

## REGIONAL LEVIES

**Administration Levy** pays for the administration costs of the region and covers costs such as costs of airfares and accommodation plus venue for regional meetings, software for our accounting (Xero) dropbox (file storage), teamwork (team task scheduling), and Groupaniser which is our website platform. Plus general admin such as printing and stationery, postage and courier and other administration costs. Currently set at \$55 per full member (half for youth members).

**Education Levy** pays for coaching costs including a large part of recent Frenzy Quartet visit costs, coaching at Convention, including venue and equipment hire, chapter visits, DPC programme, music resources, Education Scholarship – Currently set at \$45 per full member (half for Youth).

**Convention Levy** pays for the fixed costs of our annual convention. The main reasons for the convention levy is because we have to hold a convention and there are fixed costs associated with holding a convention, no matter how many members attend. These are very high and include venue hire, sound, lighting and photography. International sets the rules for the quality of those factors. Other costs include transport, judges' expenses and audio and DVD production.

International requires that convention be held every year to enable choruses and quartets to compete and have the opportunity to compete internationally. Each year the number of attendees differs. Many aspects of convention are directives from SAI and are beyond our control. For example, we cannot hold conventions in some of our regional centres where costs might be cheaper because there are not adequate facilities available to meet the requirements. The region is required by international to have sufficient reserves to hold a convention, prior to that convention. Four years ago there were no reserves and insufficient funds to pay all bills immediately following that year's convention. In effect, we were very nearly insolvent.

The Convention Levy is currently set at \$80 per member (including youth – no exceptions) no matter what part of the year they are registered. This is to try to keep the actual convention registration fee as low as possible to encourage attendance. The registration fee for convention covers the variable costs such as programmes, bulletins, badges, awards, transport, steering committee expenses, bank and credit and costs and other incidentals.

### **Timing of levies and our financial year:**

The reason for the annual and six monthly cut-off points for Education and Administration levies is acknowledge that members may join half way through the year and attend convention and compete. Full convention levy must be paid because all members must pay their fair share of running the region and convention.

Our convention is typically held between mid-April and mid-May. International's financial year runs from 1 May to 30 April and our region's financial year also used to cover the same time-frame. However it makes budgeting and financial reporting very difficult as one year you could have no convention and another year, you can have two within the financial year.

So two years ago we changed to a calendar year, i.e. 1 January to 31 December which works well for us. However because we need to be consistent with membership and levies, we have retained the 1 May date as the cut-off for being in good standing with membership. This past year is a good example of how it works....

Our convention for 2018 was held in the first week of May however our “membership year” ran from 1 May 2017 to 30 April 2018. All members attending convention needed to have paid their international and regional levies as of 30 April 2018 in order to be in good standing. We know that some choruses do not register members until they really have to and that is understandable because they are trying to save costs but there has to be a cut-off point and 30 April is that cut-off point.

We don't want to encourage the holding off of registration because by holding off membership, those members are disadvantaged by not being able to access the information they need on the international and regional websites. Choruses need to budget for extra levies for new members at the beginning of their financial year and make sure that new members understand that if they leave, they are responsible for payment of any outstanding levies that have been paid in advance for them. It is a good idea to have a clause to that effect in the membership application form.

**But I am not competing – I am only coming to watch....**

All members of Sweet Adelines must register and pay their registration fee in order to attend convention. They may not be competing but it is a 'convention' and therefore members may not attend as 'members of the public'.

Stella Nicholson  
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