

# Folk Alliance Australia

Presidents Report for Calendar Year of 2021  
Presented to FAA Annual General Meeting  
Sunday 17 April  
National Folk Festival Canberra



- **Welcome**

- Thank you for attending this year's AGM in person and on-line. It is great to see a good number of people in attendance and showing your support and interest.
- I would like to thank other members of the FAA Board who are able to attend today, Therese Virtue, Cherie Harvey and Linda Bull

- **Acknowledgement**

- We acknowledge the Ngunnawal peoples on whose land we are holding our Annual General Meeting and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

- **Thank You**

- Thank you firstly to FAA Board Members for their ongoing work with FAA over the course of the 2021 year. Thanks especially to John McAuslan our treasurer for his work on the finances for FAA. Thanks also to Rob Dickens for his extensive work on our newsletters and social media. Thanks also go to the National Folk Festival for allowing us to host our AGM as part of the Festival.

- **COVID in 2021**

- Our 2021 Program was put in place in late 2020 when we reassessed the situation not only at the height of COVID restrictions but also at a time of a significant decline in FAA Income and with the prospect of an unknown recovery period for folk music activity around Australia.
- Consequently, some of our main expenditure items were put on hold and/or cancelled (such as FAA small grants scheme/youth awards/ Folk Conference planning)
- Through this COVID period it became very obvious that Folk does not have a very visible presence or a loud voice. Our larger festivals do however have a voice in their regions.
- This did identify and signify that Folk is a different part of the arts, music and entertainment industry. We are more regional, more community, more tourism, more intergenerational, (more equitable?) and more socially aware than most other sectors.
- The Arts and Music became very vocal in their championing of the sector and raising the issue re impact and funding on the Arts and Music. This has been very important to acknowledge the importance of music and culture to our communities.
- We may well discover that COVID had had a lesser impact on Folk sector as we rely less on funding for our existence. However, it is quite possible that globally and locally we will be impacted more as we are very festival focused. Reinstating festivals is still risky. It is also possible that we are experiencing a significant break in the folk-process of transmission and will see traditions not passed on and custodians and mentors who have been lost. Community has been put second to the economy. Traditions are not seen as important by arts and music that are product oriented.

Back to FAA, with our limited resources and reach. We did however believe that in this period we should respond in our own way and implement a strategy to raise the profile of FAA and the greater Australian Folk Music sector.

FAA sees it as important to have a national umbrella organisation for Folk and as a non-funded organisation we have to be very careful regarding income, expenses and our resources in what projects we can undertake. We run a very lean organisation but we are in a good financial position still as we come out of two years of COVID.

**So 2021 saw us focus on delivering TWO main projects in addition to our membership/insurances program:-**

- Firstly the establishment of a national Folk Music Awards with an aim to engage with and raise the profile of the whole folk sector.
- Secondly to increase the output of our media and social media communications and information sharing, which goes to members and large sections of the folk music community.

So I would just like to further elaborate on our 2021 activities.

- **AFMAs - Australian Folk Music Awards**

- Aims to profile artists and achievers/ raise the profile of diverse Australian Folk music, involve, bring together and engage the larger folk music community.
- Announced in April 2021
- Established as both a live and on-line event and presented in October in Adelaide
- First AFMAs had 8 awards and we saw 30 Panelists/ 120 Nominations /6000 public votes / 3000 on-line viewers of the Live Awards event.
- Considerable workload in establishing and presenting and we will refine and develop the Awards in 2022
- 2022 Awards in Melbourne/ Announced in May / Expand to 10 Awards
- We are pleased to see so many of our award winners performing at this year's National Folk Festival

- **AON Insurance & Memberships**

- Due to closure of festivals and venues due to COVID/Govt Health restrictions our membership was hugely impacted. 2021 has seen a recovery but our income through insurance is much less.
- We need to remind members and folk community that all moneys go towards folk projects (unlike other insurance schemes)
- We have done well to deliver a 2021 break-even budget at the same time as establishing the AFMA Australian Folk Music Awards .

- **Youth Awards**

- Until 2019 the successful FAA Youth Awards were previously tied into our partners (5 major folk festivals) and run in conjunction with the National Folk Festival. In 2021 we decided to change this and run the Youth Awards as part of the AFMAs. This year's recipients, Charm of Finches are doing enormously well and embarking on a UK tour as well as featuring at many festivals and truly being ambassadors of the new generation folk music sector. Well done to them and our runner-up Sadie Mustoe.

- **FAA Information and Communications/ Social Media/ Newsletter**

- In order to serve members and supporters we are now issuing fortnightly newsletters and social media posts with current information as it comes to hand. We have focused on festival information, grants & resources as well as featuring new music releases and projects by FAA members. We are hoping to expand the newsletter to have some

magazine format where we can explore more information about projects and performers as well as discuss the issues and development of Folk.

- We are currently looking at re-developing and upgrading our FAA website to better provide up to date information and feature/profile more information and resources.

- **FAA Board**

- We currently have a strong board where the members are experienced and closely involved as performers, organisers and managers. We initiated an engagement with the folk sector to build the FAA Board membership into 2022. We are looking at the best ways to develop the board, represent most States, bring in skills as well as mentor and integrate the next generation of folk-coordinators. Consequently you will see the results of this engagement. The 2022 board will have members from:-

- Regional SA
- Adelaide
- Melbourne & Victoria
- Hobart
- Brisbane
- Regional NSW
- Perth

- **Partnerships**

FAA has developed several partnerships; with Bandzoogle (North American Web Design for acoustic folk acts) We have ongoing partnerships with Listen Through the Lens - Festival Website. The National Folk Festival and a range of Australian Folk Festivals. (FAA Youth Awards) We are looking at increasing partnerships through the Australian Folk Music Awards.

- **Additional Projects we have been discussing**

- Future Folk Music Exchange/Conference
- Directory of Folk Festivals, Presenters, Venues
- Opportunities for Project funding for FAA
- On-line Folk skills training program for folk musicians and folk project coordinators.

- **AGM**

- We have returned to holding the AGM at National Folk Festival rather than Online in 2021 as this seemed to have an inconsistent response. There is nothing like face to face.

Into 2022 we will be looking at increasing our memberships and encouraging folk supporters and performers to get behind FAA to further the opportunity for FAA to increase the profile of Folk Music and culture through projects, advocacy and reach.

Thank you for attending this year's AGM.



Keith Preston  
President  
Folk Alliance Australia  
17 April 2022