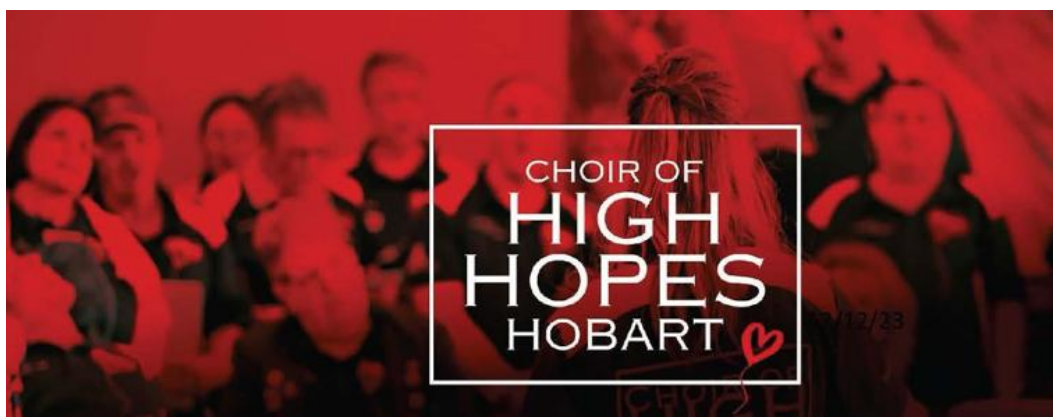


2024/25 Choir of High Hopes AGM: Chair report



I am pleased to present the Chair's Report for the Choir of High Hopes for the 2024/25 financial year. As the Choir enters its 18th year, our role within the wider community remains both meaningful and enduring. The contribution of our choristers, volunteers, and supporters continues to uphold the values on which the Choir was founded and reinforces the importance of our work in fostering connection and changing lives through the power of song.

Rehearsals

The commitment of our choristers has once again been central to the Choir's success. Attendance has been strong and consistent, with an average of 40 at weekly rehearsals and a peak of 45, ensuring excellent representation at performances throughout the year. Many are also supported by carers, whose assistance enables choristers to participate fully, and we deeply value their role in our shared success. Participants have embraced the Music Team's program and come together with real spirit and generosity as a community. Rehearsals have strengthened our repertoire and also deepened the joy and connection we share through singing. The camaraderie and energy our members bring are invaluable, and we thank them sincerely for their enthusiasm, loyalty, and contribution to the Choir.

The Music Team

This year saw our Music Team transition to a Co-Director Model expertly managed by existing Music Team members Andrew Short and Keiren Slicer. Together their leadership has been cohesive, creative and supportive. When times require, known musician, Oliver Gathercole, have also been stepping in. Our weekly rehearsals continue to offer our members an incredible musical program and performance opportunities with an increasing repertoire. We wish to thank Andrew and Kieran for the smooth continuation and for deliver an outstanding music program.

Accomplishments

Performances have remained a central achievement of the Choir throughout the year, with several notable highlights. The inaugural Sing with the Boss concert brought together prominent Hobart leaders, CEOs, managers, and business owners, who joined the Choir on stage, lending their voices and support. With eight community leaders participating, the event was a success and offered valuable insights for the planning of the 2025 concert. We wish to thank Rob Harrison (Hype TV) for generously filming promotional videos for this performance and Rob Rule, for providing equipment, testing and tagging and general support. A key focus for future years will be to further strengthen audience engagement and attendance this October.

Our annual Christmas Concert in the Mall, continues to be warmly received by the Hobart community and remains a cornerstone of our performance calendar. In addition, our participation in Hot August Jazz, Kingston Library's Music Month in June and other performances have become established traditions, reflecting the Choir's growing presence and recognition within the local community. Notably, being invited to sing at Scot's-Memorial Church 200-year celebration service was an honour for our Choir who participated and further cemented our relationship with Scots.

Key collaborations

This year we were pleased to reaffirm our partnership with Scots-Memorial Church. Their generous three-year financial commitment plays a vital role in supporting sustainability of the Choir as does the provision of rehearsal space and general support at rehearsals and performances. Their contribution enables us to enrich the lives of our members and in turn, the wider Hobart community. We extend our sincere thanks to Paul, Lisa, Rosalind, Norman, Steven, and all members of the Church Council for their ongoing dedication.

We were delighted to be successful in a Community Grant from the Rotary Club of Hobart, allowing us to replace our well-worn choir shirts, now over five years old. The new shirts carry the Rotary logo alongside, Scots-Memorial Church, and our own logo, further strengthening the visibility of this important partnership and celebrating the ongoing collaboration that underpins our work. Many thanks to Rotary for their support.

Volunteers

Our choir continues to flourish through the dedication of our volunteers whose contributions are invaluable. Alongside Scots-Memorial supporters highlighted above, I extend my gratitude to Karen and Carol, for their steadfast commitment in supporting our rehearsals and performances. I would also like to recognize outstanding Chorister Frankie, who has graciously undertaken kitchen duties for our refreshment breaks, as well to Adrian for providing percussion support. Their willingness to serve beyond exemplifies the spirit of our choir.

Financials

During this fiscal period we were fortunate to once again receive a \$10,000 donation from Scots-Memorial Church as part of our agreement. In addition, the \$3,600 grant from the Rotary Club of Hobart enabled us to provide new shirts for our members. Regular fundraising initiatives, such as the Christmas Concert, the End of Financial year campaign and Sing with the Boss, alongside healthy donations provided additional and needed support. While we recorded temporary arrears in superannuation charges and invoicing that fell outside the reporting period, our overall budget position remains cautiously sound. However, looking ahead, I note for the continuing board that strengthening fundraising efforts and securing key donors will remain an important focus for the next financial year. One important note is for us to continue to meet ACNC guidelines in reporting our financial obligations so we can maintain our charity status.

Bequest

We gratefully acknowledge a bequest of \$10,000 from Mr Nigel Rutherford Henry, given in memory of his late daughter, Lucy, a former choir member. The bequest will be formally recognised in the 2025/26 financial year, and we will in due course consider the most fitting way to use these funds to honour Lucy's memory.

Challenges and Opportunities

One of the key challenges for the Board this year has been the need for additional administrative support, particularly following the reduction of the Music Team from three members to two. This has resulted in an increased operational load for directors, requiring significant extra commitment and effort. Moving forward, there is an important opportunity for the continuing Board to recruit new volunteers to share this workload or to secure funding to provide further support.

The Board is also actively pursuing opportunities to strengthen the Choir's future, including grant applications to support our 20th anniversary celebrations and the expansion of paid performance opportunities. In addition, diversifying and increasing donations remains an ongoing priority, and we are committed to approaching this with a proactive focus on growth and sustainability.

Closing remarks

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the directors for their dedication. This year, we also acknowledge the departure of Suzie Jacobson, who is stepping down following a decade of service on the Board. Suzie's long-standing commitment and contribution to the Choir have been invaluable, and her wisdom and guidance will be greatly missed. It is imperative that a focus on succession planning continues.

The 2025/26 year holds great promise and opportunity, and we look forward to advancing our important work while building upon the progress we have achieved

together. With our 20th anniversary approaching in 2027, the coming year will be a vital period in preparing for and ensuring meaningful choir celebrations.

As I step down as Chair, I wish to express that it has been an honour to serve in this capacity. I am profoundly grateful for the support of my fellow directors and the wider Choir community throughout my tenure. Best wishes to the continuing board and welcome to the new board members.

Chair

Miriam Rule

Key acknowledgements/donations

Scots-Memorial Church

Rotary Club of Hobart

Mr Nigel Rutherford Henry

Rob Harrison (Hype TV) in kind support

Rob Rule (Rob Rule Percussion) for in kind support

Suzie Jacobson