



'Community Service and Fellowship through Song'

NEW MEMBER WELCOME & INTRODUCTORY NOTES
(January 2019)



‘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. 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 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 at ceremonies and plaque dedications. Each year we perform at a number of venues outside Canberra. These have including Goulburn, Cootamundra, Young, Griffith, Boorowa, Wagga Wagga, Bateman’s Bay, Parkes and most recently 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 and in 2017 we assisted in the similar festival in Wollongong.

For many of the choir, the peak experience was to sing in the Sydney Opera House with the British Lions Choir in 2005 and 2007. In 2013 the ARC was the only other choir invited to perform with the Lions Choir at the Sydney Town Hall. The choir's achievements have also been recognised by invitations to perform in support of Aled Jones in the Canberra Theatre in 2008 and as a member of the Male Choirs Association of Australia (MCAA) at combined choir performances. MCAA festivals have been twice in Canberra, plus the Sydney Town Hall (2010), the Dallas Brooks Hall Melbourne (2012), and WIN stadium Wollongong (2017).

In May 2019 a group of the choir are performing in Cornwall UK.

Through our previous Musical Directors, Andrea Clifford and Lucy Bermingham, we developed a relationship with the RMC Band with whom we now sing at AWM ceremonies and “in-Concert” at “Music at Midday” in the Canberra Theatre.

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.

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. His details are available 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 currently has around 80 members and attendance at practices is generally close to 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 (March 7 2019) 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

All music (hard copy or electronic) issued to members remains the property of the Choir and members are required to comply with the ARC's Copyright policy.

Communication

The weekly "email" newsletter "**The Warble**" is the normal vehicle for out-of-practice communication with members. The Warble provides details of upcoming gigs, practice venue arrangements, member news. It is usually issued on Tuesday evenings.

The ARC website (www.rugbychoir.org.au) also includes the ARC electronic "calendar" which provides details of upcoming events along with news, photographs, the choir repertoire, and other key information. The Calendar is the definitive source of gig detail and specifies information such as location, timing, repertoire to be performed and uniform to be worn.

ARC Uniform

Full details of the ARC uniform are set out on the web page and sometimes with attachments in the link. <http://www.rugbychoir.org.au/membership.html>

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 (room to the far right of the main entrance) in Theodore Street, Curtin between 7.30 pm and 9.30 pm. Practice includes a 15 minute (half-time) break. Full details of our practice night arrangements and guidelines are set out on the web site.

Members pay attendance and other fees (such as Annual Membership fees) to the Door-keepers on their arrival at practice. If members arrive at practice after the Door-keepers have packed up, they are asked to place their attendance fee in the cash-box near the practice-room door and to “tick” their name in the attendance register.

New Members

Getting your ARC Songbook

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”.

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 music provided they stand in the rear rows; and
- encouraged to participate in all AWM gigs (where song words are provided).

Fees and other costs

Choir members pay an annual membership fee of \$25 and a \$7 fee each time they attend practice.

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.

ARC OFFICE-HOLDERS AND CONTACT DETAILS (2018-19)

[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 mob: 0430 487 539

Vice President Malcolm Pascoe 6260 3866, mob 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

Other Committee members
Keith Brent
Frank Bergersen
Steve Barry
Neil Fleming

Professional Staff

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

Volunteer positions

Door-keepers Various,
Uniform Officer Tom Fitzgerald 6161 7608
Keeper of the Music Paul Green
Webmaster Stephen Wedd/Ian Johnson

ARC Web address: www.rugbychoir.org.au