

Annual Report: MFS Irish Set Dancing Group (ISD) 2024-5

Summary

Another successful year:

- Average numbers at weekly classes increased, partly due to the success of the annual October dance weekend in attracting new and younger dancers.
- The October weekend was attended by over 100 dancers (including one from the USA).
- The end of year surplus was \$439.

Weekly classes (North Canberra Baptist Church Hall)

40 classes were held over 4 terms of 10 weeks each (equating to ACT School terms). Class numbers averaged 21 (compared to 17 last year). Several beginner classes were held on an ad hoc basis to give newer dancers focussed teaching.

18th annual dance weekend (Hall Pavilion, October 2024)

Helen Stonehouse from New Zealand was the invited feature teacher for the 2024 weekend held at the Hall Pavilion, Hall Village. Helen ran workshops on Saturday and Sunday. Her musician family accompanied her and gave us live music for the workshops.

The 'pre-event' Friday social evening at the Canberra Irish Club (meal followed by dancing on the deck) proved to be very popular. It was first trialled in 2023 and is now an established component of the weekend event.

The Irish Ambassador, His Excellency Mr Tim Mawe, accepted our invitation to officially open the event at the Saturday evening ceili (staying for supper and socialising with participants).

Live music for the two ceilis was by the Jimmy Mullarkey Ceili Band from Sydney.

A lunch-time 'sausage sizzle' was trialled on the Sunday in 2024. Aim was to encourage more people to remain 'on site' over lunch and socialise, and make it easier to re-start on time after the lunch break. The response was very positive, and it will be repeated in 2025.

Succession planning

The organising team was expanded in 2024 to ensure there are enough interested and experienced people to maintain the event into the future. Additional team members were Gabrielle Mackey, Jennifer Wilson, Paula Harrison and Michelle Weston.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone in the Group. Great to have so many people offering to take on roles, and for bringing new ideas so as to keep activities relevant and refreshed.

ISD Group 2025 (core) organisers: Paul Wayper, Bec Tarrant, Peter Stringfellow and Christine Briton.

16 July 2025