



*'Community Service and Fellowship through Song'*

**NEW MEMBER WELCOME & INTRODUCTORY NOTES**  
(February 2018)



**‘Community service and fellowship through song’**

## **Welcome to the Choir**

Dear Friend,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Australian Rugby Choir (ARC).

The Choir is in its 23rd year, has some 80 members and when we are not ‘on leave’, perform at nearly a gig a week, including trips away from Canberra.

These notes provide a brief overview of the choir and how it operates. Full details of our uniform, office-holders (and other key people), costs to members along with our ‘custom and practice’ and so on, can be found on our web site:

[www.rugbychoir.org.au](http://www.rugbychoir.org.au). The website is the primary source of information for members about forthcoming gigs and is home to our membership database.

We have defined our mission as ‘*community service and fellowship through song*’ and work hard to live up to this. This means giving our time and talents to a range of good causes, while nurturing the friendships and mutual support that the choir provides to its members.

Finding your feet in a large new group can be a challenge. I hope these notes will help and that your experience with the ARC will be long and satisfying.

I, and all other members of the choir, are here to help if you need it.

Yours in song,

Bob Nield  
President

## **The Australian Rugby Choir – An Overview**

The Australian Rugby Choir (ARC) Inc. is an independent, community-based, non-audition, four-part male-voice choir. It was formed in 1996 at the invitation of the ACT Rugby Union to support the inaugural ACT Brumbies. Its first performance was at Bruce Stadium Canberra in March 1996 and it has since sung at every Brumbies home match, at a number of “away” games and at two Wallabies test matches in Sydney.

A core ARC activity is to sing at rugby matches and the choir contracts annually with the ACT Rugby Union to perform at Brumbies matches. While the rugby identity is important (and keeps us busy during the Super 15 Competition) the ARC has taken on a much broader role and now performs weekly (on average) throughout the year. Our ‘gigs’ have included high-profile concerts, television performances, weddings and funerals, conferences, conventions and citizenship ceremonies, fund-raising events and visits to Nursing Homes.

We want to be recognized as a smart, musically competent and entertaining choir which is able to add lustre to important occasions. We also want to be entertaining (and occasionally inspiring!), to support good causes and to have a bloody good time in the process.

Members come from a wide variety of backgrounds but share the enjoyment of singing along with the fellowship that comes with belonging to the choir.

The choir performs regularly at the Australian War Memorial (AWM) where it sings for major ceremonies and plaque dedications. Each year we also perform at a number of venues outside Canberra. These have included Goulburn, Cootamundra, Young, Griffith, Boorowa, Wagga Wagga, Batemans Bay, Parkes, Orange and Griffith. In 2014 the choir was the local organizing body for the 400+ voice “Male Choirs Association of Australia” Festival held in Canberra in November and in 2017 with over 300+ members of the MCAA in Wollongong.

In 2005 & 2007 the choir performed at the Sydney Opera House and with the British Lions Choir and in 2013 was the only other choir invited to perform with the Lions Choir at the Sydney Town Hall. Large contingents of the choir have also performed with Bryn Terfel in New York’s Carnegie Hall (in 2008) and in a combined Oceania choir as part of the Welsh Choir of the World in London as a precursor to the 2012 Olympic Games.

Through our previous Musical Directors, Andrea Clifford and Lucy Bermingham, and continued with our current MD, the choir has developed a relationship with the RMC Band with whom we now sing at AWM ceremonies and “in-Concert” at “Music at Midday”. We have also performed “on-the-road” with the Band at concerts in Narooma and Batemans Bay.

## **Professional Staff**

The ARC appoints a **Musical Director (MD)** and this is **Rachel Campbell**. Rachel holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of New England, and has extensive experience leading choirs of excellence in both public and private schools and the community. She is on staff with the Woden Valley Youth Choir, and is a specialist choral director and adviser to the ACT Department of Education through the 'Step into the Limelight' program, where she conducts a children's chorus of 400. She has been invited to bring choirs to the ANCA Choralfest where she was also Program Manager, and the prestigious Festival of Voices in Tasmania. Happily, she is also a great fan of the Brumbies and enjoys working with this fine ensemble in all their musical endeavours.

The MD has full authority, under the ARC Committee, in all musical aspects of rehearsals and performances and is an *ex officio* member of the committee.

**Carmilo Gonzalez** is an **Assistant Musical Director** having joined us during 2015, as is **Emily Leong** who joined us in 2017. Their details can be found on the web page.

**Karen Da Silva** is the ARC's **Principal Accompanist**. **Karen** has accompanied the ARC since 2005 playing for rehearsals, rugby games and concerts, both locally and interstate. Karen was born and raised in Canberra but has spent considerable periods interstate and overseas pursuing personal and professional development activities. In 2014 Karen was selected as the Principal Accompanist for the Male Choirs Association of Australia Festival in Canberra.

## **Choir Membership**

The Choir has around 80 members and attendance at practices generally exceeds 50. It is a community-based and therefore a "non-audition" choir. Many of its performances are at high-profile functions for which it is often paid performance fees. The ARC therefore strives to achieve the simple enjoyment of singing while maintaining high standards of performance and appearance. Our reputation, self esteem, enjoyment and future gigs depend on how we sound, look and behave when on stage and when wearing our uniform in public. Accordingly, members are expected to wear the specified uniform at all performances and be able to both "sing in tune" and to learn and perform their voice-part and lyrics.

Choir policy is to maintain an active membership with members attending rehearsals regularly and participating in the majority of performances. Members are particularly encouraged to perform in gigs in support of our major sponsors: *Brumbies Rugby*, the *AWM* and *Beyond Bank Australia*.

A Recruitment Drive is conducted early in each year (usually in February) but new members are always welcome and current members are encouraged to actively recruit them. The ARC website contains membership application forms and key contact details. We invite potential new members to “try us out” by attending up to three rehearsals before being asked to join.

Given its dynamic repertoire and its strong emphasis on quality, four-part singing, it is not feasible for the ARC to have casual and/or “seasonal” members.

Membership records are kept and used for administration and to record attendance at practices.

### **Repertoire and songbooks**

Each year the repertoire of the choir is decided by a Repertoire Committee and with input from members. The final repertoire choice rests with the MD and the Committee and the selection of pieces depends on a range of issues including copyright, suitability for ‘part’ singing, audience appreciation etc.. When music is approved members are provided with copies of music. Members are required to comply with the ARC’s Copyright policy in maintaining, using and if necessary, returning all copies of music. A small selection of current songs can be viewed here

[www.rugbychoir.org.au/songs.html](http://www.rugbychoir.org.au/songs.html)

### **Communication**

The weekly “email” newsletter “**The Warble**” is the normal vehicle for out-of-practice communication with members. The Warble provides details of committee resolutions, forthcoming gigs, practice venue arrangements, member news and information on the happenings of other choirs. It is usually issued on Tuesday evenings.

Members without internet access should therefore obtain ARC information updates by forming a “buddy relationship” with an ARC member who has email access and who is prepared to regularly pass on current news.

The ARC website ([www.rugbychoir.org.au](http://www.rugbychoir.org.au)) also includes the ARC electronic “calendar” which provides details of forthcoming events along with news, photographs, the choir repertoire, and other key information (including these Policies and Procedures). The Calendar is the definitive source of gig detail and specifies detail such as location, timing, repertoire to be performed and uniform to be worn. (Members who use an electronic calendar can connect direct to the choir’s calendar.)

### **ARC Uniform**

Full details of the ARC uniform are set out in Attachment 2. The uniform to be worn at each gig is normally specified in both the “Warble” and the Website “Calendar”. Members are required to wear the specified uniform for each performance and failure to wear that uniform may preclude their participation in that performance.

## **Practice Night Arrangements**

Practice is normally held on Thursday at the Curtin Primary School in Theodore Street, Curtin between 7.30 pm and 9.30 pm. Practice includes a 15 minute (half-time) break. Members are expected to have paid their fee before 7.30 so that practice can start on time!

## **Getting your Music**

Newcomers who are “giving it a go” will be “paired” with a “mentor” in their voice-group. The mentor will share his music with the newcomer, give him an idea of how it is sung and generally “show them the ropes”. When a new member has formally joined the choir they should notify the Keepers of the Music and they will be then provided with their own music.

## **Participation at Gigs**

New members are:

- not expected to perform at major gigs until they are fully familiar with the repertoire to be performed;
- encouraged to perform at informal gigs (such as singing to the passing crowd at Brumbies games) where they may use a book provided they stand in the back row; and
- encouraged to participate at AWM gigs. (word sheets are provided).

## **Fees and other costs**

Choir members pay an annual membership fee of \$25 and a \$7 fee each time they attend practice. The major initial cost if you decide to join will be for the ARC uniform. Details of this can be found in Attachment 2.

Other occasional costs may include trips away, our annual dinner, our annual retreat and other activities such as choral workshops. A number of these activities may be subsidised by the choir, but there is usually a contribution by members.

## **Financial hardship**

We do not want costs to be a barrier to joining the ARC for anyone who is on a low income, or experiencing temporary financial difficulties. So in cases of financial hardship, the choir is prepared to consider the waiving of some costs or to offer subsidies. Any such request should be made known to the Treasurer or the President and will be treated in complete confidence.

{These “*New Member Welcome notes*” are an updated and abridged version of the Choir’s “*Policy and Procedures*” document which is available via the website and from the ARC Secretary. In any dispute as to correctness the Policy and Procedures document takes precedent.}

**ARC OFFICE-HOLDERS AND CONTACT DETAILS (2017-18)***[Contact details + email addresses are also provided on the Contact section of the ARC webpage]***Patron**

Lt Col (retired) Ian McLean AM, CSC

**Committee**

President	Bob Nield 6239 5106 or 0430 487 539
Vice President	Malcolm Pascoe 6260 3866 or 0450 096 757
Coordinator (Practice/Performance)	Malcolm Pascoe
Secretary & Public Officer	Keith Jones 6288 8242
Treasurer	Albert Orszaczky 6231 6198
Gig coordinator	Russell Grainger 6284 3265
Member Welfare	Chris Blackall 6161 4068 Mob: 0403 550 256
Other Committee members	Keith Brent 6253 2982 or 0402 356 253 Kit Vincent 6293 3694 or 0419 000 655 Frank Bergersen 6231 7753 or 0448 839 440

**Professional Staff**

Musical Director	Rachel Campbell
Assistant Musical Directors	Carmilo Gonzalez Emily Leong
Principal accompanist	Karen Da Silva

**Volunteer positions**

Door-keepers	Frank Bergersen Jim Castrission,
Uniform Officer	Tom Fitzgerald 6161 7608
Keepers of the Music	Tim Mulcahy, Paul Green
Webmaster	Stephen Wedd
Name badges	Frank Bergersen

ARC Web address:

[www.rugbychoir.org.au](http://www.rugbychoir.org.au)

## ARC UNIFORM ITEMS (NEW & SECOND HAND) WHERE TO PURCHASE

### 1. Uniform Items Available from the ARC Uniform Coordinator

(Tom Fitzgerald, Ph: 0406377903, Email: [thomasfitz74@gmail.com](mailto:thomasfitz74@gmail.com)) New

#### Items

# Music Satchel	\$25.00
# Ties	\$22.00
# Clancy Hat	\$50.00
# All Rounder Hat	\$30.00
# ARC Logo Pocket Insert	Free initial issue for new members (\$15 for additional logos)
# Blazer Buttons	Free

#### Secondhand Items (not always in stock )

#Tie	\$10.00
# Blue Chambray Shirt	\$20.00 (in stock)
# Polo Shirt	\$10.00
# Music Satchel	\$10.00
# Brumby Cap	Free
# Blazer	\$80.00
# Taupe Trousers	\$25.00 (in stock XX/L)

### 2. New Uniform Items Supplied by 'Workin Gear', 51 Kembla Street, Fyshwick (Ph: 6280 5885). Contact Kylie Foley.

# Blue Chambray Shirt \$65.00 (50454 Glowave) #  
Blue/white Polo Shirt \$29.00 (Bocini CP0673) plus an  
additional \$9.00 for ARC Logo on shirts.

**NB:** When ordering from 'Workin Gear' please use their 'order form' which you can get from the ARC Uniform Coordinator'.

### 3. New Uniform Items Supplied by Hip Pocket, 101 Hindmarsh Drv., Phillip.

**Ph: 62852115.** (Contacts: Andrew Crockett, Chris Donahue or Kel)

# Black Blazer (SCR-001) \$215.00

**NB:** ONLY 'Hip Pocket' sells the ARC Blazer

# Taupe (fawn) Trousers (Paul Mason) \$65.00

# Raincoats J124ML \$149.00

(Plus \$15 freight charge if order not in store stock)

Uniforms as at 10 Jan 2018