

MFS AGM 2018 - PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MFS has actually had an improved year on a number of fronts.

Financially we posted a loss, however this was partly due to catching up with some accumulated reimbursements: there have also been increased venue hire rates without a corresponding rise in door prices for those attending. With our cash reserves we did not feel it necessary to raise prices. The membership discount has meant less revenue, but it will also mean reduced costs and work for Tina in producing and mailing the newsletter.

Linda, as bookkeeper, has done a sterling job again this year – she handles the lioness's share of the financials as Tina forges on as Musings Editor, as well as Treasurer. Thank you for keeping things rolling.

Memberships are up significantly after an email reminder campaign, this possibly assisted by the discount offered. Of these roughly 80 are concession, 92 non-concession, so our demographic is certainly towards the more mature end of the spectrum - no surprises there. However, we do seem to be picking up some younger participants, particularly in BDG.

As you may be aware, Declan did not realise he was given a life sentence as Membership secretary – so he has been bailed out under the custody of Kirsty. Our thanks are due to Declan, for carrying out the role for seven long years and I wish him well as he takes a breath and contemplates which committee position he would like to take on next. Fortunately, Christine Gifford has agreed to take on his role and we welcome her in that capacity.

Promotion is an ongoing work in progress. We are examining options and welcome any input from members on this. We have tried some initiatives with mixed results. This year Antonella attempted to start dance classes at ANU, however the results were not productive. On the other hand, the Come and Try free bush dance organised the morning of the Colonial Ball at the Albert Hall was encouraging, with some of the new attendees coming to bush workshops and the next Saturday night dance.

Once again, we had a promotional presence at the NFF with our marquee managed by John and Rita sited at the Central Park Stage. Eileen and Pierre ran a very successful Evening Muse blackboard concert venue (with longer hours than the previous year) at the CPS. Some of their young blackboard performers have now been coming to the Merry Muse, reflected in higher numbers there.

We participated in the annual CAP Expo again, and while there is no specific increase in our numbers due to this, it helps MFS maintain a visible presence in the community.

NB. This paragraph added in after AGM: We held two organisers meetings during the year, one partially devoted to instruction as to how edit the website. There was also discussion regarding both specific and general promotion of the society. This is the one time that subgroup organisers can exchange ideas and experiences and is therefore a very useful occurrence.

We did not seem to have a centralised Assets Register for all groups, so I have now established one – some of the entries still need to be reviewed, but this will happen over the coming months. A copy of this is in the members' section of the website.

In regard to our activities, our various subgroups are doing well in general but a few are suffering from low numbers. An interesting example is the End of Month Dances: numbers are low on average, but the New Year's Eve dance is most successful (with over 180 attending the last one). With more competition in available activities it is increasingly difficult to draw people on a Saturday night. Weeknight workshops and sessions seem to be more popular. However, the ISD October weekend continues to draw fair numbers.

The Colonial Ball this year had a good turnout, many dancers complimented the music, the dance program and the excellent food, so my congratulations to the EOMDOT for its success.

On the music side of things, TNMG is blazing ahead as up to 26 musicians now turn up for the Irish Club sessions. The BDG and Contra musicians are also turning out in good numbers to play for workshops, as well as playing at outside events which promote the society.

In summing up, I also wish to thank the subgroup Organisers and Committee members for their support over the past year in helping to move the society forward, and encourage some of you to join us.

Geoff