



1 May 2023

This past year has been another interesting one for Sweet Adelines New Zealand.

My last report was read just as we were about to launch our very first virtual contest and what a success that was! Four choruses and four quartets took the opportunity to submit video entries for either the competition or evaluation categories. With the inclusion during the evening, of all the usual convention awards and acknowledgements to members from across the country, it was a unique and fun way to celebrate our Region when we were unable to get together in person.

With the withdrawal of Waikato Rivertones from the 2022 International contest in Phoenix last September, Greater Auckland Chorus took their place in the spotlight. GAC are to be commended for taking up the challenge of getting a chorus to the USA after so much upheaval in their region due to Covid restrictions and weather events. Greater Auckland performed with their hearts on their sleeves and we congratulate them on a wonderful performance. Greater Auckland take the stage this weekend and we look forward to seeing them in action in their hometown.

Thankfully we have been able to return to rehearsals and performances since around July 2022. The preparation time for contest may have been shorter than usual for many groups but we thrive on this annual event to recharge and inspire us. We also need this gathering of our singing community as this is where we feel so much at home, sharing our art form and renewing or creating new friendships with like-minded souls.

The RMT is looking forward to seeing this Region now blossom with exciting rehearsals and captivating performances as we recover from the past 3 years of interruption to our singing hobby and our lives.

To support this objective, we followed the financial assistance given to the groups who participated in the virtual convention last year, with a \$200 coaching grant available to all choruses. Workshops were held in both Auckland and Christchurch at no cost to members, convention registration for this year has been kept at an affordable rate and we are for the next year offering a grant of \$500 to each chorus to help in their marketing endeavours. It is worth noting here that the member levies remain at the lower rate of \$100 per annum for this year and next, reduced from \$180 prior to the Covid interruption.

All of these initiatives have only been made possible by the ongoing support of members who have retained their membership over these challenging times. And also, the responsibility that our Finance Coordinator, Mary, has taken in looking after the accounts and ensuring we are maintaining the required funds in our account as per International requirements and strategically applying other monies to best fit the needs of the Region.

Your Education and Directors' Coordinators are further seeking to support our choruses, in particular our smaller groups, by working carefully with the Internationally Funded Visits programme and ensuring the best match of Faculty member to the need of the particular chorus is met. These two coordinators are also working on increasing the talent pool within the Region's faculty. This year Jocosa Bruce and Virginia Humphrey-Taylor have both resigned from Regional Faculty roles – thank you to these two Directors for their considerable work as Faculty over many years.

A Director's workshop previously postponed, has now been confirmed, with an International award winning Director who is also an International Faculty member, coming to teach and inspire our Directors. Carolyn has sent out a save the date to all Directors and further information will be published very soon. There are also plans afoot for virtual workshops in speciality areas of focus.

For many years He Tangata Show Chorus has provided members some exciting performance opportunities with education at its core. 2022-2023 saw the long-standing He Tangata Show Chorus director Virginia Humphrey-Taylor step down to establish a stand-alone group not under the Sweet Adelines New Zealand umbrella. This new group is named He Tangata Voices. We wish them well as they seek experiences both on and off-shore.

Membership numbers in Region 35 have remained fairly stable over the past 12 months. We also have Sounds of the Shore nearing their completion of the Chartering programme and many of their members are here providing assistance this weekend. We have 9 choruses, and 13 quartets, taking the stage this weekend which is a wonderful representation of the Region considering in April last year we were still in a Red Traffic Light setting. Those not taking the stage in contest but who may be taking part in the STAR chorus will be members of Sounds of the Shore, SouthCity Soundz, Taranaki Harmony, Whangarei Harmony, Foveaux Harmony and Sounds of Hawkes Bay, the latter two were granted a deferment for 2023 from the International body.

This year has seen the introduction of two new membership awards to recognise the extra input and wonderful impact that members have made on the life of a chorus. The inaugural winners of the Rock Star and Shooting Star awards will be announced on Friday at the conclusion of the Quartet contest.

Voices at Victory has been a challenging convention to arrange for our Chair of the Regional Convention, Jacqui Binnie. Along with her Competition Coordinator, Kerry Stewart, they have faced difficulty in sourcing volunteers to take on the many roles required to run a convention. Among the local volunteers this weekend are members of SouthCity Soundz and Sounds of the Shore choruses. Other roles have been undertaken from far and wide across the country and on behalf of the Region I offer our sincere thanks, as without you this convention would not have come to fruition.

Some members expressed disappointment that there was no Afterglow event this year. The RMT considered a number of options but confirmed that this year's event was not feasible owing to a lack of volunteers and the cost of hiring an additional venue (as the Victory Centre has a strict no alcohol policy and no food or drink in the auditorium).

Miriam Spragg in her position as the Facilities Coordinator for conventions has taken on tasks far above the Job Description to fill many gaps and this has been done alongside her

work as the Region's Membership Coordinator, which in itself takes several hours a week. Thank you Miriam.

It became apparent to the RMT that a convention next year in Auckland would not be feasible, so a search was undertaken by Miriam across the country for an alternative venue within the prescribed weekends. Among the locations looked at, Wellington, Christchurch and Palmerston North were not available. With only one venue proving available we had to then seek approval from International for a date change from the one previously allocated to our Region. This request had to be sent to the Judge Specialist Adjudicator and it took some weeks and a prompt from Miriam, for the reply to arrive. This was the day that our Team Talk was published so we decided to take advantage of that publication and entered the information.

In the meantime, Miriam had continued frantically researching whilst waiting for the reply from International and communication between the RMT with Dunedin Harmony chorus was overlooked and I would like to apologise for that oversight. I understand why Dunedin were surprised to read that convention will be back in their city next year and I spoke with their Director, Robyn, immediately she raised this concern with the RMT. The letter later received and for discussion today, raises not only the gap in communication but an important factor of participation plans, however as convention could well have been declined for the dates we were requesting we would have had to continue our search. We will put into our planning, procedures to ensure choruses are given a heads-up if in future we ever have to make last minute changes like this.

We are pleased to announce now that Clare Pascoe, who has held the role previously, has been appointed as Chair of the Regional Convention for 2024. Clare and Kerry are already working on putting together a team for Dunedin.

I would like to make a brief mention here, as I know many of you proffer the question, that there have been investigations undertaken by Ann-marie Francis, our outgoing Events Coordinator and online registrations are not an option for our conventions. We therefore will continue to need to fill the role of a Registrar.

I come now to a housekeeping message or two. All choruses should be preparing their Standing Rules for updates as per instructions from International earlier this year. We need to update our membership eligibility criteria and ensure that you have a copy of the SAI Standard Bylaws and reference those Bylaws in your Standing Rules. Mary Cave-Palmer will also be sending out to all Team and Finance Coordinators information on updating clauses regarding changes required by the Incorporated Societies and Charities Commission.

Another message I am sneaking in here is a plea to put all material you perform through the Song Assessment Tool on the International website.

Now it's time to say thank you to our outgoing team members, Ann-maire Francis and Jen Meadows. Thank you for all you have done for the Regional Management Team. It's a wonderful thing to give of your time for the Region and we appreciate you. Jen is staying on until we can find a replacement.

Jo, who is leaving a vacancy for the Marketing Coordinator, has served 6 years on the Team this time round; her service to the Region has been truly incredible. Her designs and creativity have produced not only wonderful convention logos and well laid out communications but also a never to be forgotten Travel in Tune entry and a virtual convention that surpassed all expectations. To replace Jo is going to be a hard ask but I want to stress to anyone who is interested in a Marketing role on the RMT that all you need is passion, ideas and planning skills. If graphic design is not your 'thing', Jo will be there to assist.

We will be advertising again for the role of Marketing Coordinator and also adding the role of Communications Coordinator. Without the 8 positions on the RMT filled it becomes very hard to put plans in place or even to complete planning for the future. We are all volunteers and are doing the best we can with the skills we bring to the table. Please consider putting your hand up for the RMT.

I welcome Julie Earl as Events Coordinator and wish her all the best as she undertakes her role on the RMT.

Thank you to the members of the Resource Team as they continue to support the Region in various ways. With events stepping up in the coming 12 months I'm sure many of them will find themselves being more active in their roles.

Thank you to all those who are working this weekend, back-stage, front of house, on stage, in the auditorium, etc, we simply would not be here without you!

A huge thank you to Jacqui and Kerry for putting it all together, you two are an awesome duo!

The RMT is looking forward to catching up with Directors and Team Coordinators on Sunday for an informal gathering over breakfast. This was a custom many years ago when I first joined Sweet Adelines and it seemed appropriate to get this group together after the recent upheaval in our world.

To all who have come to Voices at Victory, welcome, and may your few days here be all you want them to be!

My final words are to wish the Waikato Rivertones Chorus all the very best as they head to Louisville to represent our Region. It's been a few years coming but you are on your way! Go well and sing with all your hearts.

In harmony, Leigh.



Leigh Whitelaw

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Regional Annual Members' Meeting 11 May 2023

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Faultline | Judi Cardus |
| Manawatu Overtones | Jenni Masters |
| " | Chris Thompson |
| " | Sylvia Fountain |
| " | Stephanie Greaney |
| " | Liz Watts |
| Faultline | Jacqui Bunn |
| Peckham | Bernadette Lakatos |
| Wellington | Frisch Veen |
| Faultline | Deborah Kessell Haak |
| Whangarei | Kim Cairns |
| Greater Auck | Fiona Maisey |
| GAC | Natalie Roffey |
| Whangarei | Christine Oberholster |
| Manawatu Overtones | Linda Edge |
| Christchurch City Chorus | Andrea Ward |
| Nelson Bays Harmony | Hilary Gibson |
| Nelson Bays Harmony | Kathy Jamieson |
| Wellington City Chorus | Liz Monarjeff |
| Taranaki Harmony Chorus | Fy Tait |
| Bella & Cennello | Fiona Brodie |
| ✓ | Toni Griffer |
| ✓ | Gaye |
| South City Soundz | Fleur de Farias - arrived late |
| | and may have been added by my chorus |
| WRT | on another sheet. |
| | Lavera Harper |
| Brian | Kim |
| | Jennifer Fieldan |

Regional Annual Members' Meeting

11 May 2023

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Sandy Webster | NBHC |
| Trish Armstrong | NBHC |
| Browyn Kirby | NBHC |
| Tracy Lettinger | DHC |
| Stella Nicholson | DHC |
| Vikki Fuller | SOMBC |
| Lesley Standing | Sounds of H. B. |
| Sue Frostick | South City Soundz |
| Kathy Hawkins | South City Soundz |
| Cheryl Weijermars | South City Soundz |
| Fleur defarias | South City Soundz |
| Clare Pascoe | Dunedin Harmony |
| Norian Weaver | Dunedin Harmony Chorus. |
| Jackie Napier | Waikato Rivertones. |
| Selena Bernath | Faultline Chorus |
| Maggie Atken | Bella a Cappella |
| Patti Cooke | " |
| Freina Brodie | " |
| Gaye Dawn | " |
| Suzanne Benesford | Greater Auckland |
| Anne Graham | Greater Auckland |
| Mary Hamilton | Whangarei Harmony |
| Robyn Baron | Waikato Rivertones |
| Jean MacKee | Waikato Rivertones |
| Sharon Mabey | South City Soundz |
| Philippa Beckman | Melism Bay's Harmony |
| Margaret Fordyce | Faultline |