

**Sweet Adelines International – New Zealand/Region 35
Annual Report 16 May 2020**

Team Coordinator

Prior to the surreal upheaval to the world we have been witnessing since early 2019, we were enjoying a year of performance, education and achievement within our New Zealand Sweet Adeline scene. The first weekend of May 2019 saw over 450 members attend a marvellous convention held in the supreme Dunedin Town Hall. The Dunedin Chorus and Convention Steering Committee put together another well run event and we thank them again for their hard work. We said goodbye to the pilot programme of governance and welcomed back a Regional Management Team complement of 8 members. Thank you to Trish Veen for her leadership and to Stella Nicholson, Julie Scoggins, Judy Tulloch and Katrina Te Punga who also stood down from their roles on the Regional Resource Team.

The Regional Management Team met in May and continued with the planning required to keep a Region moving and motivated. The International body helped with the motivation for many by supporting Region 31, to host the amazing and inspiring International Education Symposium in Manchester, United Kingdom. This event was attended by a few members from New Zealand as was the outstanding Directors and Visual Leaders Seminar held in San Antonio, Texas. Back on Kiwi soil in August we held a training day, "Leadership in Action" for our chorus leaders very capably led by Trish Veen. September saw ROXY quartet and Christchurch City Chorus perform on the international stage in New Orleans, USA. Christchurch, under the direction of Master 700 Director, Virginia, made the top 10 cut and achieved a wonderful 7th place in the finals! I was extremely honoured to receive Patti Cooke's Ann Gooch Award on her behalf, during one of the evening events. The New Zealand contingent gained so much from such an amazing experience (Jocosa managed to fit in compering a chorus session) and with the bonus of being in one of the most interesting cities in the US some life-long memories were formed.

The latter part of the year in New Zealand was highlighted by attendance of the Secretary of the International Board of Directors and Chair of the Regional Leadership Committee, Thérèse Antonini, at an RMT meeting to assist with long term planning; The Power Within workshop in Wellington with Vickie Maybury; the One Day Challenge workshops: in Auckland led by Henrietta Hunkin-Tagaloa and Virginia Humphrey-Taylor, in Dunedin with Kristina Roper and Jocosa Bruce and Whangarei with Suzanne Beresford and Melody Lowe. The one day style of education classes being provided closer to some chorus hubs has proved very popular with our members.

January 2020 the Regional Management Team and Resource Team members held a strategic planning session in Lower Hutt and this opportunity to share ideas and create big picture concepts along with the detail required to implement those ideas, was truly inspiring. The RMT continued to work on refining this plan and reached out to the Resource Team members for further input as it progressed. We had hoped to have this plan presented to the

membership by now however with the advent of the pandemic it has meant further updates will be required to projected timelines etc.

Following the announcement from SAI that due to the pandemic all regional contests for 2020 were cancelled we withdrew our booking for the Michael Fowler Centre in May. We also had to make the decision to cancel other planned education events for later in 2020 as it is highly unlikely international faculty members will be able to travel and we were unsure of what the situation would be here for singers to be back 'in action' at that time.

As the weeks moved on and with the cancellation of events and the possibility that the work and income for some members was affected by the country being placed into lockdown, the RMT decided that as it was time to review the annual regional fees for members, we would lower the total subscription to half that of the normal for 2020 – 2021 and extend the due date of payment.

The RMT, choruses and director groups have all discovered the joy of virtual meetings on Zoom or other platforms. This has proved invaluable to keep the Region and members connected. Singing together may still be a few weeks away but we Sweet Adelines will find a way to catch up, share news, teach, rehearse and even sing – all thanks to the internet.

We acknowledged our 'would have been' convention weekend by publishing on Facebook, over the course of 3 days, our quartet and chorus contestants, members' anniversary milestones, the Education Scholarship, merit awards and the most esteemed award – the Spirit of Sweet Adelines, congratulations Mabel Knight! This proved to be a very well received format for celebrating our members and the recipients of all awards are listed on the national website and will be published in the upcoming Addaline.

At the time of writing, the situation in New Zealand is looking brighter and I am thankful that we live on an island and have managed to control the outbreak here fairly swiftly. We look forward to putting into action education events for our members soon and we have our convention in Christchurch next year to begin planning when appropriate.

You will find reports from all members of the Regional Management Team loaded on the website for your reference and I encourage you to read them and see what the team are accomplishing on your behalf.

I would like to convey my thanks to departing team members Nicola Giles and Veronika Duthie-Jung. Your input, assistance and camaraderie will be missed by us all. Welcome to Jenny Edwards who joins the team as the Communications Coordinator, thank you for bringing your talents to the table. My thanks to other members of the team, Sarah, Virginia, Jo, Miriam and Kerry, for your dedication over the past twelve months.

Our Resource Team of 15 fabulous volunteers have also contributed greatly to the success of the Region this year – thank you to you all.

2020 commemorates the 35th year of Sweet Adelines in New Zealand and this is a terrific milestone. With a stable membership recorded again this year we move into our 36th year with confidence.

I look forward to seeing people in person again soon and I cannot wait to hear those chords ringing in a hall full of joyous voices!

To close I would like to quote Deke Sharon from IES 2019 - *Sweet Adelines have the secret sauce, you can change so much more than you realise - the world needs more harmony!*

Leigh Whitelaw – Sweet Adelines Strong