

# **VFMC AGM 2025**

## **President's Report**

I am pleased to present this report at the end of my second term as VFMC President. The year has been an active and productive one with a number of achievements, thanks to a hard working committee and members contributing to many facets of the Club's operation.

A significant change was to move our monthly concerts from the Uniting Church Hall in Ringwood, to the Ringwood East Senior Citizens Hall from July 2024. This meant all our regular functions were held at the same venue and yielded significant financial benefit from reduced hall rental for sessions and concerts.

Our various regular events have, overall been well attended although in recent months, both concerts and dances have seen attendances fall somewhat. We are not sure why this has occurred and could be part of a seasonal trend we have seen in previous years. Never the less, the committee is mindful that we should explore new ways to publicise activities and some possibilities are being considered, including promoting via local FM radio stations.

Again this year, we are saddened by the passing one member and two past members. Mary Fraser, a popular and active club and Billabong Band member passed away last September. Life Member Graeme Higman and former member Clem Parkinson both died in May 2025. Our condolences go to the families of these fondly remembered members.

Thanks largely to Colin McLaren, we have continued to document various procedures and processes as part of our Club Rules. We have recently approved a process for reimbursing Billabong Band players for out of pocket expenses in attending performances and practices. Other aspects such as for life membership award guidelines and insurance are also being reviewed.

There has been considerable discussion about sound amplification at our concerts. This has arisen from some concert attendees mentioning difficulty in hearing performers. There are various views within the committee with some favouring preserving an 'acoustic feel' for our concerts and minimising technical set up complexity. Others favour a greater level of sound reinforcement without being excessive as many other venues tend to be. I hope the incoming committee will keep this matter under review.

Another welcome development is a decision to embark on the production of a new VFMC music book, along the lines of the much loved Joy Durst. Bill Buttler is leading this project with active support from other committee members. The book will feature mainly music and songs written by past and current VFMC members.

Thanks are also due to Bill Buttler and Trevor Voake who recently made the journey to Castlemaine to make a video of folk legend Dave De Hugard. This stemmed

from an approach a couple of years ago from Warren Fahey to record Dave's music and concertina playing for posterity.

I would like to conclude by thanking Secretary Peter Kernebone and Treasurer Don Fraser for their tireless work in their respective roles. I also thank the committee members who manage the running of our dances, concerts, sessions, publication of newsletter, Billabong Band, membership management, website support and many other important activities.

Michael Hassett  
VFMC President 2024-25