



Annual Report

High Street Bells Choir Inc

1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016

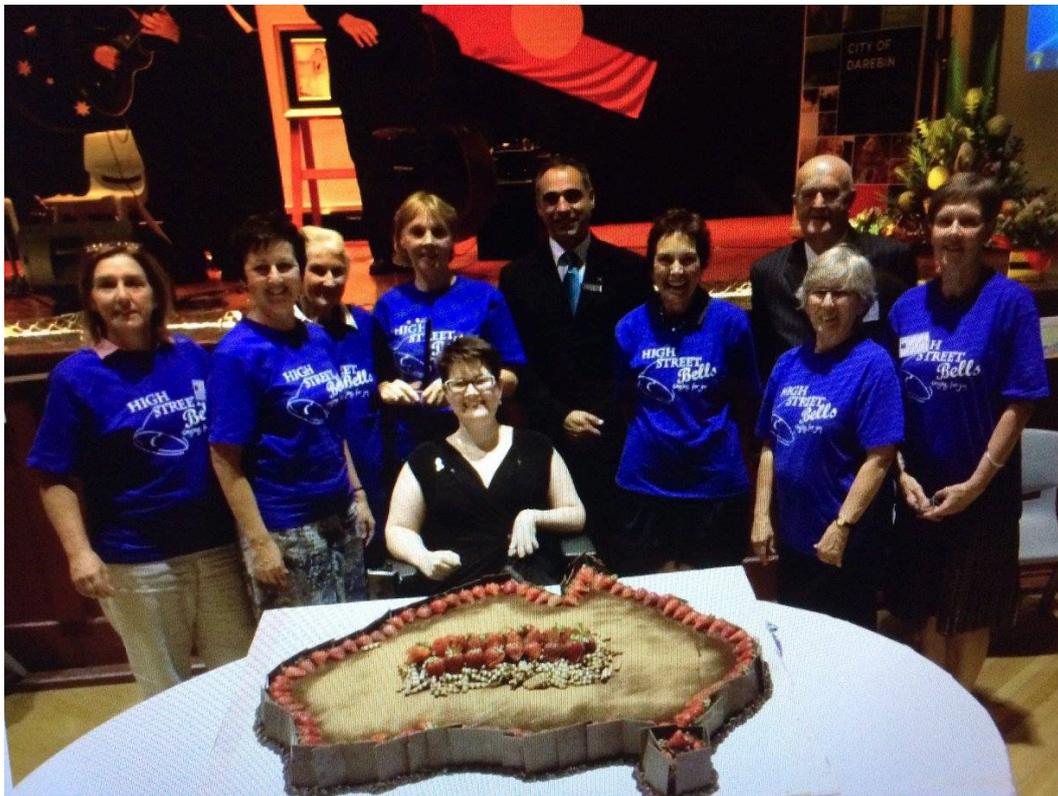
OUR VISION

The High Street Bells Choir welcomes people of all abilities to experience the joy of singing and to participate in the wider community through performance.

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THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!





City of Darebin Australia Day Awards ceremony. (L to R): Sally Green, Catherine Merry, Gwlad McLaughlin, Katherine Wositzky, Ange Barker (disability ambassador), Mayor Vince Fontana, Jenny Penfold, Councillor, Julie Contole, Nettie Harper.



Community Group of the Year Award presented to High Street Bells Choir



Our beloved member Nicole Latimer who died on 2 December 2015.

President's Report

My overall impression of the past year is of a series of exciting events. As soon as one finished, we launched into the next great episode of the High Street Bells Choir.

The Choir has a fantastic committee and staff and, because of this, we have received grants and awards and the Choir has grown. The committee is evolving to be the overseer of how the choir develops and ensuring that each step we take involves the community as well as the Choir members. Volunteers have also played an important part in keeping the Choir running week in, week out.

Examples of these changes are concerts at the end of each term, improved singer participation, more connection with the Northcote Uniting Church organization 'Chalice', a fundraiser for Nepal, improved social media including videos on YouTube and, most importantly, a strategic plan that is alive and well.

Peter Hille from the Clifton Hill / North Fitzroy Community Bank visited our committee meeting in June and encouraged us to aim high. If we could build capacity by attracting ongoing funding and sponsorship, we could operate independently of grants. To get ongoing funding and sponsorship we needed to build relationships with key players: this led to our Relationship Building Project.

This project and activities to strengthen our organizational capacity have been the focus of our committee since then. This includes improving Choir members' participation, feedback forms, singer surveys, social media, community networking functions, a communication strategy and lots of work especially by our Administrator Sally Green and Vice President Katherine Wositzky. Soon we will meet with community leaders and groups, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme, to advertise the choir and ask for their support. They will receive a pack that gives them the information necessary to refer people to the choir.

Thanks to all for a great year. I am very proud to be part of the High Street Bells Choir.

Catherine Merry



Performing at the StepUp! event for Down Syndrome Victoria

Musical Director's Report

This year has seen continued development in the musical life of the Choir. Through our performances we have strongly connected with our relevant communities.

Performances in the past year included: StepUp! for Down Syndrome Victoria at Princess Park Carlton, the closing ceremony at Melbourne University Law School Social Equity Conference and carol performances at La Trobe Golf Club, All Nations Park and St Vincent's Hospital. We have held several 'community concerts', where we invite people to join us for a Monday morning session.

A short series of film clips from our CD launch at Northcote Town Hall in 2014 have been released on our website. They are a powerful way of sharing the Choir experience with a wider audience. We have begun the process of recording songs and rehearsals for upload to our website so singers can practice their singing through the week. This will be via a private members page.

We surveyed our membership on a range of issues around our musical direction and sharing information about disability with our audiences. The overwhelming majority of singers want to perform frequently, to continue learning new songs often, and to improve their singing and musical skill. The responses around how we communicate with our audience about disability were more varied. While some singers value the opportunity to speak about disability with an audience, others prefer to focus on singing. We will re-survey the membership to determine how we proceed with communicating with the public around disability.

Recently we had a workshop performance with Interplay, where choir members, carers and volunteers shared aspects of their stories of disability and had these stories replayed in speech, dance and play. It was very courageous and inspiring and created an atmosphere of greater respect and understanding. Creating opportunity for people to have a voice to express individual experience is a direction we would like to pursue further. Orkezttra Glasso Bashalde have expressed interest in including the High Street Bells Choir in a project for the 2016 Darebin Music Feast.

With funds from generous grants from the Inner North Community Foundation and the Scanlon Foundation, we purchased a PA, projector and computer. These have been used to display lyrics during rehearsal, which allows singers to sing from a more upright position, rather than looking down at books. Results have been great, improving the quality of sound, focus and breathing.

Jan Briggs has continued with us as accompanist, allowing the Choir leaders to focus on conducting. We have had several musical collaboration sessions where we rehearse various songs. Georgia Pitts assists each week with managing the technology and supporting Choir members to take on roles.

The High Street Bells Choir continues to be a great delight and goes from strength to strength.

Jenny Taylor

Relationship Building Project Report

Developing close working relationships with a range of organisations is a priority for the High Street Bells Choir.

A 12-month Relationship Building Project has been undertaken to increase the reach, understanding and impact of the Choir through developing stronger relationships with relevant service providers, universities and donor opportunities.

A part-time project officer (130 hours) developed *HSBC Promotional Kits* for organisations to assist planning, communication and referral processes between the Choir and organisations. This work has strengthened the Choir's capacity to engage with organisations and potential Choir members, resulting in an increase of referrals.

As well as developing effective working relationships with a range of service providers, the work has contributed to the Choir's readiness to also operate as a 'provider' under the new National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Choir's Committee of Management identified a desire to formally document and capture what is anecdotally reported as improved health and wellbeing for people participating in the Choir. Under the Relationship Building Project, early discussions were undertaken with a university faculty to establish the potential of conducting a research project into the health and wellbeing outcomes of Choir participants. Further exploratory work is required to pursue this possibility.

The work achieved under the Relationship Building Project has made a significant contribution to strengthening the professional operation of the Choir and its capacity to continue to provide music and performance opportunities for people of all abilities. Thanks are extended to the Clifton Hill / North Fitzroy Community Bank for project funds and to the Project Officer, Sally Green, for all of her great work.

Katherine Wositzky



Christmas Carols at the LaTrobe Golf Club

Treasurer's Report

During the 2015-16 operating year there were cash receipts of \$35,589.72 that included: \$21,000 grants; \$9,000 from three donations; \$1,780 fees; and \$432.07 miscellaneous receipts. In addition \$2,763.45 was raised by the Choir and donated in full to the Nepalese earthquake appeal. Cash receipts are substantially higher in 2015-2016 than 2014-2015 due to more successful grant applications and significant donations.

During the year payments of \$27,087.84 were made, which is significantly higher than in 2014-2015. A relationship-building project was undertaken during the year, and the costs associated, including a computer purchase and the project officer costs, contributed to the increase in expenditure. Fees paid to the Musical Director and the Administration Officer remained stable. Operating costs fell slightly as there were fewer one-off costs associated with establishing the website.

During the year the membership database was improved and efforts to ensure member fees are paid in a timely manner will continue to be ongoing.



Lyn Harper



Peter Hille, Chairman of the Clifton Hill / North Fitzroy Community Bank Board, addresses the Choir, friends and family members at a 'community concert'.

**HIGH STREET BELLS CHOIR INC
SPECIAL PURPOSE STATEMENT**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
For 12 months 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016**

CASH RECEIPTS			2014-5
Grants	1	21,000.00	15,375
Fees	2	1,820.00	360
Fundraising		1,085.30	3,750
Donations		9,029.97	1,000
Nepalese Fundraising	3	2,654.45	
TOTAL RECEIPTS		35,589.72	20,944
CASH PAYMENTS			
Relation-building Project		6,115.31	
Musical Directors fees		6,650.00	6,860
Administration Salary		7,287.50	5,178
Operational Costs		4,380.58	6,674
Nepalese Fundraising		2,654.45	
TOTAL PAYMENTS		27,087.84	18,712
NET CASH		8,501.88	2,232

Movement of cash

Bank balance 1 April 2015	9,404.62
Net cash movement	8,501.88
Bank Balance 31 March 2016	17,906.50
Balance held in PayPal account 31 March 2016	3 33.90

Notes:

1	Grants	City of Darebin \$2,000; Clifton Hill / North Fitzroy Community Bank \$4,000; Refuge of Hope \$5,000; State Trustees, \$10,000
2	Fees	Includes \$620 received March 2016 for half year 1/1 – 30/6/2016
3	PayPal balance	Donations via PayPal not transferred to main bank account and not yet recognized as income

Assets held at 31 March 2016

Item	Value	Purchased
Computer	1,582.08	1/06/15
Computer	2,449.00	30/10/15
Projector	449.00	30/10/15
Microphone & speaker	112.80	30/10/15
Stock of t-shirts	110.16	23/6/13
Stock of CDs	1,063.14	15/11/13

Lyn Harper

Lyn Harper
24 May 2016



Christmas Carols at St Vincent's Hospital



Rehearsing at the Northcote Uniting Church

Facebook: www.facebook.com/highstreetbellschoir

Email: highstreetbellschoir@gmail.com

Website: www.highstreetbellschoir.org.au

Rehearsal venue: 251 High Street, Northcote 3070

Mail: 33 Willsmere Road, Kew 3101

Phone: 0412 546 665