

Monaro Folk Society - Bush Dance Group Annual Report 2020/21

Like all groups, the Bush Dance Group had a punctuated year, with the cancellation of all activities from July to November 2020. We recommenced dancing, outdoors, in December with Dancing in the Park and due to popular demand extended that into February 2021, before returning to indoor Workshops and Saturday dances from March 2021.

Dancing in the Park saw good numbers, that increased as we went through December to February. As previously, attendees were asked to make a small donation to cover costs. The result was a small profit.

Encouraged by the good attendances at DitP, Monday Bush Dance Workshops recommenced in March 2021, but failed to attract good numbers, averaging just 9 dancers (previous years' averages have been 20+) with numbers ranging from 6 to 12. The “open stage” for musicians and callers attracted an average of 10 musicians, plus 2 or 3 callers each night. The low dancer numbers has led, for the first time ever, to a loss being made for the Workshops.

Saturday dances started in March 2021, and were changed in April to alternate between Bush Dances and Dancers' Dances, attracting better attendances – averaging around 25 dancers. While this provided a reasonable fee for the band, Saturday dances rely on profits from Workshops to cover the hall hire, and with this not eventuating, added to the loss made by the BDG.

No Kids' Dances were held during the year.

The Bush Capital Band has continued to attract a steady number of musicians to Workshops and Saturday dances, although the band has had no gigs from outside the Society this year.

Overall, the BDG made a loss of \$204 for 2020/21.

With Covid restrictions again causing the cancellation of Workshops and Dances in July 2021, and the new Delta strain being far more transmissible, it is difficult to imagine numbers improving significantly in the short term. The Society may therefore have to be prepared to carry our small, but continuing losses, until a lot more dancers feel confident enough to return on a regular basis.

Mark Simmons September 2021