

Monaro Folk Society - Bush Dance Group Annual Report 2018/19

The Bush Dance Group has had another successful year, maintaining numbers for most events and continuing to make a profit for the year.

Attendances at Monday Bush Dance Workshops have continued to attract good numbers, slightly increasing average attendance to 28 dancers, with numbers ranging from 20 to 38 during the year. The “open stage” for musicians and callers is attracting an average between 10 and 11 musicians, plus 2 to 3 callers.

The CIT courses held in conjunction with the Monday Workshops continue to bring in new dancers in most terms, however very few, if any, have joined the Society or continue to come to Workshops and Saturday dances following completion of their course. These courses do, however, contribute a significant amount of income.

Saturday dances, including 3 Dancers' Dances, have seen continuing low attendances, with an average attendance of 25 (up from 24), with numbers ranging from a low of 18 to a high of 36. A decision was taken during the year to change the Christmas Picnic/Dance venue to All Saints, and to not charge for entry. The event attracted a good crowd to the new venue and will be continued there.

Only two Kids' Dances have been held with mixed attendances (the first well attended, the second very poor), and the result was a small loss of \$16.

In December 2018 and January 2019 another season of Dancing In The Park was held. Numbers were steady for this, but again there were very few new dancers attending. DITP has, until this season, been a free event, however due to the NCA charging for use of Stage 88 attendees were asked for a small voluntary donation. The result was donations exceeding hire charges by some \$28.

At the CAP Expo we presented a Join - In Display along different lines to those done in the past: no need for rehearsal by dancers; an informal dress code instead of heritage costuming; walk-through and instruction before each dance set; an invitation extended from the beginning for those watching to join in. We also distributed some free passes to the next 2nd Saturday dance: 5 people attended that dance as a result. We therefore feel this avenue is worth pursuing so we are forming an ongoing group (JIG - Join In Group) to mount similar displays when the opportunity presents itself. We intend to develop some new promotional displays and will advise the committee of any required expenditure in advance.

As far as dance music is concerned, the standard at workshops is rising, and less experienced musicians are improving, which was the point of having an open stage policy at workshops. The second Saturday dances were implemented to give the musicians a chance to function as a dance band. For these they receive a token payment, dependent on the door take.

As a result, the Bush Capital Band is now a very accomplished bush dance band. The proof of this is in the accolades received from dancers, other musicians attending, and even the sound engineers, when the BCB played for the prestigious Heritage Ball, as well as a “Canberra Composers” dance, at the 2019 National Folk Festival. These were well attended and demonstrated that the BCB is as good as, if not better than, other dance bands, and was a huge boost to the morale of the musicians.

Overall the BDG has done well financially, making a profit of \$1,756 (including \$850 CIT income) which is up almost \$600 on last year.