

Monaro Folk Society - Bush Dance Group Annual Report 2021/22

Like the previous year, the Bush Dance Group had a punctuated year, with the cancellation of all of our activities from mid-August to November 2021. We recommenced dancing outdoors with a Christmas Party in November and then Dancing in the Park (DITP) in December, had to again stop due to Covid, before returning to indoor Workshops and Saturday dances from March 2022.

DITP did not achieve the good numbers of previous years, but as is customary, attendees were asked to make a small donation to cover costs. The result was a small profit.

Monday Bush Dance Workshops from July to August 2021 averaged just 8 dancers before the shut down of activities due to the Delta strain of Covid. When we recommenced in March 2022 we continued to fail to attract good numbers, averaging just 6 dancers (pre-Covid averages have been 20+) with numbers ranging from 4 to 7. At the end of July 2022 we made the decision to again suspend Workshops as the low numbers showed no signs of picking up.

The “open stage” for musicians and callers at Workshops attracted an average of 10 musicians, plus 2 or 3 callers each night.

Saturday dances re-started in March 2022, but after just three months were cancelled due to very low attendances, which declined each dance dropping from 11 to 4. This added to the loss made by the BDG.

No Kids' Dances were held during the year.

Overall, the low numbers at Workshops and Saturday dances saw the BDG make a loss of \$1317 for 2021/22.

While Covid restrictions have eased for most of 2022, it seems that a lot of dancers have either found other activities, or are not willing to return to close contact dancing such as Bush dancing. Two attempts at surveying dancers, including a suggestion that Monday evenings be changed to Wednesday daytimes for Workshops (daytime classes at Scottish dance have been hugely successful) brought few responses.

BDG intends to restart dancing again with DITP in December, or possibly even late November, however we need to have a concerted effort to advertise the series in the hope of attracting new dancers who may then enable us to re-start Workshops next year. However we do not have any expertise in advertising/promotion and seek assistance/guidance from the Committee on how best to do this.