

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT - 2024 Annual General Meeting

The past 12 months has seen continued growth in participation across a range of the Society's activities, including the Monday night Bush Dance group, the Tuesday night music group, and Irish Set Dancing, with a number of new (and younger) faces becoming regulars. The Tuesday night music group now has around 100 people on its mailing list, which is great to see. The Irish Set Dancing weekend in October 2024 had over 100 attendees (including a number from interstate).

In May 2025, we held a whole of Society event – Carnival Day – for the first time in a number of years, involving almost all of our sub-groups in what was a full and successful day of music, dance and performance. A big thank you to everyone who came along and contributed to it on the day. It was great to see people from all of the Society's various sub-groups come together in one place, and some newcomers as well, especially at the Kids' Dance in the afternoon.

I would again particularly like to thank Gabrielle Mackey and Ian Bull for taking the lead in planning and organising the day, and especially Gabrielle for the enormous effort she put in to the logistics and catering.

2025 has also seen some new callers learning the ropes, via a couple of calling workshops run by Lance Green. This is an important initiative for the long term of future of dancing in the Society, and of folk dancing in our region more generally, and I would like to express my deep appreciation to Lance and Gabrielle for making it happen.

Declan O'Connell and Anna Brown have settled into their important roles of Monaro Musings editor and Membership Secretary respectively. I have been enjoying the content that Declan has pulled together each quarter. Anna and Moir Holmes have helped to further streamline the membership renewal process this year, which has been greatly appreciated.

To further grow the Society, I would love it if we could find someone who could take on the role of Publicity Officer. As a Committee, we have plenty of ideas for how to lift the Society's profile and advertise its events, but not much time to really make it happen. if you know of anyone who would be interested in making a valuable contribution to the Society in this area, please get in touch.

Once again, the Merry Muse has put on a diverse and well attended range of Sunday afternoon events at the Irish Cub, and our members have also been involved in providing music and dance entertainment at various events, such as community and display dances. The Canberra Celtic Choir again had a strong presence at their National Multicultural Festival stall in February. Events that are outside the regular

planned activities of our subgroups can take place if prior Committee approval is given.

Thank you for all your contributions to the Society and its activities. It is wonderful to see so many people enjoying and participating in all things folk. I look forward to seeing what the next 12 months will bring.

David