



Presidents Report

Folk Alliance Australia

January – December 2023

Presented to Annual General Meeting, Canberra

Sunday 31 March 2024

Finances

Folk Alliance Australia's financial operations were very similar to the previous year. We have started to recover from the COVID period and most positively we have been able to incorporate the establishment and presenting of the annual Australian Folk Music Awards (AFMAs) into our annual budget without any significant impact.

Through careful money management and the fact that we have few overhead costs not running office we have shown a small profit of \$7,105.00. One of our main issues is our limited income source of membership and a small amount via insurances. We do seem to have more members joining to support and be part of FAA for the work we do rather than just for their performer or event insurances. As you will see we are able to achieve a lot with a small budget and through tight management we are able to maintain a surplus, make small investments in projects and can afford in 2024 the task of upgrading our website. This of course is based on the large amount of in-kind skilled voluntary work that Board members and key people contribute to FAA.

In 2023 we were also fortunate to secure some Federal Arts funding from Creative Australia for a 2024 Festival Organisers Roundtable Conference. This shows up in our 2023 finances as we received the funds in the 2023 financial year.

Membership & Insurances

FAA Memberships have been maintained and slightly increased from 2022.

Insurances are still problematic in some areas as festivals/organisations have to apply on a case by case basis. Performer insurances are stable and available at the same pricing.

The insurance industry is still recovering from COVID/bushfires/floods and event cancellations and claims. So many areas of events/ tourism/ arts/music venues are waiting to see what happens next. This is not an issues specific to folk festivals.

We are having new discussions with AON in near future and will be looking at this at our Festivals Conference in July this year as well as taking part in submissions to the Music Industry.

Australian Folk Music Awards (AFMAs)

FAA presented the 3rd AFMAs in October 2023. This project runs from May to October and seeks to engage the whole gamut of the folk music industry as widely as possible through nominations, judging, the awards event and promotion of the awards. The AFMAs are growing each year in numbers and engagement and are now seen as a very useful tool by AFMA winners and finalists in raising the profile of artists to venues/ festivals/ overseas agencies and so on.

Some AFMA statistics:-

- 9 AFMA awards were presented as well as 2 lifetime awards
- 145 entries were received
- 45 Panelists were engaged in the judging/assessment of nominations process
- 4,800 people voted nationally in the People's Choice Award (public voting)
- 220 people attended The AFMA Awards Night in Melbourne
- 8 of 9 award winners attended the awards night in person

Communications Newsletters & Media

In 2023 we continued the aim of FAA to disseminate regular information to our national folk networks. We have succeeded in issuing fortnightly FAA E-newsletters which go out to around 5,000 people around the country.

In 2023 we welcomed Sandy Watkins in Perth WA to the FAA as Newsletter editor and his skills have seen the quality of our newsletters improve markedly. We endeavour to publish information about festivals, funding, folk related material, Folk Alliance International as well as information about national tours and music/video releases from our members. We encourage members to send us any information that would be relevant to or of interest to a national folk audience/network.

Venues, Presenters & Festivals data-base

This project is ongoing but has been started and is to assist performers to put together national tours and to be an FAA Members resource. Thanks to Erin Heycox for work on establishing this.

Folk Festival Organisers Roundtable Conference

FAA has been successful in attaining some funding towards an Australian folk festivals national conference to be held in July 2024. Funding is from Creative Australia. This event will be presented in partnership with our friends at the National Folk Festival. This is a strategic project to support our folk festivals sector with an emphasis on:

Assessment of our sector / Skills development / information sharing / collaboration / networking / resourcing & promotion. We are currently collecting expressions of interest in attending from festival organisers.

Small Grants Go Fund Me

In late 2023 we established a fundraising project to raise funds for the FAA Small Grants scheme. This has continued into 2024 as we need to reach a target of \$10,000 to be able to launch the project.

FAA Website

Our website has become quite old and dated and in 2024 we will look to upgrade the FAA website. With the advent of AFMAs the site receives an increased visitation. Our website had 49,000 visitors and 101,000 visits in 2023. We are looking to improve the effectiveness of FAA social media through more use of Facebook & Instagram.

FAI – Folk Alliance International

FAA met with CEO of FAI in Adelaide in 2023 and continue to look at ways we can link Australian artists into the opportunities that are available through attending Folk Alliance International. Australian artists attending FAI are supported by Sounds Australia.

On an additional note FAA was approached by international Thinktank (IPAG) Institute for Policy, Advocacy & Governance to hold a Melbourne Forum in 2024 on the focus of Australian Cultural identity and changing demographics. An application was submitted to Foreign Affairs & Trade with FAA as the lead agency working with cultural partners in Melbourne such as The Boite. We will soon find out the result of the application and advise if successful.

FAA Board Members

Thank you to all our FAA Board members in 5 States who have pushed FAA along this year. I believe that we are more strategic, effective and relevant than ever before due to the commitment, passion and experience of our Board team. Thanks especially to John McAuslan for his work as Treasurer. John has contributed to FAA since it's inception.

A special call out to Sandy Watkins in Perth for his work on our Newsletter and Website. We have been fortunate enough to have strong continuity of the FAA board which gives it stability. Last year we did welcome Jo Cresswell to the FAA Board but due to family illness she was unable to continue.

Again, thank you to all our FAA team;

Cherie Harvey (Regional SA) (Secretary) Erin Heycox (Regional Vic) Louise Coomber (WA), Erin Collins (Tas) Therese Virtue (Vic) Sam De Santi (Qld) John McAuslan (Vic) Keith Preston (SA)

An additional thank you to Roger King for his support at the National with our Forum and AGM documenting and livestreaming these two FAA events. We invite members and supporters to work with us on our projects such as coming on board as AFMA panel members or supporting our Conference or newsletter. Your support is much appreciated.



Keith Preston
President - Folk Alliance Australia
March 31st 2024