

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT - 2026 Annual General Meeting

The 2025-26 year has seen continued healthy levels of activity across the Society's various activities. Dancing in the Park and the Irish Set Dancing weekend were again well attended, and the Merry Muse has put on a number of strong events including a return show from Andy Irvine and a "Strong Women of the 60s" themed event. Our diverse range of music and dance groups provides plenty of scope for dancers and musicians to find their niche within the Society, and to develop their skill and experience levels over time.

In addition to their regular activities, our music and dance groups, as well as the Celtic Choir and the Merry Muse have continued to expand their participation in various regional Festivals, such as Kangaroo Valley, Cobargo, Yass and Majors Creek. We are looking forward to both the Choir and Society dance display group performing at Floriade in the next few weeks as well. Events that are outside the regular planned activities of our subgroups can take place if prior Committee approval is given.

The middle of 2026 has also seen the start of some initiatives to encourage (but not mandate) non-gendered calling at the Society's dance events, including calling workshops for those of our callers who might not be as familiar or confident in calling dances in this way. Thank you to Gabrielle Mackey for getting this off the ground.

The Society's overall budget position is strong, and the Committee is considering ways in which we can use some of the funds from the 2025-26 year to again put on some form of whole of Society event in the not-too-distant future. While there were some one-off timing factors that contributed to this result, it does appear that the Society's activities are currently operating in sustainable manner, with plenty of room to grow as well.

We have recently welcomed Shirley Jorritsma into the Membership Secretary role, and are very grateful for the enthusiasm and efficiency with which she has handled our recent 2026-27 membership renewal process. The Committee would also like to thank Anna Brown for her previous contribution in this role over the last couple of years. We have also been delighted to see Anna being able to resume her leadership of the Celtic Choir in recent times. Declan O'Connell continues to do a great job of compiling and presenting the Monaro Musings newsletter. If you have ideas for the content of the newsletter, or would like to put together an article for it yourself, please get in touch.

Thank you for your continued support of the Society and its activities – we should not take what we have for granted. I am looking forward to the next 12 months.

David