

MFS AGM 2019 - PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2018 was marked with a number of sad losses on the music scene, possibly the most significant for the society being the passing of Daryl Powell. Daryl's estate has, in fact, left a very large pile of boxes of music, dances and books: Bob Hodgson and Dave Wardle are currently attempting to catalogue these and a library list of books will be issued in due course.

Overall, MFS has had a productive year, as evidenced in the Sub-group reports.

Membership is roughly the same as last year, losing some members due to advancing age or change in location, while gaining some new members with approximately 50/50 on non-concession and concession numbers. The good thing is that we have a number of younger members, particularly as they are becoming involved in organisation within sub-groups.

Financially, we have seen a profit of over \$3000, due largely to increased revenue from Bush Dance and Irish Set Dance, which offset losses from some others. ISD, in particular, posted a significant profit, largely due to the initiative of funding a dance teacher from Ireland for the October weekend which drew a much bigger attendance than usual.

More interaction between group organisers has developed with our Organisers' Consults, and a follow-up meeting of Dance Organisers has initiated a Working Group to address different issues involved in attracting and keeping new dancers.

With the ACT being a featured state at the National Folk Festival, MFS again had a notable presence. Contra workshops, dances and other dance displays were well attended, and by all reports the Bush Capital Band did a brilliant job at the Heritage Ball, showing they are up there with the best. We also displayed our new promotional banners at different events. The Evening Muse blackboard was a great success, thanks to Eileen and Pierre, with performers lining up early to register.

I wish to thank all the Organisers, assisting volunteers and committee members for keeping our activities running, however this raises two issues:

Firstly, we need to start some succession planning. We need more members to become involved in running activities, not just participating. Tina has decided to get a life and will not be continuing as Editor of the Musings. Ideally someone or sometwo will step up as Cub Editors, and Tina would like the coming year to be one of transition with her showing them what needs to be done. It is not a particularly onerous job however if this does not happen, we shall lose our newsletter.

Secondly, the ongoing success of the society will depend on effective promotion to draw new members and the public in general to our events. We have been raising our profile at events such as the National Folk Festival and the CAP Expo over the last few years, due to work by a few individuals. However, as was discussed at the Organisers' Consult in July, we need a broad, unified approach to promotion. I do not think this is a role for one person, rather a small group of three or four people to spread the initial load of coordination.

Next year marks our 50th anniversary, and we are planning a similar showcase event in conjunction with the Shearers' Ball at the Woolshed in March. I believe we need to invest a significant amount of our cash in a wide promotional push in Canberra, managed by a promotional team, around such events in 2020. So please give this some creative thought and assistance to the committee over the coming year.

Thank you

Geoff Kell MFS President 2018-19