

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT - 2020 AGM

Well it has certainly been a different year! Bushfires through the summer, followed by the Covid 19 pandemic, have knocked the social side of Canberra life significantly and the effects will continue for quite some time. Some businesses have not survived, and it was indeed sad to see the closure of the Beyond Q bookshop and café which has been so supportive of MFS as well as Canberra musicians in general.

The suspension of our activities in March has meant that the only significant dance event held this calendar year was the Gala Ball in March, and this only (fortunately) because of Roni & Adrian's anniversary. Whether any dance activities can begin over the coming few months will obviously depend on ACT government regulations, and the willingness of Organisers and dancers to resume.

Music is somewhat easier as it does not require contact, so a number of our groups are already holding sessions, these being Zoomed if technically possible. Zoom is proving to be an excellent way of including more remote musicians, or those who may find attending in person difficult: the use of Zoom for meetings is also proving to make life easier for the committee.

Over the last 5 years as President I have attempted to resolve some of the past issues that have continued to cause difficulties in some activities, to identify aspects of the society that seemed to be flagging and introduce initiatives to improve communication between committee, organisers and members.

I have also tried to facilitate promotion of our activities to the public with banners for subgroups and give them a stronger sense of identity, while being part of a greater whole.

Easier ways of handling membership administration have led to higher membership numbers – the challenge will be to maintain interest and build on these through the difficulties from Covid 19. Our membership secretary, Christine, is doing an excellent job in maintaining a personal approach to members that I feel is most important.

After years of doing a fantastic job as editor of the Musings, Tina has been succeeded by Keith, and now gets a deserved break from producing the newsletter on a monthly basis.

Linda has continued to do a great job as bookkeeper, and her tasks are now being shared by Rod, who has emerged as a very active and capable Treasurer.

I believe that MFS is in a good position now, with capable people in significant roles. My thanks to those who have supported my efforts as President and to the organisers who have responded to meetings to improve inter-group communication.

Given the current low level of activity, I see the rest of this year as an opportunity for the MFS committee to hold discussions with organisers in pursuit of the most viable way to resume their activities, and to decide on strategies to rejuvenate these activities. My best wishes to the incoming committee in working towards a productive future for MFS.

Geoff