

# The Australian Boys **Choir**

Information Book  
2023

The information in this booklet is presented to give parents an understanding of the objectives and operations of the Australian Boys Choral Institute.

If you would like to know more, you are invited to contact the Choir office directly.

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## Contact Details

### Address – Office and Rehearsals

3C Hepburn St, Hawthorn, 3122

### Postal Address

PO Box 3117, Auburn, 3123

### Phone

(03) 9818 4818

### Email

admin@australianboyschoir.com.au.

Please note that this email address is accessed by all office staff members.

### Website

[www.australianboyschoir.com.au](http://www.australianboyschoir.com.au)

### ABN

53 004 466 700

### Bank Account

BSB: 633 000

Account number: 181 098 674

Account Name:

Australian Boys Choral Institute

### Office Hours During School Terms (subject to change)

Monday: 12:00 - 6:00pm

Tuesday: 12:00 - 8:00pm

Friday: 12:00 - 7:00pm

*All correspondence should be addressed to the General Manager.  
Parents wishing to contact Music Staff should send a communication to the Choir office, requesting  
the message be forwarded on, or requesting the relevant staff member to contact them.*

## Child Safety

Working to safeguard children from abuse is everybody's responsibility, and an organisation's leadership is essential in creating a child safe culture in that organisation.

Our Board has expressed a strong commitment to developing and maintaining a Child Safe Culture at the ABCI. They have developed a robust Child Safety policy and are committed to a process of continual review to ensure the safety of all children and young people in our care.

### Our Child Safety Officer

As part of our ongoing commitment to Child Safety, a dedicated Child Safety Officer (currently Choir parent and Paediatrician Dr Suba Rudolph) assists ABCI staff and volunteers to manage child safety processes and/or concerns. This is under the framework of The Australian Boys Choral Institute Child Safety Policy. Our Child Safety Policy can be found on our website.

Suba can be contacted on 0412 744 506 or by emailing her at [childsafety@australianboyschoir.com.au](mailto:childsafety@australianboyschoir.com.au).

### Our commitment to child safety

The Australian Boys Choral Institute is committed to the safety of all children and young people.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

When we are worried about a child's safety, we follow rigorously our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities.

The Australian Boys Choral Institute is committed to preventing child abuse by identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks as much as we can.

The Australian Boys Choral Institute has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse and safety risks.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

### Leadership in a child safe environment

Working with children can be very rewarding, and it brings additional responsibilities. We will act to protect children from abuse in our organisation, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. This requires a culture of child safety to be embedded throughout the Australian Boys Choral Institute so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. Such a culture is achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the values, attitudes and behaviours of the organisation.

A child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. The Australian Boys Choral Institute fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults should know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

All staff and volunteers should consider the safety of all children and recognise the importance of cultural

safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

## **Staff and volunteers**

We take all reasonable steps to employ highly skilled people. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All our staff, including volunteers attending Weekend Workshops, Summer Music Schools, Tours, or working with the Caring, Concert or Wardrobe Teams and Board Members, are required to hold a current Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.

We require all of our staff and volunteers to agree to and abide by our Child Safety Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Our Child Safety Officer runs regular Child Safety Training sessions. These sessions educate our staff and volunteers on our child safety practices, inform them how best to work with our singers and how to respond to any instances of suspected child abuse.

The Institute has committed to ensure that all our staff, including volunteers attending Weekend Workshops, Summer Music Schools, Tours, or working with the Caring, Concert, Wardrobe Teams and Board Members, are required to complete our Child Safety Training Program. Any other parents or volunteers are also welcome to attend these training sessions. Dates are advertised in the calendar in the Choir's newsletter *Chant*, and bookings are made through the Choir office.

Education and support are critical to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisation's culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We support our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision and training to develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

We remain committed to the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex) children.

If you would like more information about our Child Safety Policy, please contact the office or read a copy of the policy on the intranet.

## Patrons

The Hon Dr Kay Patterson

The Hon Bill Shorten MP

Ms Wilma Smith

## ABCI Board

Chair	Stephen Duffy
Treasurer	Deb Damman
Secretary	Fiona Trumble
Directors	Rachel Atkinson
	Andrew Westcott
	Glenn Williams

## Staff

Artistic Director	Nick Dinopoulos
Director of Training Choirs	Naomi Heyden
General Manager	Elizabeth Lindner
Administration Assistant	Julia Gilchrist

## Conductors / Teachers-in-Charge

Performing Squad	Nick Dinopoulos
Senior Singers	Nick Dinopoulos
Junior Singers	Naomi Heyden
Tyros	Timothy Mallis
Probationers	Monika Harris
Early Learners	Rachael Joyce
Cambiata	Jack Jordan
Kelly Gang	Timothy Mallis
The Vocal Consort	Nick Dinopoulos

## Tutors

Senior Tutors	Nicholas Christie (Tyros)
	Rachael Joyce (Junior & Senior Singers)
Tutors	Ian Damman (Probationers)
	Declan Farr (Tyros & Cambiata)
	Clyde Saniga (Tyros)
	Zachary Hamilton-Russell (Junior & Senior Singers)
	Timothy Mallis (Junior Singers & Senior Singers)

## A Brief History

The first rehearsal of the Australian Boys Choir took place on 20th October 1939, a little over one month after the outbreak of World War II when Vincent J. Kelly, a dedicated school teacher, began rehearsing with 28 boys at the Toorak Scout Hall. Annual summer trips began in 1940, and by 1947 there was a long waiting list of boys wanting to join the Choir.

Following a successful tour to Tasmania in 1951, a branch of the Choir was established in Hobart in 1952 and another in Adelaide in 1954, but since the 1960s the choir has largely operated from its base in Melbourne. In 1971, the boys enjoyed their first overseas tour to Japan, which lasted just over a month.

Vincent Kelly was not well enough to tour with the Choir, and following his death in March 1972, Geoffrey Jones was appointed and remained Director of Music during the following period of transition.

Long-time music staff member Ian Harrison took over the reins as Musical Director when Geoffrey Jones retired at the end of 1978. Ian's influence on the choir and repertoire was profound and long-lasting and included the introduction of Kodály music training.

Taking over from Ian Harrison, Noel Ancell assumed the post of Artistic Director in 1983 and was responsible for the formation of two additional choirs. The Kelly Gang (originally known as *The Junior Consort*, but now named after the Choir's founder) is a group for young men whose voices have changed. Formed in 1984, The Vocal Consort is an adult male ensemble that takes a core part in Institute concerts as well as maintaining an independent concert and touring program ([www.thevocalconsort.org.au](http://www.thevocalconsort.org.au)). This career path from the youngest training groups through to The Vocal Consort, has remained a distinguishing feature of the Australian Boys Choral Institute.

After a period as the ABCI's Assistant Artistic Director, Nicholas Dinopoulos was appointed to lead the organisation in 2018 ahead of that year's highly successful European Tour. A teaching artist and conductor working across Primary, Secondary and Tertiary education sectors, he is the Choir's current Artistic Director and has also brought over a decade of professional performance experience as a singer in opera, concert and recital throughout Australia and New Zealand to the role.

Nick's earliest initiatives have included developing a range of external partnerships as well as a co-educational Early Learner's program. These have expanded the opportunities available to singers and introduced our renowned programs to the youngest aspiring musicians in the Choir's history. The Choir was proud to launch these during its 80th Anniversary in 2019.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020 and 2021 the ABCI moved its programs online whilst Melbourne was in lockdown.

## Organisation and Management

The Australian Boys Choral Institute is the corporate and legal entity behind the training and performing groups of the Australian Boys Choir and The Vocal Consort. The organisation is registered as a not-for-profit incorporated company limited by guarantee under Articles of Association.

The Institute's Board is elected by Registered Members at the Annual General Meeting. Parents and other interested people are encouraged to become Registered Members by completing an application form and paying a small annual membership fee. Forms are obtainable from the Choir office.

The Board oversees the affairs of the Institute, meeting monthly. Day to day management is in the hands of the Artistic Director and the General Manager, who are assisted by the music staff and a small army of volunteers.

Concerts, ongoing activities, tours and other events are managed by specific purpose Teams of volunteers, appointed by the Manager and Artistic Director. The Team Leaders Council meets once per term.

## Vision

To inspire and celebrate choral excellence.

## Mission

To deliver the highest standards of choral music training and performance, enabling individuals to realise their potential.

## Objectives

- To advance artistic excellence in choral music training and performance;
- To build the performance capability of the Institute's performing groups;
- To maintain and promote an understanding of the interaction between training and performance activities;
- To leverage the unique progression opportunities available to singers into adulthood;
- To maintain personalised coaching and group workshops, and seek opportunities for Master Classes with accomplished artists/educators;
- To seek opportunities for cultural exchange and for key artistic staff to study internationally;
- To initiate and nurture performance partnerships.
- To attract and retain quality teaching staff; and
- To maintain and enhance existing educational infrastructure and training resources.

These objectives depend on the boys sustaining regular and profound contact with musicians and teachers of the highest calibre.

The availability of highly skilled choral performers will, in turn, assist in the development of a wider base of discerning audiences and encourage composers to work in this hitherto largely neglected area of musical composition in Australia.

The organisation believes that such developments can best be fostered in a carefully structured community situation where access and equity are high priorities and excellence is highly valued. In such situations the community, corporate elements and government agencies work in close partnership to achieve shared goals.

## Music Staff

*The Australian Boys Choir prides itself on its high staff/student ratio. In addition to the groups being led by well-qualified musicians and teachers, each group has one or more tutors who work intensively with singers on their musical skills. All staff hold Working With Children checks, undertake our Child Safety Training and sign our Child Safety Code of Conduct at the time of employment.*

### **Nicholas Dinopoulos** BMus

Nicholas Dinopoulos studied singing at The University of Melbourne under Merlyn Quaife AM and furthered his training as a studio artist of Gertrude Opera. He maintains a busy performance schedule consisting of various concert, recital and operatic engagements, most notably as a core member of Songmakers Australia. He is frequently heard in national live-to-air broadcasts on ABC Classic FM and 3MBS FM and has performed as guest soloist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, Bach Musica NZ, Victorian Opera (Melbourne) and Pinchgut Opera (Sydney).

As a conductor and educator, he has prepared both choral-symphonic and chamber choral works as a guest chorus-master for leading Australian organisations and currently holds positions at The University of Melbourne (Music Director, Melbourne Conservatorium Chamber Choir) and the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music (Sessional Voice Teacher & Music Director, Monash University Singers). He has also been resident vocal consultant to the National Youth Choir of Australia over four consecutive seasons.

A specialist in the field of changing voice and young men's singing, he has served on the staff of the Australian Boys Choral Institute since 2007. He is only the fifth Artistic Director appointed in the Choir's 83-year history. [[www.nickdinopoulos.com](http://www.nickdinopoulos.com)]

### **Naomi Heyden** BMus, MA, BTeach (Primary and Secondary)

Naomi Heyden joined the staff of Australian Boys Choral Institute in 2001. She holds tertiary qualifications in both Music & Education from Monash and Deakin Universities, and has taught across the breadth of Institute's training program. Currently, she is Teacher-in-Charge of Junior Singers as well as being the Director of Training Choirs.

With a particular interest in Kodály-inspired education, she has also taught at Erasmus Primary School, Ivanhoe Grammar School, St. Kevin's College and Melbourne Youth Chorale. As a performer, she has sung with various Melbourne choirs and enjoys sharing her love of music with choristers of all ages.

### **Timothy Mallis** BMus (Hons)

Tim Mallis is a Melbourne-based musician specialising in composition and piano accompaniment. Tim is a passionate advocate for music education and bringing new Australian compositions to life.

Tim is a graduate of the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music specialising in organ and composition. As an award-winning composer, he has written for some of Australia's finest ensembles and is frequently commissioned for works by local arts bodies including Arts Centre Melbourne in their 5x5x5 program, and Choral Edge in their award-nominated Stories from the Choir.

As a former member of Young Songmakers Australia and former student of the Franz-Schubert-Institut, Tim is in high demand as an accompanist, organist, and conductor. He has also held positions as Director of Music at both St Bartholomew's and St Stephen's Anglican Churches in Richmond.

As part of his ongoing relationship with the Australian Boys Choral Institute since 2003, Tim is involved both as a staff member and singer in The Vocal Consort. Tim is also employed by Opera Australia, Victorian Opera, and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra as a surtitle specialist since 2014.

### **Jack Jordan** BMus

Jack Jordan is a classical singer with over 10 years of vocal training. He commenced his vocal studies as a chorister with the Australian Boys Choral Institute. Jack has performed extensively as a choral singer throughout Australia and abroad. Currently, Jack is a member of The Vocal Consort, St James Old Cathedral Voices, and is a scholarship recipient for the University of Melbourne. Jack has also worked extensively with Victorian Opera. His recent stage credits include *The Magic Pudding*, Bowman (2018), *William Tell*, Rossini (2018), *Parsifal*, Wagner (2019) and *Friend of Salamanca*, Schubert (2020). Alongside this, Jack is currently completing his Masters of Music (Opera Performance) at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music under the tutelage of Patricia Price. With the conservatorium, Jack has performed in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Monteverdi (2021) and *Little Women*, Mark Adamo (2021).

### **Monika Harris** BMus (Hons)

Monika Harris is currently working as the Probationer Teacher and has been with the ABCI since 2015 having also worked with the Tyros, Junior Singers and Senior Singers during her time with the Choir. Monika is a qualified speech pathologist, Kodály trained music educator, singer and musician. She completed her Bachelor of Music with Honours at the Melbourne Conservatorium majoring in classical voice in 2017 and completed her Masters in Speech Pathology in 2019. Monika has also completed 6 years of Kodály Methodology training through the Kodály Music Education Institute of Australia obtaining both her primary and secondary levels.

As a musical educator, freelance musician, conductor, and speech pathologist, Monika currently holds positions at the Melbourne Youth Chorale, Parkinson's Victoria Therapy Choir, Yarra Voices, Lilydale Speech Pathology, and as a choral scholar at the St James' Old Cathedral. With over 18 years choral experience, Monika has travelled both nationally and internationally with various choirs and vocal consorts including the Young Voices of Melbourne, Exaudi, Choral Edge, Burgundy Blue Jazz Quintet, the Nineteen Quartet, and the National Youth Choir of Australia, as well as worked as the musical director of the Melbourne University choir, Ring of Choir, during her undergraduate.

### **Rachael Joyce** BMus (Hons)

Rachael joined the staff at the ABCI in 2018 as a Probationer tutor, and has since gone on to teach at all levels of the Choir. She is currently the Teacher-in-Charge for Early Learners, and Senior Tutor for the Junior Singers and Senior Singers. Rachael graduated from her Honours degree in Classical Voice at Monash University after completing a Bachelor of Arts/Music majoring in French language and performance. Rachael currently holds the position of Voice Teacher at Kingswood College (Box Hill) where she also directs one of the senior choirs. She has a wide range of professional performance experience, and has been the recipient of many awards, notably winning The Talent (2019) and the Monash Australian Music Prize (2019) as well as performing as a finalist in the National Liederfest (2022) the Boroondara Eisteddfod Vocal Championship (2021) and the Opera Scholars Aria Competition (2021). Rachael is also the current recipient of the John Dorrington and Pam Vallence Scholarship with Opera Scholars Australia young artists program.

### **Nicholas Christie** BMus

Gaining his first formal musical education at the Australian Boys Choral Institute in 2007, Nick has since continued his involvement with the institute singing and touring with the Performing Squad, later joining the Kelly Gang and then The Vocal Consort. Nick has worked at the institute as both a Senior and Junior singer tutor and is currently the Senior Tyro tutor. In 2018, Nick commenced his study at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, specialising in classical voice performance under the tutelage of Stephen Grant. In 2017, Nick made his debut with Victorian Opera, performing in the Youth Opera, *The Second Hurricane*, and has continued to work with the company, performing in several shows such as *William Tell* (Rossini) in 2018 and *Parsifal* (Wagner) in 2019. Nick is passionate about music performance and is excited to work with Australia's fine musicians of the future.

### **Ian Damman**

Ian is the newest member of the ABCI tutorial team, commencing as the Probationer tutor in 2023 after assisting as an emergency tutor in 2022. Ian joined the ABCI as a Probationer in 2011 and successfully worked through all of the Choir's training levels before singing with the Kelly Gang, and now with The Vocal Consort.

### **Declan Farr**

Declan started with the ABCI as a Probationer in 2010, eventually going on to sing with the Kelly Gang and The Vocal Consort. After completing emergency tutor training in 2021, Declan commenced as a permanent tutor in 2022 and is currently completing a Bachelor of Music at the Melbourne Conservatorium in Classical Voice.

### **Zachary Hamilton-Russell** BMus (Hons)

Commencing with the ABCI in 2020, Zachary works as a tutor to both Junior and Senior Singers. He grew up in Newcastle, singing in the Hunter Singers, an auditioned choir for high school students from around the Hunter Region. Zachary moved to Melbourne to study Classical Piano Performance under Max Cooke OAM at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. During his time at university, he joined the Choir of Trinity College, University of Melbourne, and was a choral scholar there for several years, and has also sung with the Choir of St Peter's Eastern Hill, St John's East Malvern, St Michael's Uniting Church, and Christ Church South Yarra. In 2019, Zachary joined St Andrew's Brighton as organ scholar and began learning under Jennifer Chou. He also works as a piano and music theory teacher at Moving Into Music in Kew.

## **Administrative Staff**

The Choir office, located in Choir House at 3C Hepburn Street, Hawthorn, is often the first point of contact for new boys and their families.

### **General Manager**

#### **Elizabeth Lindner** BA (Communication Studies)

Liz was appointed to the role of General Manager early in 2022 but her involvement with the Choir spans well over a decade.

As her two sons progressed through the ranks of the Choir, both achieving the highest rank of Chorister and currently performing with the Kelly Gang and The Vocal Consort, Liz worked in many volunteer roles, including as Marketing Team Leader and as part of the Caring Team on numerous Weekend Workshops, Summer Schools, and Australian and international tours.

With close to two decades of professional experience in strategic communications management and consulting across a range of sectors, Liz brings to the role a passion for the arts and the not-for-profit sector.

### **Administrative Assistant**

#### **Julia Gilchrist** BSc (Hons)

Julia began working for the Choir in 2019 as an administrative assistant and is currently working three days per week. She has been involved with the Choir as a parent and volunteer since her son began the Choir's training program in 2013. Julia is delighted to have the opportunity to assist with the smooth running of the office and to work more closely with the Choir community.

## The Training Program

Detailed education and artistic policy documents form the basis of the training program, which is designed to encourage each boy to achieve his full potential, both individually and collectively. Singers are also encouraged to develop self-reliance and social skills within the wider context of the Choir's activities.

Prospective members are selected through auditions held twice per year and commence training between 7 and 9½ years of age. The training program is well-rounded, with outcomes far beyond choral singing.

Central to the ABCI program are:

- Aural Skills
- Vocal Technique
- Rehearsal Technique
- Musical Literacy
- Repertoire
- Performance Skills

Boys are divided into "rehearsal groups" for training purposes – Performing Squad, Junior Singers, Tyros and Probationers. The group's Teacher-in-Charge/Conductor is assisted by tutors and other music staff.

At every stage, boys are provided with a handbook which clearly sets out the skills they must achieve in order to progress to the next training level. At the lower levels the focus is on training rather than performance, although boys are encouraged to work to the very best of their abilities at all times.

Parents are kept informed of their son's progress through twice-yearly reports and are notified when their son is ready for promotion to the next rehearsal group. From Tyros onwards, this can occur at any time of the year as the boys work at their own pace and are promoted when they attain the necessary skills.

Families should note that a high standard of punctual attendance at all rehearsals, Institute concerts and residential programs is a pre-requisite for any promotion. Promotions from one group to the next take place when then Music Staff are wholly satisfied that the boy has met all relevant requirements.

A new singer begins his training as a Probationer, attending introductory rehearsals for approximately 20 weeks (two terms). At this stage emphasis is placed on enjoyment, with the boys gradually being introduced to the disciplines and skills of choral singing. There are generally two Probationer training times offered - these are parallel rather than consecutive programs, each covering the same work on a weekly basis.

Satisfactory completion of the Probationer syllabus leads to an invitation to join the formal training choirs of the Institute, beginning as a Tyro. These singers are recognised as full members of the ABCI, and wear the Choir uniform to all rehearsals and events.

The Tyro program is divided into Tyro 1 and Tyro 2, which are consecutive programs (Tyro 2 is the more advanced). Boys usually spend around two terms in Tyro 1. There is no set duration for Tyro 2, as each boy is encouraged to work at his own pace, but this usually takes between 6-12 months.

When he attains the required standards of skill and knowledge and has demonstrated sufficient maturity to be able to cope with an increasing rigour in rehearsals, the Tyro is promoted to the rank of Junior Singer.

Junior Singer training builds on the basics learned as a Tyro, with more emphasis on vocal and music reading skills. Again, this level is divided into two consecutive programs, Junior Singer 1 and Junior Singer 2. There is no fixed time for this stage of training, as individuals differ in their rates of progress. It is rare for a boy to qualify for the rank of Senior Singer in less than 12 months and before the age of 10 years.

Senior Singers may rehearse with the Australian Boys Choir Performing Squad or in a separate group, depending on numbers. Their training concentrates on performance skills to prepare them for selection to

perform in public with the Choir. To be selected to perform with the Squad, boys need to meet the highest criteria with regard to preparation, discipline and musical skill. Before each performance, the Artistic Director selects the boys who will perform amongst the members of the Choir Squad, taking into account the difficulty of the music, the availability of performers and their 'fitness' to perform.

The Australian Boys Choir Performing Squad comprises boys selected for their skills and dedication. Not every boy will earn a place in this performing group, which undertakes major concerts plus external engagements, recording projects and local, national and international tours from time to time.

The highest rank is that of Chorister, which is awarded to boys who demonstrate a high level of musicianship and leadership skills. Many boys do not ultimately achieve this rank, but still perform very creditably with the Choir. Choristers are eligible for selection as Leaders in the Australian Boys Choir.

At Performing Squad level, the work of rehearsals includes time spent learning new music, practising performance skills and developing vocal technique. Working in smaller groups with tutors, the boys have regular opportunities to acquire, improve and assess a wide range of musical skills and knowledge.

Boys 'retire' when their voices change, usually between 12-14 years of age. Unique to the Australian Boys Choral Institute is the provision made for older singers to continue enjoying choral music within Cambiata (teenagers still in training stages), The Kelly Gang (teenagers who have previously reached the level of Chorister or can demonstrate equivalent skills in audition) and The Vocal Consort (for young adults).

### **Cambiata and The Kelly Gang**

Cambiata and The Kelly Gang\* are groups of teenage boys whose voices have begun to change and who choose to continue their vocal and choral interests. Membership of the Kelly Gang is by invitation/audition and normally requires qualification at Chorister level. In both groups, the focus is on training rather than performance, with an emphasis on vocal technique, especially learning to cope with their 'new instrument'. In Cambiata, boys continue their Junior Singer or Senior Singer skill development. In Kelly Gang, some boys choose to develop their musical leadership qualities by learning conducting techniques, and music reading skills are constantly enhanced. Auditions for entry to Kelly Gang are contingent on a place being available.

Boys are able to stay with Cambiata or the Kelly Gang until they leave secondary school. At that time, if their voices and skills are sufficiently developed, they may audition for The Vocal Consort.

*\* The name honours the memory of the founder of the Australian Boys Choir, Vincent J. Kelly, who devoted his life to music education and particularly to fostering singing among boys.*

## **The Vocal Consort**

The Vocal Consort is a choir of adult changed voices, founded in 1984 to complement the work of the Australian Boys Choir. Many members of the Consort have been members of the Australian Boys Choir who are now furthering their career in music. The group often performs with the boys, as well as appearing in its own right.

In combination with the Boys Choir they constitute the first secular choir of changed voices and boys in Australia, forming one of very few choirs in the country able to give authentic performances of much of the choral repertoire. Membership is open to tenors and basses who demonstrate, in audition, excellent music reading skills and vocal quality.

## Deferrals

Deferrals for one term may at times be possible, at the discretion of the Teacher-in-Charge. A request for a deferral must be submitted via email to the office prior to the term in question. A term's fees paid in advance will generally be required to secure the place of the singer; this will be applied towards the term fees upon the return of a singer to the ABCI. Failure to return will result in the forfeiture of these fees.

Deferral can be incredibly disruptive to a singer's progress and is largely discouraged. However, the ABCI recognises that extraordinary circumstances sometimes occur when a deferral is warranted.

## Resignation

Parents are requested to give one term's notice of intention to withdraw their son in order to assist planning by music staff and maintaining the balance of voices in the performing groups.

## Rehearsals

Attendance at all rehearsals is a basic requirement of the training program with punctuality and appropriate behaviour expected. Prior apology or explanation of absence is required for any rehearsal or performing engagement at which a boy is unable to be present, by emailing or telephoning the office, preferably at least one week prior (obviously in the case of illness this may not be possible, but notice should be given as soon as possible). **Singers are expected to attend 90% of all rehearsals in any given term.**

Provision of a doctor's (ie medical) certificate will be taken into account, but a singer's absence from rehearsals immediately prior to a concert will generally preclude him from participating in that performance.

Additional rehearsals may occasionally be scheduled in the lead-up to major performances. These are called only when strictly necessary, and full attendance is required from those singers invited to perform.

### Rehearsal times

Probationer 1	Tuesday	5:00pm – 6:00pm
Probationer 2	Tuesday	6:15pm – 7:15pm
Tyro 1	Tuesday	4:45pm – 6:45pm
Tyro 2	Tuesday	5:45pm – 7:45pm
Junior Singer 1	Friday	6:00pm – 8:00pm (tutorials 5:30pm – 6:00pm)
Junior Singer 2	Monday and Friday	4:30pm – 6:00pm 7:00pm – 8:30pm (tutorials 6:30pm – 7:00pm)
Performing Squad (Senior Singers & Choristers)	Monday and Friday	4:30pm – 6:00pm 6:30pm – 9:00pm (tutorials 6:00pm – 6:30pm)
Cambiata	Wednesday	4:30pm – 6:30pm
Kelly Gang	Sunday	4:30pm – 6:30pm
The Vocal Consort	Thursday	7:15pm – 9:30pm

*\* Tyro 1 / Tyro 2 and Junior Singer 1 / Junior Singer 2 are sequential programs.*

## **Punctuality and Late Collection Policy**

An ABCI staff member will admit students to their rehearsals five minutes prior to the scheduled starting time. Singers are requested to not arrive earlier than this as supervision cannot be guaranteed.

Late collection by parents generally causes children much distress, and we ask that singers are collected promptly at the end of all rehearsals and events. Singers who are not collected within five minutes of the scheduled finishing time will be taken to the office, and their parents / guardians contacted by phone.

The ABCI is also required to have two staff members onsite until all singers are collected. Should parents not arrive to collect their child within 15 minutes of a scheduled rehearsal finishing time, a late fee of \$50 per occasion will be invoiced to the family to cover staff wage costs incurred.

## **Materials for learning**

Probationers receive a *Probationer Song Book* and *Probationer Syllabus and Workbook*. All other levels use a Handbook, which outlines the syllabus and allows the boys to plan and record their progress.

In addition, boys are supplied with the Institute's music collections *Favourite Rounds and Canons* and the *Tyro Songbook* when they begin their Tyro training. These are used at all levels of the Choir.

Tyros also receive an ABCI Passport which is stamped when they attend ABCI events and kept as both a souvenir and a record of attendance requirements through all training levels. Junior Singers receive a music folder to file all library music received.

Both Tyros and Junior Singers receive workbooks each term, which helps them develop their musical understanding and form regular study and practice habits.

The initial cost of these materials is included in term fees, but if a boy loses any of these items, a replacement must be purchased by the family. Replacement items can be ordered via the office.

## **Repertoire**

The Choir's repertoire ranges over six centuries of international choral music, showcasing and celebrating the richness and diversity of Australia's cultural heritage. New works are regularly added to the repertoire, especially contemporary works by Australian composers, and singers often learn music which reflects the culture of countries visited on tours.

## **Music on Loan from the Choir Library**

While some photocopied learning materials will be supplied from time to time, published sheet music is issued to boys on a loan basis only. Parents are asked to make sure that their sons take good care of all music, as they will be charged for any copies that are lost or damaged.

The ABCI spends thousands of dollars each year purchasing new and/or replacement copies for singers to use. We thank families and singers for their assistance in helping to maintain the library to a standard that all can continue to benefit from.

## Homework

At the Probationer, Tyro and Junior Singer levels, formal homework assignments are set each week and should be completed by the following rehearsal. In general, homework is designed to reinforce the work covered in rehearsals and to encourage the boys to practice their singing on a daily basis.

Parents are asked to look at their son's homework each week, discuss (and, if possible, help with) set work, and sign the relevant homework sheet and practice record when completed.

There may not be set work at more advanced levels, but boys are expected to prepare for forthcoming rehearsals and performances by learning new music and, in particular, by practising vocal technique and maintaining good vocal health. The boys' training handbooks offer guidance on these aspects.

Senior Singers are expected to work independently on their skills with the aim of demonstrating them in rostered tutorials. They take full responsibility for working actively towards the rank of Chorister and being selected for performances. Additional feedback may be requested from the Artistic Director at break times.

## Weekend Workshops

All boys (except Cambiata and Kelly Gang) are expected to attend two residential weekend workshops each year. These are usually held in May/June and October, and venues and locations may vary from year to year.

These intensive learning environments are immensely valuable from an educational point of view, and are also where Choir friendships are cemented and essential life-skills are learned. The costs associated with these weekend workshops are covered by term fees.

Boys travel to weekend workshops on Saturday morning and return home on Sunday afternoon. Probationers only attend workshops for the day on Saturday and are collected by their parents.

## Summer Music School

An intensive residential camp is also held each January for 4-7 days, usually at a campsite or boarding school in Regional Victoria. Summer Music School fees are invoiced in addition to term fees, but bursary assistance is available to families in financial need to allow their son to participate in the program.

Summer School is a fundamental part of the ABCI's activities and provides an opportunity to benefit from:

- musical training necessary to complement rehearsals
- non-musical training for independence and life-skills
- re-organisation of rehearsal groups
- preparation of repertoire for the coming year
- social interaction with one another and with staff

Satisfactory participation in the Summer School program is an important criterion for promotion to the Australian Boys Choir Performing Squad, and for selection on local, national and international tours.

All Choristers, Senior Singers, Junior Singers and Tyros, as well as Cambiata and Kelly Gang members, are expected to attend Summer Music School each year. We thank families for making the necessary arrangements for their son to be able to participate.

Junior Singers, Senior Singers and Choristers usually participate in a week-long program, and Tyro, Cambiata and Kelly Gang singers stay for 3 nights. Probationers do not attend Summer Music School.

## Attendance Requirements

In addition to making satisfactory progress with the syllabus of musical skills outlined at each level, boys in training must satisfy certain attendance requirements before they can be considered for promotion.

### 1. Attendance

Singers must demonstrate a solid record of punctual attendance at rehearsals throughout the year.

90% attendance is the expected benchmark within any given term, unless there are exceptional circumstances of which the Choir office has been notified in advance.

When attendance is not possible due to illness, an apology must be recorded by calling or emailing the office (not the teacher) ahead of time. Boys who are unwell must not attend rehearsals.

### 2. Residential Programs

Singers must demonstrate satisfactory participation in all residential camps at which their rehearsal group is required to be in attendance, and are supported in this by music staff and volunteer parents.

ABCI residential programs include a variety both of structured and unstructured rehearsal, tutorial, social and recreational activities for singers. These are vital in supporting singers through the program.

Participation helps enhance group dynamics and outcomes, and all Tyro, Junior Singer and Performing Squad members, as well as and Kelly Gang singers, are expected to be in residence for ABCI camps.

Probationers attend a day workshop early in the second term of their training as a means of introducing the singer and their family to camps. No arrangements are made for Probationers to stay overnight.

Families should note that singers are not generally permitted to attend Summer Music School unless they have successfully completed one Weekend Workshop, and promotion beyond the rank of Junior Singer is strictly contingent upon the successful completion of at least one Summer Music School.

### 3. Concerts

All singers are expected to attend ABCI concerts as part of their training. Where possible, ABCI students are provided with complimentary tickets for these events.

In addition to progress with the skill syllabus, singers at Tyro level and above must attend at least two Institute Concerts at each level before being considered for promotion.

Records of these events are kept in the singer's Choir passport, as well as the ABCI central database. These aspects are managed by ABCI office staff and/or volunteers.

## Tours

The Australian Boys Choir has made countless concert tours throughout Australia, taking our singers and their music to some of the most remote towns in the country, as well as the largest cities in each state.

The Australian Boys Choir has toured internationally on 17 separate occasions since 1971. Countries visited include USA, Canada, England, Scotland, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand.

The Choir's most recent international tour was in 2018 when the Performing Squad, The Kelly Gang and The Vocal Consort undertook a highly successful tour to Europe, performing in many different venues including the famous St. Thomas' Church in Leipzig (where the composer J.S. Bach was music director) and the Dom in Salzburg (where Mozart was baptised). In 2019, the Performing Squad also toured through regional South Australia and Victoria giving several concerts and facilitating school workshops.

Our organisation has also hosted many visiting children's choirs, especially from overseas. This has proved beneficial to the boys, making them aware of the international language of music and allowing our community to repay hospitality provided to our singers.

There is no set schedule for ABCI tours but typically, the Choir tours every other year, alternating between domestic and international destinations. Tours are usually between one and two weeks in length and are at additional costs to families. Families are always provided with advance notice regarding proposed tours.

Boys selected to represent the Institute on tour are supervised by a specially selected and trained team of volunteer caring staff (in addition to members of the Institute's music staff).

The Australian Boys Choir undertakes tours to:

- Promote Australian choral music and performance throughout Australia and abroad, demonstrating and celebrating the richness and diversity of our country's cultural heritage
- Present a distinctly Australian musical product to audiences around the world, achieving recognition for the talents and accomplishments of our young people
- Represent the youth of Australia, fostering enduring relationships with people from other countries
- Forge links between musically aware people of different regions and nations, leading in turn to the development of international understanding
- Promote the love and enjoyment of fine choral music amongst a wider audience
- Provide opportunities for our singers to perform in settings in which they can appreciate a wider range of historical, social and other cultural influences
- Enhance the social maturity of our singers through new experiences and contact with a diverse range of cultures, languages and customs
- Enhance the motivation of our singers through the experience of recognition at the highest level of professional concert giving
- Provide an avenue for the promotion of Australian culture, tourism and exports and to contribute to the choir's ongoing welfare.

In addition to the above, touring allows for more intensive rehearsal than usual, resulting in higher performance standards. Touring also provides a more "professional" experience in delivering performances, both for performers and support personnel.

## Concerts

The Institute typically presents three or four major concerts in Melbourne each year. Singing in a concert is a great experience but, for our boys, that experience only comes after rigorous training and preparation.

One of the most important aspects of our singers' training involves an understanding of what concerts are about: this understanding comes when a boy has attended some concerts as an audience member. This is why we require all Tyros and Junior Singers to attend ABCI concerts and provide them with a complimentary ticket to do so. Probationers are most welcome, but it is not a requirement at this level.

When our Choirs perform at joint concerts with other musical ensembles, both at home and abroad, they may have to sit through and observe other groups' performances, so being a good audience member is another "skill" that is learned by attending ABCI concerts. Parents can help their children by demonstrating this skill and by helping them to think about what they are hearing and discussing it with them afterwards:

*Which song did you like best?*

*What did you like about it?*

*What does the music make you think of/feel like?*

*How many parts can you hear singing?*

*How do the singers on stage behave?*

Like punctuality, rehearsal attendance and behaviour, attending concerts is one of the requirements at every training level. Boys must attend at least two Institute Concerts before being considered for promotion.

As audience members, Tyros and Junior Singers attend in uniform. They should show the very best standards of behaviour, as other members of the audience recognise the ABCI uniform. We expect that the boys will be supervised by one or more adults – who themselves will almost certainly come to a better understanding of what we do when they hear the Choir and The Vocal Consort in concert.

## Engagements

In addition to regular weekly rehearsals, singers of the ABCI are often required to take part in performance engagements as representatives of the Choir in the community.

Engagements may include major concerts organised by the Institute or other organisations, or participation as guests in concerts of other musical groups. Alternatively, these could also be visits to aged care facilities or short appearances as a community service, such as at Citizenship Ceremonies. Most engagements are undertaken by the Performing Squad but from time to time Junior Singers and others may be involved.

Parents of boys involved in engagements are always notified in advance of the engagement details. The newsletter *Chant* and other regular email reminders are the normal source of such information.

## Installation Ceremonies

Installation ceremonies are held twice every year and are important events for the Choir community.

Boys who have satisfactorily completed the training requirements for each level are formally presented with certificates and/or badges, and recognised for their achievements at these events.

All ABCI groups (except Probationers) present items at Installations. It is always a pleasure for singers, staff and families to witness the progression of individuals as they advance through the Institute.

All singers from Tyros and above are required to attend Installation ceremonies as a part of their own training. Probationers and their families are most welcome to attend and observe.

Awards are typically announced at the second Installation ceremony of the year. Boys whose voices have changed have their contribution to the Choir celebrated in a "Passing Out" ceremony at each ceremony.

Following each Installation, a community afternoon tea allows the chance to mingle with other Choir families and to individually congratulate boys who have achieved promotion.

## Awards

The VJ Kelly Memorial Award and the Pat McCaffrey Award are presented annually to outstanding members of the ABCI with unchanged voices. Staff nominate boys who meet the criteria and a final decision is made by the Artistic Director. Awards are usually presented at the first Installations of the year.

### V.J. Kelly Memorial Award

Vincent Joseph Kelly was a school-teacher with a lifelong interest in music. Known to the boys as Mr Kelly, V.J. to their parents, and Vin to his friends, he founded the Australian Boys Choir in 1939 with the encouragement and support of influential musical colleagues. From that time, he devoted his life to the advancement of the Choir. V.J. continued as Director of the Choir until his death in 1972. For over 30 years, he was responsible for the musical direction of the Choir and, with others, the administration and management of the Choir's affairs. The V.J. Kelly Memorial Award is given annually to a Chorister who has embodied the ideals of the Choir and is an exemplar to other boys.

### P.R. McCaffrey Award

Patrick McCaffrey was ABCI Chairman from 1979-1986, a Registered Member and Choir parent, whose involvement with the Choir dated from its founding in 1939. The Choir's founding director, V.J. Kelly, invited his student to the early rehearsals of his new choir. From that point on, Pat's association with the Choir was virtually uninterrupted for more than five decades and included assisting with the musical training of the boys and participating in tours and workshops. Along with witnessing the growth and development of the Choir, Pat oversaw no less than five changes of Choir premises. He continued as a Registered Member of the Institute until his passing in 1993. In his later years, his involvement was in a quiet, fatherly manner, always offering words of encouragement for members of the 'Choir family' which was so dear to him. The P.R. McCaffrey Award is awarded annually to a boy who has shown exceptional promise while in training.

## Uniform

The ABCI prides itself on its high standard of uniform. Uniform is worn at rehearsals and other Choir activities by Tyros, Junior Singers and Choir members. Probationers do not wear uniform. The uniform must be purchased by each boy's family and maintained at the highest standard. Regular uniform checks are conducted throughout the year, and families will be notified if a singer's uniform standard falls short.

Stage wear for major performances is supplied and maintained by the Choir.

A small annual maintenance fee for stage wear is charged to the members of the Performing Squad, and they are also required to purchase a black choral music folder for use in performances.

### Uniform Basics

- Long 'Camberwell Grammar style' grey pinhead trousers with cuff
- Black leather belt (with gold buckle)
- Black socks
- Black, lace up leather shoes (not runners, or black leather sport shoes)
- Choir Blazer\* (for Junior Singer and above)
- Choir Bag\* (for Senior Singers and above)
- Choir Jumper\* (for Tyros)

### Winter (Terms 2 and 3)

- Blue long sleeve shirt - Fairmark, Highmark or Dobson's 'Camberwell Grammar' style (for Tyros and Junior Singers)
- White long sleeve shirt (Performing Squad only)
- Red Choir Tie\*

### Summer (Terms 1 and 4)

- Short-sleeved blue shirt with Choir Logo\*
- Grey fly-front Primary Shorts (Optional. Only for rehearsal; trousers must be worn for concerts and engagements)
- During warmer months when the weather on a rehearsal day is forecast for 35 degrees and above, boys may wear casual clothes. The office will issue an email to that effect on relevant days.

Items marked with an asterisk (\*) are available *only* from the choir uniform shop.

All items of clothing MUST be clearly named. The name tag on the blazer should be clearly legible, inside the collar.

### Uniform Shop

The Choir Uniform Shop is located in the Church Hall at our premises in Hawthorn. The shop stocks all items of new uniform that are required, aside from socks and shoes. Some items of uniform (trousers, shorts and winter shirts) are also available from local uniform suppliers Bob Stewarts or Dobsons. The Uniform Shop also maintains a stock of second-hand items in good condition. The uniform shop is staffed by volunteers.

Opening hours can be found on the Choir Intranet.

### Second-hand Uniform Items

As well as stocking most items of ABCI uniform in brand-new condition, our uniform shop also facilitates

the sale of second-hand items for purchase by families at a reduced price. Note that not all items are consistently available and may need to be sourced directly from the official suppliers in new condition.

Additionally, parents may recoup part of their original outlay through sale of well-maintained blazers (only worn at Choir by Junior Singers, Senior Singers and Choristers) on a consignment basis. The Choir sets a standard second-hand price for blazers and retains 25% of the sale price. The remaining 75% of the sale price is returned to the family. Blazers must be dry cleaned before they are accepted for sale.

The Choir is also delighted to accept donations of all other uniform items. Donated items should be cleaned and pressed before they are donated to the uniform shop. Please contact the office to organise a time to drop off any blazers or other uniform items.

Families should be aware that boys appear at public concerts and other engagements in uniform throughout the year, and all articles offered for sale must be in good condition and fit properly.

A closed Facebook group has also been established for families who wish to 'buy, swap and sell' uniform items independently. People must become members of the group to sell items of uniform. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/398518480704947> The ABCI bears no responsibility for the condition of items sold in this forum. We remind families that only items that are 'as new' should be sold to others.

## Communication from Parents

### With the Manager

Parents can telephone the office on (03) 9818 4818 during opening hours (see page 4), or email [admin@australianboyschoir.com.au](mailto:admin@australianboyschoir.com.au) anytime. Note that this email address is accessed by all office staff.

### With Teachers

Parents are asked not to try to speak to Music Staff immediately before a rehearsal, as staff need to focus on preparation. Instead, please ask the General Manager to organise for the teacher to call or email you. Direct email addresses and mobile numbers of teachers are not normally given out. If you have a message for a teacher, please send it to the Manager who will see that it is forwarded to the appropriate person.

## Communication to Parents

### Chant

The monthly newsletter, *Chant*, is the major means of disseminating information and is distributed by email generally on or around the first day of each month. Parents are asked to watch out for this newsletter, as it contains the year's calendar, rosters, special engagement details and a variety of information that families need to assist their sons.

### Email

Other notices are distributed as necessary by email. The Choir utilises the email service MailChimp for all group emails. Some email applications (eg. Gmail) deliver MailChimp to junk or 'Promotions' folders. Moving the email into the inbox usually teaches the program how to manage these items and future emails are then delivered to the inbox. Please see the office for help if you experience difficulties.

### Website

The Choir's website [www.australianboyschoir.com.au](http://www.australianboyschoir.com.au) includes up-to-date information for parents and families in addition to information for the general public and potential members and clients.

### Intranet

The website also contains an Intranet for ABCI families. Families will be able to create a username and password to enable access to the Intranet upon joining the Institute.

## Operoo

The Choir utilises *Operoo* (formerly CareMonkey) to manage singers' medical and dietary information. Many schools and clubs also use this application that allows parents to build a single profile for their child that may be shared with the organisations to which the child belongs. Any updates made by the parent are automatically shared with all the organisations, eliminating the need to notify multiple people.

ABCI also uses this platform to request RSVPs for performances and Music Schools/Weekend Workshops and to disseminate other information pertinent to these events.

When boys join the ABCI, they will be sent a request from *Operoo* to complete a profile for their son. It is mandatory that this be completed (including a photo for identification purposes), before a boy may attend any rehearsals. Parents should regularly check to make sure the information remains up to date.

## Reports

Staff carefully monitor each boy's progress through the training program and written reports from teachers are provided twice yearly to parents concerning their son's progress. These reports are emailed to families.

## Parent-Teacher Meetings

Either parents or teachers may request a meeting. Appointments must be scheduled through the office.

## Complaints

If a singer or their family is unhappy with any aspect of their involvement with the ABCI and wishes to make a complaint, they may do so in the first instance by contacting the General Manager, either at [admin@australianboyschoir.com.au](mailto:admin@australianboyschoir.com.au) or on (03) 9818 4818.

If the complaint is regarding the General Manager or the Administration Team, the complainant should then address their concern to the Artistic Director. The current Artistic Director is Nick Dinopoulos, and he can be contacted at [nick.dinopoulos@australianboyschoir.com.au](mailto:nick.dinopoulos@australianboyschoir.com.au).

If a complaint concerns both the Choir Manager and the Artistic Director, families are then directed to contact the Chair of the Board, Professor Stephen Duffy, on 0408 771 937.

The ABCI commits to addressing all concerns raised in a thorough, respectful and timely manner, and thanks families for respecting and adhering to these processes.

## Parent Participation

Volunteer support is a vital element in the smooth running of any not-for-profit organisation. All parents are asked to indicate how they may be able to assist in a variety of operational and/or financial ways, in addition to regular involvement in the Duty Roster (see below). Those who volunteer say that they gain a much better understanding and appreciation of the Choir's work, both in training and performance. Boys also find it very rewarding to have their families involved and feel their activities are valued.

Parents unable to donate time on an on-going basis are welcome and encouraged to make financial donations. Volunteer help is also sought amongst the boys' wider families (eg. grandparents may be able to help at times when parents are unavailable).

ABCI leadership reserves the right to select the services of volunteers in the best interests of the Choir and its members. Volunteers who supervise boys at concerts, engagements and residential programs must have a current Working With Children card and must complete our Child Safety Training program.

## Parent Duty Roster

Keeping track of boys' attendance and punctuality is a vital aspect of supervision of the boys in our care. All families (excluding Probationers) are expected to participate in the weekly duty roster and will be allocated a rehearsal date once or twice a semester.

Parents on duty ensure that all boys are signed in, supervise them before lessons and during the break, stay after the rehearsal until all the boys are collected and look after any boys who are unwell or need support during rehearsal. Parents on duty must ensure that each boy is signed out by a parent/guardian.

For the sake of your son, as well as the other boys, please ensure you take your turn on the Duty Roster. If it is difficult for you to attend on your allocated date, you may be able to find help from among the boys' wider families (e.g. grandparents), but please let the office know of any change.

A 'reserve' family is also listed on the roster for each week and should be the first port of call if you are unable to attend on your allocated date. If you need to contact the Reserve family, please contact the office to obtain their details. If you are listed as a 'reserve', please keep the date free so you can take up the duty in the case of illness or emergency.

## Volunteer teams

In addition to the Duty Roster, parents are strongly encouraged to help further the Choir's work as volunteers in any of the key areas as outlined below. Volunteers join one or more teams, which have responsibility for different aspects of the Choir's operations.

The leaders of each team meet quarterly at the Team Leaders Council (TLC) to provide a "peak body" for our highly valued volunteers. The TLC facilitates communication and cooperation amongst the various teams, and also acts as a parent forum to provide opinion and advice to management.

### Archives and Alumni Team

This team looks after the extensive Choir archives, including cataloguing, digitising and storing items. Currently, they also look after the database of old boys of the Choir and work on tracking down those for whom no current contact details are held.

### Caring Team

The caring team operates under the supervision of the Artistic Director. Its role is to provide supervision, and support to singers at concerts, engagements, workshops and Summer Music School. Expressions of interest are sought prior to all events requiring Caring volunteers.

A hierarchy of experience and training exists for this team where those wishing to attend as Carers on weekend workshops need to have demonstrated their suitability at a concert or engagement, and those wishing to attend at Summer Music School need to have acted as Carer on a weekend workshop.

### Community Development Team

This team is responsible for the development, coordination and management of social activities involving both boys and parents to encourage a strong community spirit. This team also looks after planning, coordination and management of fundraising activities to financially support the Institute's training program.

### Concert Team

The Concert Team plan and manage the Choir's various performances in Melbourne and its surrounds as required. This includes logistical planning, publicity and promotion, ticket sales, stage and front-of-house management, equipment transportation, and refreshments at concerts.

### Development Team

The Development Team is responsible for identifying, cultivating, soliciting, recognizing, and stewarding prospects and donors to establish and nurture relationships and to raise resources. They work on building a culture of philanthropy and educating our community about the benefits, value, and distinct nature of our organisation. They work with all parts of our community including current boys and their parents, old boys, parents of old boys, and other associates of the Choir.

### Grants Team

The Grants Team identifies, researches and writes applications for philanthropic, government and corporate grants. These applications support the work of the ABCI in seeking out further opportunities.

### Library Team

The Library Team is responsible for the maintenance, cataloguing and administration of the music library. The major activity is filing away of music returned from the performing groups.

### Maintenance Team

This team looks after general maintenance of buildings and grounds. Apart from annual Working Bees in the grounds of the Church, the maintenance team responds to any specific needs of the management

team to repair or install (and occasionally to make) items of equipment. Where specific trade skills are required, these are organised by the office.

### **Marketing and Design Team**

This team is responsible for planning and management of Choir communications, marketing, networking and promotional initiatives, as well as publicity for concerts. This team also undertakes any design work necessary for programs, brochures, etc. and ensures the Choir brand is maintained in all communications.

### **Recruitment Team**

The Recruitment Team helps ensure a regular intake of boys to the Choir by organising and assisting music staff on visits to schools and inviting boys to audition for entry to the training program. Team members also provide support at audition days, currently held twice each year.

### **Special Projects Team**

A special projects team is assembled from time-to-time to assist with the planning, coordination and logistical support required to undertake major events or projects. Some examples of recent projects include the Dreams & Desires CD and the exhibition held to celebrate the Choir's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

### **Tour Team**

This team is responsible for liaising with touring partners, promoters and venues, organising accommodation and/or billeting arrangements for singers, and crafting tour itineraries including sight-seeing. Tour planning generally commences 1-2 years in advance, depending on the proposed destination.

### **Wardrobe - Streetwear Team**

This team manages the sale and inspection of uniforms including staffing the Uniform Shop during rehearsal and other times, ordering new stock and handling receipt of second-hand items for sale.

### **Wardrobe - Stagewear Team**

The Stage Wear Team manages robes and costumes for performances, including sewing/ alterations, laundering, measuring and fitting of stage wear. Due to the large stock of stage wear held by the Choir, this is largely a logistical exercise, rather than one involving a lot of sewing.

## Discipline - the Choir's approach

Membership of a choir is equally as demanding as membership of a sports team or any other group where the participants need to rely on each other. The Institute believes that such demands are good for a boy, and makes no apology for requiring a high level of commitment from students and their parents. Parents are expected to work with the Institute to help each individual cope with the high level of discipline necessary for satisfactory membership.

### Expectations

Institute staff will always attempt to make their expectations clear and be consistent in their reaction to situations. The principal aim of this approach is to establish and maintain a strong working relationship between children and young people at the ABCI and the adults who take responsibility for them and their activities at Choir.

From the moment they assume the ABCI uniform and/or are signed-in for Institute activities, individuals are expected to exercise strong habits of self-discipline, suiting their behaviour to each situation without needing direction or reminders from adults. This should occur naturally when the boys are absorbed in any activity they value. Students will therefore constantly be challenged through rigorous and constructive procedures. They should also see adults valuing their own involvement in the Choir's programs and exercising self-discipline as a matter of course.

Expectations and procedures are further developed at Summer Music Schools and Weekend Workshops, where the logical consequences of behaviour can be made more obvious to boys and where extended contact with a consistent set of expectations can have maximum effect. Table manners, consideration for others in dormitory and bathroom arrangements, and care of personal property are areas of special significance at these times, and they become very important for those chosen to tour with the Choir.

Members of the Australian Boys Choral Institute, both adults and boys, acknowledge that the differences between individuals enrich the talents of all the members, making the organisation strong and worthwhile.

### Responsibilities

Music staff are responsible for the management of the boys in their classes. This is exercised in a non-oppressive way through the adult's leadership, example and enthusiasm. Teachers establish with the boys in their care an understanding that certain consequences flow from inappropriate or disruptive behaviour.

Boys generally need most supervision at breaks, and a responsible adult will be present from the earliest arrival of boys to their latest departure.

Music staff are generally unavailable for detailed supervision out of class times, being involved in preparation or other administrative activities. The supervision of boys not in class (e.g. at break times, etc) is undertaken by rostered volunteer parents.

Some recreational activities may be provided for the boys during breaks, especially during winter. Boys will usually coordinate these and be involved in making rules for them. Those engaging in an anti-social fashion may be excluded by supervising adults, and students using equipment inappropriately will be charged for any damage sustained.

Boys who fail to respond to warnings about their behaviour may be placed on supervised "time out" or, in exceptional cases, sent to the Artistic Director or Director of Training Choirs for counselling about their behaviour. Time out should be regarded as an opportunity for the boy to regain control of himself by sitting quietly or (from Junior Singer level onwards) preparing music or syllabus outcomes (i.e. skill work).

All student leaders and aspiring student leaders (individuals seeking to hold the rank of Chorister and above) are expected to display exemplary behaviour at all times, cooperating instantly and cheerfully and setting a positive example to younger students.

Members of the Institute's Caring Team are adult volunteers capable of displaying consistency, firmness and tact in their interactions with boys. Music staff provide support for volunteer supervisors by reminding students of expectations and by dealing with serious problems if necessary.

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour in the Australian Boys Choral Institute. Every member has a right to feel safe and to develop talents to their full potential within the activities of the Institute.

## **Unacceptable Behaviour**

The consequences of unacceptable behaviour will be negotiated in each case with the offender by an appropriate staff member delegated by the Artistic Director. This may be a member of the volunteer Caring Team when on residential workshops, and the seriousness of the consequences or sanction will match the severity of the incident. A first offender will usually have the opportunity to redeem himself; a second offence will normally be treated much more seriously.

Lateness – especially in ongoing cases – and poor uniform will be followed up on a systematic basis. Staff will contact parents about these matters and parents will be asked to facilitate improvements and/or discuss possible solutions with their sons.

Parents will be notified by the appropriate staff member if their son has been behaving in an unacceptable way, and their help will be requested to solve problems. Boys who consistently fall short of expected ABCI standards after consultation with parents will ultimately be asked to leave the Institute.

Institute expectations regarding personal demeanour and behaviour apply at all Institute activities, whether at Choir Headquarters or not. Parents are asked to support the Institute's ideals and discuss with a boy's teacher any difficulty he or the family might have with our procedures or expectations.

## Fees and Debtors Policy

This policy applies to staff, Board and to parents/guardians whose boy/s are enrolled, or who wish to enrol a boy in the Australian Boys Choral Institute (the Institute).

### Background

Fees are necessary to meet the costs of tuition, including music staff, administration and materials.

Parents/guardians need to be aware that the Institute relies on prompt payment of fees to meet costs. All parents/guardians must pay fees; the Institute has the discretion to withdraw service for non-payment of fees.

### Definitions

Enrolment Fee Payment:	A payment that secures a place that has been offered in a program at the Institute.
Enrolment Application Fee:	A payment, to accompany the enrolment application of a child for a place in a program at the Institute.
Term Fee:	A payment for a period of one term within a program at the Institute.
Summer Music School Fee:	A fee payable to attend the residential Summer Music School held in January each year.
Stagewear Fee:	A fee payable annually by members of the Performing Choir as a contribution to the maintenance and ongoing replacement of Stagewear.
Sibling Discount:	A 25% reduction of term fees available to second and subsequent members of the same immediate family concurrently in training with the Institute. Early Learners, Probationer and The Vocal Consort term fees are not eligible for this discount. The discount will be applied to the lowest fee.

### Policy Statement

#### Values

The Australian Boys Choral Institute is committed to:

- Providing responsible financial management of the Institute, which includes setting fees that will result in a financially viable service and keeping user fees at the lowest possible level.
- Providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with the failure to pay fees, and/or inability to pay outstanding debts.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians.
- Complying with all legislative requirements.

#### Purpose

To provide a clear set of guidelines for the setting, payment and collection of fees, which ensure the viability of the Institute and the equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided.

## **Procedures**

### **Setting fees**

The Board will set fees for the programs each year, taking into consideration the operational costs of the program.

The Board may review and change the fees during the year if the financial viability of the individual programs, or the Institute is at risk.

Parents/guardians will be advised of the fees for the program.

### **Bursaries for families facing financial difficulty**

There are a limited number of bursaries available to assist lower families facing financial difficulty. Details on how to apply will be advertised through Chant before the start of each term, or, prior to Summer School.

### **Payment of accounts**

Term fees will be invoiced to families directly and must be paid by the date indicated on the invoice. Each invoice will be accompanied by payment instructions. Please note that the Institute must receive the enrolment fee and the first term's tuition fees before the boy can commence in the program.

If parents/guardians are experiencing financial hardship, they should contact the General Manager to discuss payment options.

### **Method of payment**

Details of payment will be specified on the invoice.

Payment may be made by:

- direct credit to the Institute bank account BSB: 633 000 Account number: 1810 98674, or
- debit card/credit card facilities in the Choir office

For safety and security reasons, cash payments will not be accepted.

Payment plans, where fees are paid in instalments, are available and must be negotiated directly with the General Manager.

### **Refund of fees**

Fees are not refundable.

There will be no refund of fees if a boy commences a term with the Institute and retires before the term has concluded.

### **Debt recovery**

The Board reserves the right to take action to recover debts owing to the Institute.

Where a family owes a substantial amount of money to the Institute, no further placements in programs will be provided to any child in the family, until all outstanding monies are paid, or a payment plan is agreed to by both parties.

## 2023 Fee Schedule

Invoices are sent via email during the holidays before the start of each term. Term fees are payable at or before the first rehearsal each term. No refund of fees is possible. Term fees cover the costs of weekly rehearsals, two residential weekend workshops per year, learning materials, library, monthly newsletters, Stagewear etc.

### ***Tyro, Junior Singer, Senior Singer/Performing Squad***

Term fee (4 terms per year)	\$570
Annual Stagewear fee (Performing Squad only)	\$40

### ***Probationers***

Enrolment fee	\$100 (one off)
Term fee (4 terms per year)	\$375

### ***Cambiata***

Term fee (4 terms per year)	\$460
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### ***Kelly Gang***

Term fee (4 terms per year)	\$400
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### ***The Vocal Consort***

Annual fee	\$450
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A 25% Sibling Discount on term fees is available for second and subsequent members of the same family currently in training with the Institute. The discounted tuition fee does not apply to Early Learners, Probationers, The Vocal Consort, stage-wear contributions or the Summer Music School. The discount will be applied to the lowest fee.

## Residential Programs

Weekend Workshop costs are covered by the term fees.

Summer Music School costs are in addition to term fees and vary from year to year. Parents are advised of the cost in advance and payment may be made by instalments, usually due in mid/late November and mid-December.

As an indication, the costs for the 2023 Summer School were:

- \$1050 for 7 days/6 nights (Choir, Senior Singers and Junior Singers)
- \$625 for 4 days/3 nights (Tyro)
- \$695 for 4 days/3 nights (Cambiata)
- \$555 for 4 days/3 nights (Kelly Gang).

## Donations

Like other major arts organisations, the Choir cannot rely on income earned through tuition and performance fees to meet all its financial obligations.

Supporters of the Australian Boys Choir are encouraged to make donations, which are acknowledged in concert programs at the following levels:

Platinum Benefactors	\$10,000 and over
Gold Benefactors	\$1,500 - \$9,999
Benefactors	\$500 - \$1,499
Donors	\$200 - \$499
Supporters	- \$199

All donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible. Cheques should be made payable to 'Australian Boys Choral Institute'.

For further details please phone the Office on 03 9818 4818.

## Choir Merchandise

### CDs

The Choir and The Vocal Consort have recorded seven CD's:

Dreams and Desires (2015)	ABC & TVC	
Christmas with the Australian Boys Choir (2013)	ABC & TVC	
Incantations (2012)	TVC	
Calls and Cries (2009)	ABC & TVC	
Journeyings (2004)	TVC	
Sweet & Low (2001)	TVC	
Sons of the South (2000)	ABC & TVC	not available
Zoos & Ships and Candlewax (1996)	ABC	not available

### DVDs

More than Just a Hobby	KG	not available
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