



Swing Riot Dunedin Incorporated
Annual Report April 2025 – March 2026

“Looking within and changing for today and tomorrow”

Acknowledgements

I would be remiss to not first acknowledge, not just the knowledge, but the time and efforts (and of course financial contributions and support) of each and every person who contributed to the last year of classes, events, and general dancing mood, for our Swing Riot community. However listing each and every person would be a near impossible job, even for the outstanding team behind Swing Riot Dunedin. So please thank yourself on our behalf knowing that without people, we are nothing!

As is tradition, I wish to specifically thank this year’s outgoing Executive Committee members: Emma Christie (Secretary) and Kieran Ford (Small Events) who have both, in different ways, helped ensure we met our responsibilities as a Society, and also helped us to remember what we want to do – primarily, DANCE, but also to grow the community and to share the love of swing dance as best we know how.

Now, to address the pink elephant in the room...

A New Look

With the goal being to more accurately reflect who we are and what we want to be moving forward as Swing Riot Dunedin, we have settled on a new primary logo design. The new look being bold, jovial, including Ōtepoti, and ditching the apparent male+female dance pair as iconography were easy choices towards making our logo more authentic, but also to remind us of some of our ideals. We hope it will serve us for some time in communicating to those yet to experience Swing Riot Dunedin first hand, what they can expect.

On The Teaching Front

This year there were a few significant changes to our weekly dance classes. In no particular order, October 2025 saw weekly Tuesday evening Level 1 and Level 2 Lindy Hop classes move from being held at Knox Church’s Stuart Hall, to a venue we came to value greatly with last year’s Dunedin Swing Festival – The North East Valley Bowling Club. Additionally, in October we happily introduced, and are looking to grow, weekly Thursday evening Balboa and Blues classes taught by Kieran and Sibby – with classes having been running at St. Thomas’s (sic) Hall in Pine Hill. And monumentally, in November we welcomed a new teacher to our team, Hannah Daniell [pause for applause], whose enthusiasm and self-expression really embody swing dance so well, that we’re thankful to have her in a position to play an even greater part in sharing the joy of dance.

Further Learnings

We are all continuously learning and improving with each dance, but this year saw some outstanding

opportunities presented. Auckland Blues continued offering their series of “Sunday Seminars”, accessible to our scene through online webinars, on the topics of Blues Dance lineage, on the cultural context of leading and following, on the feeling of burnout, and more. Swing Riot has been happy to both contribute to and learn from others with integral knowledge worth sharing. Also in October 2025 we hosted a set of fantastic Saturday afternoon dance workshops taught by former Swing Riot teacher Jethro Hardinge on variations on classic shapes and the Social Big Apple.

The Dunedin Swing Festival 2025



Hosting the huge 10th Anniversary of the Dunedin Swing Festival in 2024 didn't mean 2025 was any less special or amazing. The powerhouse team that is the Dunedin Swing Festival Committee put together an stunning long weekend from Thursday 29th May – Monday 2nd June with joyous social dancing and social activities, inspiring workshops taught by legendary teachers John and Julia Wharington, Jessie Gordon, Evan Hughes, Ramona Staffeld, and Miya Miyazaki, plus fantastic bands sparking up the dancefloor at some of Ōtepoti's best spots. The Dunedin Swing Festival always brings an incredible array of dancers, musicians and venues together in ways hardly seen in Dunedin. Hats off to those that worked tirelessly and tirelessly very very very very very hard to make the event possible.

On that note, plans for a re-imagined festival are currently underway. While it's entirely *possible* to run the same successful event very similarly year to year, the Festival Committee and Executive Committee are envisioning how the festival could or should run into the future – with considerations paid to what our community here in Ōtepoti would like, but also our wider community here in the South Island and in Aotearoa New Zealand as a whole. As such many will be aware that this year, Swingtown Rebels in Ōtautahi Christchurch ran the 2026 Christchurch Swing Festival in early February which saw many of our local scene travelling up in support. Watch this space in 2027!

Finally, A Look Towards Further Growth

Not running a Dunedin Swing Festival for 2026 hardly means a plan to scale down or to not look for

all the opportunities for growing the scene and sharing the dance that we can be a part of. The past year saw Swing Riot return to perform publicly at the 2026 South Dunedin Street Festival, at International Dance Day 2025 (including running a beginner swing dance class at Te Whare o Rukutia), and summer social dancing on the St. Clair Esplanade (in fair weather). Our new logo design will see us into the future as we continue promoting our activities. Looking to grow weekly Balboa and Blues classes and dance opportunities for those styles is a high priority for the year. And naturally new Executive Committee members [rising inflection] will help plot the course ahead.

Let's get on to that!

I think there was something else I was meant to do... [knowing look at Kieran].

Your Executive Committee

This year your Committee were:

Jon Bakos (Chair), Anna Bryan (Teaching), Emma Christie (Secretary) Sibby Dillon (Large Events), Kieran Ford (Small Events), Taryn Ormsby (Communications & Marketing), Lorraine Johnston (Treasurer).

Ngā mihi nui

Jon

Chair 2025-26