

PRESIDENT'S REPORT AGM 17 AUGUST 2021

Hello everybody and welcome to the 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Nirkoda Israeli Folk Dance Club – sadly, once again on Zoom. Living as we are through lockdown number 6 and unable to meet or dance in person, it is completely understandable that we find ourselves pre-occupied with all the things we can't do and the bleak prospect of not getting them back in the immediate future.

Despite the doom and gloom, I am still really happy to report that there were some bright spots in the past year, the most important being finding ourselves a new home. I hope you will all agree that the St James Hall has been a great choice for the Club. The flexibility of two rooms, particularly with social distancing in mind, has been enormously valuable. The St James staff have been wonderful to deal with - organized, accessible and communicative. I have to say that the Club, as tenants, are pretty good too. We don't just pay our rent on time but have contributed to making a very good venue even more comfortable by sharing with the church the cost to install blinds in the main room.

You will also have seen recently the news about Denise Borghi's successful completion of Tel Aviv University's first international course for Israeli dance teachers. Formal accreditation of one of the Club's senior teachers is a clear benefit to the Club, not just for us personally at a class level but as an external and unbiased statement about the quality of the teaching that Nirkoda offers. So the Committee felt it was entirely appropriate to offer a financial contribution to Denise's costs. She was the one getting up at 4 in the morning - we just gave her a small cheque. I'd like to formally congratulate her at this time and thank her for her commitment to teaching in general.

Jack, our treasurer, will shortly present the Club's Financial Report but I'd like to take this opportunity while speaking about the blinds and Denise's training, to thank the membership for their financial support to the Club during the last year when normal revenue was so often non-existent. Its because of that generosity that we've been able to do these things and I just want to say again how grateful we are and that you should know that, in spite of the havoc wreaked by the pandemic, that the Club can comfortably proceed into 2022.

So the major disappointment at the moment is not being able to enjoy our new facilities. Club's overseas are beginning to function normally by requiring vaccination certificates and we, along with the other Melbourne groups, will inevitably be introducing similar requirements with a view to protecting each other and the wider Victorian community. We will do this as we have done throughout the past year, within government rules and guidelines. Once vaccination is widespread and the pandemic under control, we might not only have classes that run regularly but eventually we may also get to have international choreographers and camps and workshops as in the past. Whenever this happens, we have the resources at the moment to fully participate.

Otherwise, not much has changed. The clubs administration remains intact and active - Margaret still runs the door and monitors covid check ins - thank you Margaret. Our teachers are consistently as good as ever - thank you Judi, Denise, Chris, Mary, Rosie and Sharon.

Covid has meant that some of the talents of our committee have not been able to be exploited as well as in other years but I thank them for their constant availability and look forward to the time we can work them hard again.

I particularly want to thank Denise Setton, our Secretary and Jack our treasurer for not only the work they do but always having Nirkoda issues as a priority. For a long time now, all these people have worked together like a well oiled machine and I hope you'll all agree by voting to keep them in their positions later in this meeting.

I ended my report in 2020 by noting that there'd been a significant drop in infections by the end of September giving us some optimism that the next AGM would be in person. Sadly that hasn't happened but we can again hope that we are all on the way to being fully vaccinated and maybe next year we can do this in person.