

Monaro Folk Society – End of Month Dance Organising Team (EOMDOT) Report for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018

EOMDOT area of responsibility - goals and objectives

The EOMDOT organises dances on the last Saturday of the month for most months of the year hiring various local and interstate bands and callers. The EOMDOT also organises three MFS high profile dances: the Shearers' Ball, Colonial Ball, and New Year's Eve dance.

The EOMDOT's objectives are to build competency in the performance of Australian traditional folk dance, dance calling and music, and grow by recruitment and promotion of these traditions to the general public.

Membership of EOMDOT

Antonella Salpietro - Convener and Primary Contact
Mark Simmons
Rita Turnbull
Matthew Gibbins

Rod Peters and Pierre Sibilant are not members of EOMDOT; however, they fulfil very important roles in providing assistance and advice to the EOMDOT. Rod Peters provides support on publicity and Pierre Sibilant edits the EOMDOT webpages.

In 2017-18, in addition to the end of month dances, EOMDOT organised the annual Colonial Ball held on the 2 September 2017 at the Albert Hall, the New Year's Eve dance on the 31 December 2017 at the Woolshed and the Shearers' Ball on 24 March 2018.

Attendance at EOM dances is rather irregular. The EOMDOT has taken a number of measures to increase attendance and reduce costs; for example, promoting EOMDOT activities through local newspapers and magazines, and distributing printed publicity material. In addition, the EOMDOT decided not to hold the November or February EOM dance, as the first is too close to the MFS Xmas party while the other is usually concurrent with the Cobargo Folk Festival.

The overall financial outcome for the EOMDOT activities held in the financial year 2017-18 has been a loss of \$631.00 (based on accrual accounting) which is mainly due to poor attendance at two dances. Unpredictable factors like bad weather, with related dangerous road conditions, have also affected dance attendance.

Last year, the financial feasibility of continuing to hold the Colonial Ball at the Albert Hall was in doubt, given the change in hiring conditions and charges introduced by the ACT Government on 1 September 2017. I made representations to Albert Hall management and the ACT Chief Minister to have the decision reviewed. While the decision was not reversed, all-day charges were not imposed for the 2017 Colonial Ball, and only imposed in relation to the 2018 Ball. We decided to only apply a very modest price increase for tickets for the 2017 Colonial Ball to ensure that the event would remain affordable to a wide public, attract a younger demographic and retain participation by MFS members.

In late 2017, I explored the possibility of collaborating with other cultural groups to offer a full day program featuring complementary activities. A partnership was established with the Canberra Mandolin Orchestra and this may eventuate in an attractive program for 1 September 2018 and

reduced costs for the Colonial Ball.

At the beginning of 2018, I proposed that a dance class be held at the ANU to attract new dancers to the MFS. For a number of reasons, possibly including limited support by the ANU Lifestyle management, the class was not successful.

A number of suggestions have been put forward to the MFS Committee with the aim to increase attendance at MFS activities including running an MFS Open Day. This will be further explored with the other MFS subgroup organisers.

I believe that the EOMDOT has demonstrated a commitment to improving attendance at MFS events, a willingness to seek and develop collaboration opportunities with other cultural groups, apply a creative and sensible approach to the use of resources, and explore a wide range of options to reduce costs.

The EOMDOT will continue looking at strategies to increase attendance and overall MFS membership to ensure that ALL MFS activities are successful.

Antonella Salpietro
EOMDOT Convener