

TEAM COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Regional Annual Members' Meeting
James Hay Theatre Christchurch
1 May 2025

The logo for Sweet Adelines New Zealand is located in the top right corner. It features the text "sweet adelines" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, with "new zealand" in a smaller, lowercase, sans-serif font below it. The text is set against a dark red square background, which is partially overlaid by blue and yellow geometric shapes.

Tēnā koutou katoa/Greetings all

It is my pleasure to present the Annual Team Coordinator's Report for Sweet Adelines New Zealand (SANZ).

This year has been one of increased engagement, connection, and wonderful celebration as we continue to strengthen our region and commitment to musical excellence, education, and community.

Over the past year, with your help we have redeveloped our strategic planning for 2025 -2029 to support us achieve our vision and mission. The strategic plan and the more detailed annual plan are now available on our website.

Our SANZ vision '*a thriving, leading, women's a cappella and barbershop organisation in Aotearoa New Zealand, inspiring and enriching lives through the power of song*' and our mission, '*to create an environment where musical education, performance and competition thrive in a welcoming and vibrant community.*' To unpack these aspirational goals, we have focused on four strategic pillars: **Learn, Connect, Perform, and Compete**. These pillars, are guiding our planning and initiatives to ensure that we remain a vibrant and thriving organization which meets the needs of you, our members. I have used these 4 pillars to guide my reporting to the region.

Strategic Pillar One: Learn

- We have continued to provide diverse and accessible high quality education opportunities including face to face and online workshops such as the Arrangers Series, Anne Downton workshop and quartet workshops. Planning for our coach in residence is almost in place. Our directors have guided our choice of Ryan Heller for this 3-week programme and we hope this will provide the opportunity for accessible international chorus coaching and/or a weekend workshop for all.
- Our Regional Management Team benefited from an educational opportunity with Bec Hewitt SAI Faculty, funded by Sweet Adelines International, helping to further develop leadership and organizational skills within SANZ. To have external input was an extremely valuable opportunity
- In our all-member survey, you shared that there was a need for further support for chorus leadership and management. There are online opportunities (Chorus Management 101 and a Leadership Series) planned later in the year and we strongly encourage you to take advantage of these.

Strategic Pillar Two: Connect

- The RMT has strengthened its relationships with choruses through communication via the Tuned In newsletter, the fantastic Addaline, job alike private Facebook groups and continuing to build relationships with each chorus, all member surveys, zoom consultation meetings and evaluation of our events to ensure that we are listening and responding to your needs
- As part of our refreshed regional communications, we are incrementally enhancing the website content for ease of access.

- A strong focus has been placed on marketing, with the development of the marketing plan. We believe there are many out in our community who don't know about us YET and don't know what they are missing. There is more to come in this area, including supporting choruses with tools and strategies to increase their visibility utilizing our talented Faculty.

Strategic Pillar Three: Perform

- We have all showcased a cappella and barbershop singing across Aotearoa New Zealand, and we have shared choruses participating in public performances and special events through our social media platforms and of course we have a weekend of performance to come.
- A new and hauntingly beautiful regional song A Thousand Years by Christina Perry & David Hodges arr. Rowena Harper will bring us together in performance this weekend.
- SANZ is committed to supporting musical leadership development within choruses to improve skill levels. Check out the Education Plan for 2025-2026 on the website.

Strategic Pillar Four: Compete

- A huge congratulations to Greater Auckland Chorus (1st place in Division A Harmony Classic), Christchurch City Chorus (with 5th place in the international competition and Fire & Ice quartet (21st place) for their outstanding achievements at the Sweet Adelines International competition in Kansas City in 2024. Their performances on the international stage have made our region proud and showcased the exceptional talent in Region 35. We will be basking in the glory until our next kiwi quartet and/or chorus crosses the international stage.
- The 2024 regional competition was a fantastic event, with incredible performances from our quartets and choruses. Dunedin Harmony chorus and their team of volunteers certainly impressed in every aspect of running the convention.
- Here we are gathered and anticipating our Harmony Ōtautahi – Forty and Fabulous' 2025 competition, which also marks our 40th anniversary. Alongside competition we will enjoy a retrospective look at ourselves over the last 40 years. Thank you to the 40th anniversary Team and all choruses for contributing to this celebration.
- We continue to explore ways to support international competitors and ensure sustainable competition opportunities. Competition creates purpose and momentum in choruses, it challenges us to be even better and is an important part of what we do. We want all choruses to feel they are supported to compete.
- We continued to refine the processes around convention this year, with a trial of the online Survey Monkey registration. Thank you for your feedback, we will review and continue to improve this process.

Membership and Financial Sustainability

- Membership has shown minor variability, but currently stands at 502 members up from 486 in 2024. This growth, albeit small is encouraging
- Financial sustainability remains a priority and we continue to take a prudent approach, whilst actively looking at various opportunities to support our choruses. The 2025 budget projected a loss, which prompted the necessary SANZ membership fee adjustment which came into effect, beginning 2025. The necessary rise comes after several years of reduced fees (Covid years) and remains less than the key economic indicators suggested.
- The Prue Blythe Memorial Trust continues to be an important avenue for supporting young singers (our future members) and efforts are being made to raise awareness and

encourage donations to build this resource. Sweet Adelines Aotearoa New Zealand are actively welcoming and embracing of upper voice youth members. Four youth singers are benefiting from four SANZ scholarships this year and relationships with YSIH are continuing to strengthen. Thank you for contributing so generously when registering for this convention, we have raised \$1390 for young upper voice singers. If you missed this opportunity to donate and want to invest in our future, come have a chat. There are many exciting possibilities!

- The RMT are continuing to make progress refining SANZ operating systems and processes to ensure efficiency, transparency, and sustainability in our operations.

Looking Ahead

The coming year presents exciting opportunities for all of us including:

- This weekend which celebrates our 40th anniversary and honours those who came before us.
- Strengthening outreach to choruses through RMT visits and regional networking initiatives.
- Expanding educational offerings, including a coach in residence, a musical leadership development programme, Faculty visits, leadership development programme and a Chorus Management 101 programme.
- Growing our SANZ faculty to include both musical, leadership and chorus management skills utilising the new THRIVE resourcing. More information to come.
- Growing our Resource Teams by offering leadership opportunities to members, to support the work of the RMT.
- Continuing to enhance our marketing efforts to attract new members and audiences.
- Continuing to strengthen our partnership with Region 34 Australia, exploring opportunities for further collaboration and shared initiatives.
- And of course, in 2026 we look forward to gathering for the Harmony Manawatu Convention in Palmerston North with the fabulous Manawatu Overtone team. I know we will all be rallying to support you.

Acknowledgments

I extend my heartfelt thanks to our fabulous hardworking Regional Management Team, Mary Cave-Palmer Finance, who is sadly standing down after almost 4 years' service, Shelley Bascand Events and Convention oversight, Carolyn Currington Directors Representative, Shelley Phillips Marketing, Leanne Wheeler Education Coordinator, Nikola Worrall-Bader Membership and Katie Mathison Communications. As there were no further nominations received for those RMT members who were at the end of their two-year cycle, the whole team except for Mary will continue in their roles. We have grown into a strong team over the past year, each contributing our unique strengths to serve on your behalf. Thank you for the opportunity.

Huge thanks to our fantastic Convention Team, Pam Brian CRC, Claire Takacs CC and the vast team of volunteers who have made this weekend possible. Thank you to our faculty, chorus leaders, and all members for your work and passion for barbershop harmony. A special thank you to our Resource Team members, whose behind-the-scenes efforts have been instrumental in supporting our education, events, publications, marketing, membership initiatives, systems and processes. We have thanked and acknowledged those who have served during the year however I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Lesley Standring who has worked tirelessly behind the scenes on the Resource Team in many areas but particularly membership. Lesley was there at the very beginning of Sweet Adelines NZ and here we are today thanking her for her service at the 40th anniversary. So very special.

SANZ relies on many, many people behind the scenes, Jo Maxwell, Sharon Conner, Chika Dean, Ruth Carson, Sandy Gunn and Brianna Perry and I know there are many, many more, we thank each and every one of you. We look forward to continuing our work together.

SANZ is a truly special organization, giving immeasurable joy, fun and opportunity, our happy place and we are excited for what lies ahead for us all.

Ngā mihi nui,
Julie Earl
Team Coordinator, Sweet Adelines New Zealand