



**NEWPORT**  
FIDDLE & FOLK CLUB

# Annual Report 2020





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# Annual Report

This report reviews the activities of the Newport Fiddle & Folk Club for 2020. This was our 16th year of creating spaces for music making, storytelling and sharing poetry in Newport. The club is now an established part of Hobsons Bay. We have created a range of activities and initiatives that continue to address the needs of our members, and this in turn serves and enriches our local and broader community.

The report will describe the club's activities for 2020 and assess how the aims of the club can best be met through our range of activities. The club aims to:

- Provide a venue for those interested in locally produced music
- Provide opportunities for amateur musicians to get together, play and learn from each other with an emphasis on, but not restricted to, folk music.
- Provide opportunities for non-musicians to join the club and participate in and enjoy the arts through listening, singing, and dancing.
- Provide opportunities that challenge our members to refine and develop their performance and presentation skills.

Beyond the monthly gatherings of the NFFC, the club has a role to play in the development of young and older musicians through workshops and other planned musical gatherings. The NFFC aims to develop links with sponsors of the Arts to source funding for professional musicians who will be able to provide both musical leadership and inspiration for developing musicians within the club.

This report will assess the extent to which the club is meeting these aims and identify goals that we can work towards in 2021 that will maintain the vitality of the club.

## INTRODUCTION

The big joke of 2020 was that by December 2019 the committee had developed a complete list of all the activities and events that were going to occur in the following 12 months. (it was a very impressive list!). However we got as far as March and the Newport Lakes Bush Dance (which actually occurred) before the realities of COVID set in. It was obvious that we would need to find an alternative way of coming together for the club to continue. Very quickly we all installed Zoom, and most of our activities were able to move seamlessly to the online world. It is stating the obvious to note that Zoom is not quite the same as face to face, but despite this reality, we had many satisfying and enjoyable sessions. Thanks to Alan Davies and some other club members who shared the technical solutions to optimize Zoom, and it was pretty interesting to see everyone's workstation/kitchen/ make-shift recording space (or virtual backgrounds). All in all, it was a good year for the club – we kept up the connections (and made a few more) strengthened existing groups under some duress, and set ourselves up for a wonderful 2021!

The Newport Fiddle & Folk Club is a very active organisation that has created many regular activities. We used to separate them into **Groups** and **Sessions** but we have now realised that this is an arbitrary separation. This report simply includes all of the activities that we do (in alphabetical order) and then concludes with an analysis of the organisational aspects of the club that enable us to operate successfully and sustainably.

# Annual Report



## Beginner Jam

### **BEGINNER JAM**

Beginner Jam didn't miss a beat this remarkable year meeting during the afternoon of every third Saturday of the month on Zoom. The sessions were run, in turn, by the small band of jam leaders, experienced musicians, who stepped up and used video, PowerPoints and guest leaders to bring interest to each session.

The guiding principle of Beginner Jam is to provide an encouraging space for people to make music with others. Many are new musicians, but others are experienced musicians learning a new instrument or just being there for us. In general the sessions are run in one key and the jam leader chooses a few songs using three or four chords in that key. Jam leaders usually bring some technique to each session, a rhythm pattern, a simplified chord, or suggestions for song dynamics.

Our jam leaders are the backbone of this group and we rely on these (occasionally overworked) experienced musicians to run the monthly jams. We would love to have some more people step up and support this group in 2021, playing, leading, and especially singing (subject to COVID-19 restrictions). In addition to our enthusiasm we generally bring a great supper.

Some new ideas have sprung from the Zoom experience. We enjoyed having guest leaders, including the club President, and would like to invite guests more often. We would like to follow up on a suggestion for a session on playing three chord songs by ear and perhaps including some ear training as a regular feature of our programs.

We hope to resume our in-person jams from 6.30-8.30pm on the third Saturday of each month at the Scout Hall. All are welcome, adults and children. The sessions cost \$3 for members and \$5 for non-members. While the summer weather lasts, we can have open doors so we have a well ventilated environment. We will be guided by Victorian health guidelines each month. If we are not able to meet in person, we will revert to Zoom until it is safe again.

*Barbara Beaumont*

### **CELTIC SESSION**

It took a pandemic and the need to avoid gatherings to bring home to all of us just how important it is coming together to play and sing – it's the essence of the club and the music we love to create and share. We weren't sure whether virtual sessions on Zoom would cut it. It took some getting used to. The microphone adjustments, camera misalignments, volume levels, reception drop-outs, and of course the curse of the mute button. But for all that, and more, we logged in every month and played some tunes, sang some songs, had lots of laughs, and caught up with our session buddies. We had nine Zoom sessions, each attended by between 15 and 20 people. We tried using pre-prepared backing tracks that the leader would play to the group to help fill out the sound, with mixed success. Otherwise, we'd all mute except for the leader who we'd play along with. It sort of worked, most of the time. There were also many gems, like having folk join us from across town, up state, and Linn, a wonderful singer of Gaelic songs, from a village in the UK. It was a great pleasure making those contacts, and we hope they can be maintained in some way.



Looking ahead to 2021, we hope to be able to hold COVID-compliant monthly sessions at one of the regular club venues at Newport (details being finalised). During the year we will also invite one or two experienced session musicians to join us to provide 'tutorials' in session tune playing. We will of course be playing at the Newport Folk Festival in June, one of the highlights of our musical year.

*Simon Levertton*



## NEWPORT CELTIC SESSION

# Annual Report

## CLUB NIGHT

The monthly club night is aimed to be a time where club members and visitors can meet and mix in a casual environment to perform or hear acoustic music, poetry or stories. It is an ideal opportunity for beginners to begin performing live without a large audience or for newcomers to visit the club.

As with all NFFC events, monthly club nights have been drastically different this year due to COVID-19. All sessions were conducted using Zoom and have been very popular. As well as the regular members, a number of people from outside the metropolitan Melbourne area and from the UK participated each month. On average we had 20 or more logging in, most of them as performers.

Zoom sessions have had some very positive aspects:

- It enabled the club to continue activities during a pandemic lockdown.
- It allows people to participate without having to battle Melbourne traffic to get to Newport.
- People from country/interstate/overseas can join in.
- People can easily come in late or leave early without disruption to the session.
- Some find it less stressful performing on Zoom than in front of an actual group.
- It is easy to nip off for a drink or toilet break.

The downside to Zoom sessions:

- Acoustic music quality over the internet does not have that same feel or quality as a live session.
- It is very difficult to have more than one performer active at any one time so groups cannot perform together.
- The group leader is continually required to pay close attention to the computer during performances, often has to answer chat messages. I found myself quite drained after a Zoom session.
- The social side is quite a significant part of the nights; chatting on a computer screen is just not the same as meeting up face to face.

Considering the difficulties that COVID-19 has presented, it has been another good year for club nights, and we are looking forward to resuming the sessions at the hall again. We aim to get the club nights back to where we were at the end of 2019 with 10 – 20 attendees each night. This will involve adhering to the COVID requirements which will mean some changes to the usual routine. At this stage it appears that even with restrictions we will be able to have enjoyable live nights again.

I would like to thank and congratulate the committee; you have done a fantastic job to enable this club not just to survive but to continue activities for a year during a world-wide pandemic.

**Bill Field,**  
**Leader, monthly club night**



# Annual Report

## NEWPORT BUSH ORCHESTRA

We had a meeting in Dec 2019 and set goals and mulled over ideas regarding 2020. Then, as we were about to implement some of the initiatives, COVID hit and the playing field and game changed dramatically. Since we had lost the ability to have face-to face meetings, to keep the group ticking over, we resorted to Zoom.

Needless to say it was not very satisfactory for music due to the delays in real time but we had to use it.

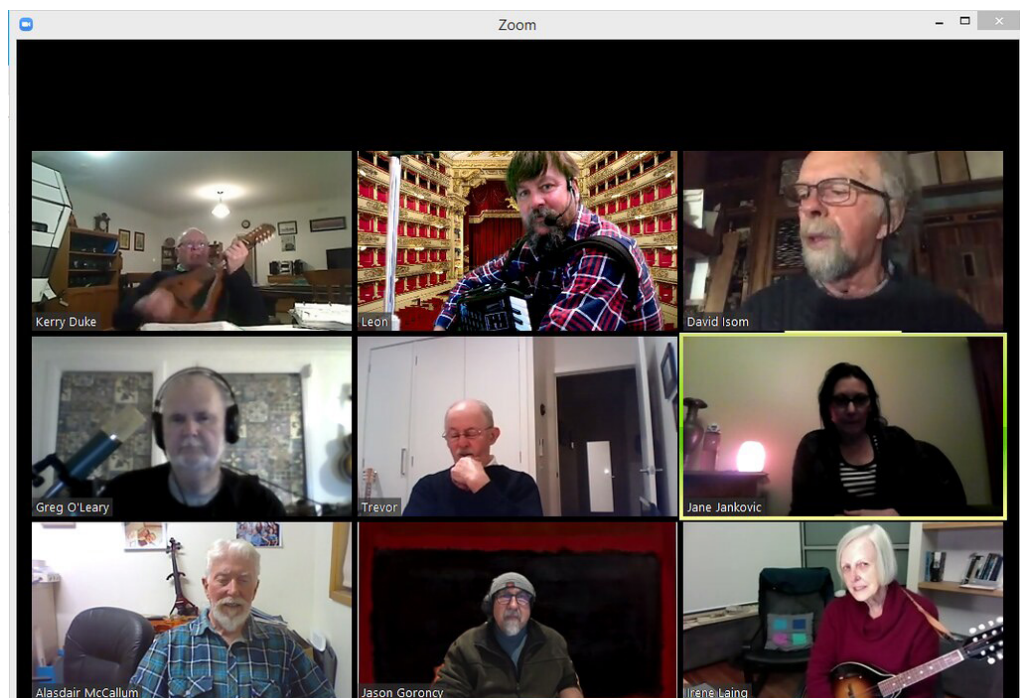
A mighty big thanks to Leon Conway as he was our tech savvy manager. I have had enough of learning new computer apps and was deeply grateful that Leon took the slack up.

2020 aims were put massively on hold and the new aims could be summarized as

- 1) Survive
- 2) Keep current members
- 3) Develop a Zoom meeting protocol that worked
- 4) Re-learnt a limited number of tunes
- 5) Try to capture the “feel” of a NBO meeting
- 6) Try to preserve our core Aussie repertoire
- 7) To a limited extent introduce new material

We achieved ALL of these goals as was evinced by the one and only end of year meeting at the Bowls Club.

I drove down to find members past and present, old and new having a pleasant time playing Aussie and “other” tunes and using their music as a social tool. We survived as a group, we lost no members and maybe picked up a couple, the Zoom meetings worked, we learnt some new tunes as well as revising a few oldies, kept our Aussie core and worked on a few songs. When restrictions ease in 2021 we can go back to the original 2020 goals (which were very ambitious) and implement a few of them.



# Annual Report

Here are the reprised 2020 initiatives, each is do-able but maybe not all together. We agreed that :

Greg has the general responsibility for teaching and running the sessions but we will share leadership of the group. Dave will develop our song repertoire and we did get some new songs up and running. Bruce will look for new and interesting material and he hopes to get on with that in 2021. Suzie has taken on the admin, advertising and NBO initiatives for the group.

The NBO is a worthwhile arm of the NFFC and so it will continue its role in 2021 and beyond.

A core set of Australiana will be identified, put into a Booklet form and audio (midi and mp3) to be provided to all members and a copy of our CD to be given to any new members.

The NBO has developed also as a social tool, attracting many people who need a bit of human interaction and emotional support. This turns out to be an important function of the group and it also acts as a stepping-stone for members to enter the wider NFFC. This was the key operational feature of the group in 2020 and will continue to be in 2021 and beyond. Initiatives need to be set in place to look after new members. To this end, one of the core tunes will be taught by ear every session by Greg. The NBO will also address this most intractable of problems.....how to bring new members up to speed pleasantly.

We will attempt to bring a number of sets of tunes up to a higher standard by introducing arrangements.

Suzie suggests allocating each member a task of starting a set....they don't have to play by themselves, just be able to start the tune. The autocratic method of leading the group is to be toned down and we will now operate in a non- Greg oriented environment. The circle of tunes we have been using to start the night is a useful tool to get folks up and going so this is to be continued.

The dates for the NBO need to be advertised for the whole year ahead of time and NOT CHANGED. We will need to work around any problems as they arise. Greg will endeavor to link tunes to all the dates for 2020 so everyone knows what tunes are going to be revised or taught...this is ambitious.

Overall 2020 was a challenging year for the NBO on Zoom. However, as stated above, the final session at the Bowls Club indicated that there is still plenty of life left in the NBO as it has value to its members, to the folk club, and to the wider Hobsons Bay Community through our performances and dances.

**Greg O'Leary**



# Annual Report



## NEWPORT COMMUNITY CHOIR

Within a couple of weeks of the first COVID lockdown in March, the choir moved to online sessions. It took some getting used to – not being able to hear the rest of the choir as you sing is a big loss for a choir singer! However, the Zoom sessions helped us to focus on the other elements we love about being in a choir – the fun of singing together, the enjoyment of seeing familiar faces, the sharing of our everyday stories. The sessions were a very welcome break in the enforced isolation of COVID lockdown. Over time the sessions morphed into a simple ‘singalong’ format, where we shared our favourite songs and the significant life stories that so often go along with them.

Some of our members really got their creative mojo going during the lockdown, and we created a 37-page “Coronavirus songbook” with titles such as Hotel COVID-19 (to the tune of Hotel California), Wipe Every Surface (to the tune of Climb Every Mountain) and Fill Another Trolley Up (to the tune of Music, Music, Music).

We weren’t able to do any performances in the usual sense, but thanks to a grant from the Hobsons Bay Community Fund we were able to produce a video of the song Curlews Fly by Sue Kirkpatrick. Everybody recorded their part individually at home, and choir member Kerry Saxby used his awesome technical skills and creativity to stitch it all together into a beautiful video. In this way we were able to participate in World Migratory Bird Day, an annual event we’ve been part of since 2014.

Looking back over the screenshots from our online sessions, the faces tell the story. The strain of lockdown is evident, as is the ‘Zoom-fatigue’ of those who had already been at the computer all day for work. But what also shows is the joy of being part of a supportive and friendly group and the fun of singing together. We held on to the things that really matter and kept the spirit of the choir going even through the toughest times of a Melbourne winter lockdown.

**Alan Davies**

## NEWPORT OLD TIMEY SESSION

Newport Old Timey Sessions for 2021 started with a very successful session on Monday 22 February which was attended by 19 people. Despite the current government rules enforcing facemasks and limiting singing, a great time was had by all.

Minor hiccups have occurred, with a miscommunication re timetabling resulting in the Old Timey Session clashing with the Newport Bush Orchestra every second session. However, this is being addressed and a rescheduling of the Old Timey Session to the 3rd Monday of the month should resolve this issue.

The Old Timey Session has applied to the committee to run an informal acoustic session at the 2021 Newport Folk Festival. The idea was floated to the group at the first meeting of the year and met with enthusiasm.

Bruce and Noel thank all those who attend the Newport Old Timey Session and we look forward to consolidating the work started in 2019.

**Bruce Williams & Noel Landry**





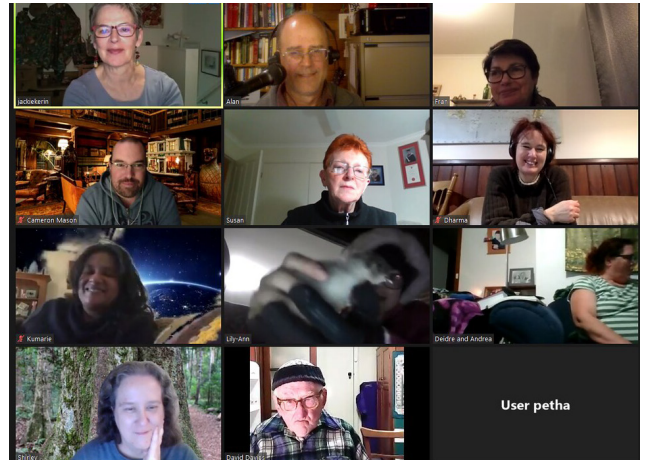
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## NEWPORT STORYTELLERS

The aim of the storytelling gatherings is create an open-hearted and inclusive space for people who want to learn to craft true tales, traditional stories, tall tales, yarns and stories for children; heart to heart and without notes. We also welcome musicians wanting assistance and practice with their patten and we love a song with a story.

### PUBLIC PROFILE

- We operate a blog to which interested people can subscribe.
- A Facebook Page
- A google email group
- We have a general page and a Podcast page on the NFFC website.



2020: Initially a little skeptical about switching to Zoom (in the light of COVID 19), we unexpectedly discovered a new realm of possibilities as people joined us from around Australia, the UK and Canada. After a slow start, and as people gained confidence, our numbers grew and towards the end of the 2020, we regularly attracted between 15-18 attendees, including listeners. Our participants ranged in age from 8 – 80+ years; we enjoyed stories from tellers with varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds including Aboriginal, LGBTQ and Tamil.

PODCAST: With the support of a Hobsons Bay City Council Quick Response Grant, a team of three set themselves the task of creating six episodes of stories and music with content gleaned from our audio archives and some special items recorded in home studios. The bulk of the planning took place during the strictest lockdown period and gave many a creative outlet. This project showcased (at last count) 12 storytellers, 9 NFFC musicians, the Community Choir and the Bush Orchestra.

The team: Matt McArthur, Alan Davies and Jackie Kerin.

2021: We have consulted with participants via email, as to how they would like to see the gatherings continue next year with the following result:

- We will continue with virtual gatherings as well as face to face meetings
- We will present a small number of public performances
- We will explore possible partnership gatherings eg. regional or outer suburban libraries
- We will create a special recording session for future podcasting.

We are yet to decide how we will progress, but it will probably be:

- 50/50 virtual and live gatherings including partnerships
- Gatherings will take place in the Newport Community Hub.
- COVID permitting we may organize a live recording session of storytellers and musicians for future podcasts.
- We are entertaining the idea of applying for another grant to ensure the sustainability of the podcast.

We are respectful of our responsibility to the Club and our partners and will adhere to all guidelines and when in doubt seek advice.

We thank Alan Davies for his time and encouragement with all things technical, Steph Payne for valuable advice on hosting virtual sessions, all the storytellers and musicians who made stories happen throughout 2020 and of course the NFFC committee who keep the club wheels greased and turning.

**Jackie Kerin, Co-ordinator**

# Annual Report



## **NEWPORT STRINGS**

Newport Strings 2020 ... Newport Strings did one glorious performance at The Hub on 15th February in 2020. A selection of old favorites and two home grown piece before everything was sadly shut down by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some members have gone into musical hibernation for the year being 'essential workers' with little time to pick up their instruments, some have had a go a various online activities both at home and abroad and others have been exercising their musical grey matter by using the time to hone their composition skills. It will be interesting to see how the group re-boots after a year of forced isolation, in particularly to hear what scores may have been written for the group.

Planning is well under way for 2021 in the hope that regular COVID safe activities can start up again. As a group, Newport Strings will follow Victorian Health Department advice in regards the maximum number of people allowed to gather, masking requirements, social distancing, and proper hand hygiene. It has been discussed that we may ask players to play one to a stand instead of using desk stands ... this will be assessed at the time and will be dependent on the Victorian Health Department guidelines and any NFFC committee recommendations.

We are hoping that in 2021 we will be able to do at least 3 Saturday morning performances at The Hub and an application for the 2021 Newport Folk Festival has already been submitted.

### ***Warwick Dawson (cello)***

## **OPEN STAGE**

2020 was a challenging year for Newport Open Stage (NOS). Though we started off as usual at the Newport Mechanics Hall, COVID restrictions lead us to have our meetings on Zoom. This led to the modified format of one song (or piece) each followed by a second round for those wanting to perform again. Dharma Picking and Alan Davies again helped with MC'ing. "attendance" was more consistent, and we had two loyal participants from the UK, which would obviously not have happened in our regular face-to-face mode.

Even online, NOS continued to advance the Club's aims by providing a venue and encouragement for local performers (and some from further away). It also provided connection and musical camaraderie in trying times while physical venues were closed and performance opportunities limited.

In the coming year the team aims to return to the Mechanics Hall, COVID permitting, with the option to return to Zoom if necessary.

### ***Greg Jenkins***

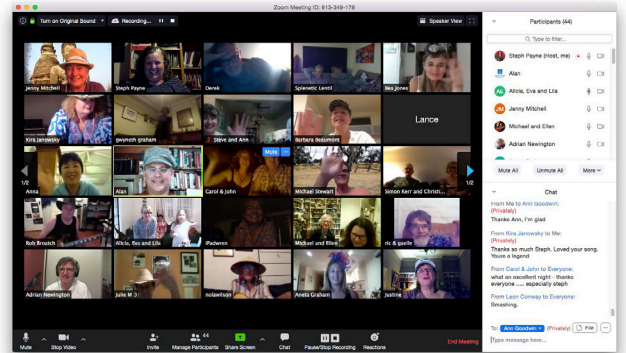


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## THEME NIGHTS

2020 was a very different year for the Live@Newport Theme Nights. The team (Andrea McGlashan, Steph Payne and I) were poised to run the “Getting There” night at the Newport Bowls Club when COVID restrictions made it impossible. We put that project on hold and organised the topically-titled “Songs of Freedom” on Zoom. This led to the modified format of one song (or piece) each followed by a second round for those wanting to perform again. A second, rather niche-interest, Zoom Theme Night arose from a chance conversation during an online Newport Open Stage – “Spanning the Years” - an evening of Steeleye Span covers. As well as Andrea, Rick Sidgwick and Alan Davies helped me to organise this one and Steve Martin gave technical assistance and livestreamed the event on Facebook..



In the coming Year Steph will be reducing her level of involvement (thanks for all your good work!) Andrea and I will continue organising and Dharma Picking has offered to join the team – welcome, Dharma!

Our plan is to finally run the “Getting There” night at the Bowls Club early in the year and hold at least one other one later in the year.

### **Greg Jenkins**

## TUES BLUES

What we had hoped to achieve in 2020 and what we did achieve, are very different things.

We had aimed for a weekend developmental retreat, at least one if not 2 major ‘shows’, and participation in the Newport Festival as well as a few other performances.

Ha ha ha! Everything was of course cancelled.

However, in true trailblazing fashion, I think Tues Blues may have been the first to move over to the better-than-nothing Zoom option. Despite the inability to jam together, we still pulled regular participants of 15 - 20, including new country & International cousins (UK, NZ, Sri Lanka) and maintained our fortnightly presence, thanks to our Tech team of Shameema, Gavin, Garry and Adrian.

What 2021 hold is still uncertain. We hope to resurrect our 2020 goals.

We are currently operating out of the Bowls Club due to the Hub being unable to accommodate us for 3 months. Time will tell whether we stay there or move back. The jury is out at the moment.

I am hoping to lead a one day developmental workshop soon, and we are awaiting confirmation as to whether we have secured a gig at the Newport Festival - the group badly needs this to give us something to work towards & get us back fighting form.

We are tentatively pencilling in a Speakeasy-style gig for the end of the year.

But watch this space!

### **Gaelle Horsley**



# Annual Report

## **NEWPORT LAKES BUSH DANCE - SUNDAY 15 MARCH 2020**

This year as the third Sunday in March drew closer, the possibility of a shutdown due to the Corona-virus pandemic threatened to derail our Bush Dance, but luckily we were able to go ahead and run what turned out to be the last 'live' club event for some time in 2020 – two days later a special club committee meeting unanimously voted to put all club activities on hold until further notice.

The 2020 Newport Lakes Bush Dance was organised once more by NFFC secretary Rick Sidgwick, assisted by several other club members, and was again a pleasant afternoon's entertainment in the park. We stuck with the abbreviated program we trialled last year which worked well – commencing at 3.00pm and finishing up at 5.30pm. The dance band – Newport Bush Orchestra – played 30 minute brackets at 3pm, 4pm and 5pm, while musicians and singers from Newport Lakes Primary School led by Ellen Morabito entertained us at 3.30pm - unfortunately Laura Sheridan's Strings West group withdrew in the week before the event so a late program change was made.

This year's MC was club stalwart Dharma Picking who did a cracking job – and also stepped in at short notice and presented a 30 minute bracket of songs to entertain us all – and give the orchestra a break to catch their breath and have a cuppa. Neil Jolly again expertly called the dances and 'Captain' Dave Isom was at the helm of the Newport Bush Orchestra, which consisted of a dozen or so seasoned players on the day. Again the weather was on our side – warm without being too hot - which made for another great afternoon in the park.

Probably due in part to the withdrawal of the Strings West performers crowd numbers were down a little on previous years however, about 150 people came along with rugs and picnic baskets and enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon's entertainment in our wonderful natural local environment that is Newport Lakes Park. Each time the orchestra started up lots of people large and small jumped up and joined in the dancing and had a great time. Our soundman Clive Bourne was assisted by Alan Davies with the transporting and set-up of the PA gear and as always they did a fabulous job.

Sue Davies again ran a children's activity incorporating natural and organic 'found' objects from around the park - which the children stitched onto pieces of hessian producing interesting and environmentally friendly works of art.

Thanks to all the musicians and teachers for all their rehearsing and wonderful playing on the day and a special thank-you to Dr Mary Burbidge for being our First Aid Officer once again. Thanks to committee member Suzie Pearce for her help in purchasing refreshments for the musician's green room – and thanks also to Alan Davies for setting up a hand sanitising station at the first aid tent.

Newport Fiddle & Folk Club also thanks Hobsons Bay City Council for their continuing financial sponsorship of this popular family event.

***Rick Sidgwick, Secretary – Newport Fiddle & Folk Club Inc.***



# Annual Report



## NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL

2020 was set for a big Festival. The program was finalised in February (it was a fantastic program!) and we had a 14 person committee to run the show. Then C19 put an end to all of the marvellous plans. It was then decided to create a virtual festival (live on Facebook) with a cut down program (5 acts on both the Saturday and Sunday of the festival weekend -27 & 28 June). Sue Davies, Aneta Graham and Michael Stewart took on the task of producing the event with the assistance of other club members. The program was created by selecting some of the professional musicians from the original program who would be able to perform together given the restrictions. The process of staging the event was more challenging than anticipated. However it was enjoyable and involved learning a range of new skills. Also it was a valuable exercise, and we were able to measure the engagement levels through the facebook stats (two acts attracted over 4000 hits). Many thanks to the Hobsons Bay City Council who sponsored and supported the event from start to finish.

Let's hope that we are able to put on an actual festival in 2021!

*Michael Stewart*

2.00PM  
KERRYN FIELDS

3.00PM  
GREAT AUNT

4.00PM  
HANNAH ACFIELD

**SATURDAY 27 JUNE**

7.00PM  
MATT GLASS

8.00PM  
MONTGOMERY CHURCH

**NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL**  
LISTEN LIVE from your LOUNGE

## CAROLS AT THE SUBSTATION

The Club was not able to present Carols at the Substation in 2020 due to COVID Restrictions. We look forward to Carols at the Substation returning to Newport in 2021.

*Michael Stewart*

# Annual Report

## COMMITTEE

Many thanks to the committee of the club for their hard work during 2020. We met each month on Zoom (actually it worked really well) and we able to manage the business of the club without too much in the way of challenges. Thanks to each of the committee members:

Alan Davies – Vice President

Rick Sidgwick – Secretary

Neil Brydges – Treasurer

### *Ordinary Members*

Alison Dew

Suzie Pearce

Greg Jenkins

Kerry Duke

We have a vibrant, successful and sustainable organisation and on behalf of our members I would like to formally acknowledge your time and efforts in maintaining the club during the last 12 months.

I look forward to working with the new committee in 2021 and to continue to develop our core activities as well as to explore that will contribute to the aims of the club.

## MEMBERSHIP

At the time this report was compiled, the Newport Fiddle & Folk Club held 183 memberships. This is 43 memberships up from last year. This is a key indicator of the continued growth of the club over the last 12 months and an incredible tangible indication of the support towards the club during COVID-19

There are 3 types of memberships.

Type	Memberships	Members
Single	83	83
Family	98	196
Organisation	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>281</b>

# Annual Report

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Websites

Visitation to the club website was less than usual this year – just over 5,500 visits.

The most popular pages were:

- Choir resources (used by choir members to download music)
- Choir (general public information about the choir)
- Events
- Celtic Session
- Membership
- Newport Bush Orchestra
- Festival
- Performers

Visitation to the Festival website was also well down this year (around 2,750 visits). This is hardly surprising as most of the traffic in a normal year happens over the Festival weekend as people search the program and associated information.

### Facebook

The club's Facebook page has over 650 likes. Popular posts over the year included local news about the redevelopment of Paine Reserve and the Scout Hall, posts about our Online Theme Night in March and a video from the Newport Bush Orchestra.

The Newport Folk Festival Facebook page has 1,655 likes. Since we had a much smaller festival this year there were not as many posts as usual, but posts promoting festival performers were still popular, especially Jordan Brodie, Austral and Robert K Champion.

### Club News email newsletter

The club's newsletter goes out to almost 600 subscribers every month. The open rate has risen to 45%, a big increase over 35% in 2019.



## Newport Fiddle & Folk Club

@newportffc · Community Organization

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# Annual Report

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Club finished the year in a sound financial position with available funds (after known commitments) of just over \$22,700 between the general and festival accounts – an increase of \$963 from last year. However, like last year much of the available funds is earmarked for our commitments to run the festival, our regular activities, new initiatives, and a buffer for a “rainy day”.

Over the last year the folk club community supported the Club by renewing memberships or joining for the first time. We also allowed people to make donations to the Club and thank the people who did.

While COVID-19 meant we could not run our regular activities on a face-to-face basis the Club has ongoing commitments in terms of insurance, registration, the website, and other administration costs. The support of the Club’s friends and members meant we did not need to draw on the “rainy day” buffer or the funds earmarked for our regular activities and new initiatives when they could recommence in person.

As most of our activities were conducted online without charge, or not at all in 2020, we have not broken out the net cash inflows / outflows of each activity this year as that would be misleading (or irrelevant). For the Club as a whole (including the Festival) the net cash inflow over the year was \$963.

More detailed financial reports are prepared for submission to Victorian Consumer Affairs. Please contact me with any queries.

***Neil Brydges, Treasurer***



# Annual Report

## NEWPORT FIDDLE & FOLK CLUB 2021

The last 12 months have presented the club with significant challenges. We have had to abandon some of the events and activities that we planned this time 12 months ago. However this report illustrates the ways that we have been able to come together despite the restrictions imposed due to COVID. This has been due to the energy, enthusiasm of the leaders, and leadership groups, that continue to drive the activities of the club. Many thanks to all of those people who have continued to 'make things happen' in 2020. We are all the beneficiaries of their hard work. Thank you.

The club has now been making music, telling stories and building friendships for 16 years. The club remains vibrant through continuing to do what we do – with 12 activities ranging (alphabetically) from Beginner Jam to Tues Blues, as well as our major events throughout the year. The Newport Old Timey Session kicked off in 2020 and has rebooted in 2021 after their COVID Break, and this year has already seen the emergence of another new group – Newport Drummers! We currently have three grants in the pipeline that will be the catalyst for new initiatives of the club. These grants will provide the funding for following three initiatives:

**A Songwriters Workshop:** This is a repeat of a very successful songwriting process that we ran in 2016. It is a process that spans 4 months, and will lead to the songwriters performing their polished gems at our Festival in June.

**A Storytellers Podcast:** This Podcast will follow on from the Podcast series produced (and published) in 2020 under lockdown. All the preparation for the Podcast will be completed in the first half of the year, and the Podcast will be recorded LIVE at our festival in June.

**A Desktop Audio Workstation:** This grant will fund the purchase of 3 computers that will be loaded with recording software, and include the hardware (mikes, stands, leads) that will enable the club to have three mobile recording studios. Importantly the grant incorporates funding for training in the software so that our members will develop skills in recording and sound engineering.

I am really pleased that we have leaders in the club who have the vision to devise these projects, and the energy to write the grants and implement them. They illustrate the creativity that drives the club, and the leadership that is required to make things happen.

2021 will be different from 2020, and maybe quite different from the other years before that. There are plenty of challenges that we all face in our lives and no doubt there will be others that we don't even know about yet. Within this changing and challenging world I hope that the Newport Fiddle & Folk Club continues to provide us all with a sense of connection, community and a place for creative expression. What we do is unique, and as long as we value this, and appreciate the efforts of the many people who 'make it happen', I am confident that the club will continue to prosper for some years ahead.

I look forward to seeing you on the next step of the path ahead.



**Michael Stewart**  
**Club President**  
**2005 - 2020**



**NEWPORT**  
FIDDLE & FOLK CLUB

# Club History and Timeline

- 2004 **First:** Monthly Meeting
- 2005 **First:** Committee Formed  
**First:** The Tank
- 2006 **First:** Newport Lakes Bush Dance  
Music on Mason  
Year 1 Newport Bush Orchestra
- 2007 **First:** 'Music at Breizoz'
- 2008 **First:** Newport Folk Festival
- 2009 **First:** Carols at The Substation  
Workshop Series  
Newport Community Choir  
Newport Strings  
NFFC Incorporated
- 2010 **First:** Open Stage  
Incredibly Supportive Songwriting Group formed
- 2011 **First:** Celtic Session (Bowls Club)  
Newport Bush Orchestra plays at the National Folk Festival
- 2012 Breizoz transforms to 'Live@Newport'
- 2014 **10 year Celebration of NFFC**
- 2015 **First:** Tues Blues
- 2016 **First:** Family Jam  
**10 years: Newport Bush Orchestra**
- 2018 **10 years: Newport Community Choir**  
Music on Mason – revived!
- 2020 **First:** Newport Old Timey Session  
**COVID COMES - NFFC GOES Zoom!**  
**Established Groups/Sessions:**  
Beginner Jam, Newport Bush Orchestra, Celtic Session, Newport Community Choir,  
Newport Storytellers, Newport Strings, Tues Blues  
**Regular Activities:**  
Club Night, Theme Night, Newport Lakes Bush Dance,  
Newport Folk Festival (online 2020), Open Stage  
(Carols at The Substation – COVID Break)  
**Initiatives for 2021:**  
Newport Drummers, Redesign of Website, Songwriting Program,  
Desktop Audio Workshop Project



## NEWPORT FIDDLE & FOLK CLUB

### 2004 - 2020

- Provide a venue for those interested in locally produced music
- Provide opportunities for amateur musicians to get together, play and learn from each other with an emphasis on, but not restricted to, folk music,
- Provide opportunities for non-musicians to come enjoy and participate in music through listening, singing, and dancing.
- Provide Opportunities that Challenge our Members to Refine and Develop their Performance and Presentation Skills
- Provide opportunities for our members to contribute to the organisation and running of folk club activities
- The Club has a role to play in the development of young and older musicians through workshops and other planned musical gatherings.
- The NFFC aims to develop links with sponsors of the Arts to source funding for professional musicians who will be able to provide musical both leadership and inspiration for developing musicians.

#### MEMBER DRIVEN ORGANISATION:

#### NFFC OUTCOMES

#### 1—5 YEAR PLAN?

	NFFC OUTCOMES	1—5 YEAR PLAN?
<b>Income</b>	• Strong Sense of Community	• Marketing of What We Do
• Subscriptions	• Insurance	• Provide Support for New Ventures
• Grants	• Logos & Banners	• Develop and Strengthen Our Image
• Sponsorship	• Gear—Audio ++	• - Web Redesign—Imaging of Groups
• Tickets	• Web Redesign	• Create New Projects—eg Songwriting,
• Current: NFFC	• Hire Rooms	• Develop and Support Members and Leaders
• Current: Festival	• Hire Gear & Skills	• Collaborate with other Organisations

#### THE CLUB ACTIVITIES, EVENTS AND PROCESSES

SESSIONS and GROUPS	THE FESTIVAL	NFFC COMMITTEE
Beginner Jam	Newport Old Timey Session	The Meeting of the Clan!
Celtic Session	Newport Storytellers	Festival Committee
Club Night	Newport Strings	Report to NFFC C'ee
Newport Bush Orchestra	Open Stage	Newport Lakes Bush Dance
Newport Community Choir	Theme Nights	Carols at the Substation
		Annual General Meeting
	<b>EVENTS</b>	Remain Accountable
		Adhere to our Aims
		Support Members
		Provide Initiative

**PARTNERS:** HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL—NEWPORT TRADERS ASSOCIATION—NEWPORT BOWLS—SUBSTATION—NEWPORT RSL—THE HUB—NEWPORT SCOUTS—OUTLETS