

Annual Report: MFS Irish Set Dancing Group (ISD) 2024

Summary

Overall, a successful year.

Average numbers at weekly classes remained steady. A number of newcomers joined MFS.

The annual October weekend attracted 98 dancers (plus the Band, a few observers and the Irish Ambassador). The small financial loss (\$695) was largely offset by the surplus in weekly class takings (\$667). The investment made by bringing a teacher from Ireland is expected to reap dividends in growing the annual event; which in turn, attracts more people to weekly classes, and thence to other MFS activities.

Classes and general activities

Class numbers remained steady, averaging 17 (same as last year).

Beginner classes continued to be offered on an ad hoc basis, to help retain new dancers by offering tailored sessions on stepping and the basics.

For the first time since Covid, we were able to offer a 'deck dance' - a social occasion (dance and BBQ) held at a private home. Thank you to Trish and David Arnold for hosting in December 2023. These informal social events contribute to the cohesion of the group and to retaining the interest of newer dancers.

17th dance weekend (Hall Pavilion, October 2023)

Tim Flaherty from Belfast was the feature teacher for the 2023 weekend. As anticipated, having a teacher from Ireland was a 'draw-card', attracting close to 100 dancers.

The trial of a social evening (meal and informal dancing) on the Friday evening at the Canberra Irish Club to 'kick-start' the weekend was very successful, and will be repeated in 2024.

The Irish Embassy was unable to offer cultural grants to any organisations in 2023. We had received annual grants in previous years and had factored a potential grant into the budget. The lack of a grant in 2023 is reflected in the small loss (\$695).

The Irish Ambassador, His Excellency Mr Tim Mawe, did accept our invitation to officially open the event at the Saturday evening ceili. He stayed for supper, mingling with many participants. His staff confirmed to us that he thoroughly enjoyed the evening. This should position us well, should the Embassy be able to resume its cultural grants program in the future.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone in the Group for your participation and creativity. Great to have so many people offering to take on roles, and for refreshing ISD so that it continues to be welcoming, fun and dynamic.

ISD 2023 organisers: Paul Wayper, Christine Briton, Bec Tarrant and Peter Stringfellow.

10 July 2024