

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT - 2024 Annual General Meeting

The end of 2023 and the first 8 months of 2024 (we are holding the AGM a couple of months earlier this year) have seen many of our regular activities returning to pre-Covid levels and attracting new participants. We have a number of new dancers, musicians and singers across our various groups, which is encouraging for the longer-term future of the Society.

The Committee has been keen to continue seeking ways to build greater community and connection across the Society as we move forward. We got a real and renewed sense of the importance of this from seeing people re-connect with each other at last year's AGM, which was the first one we had held in person since 2019.

The Merry Muse hosted two major artist events this year – Andy Irvine and Eleanor McEvoy. Both events had full houses, and were very well received by those who came along. Proceeds from these events enabled the Society to significantly upgrade the sound equipment used at the Merry Muse. The continued incremental growth and consistent attendances at our Monday night bush dances in Turner also enabled us to invest in an equipment upgrade for use by the Bush Dance Group.

May 2024 saw the relaunch of the Monaro Musings, thanks to the enthusiastic editorship of Declan O'Connell and the assistance of former editor Keith Ogborn. We are hoping that the Musings will continue to foster a greater sense of connection to the Society, and a deeper appreciation of the range of activities that we run.

2024 has also seen Anna Brown (of our Canberra Celtic Choir) take on the important role of membership secretary for the Society, replacing Christine Gifford. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to welcome Anna to the role and express our appreciation to Christine for all her efforts over many years in managing our membership process and records.

Once again, our members have also been involved in providing music and dance entertainment at various events, such as community and display dances. The Canberra Celtic Choir, for example, had a strong presence at their National Multicultural Festival stall in February. Events that are outside the regular planned activities of our subgroups can take place if prior Committee approval is given.

It has struck me recently how fortunate we are to have such a diverse range of regular community-based folk music, dance and singing activities under the Society's umbrella here in Canberra. We should not take what we have for granted.

Thank you for your continued support of the Society and its activities. I am looking forward to the next 12 months.

David