



Sweet Adelines NZ Chorus Guide: When a Member Passes Away

This guide is intended to help choruses navigate the emotional and logistical steps following the death of a beloved member. Every chorus is different—please adapt this to suit your community and chorus culture.

Immediate Steps

- **Confirm the news with care**
Ensure the information is accurate and respectfully communicated. If possible, speak with a family member or close friend.
- **Notify chorus leadership**
Inform the director, team coordinator, and other key leaders privately before sharing with the full chorus.
- **Respect family wishes**
Ask if the family is comfortable with the chorus acknowledging the loss publicly. Honour any requests for privacy.

Communication

- **Share the news with the chorus**
Share a sensitive message with chorus members. Consider whether this would be in person or in another way. Include known details (if appropriate), and offer space for grieving. If in-person, offer the opportunity to do what is comfortable. Sing or not, share stories or not etc.
- **Coordinate with regional leadership**
With the family's permission, notify your region's communications coordinator, our region is small and many know each other and RMT would like to be in a position to offer support. sweetadsnz@gmail.com
- **In communication with the family (and do consider the timing of this)**, check to see if they want the passing published in the Sweet Adelines International Pitch Pipe if so, arrange this through the Regional Communications Coordinator using the above email.
- If desired **SANZ can assist with dissemination** of news, tributes through our regional newsletter Tuned In, the Addaline and social media channels
- **Prepare a public tribute (optional)**
If the family agrees, share a tribute on your website or social media. Include a photo, short bio, and chorus memories. Check to see if the family want to see this prior.

Honouring Memories

- **Attend or participate in the memorial**
If invited, organize a small ensemble to sing a meaningful song. Wear pins if appropriate.
- If the decision is that there is **no funeral or memorial**, consider holding a gathering outside of rehearsal for current and past members to remember their friend. Let the family know you are planning such an event and invite them.
- **Create a tribute at rehearsal**
Light a candle, share memories, sing a favourite song, or hold a moment of silence.
- **Send condolences**
Consider sending flowers, a card, or a donation in their name. A chorus-signed card can be deeply meaningful.
- **Offer support to grieving members**
Some may need extra care. Encourage open conversations.
- **Acknowledge** that there will be a series of 'firsts' to get through. Noticing and acknowledging these is an important part of the ongoing grieving process.

Record Keeping and Legacy

- **Update chorus records**
Note their passing in chorus history, membership lists, and any relevant documents.
- **Celebrate their contributions**
Include their name in future chorus milestones, anniversaries, or memorial performances.
- **Consider a lasting tribute**
Ideas include a scholarship in their name or an annual award – communicate with family about this.