

KU-RING-GAI MALE CHOIR
PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2016

Ladies and Gentlemen

2016 has been the 70th 'Anniversary Year' of the Ku-ring-gai Male Choir and I have been honoured to be the President during this celebratory year.

I am now pleased to present my report for 2016.

In addition to our usual activities and performances we had a special '70th Anniversary' brochure printed entitled 'Seventy years of four-part harmony'. We held a '70th Anniversary Dinner' at the North Ryde RSL Club and also conducted a '70th Anniversary Concert' in aid of 'Streetwork' at the Uniting Church Willoughby.

We performed at seven Retirement Villages this year – an increase of one over last year – and we hope to increase the number again next year.

At Christmas time 2015 - 25 members sang carols and some choir items at a Christmas Evangelical Church Service at the Dougherty Centre Chatswood.

It was rewarding to see the many Aged Care residents enjoying and joining in with our singing.

In May we returned to the Aminya Retirement Village at Baulkham Hills after many years of absence and were warmly welcomed back.

St Stephens Anglican Church Willoughby invited us to sing at their Anzac Day Service and I believe they were so impressed with our singing they will probably ask us back again next year.

In July some of us attended a masterclass conducted by American Dr Jerry Blackmore at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church Sydney.

Here we worked on two new songs 'When I was young and twenty' and 'Loveliest of trees, the cherry now'. Dr. Blackmore's warming up exercises will be remembered as 'very different' and challenging.

Our annual Hornsby RSL concert was a great success with 265 tickets being sold – our best result ever.

Thank you once again to Sherna Kotwal and Kit Ferry who donated our major raffle prizes. Your generosity and artistic skills are truly appreciated.

Also, a special thank you to all the ladies who helped at the door, on the day of the concert.

We have now established a good working relationship with Hornsby RSL and are grateful for their continued support.

In August the Great Western Choir invited us to sing at a joint concert at St Marys.

On the 2nd of September we were invited to sing on the Channel 7 'Morning Show'. This was quite an experience for us all and it was fascinating to see what goes on behind the scenes at a television studio.

As a result of our 70th Anniversary Charity Concert at the Uniting Church Willoughby in October, we were able to donate \$1624 to the 'Streetwork' organization which is one of the two charities we support – the other being the Braille Music Camp for blind children at Mittagong.

On 23rd October we sang three songs at the 'Music Clubs of Australia Memorial Concert' at the Uniting Church Turrumurra. We were honoured to be invited to perform with such talented, professional musicians.

The Ryde Eastwood Music Club concert was conducted in November at the North Ryde Community Centre and we were pleased to be invited back again and to renew our acquaintances.

On the 6th December, instead of having a traditional Christmas Dinner function, Ross Smith organised an informal get together in the St Swithin's church hall Pymble (where we practice during the year).

Several individual members or groups performed various musical items or said a poem etc. and a great 'fun' night was had by all.

Supper followed where we could fraternize and enjoy each other's company.

Of course, all of these functions don't just happen. Someone has to organize them.

May I express my sincere appreciation to the Executive Committee for their expertise and willing support during the year.

Many hours of planning and organizing goes into keeping this choir functioning and I'm pleased to say the excellent team work keeps the choir running like a 'well oiled machine'.

Apart from the Executive Committee there are many other helpers behind the scenes. You know who you are and we are indebted to you all. Thank you.

However, the BIG news this year is that on Australia Day, our esteemed Musical Director Dr. Paul Whiting was awarded the OAM – Medal of Australia in the General Division for service to the community through Choral Music.

Congratulations Paul, we are so blessed to have you as our Conductor and really appreciate the amount of time and effort you put into making us the great choir that we are.

Behind every great man is a great woman and Jenny, may I thank you for being so supportive of Paul and thanks also for organizing the 'Choir Wives' outings during the year.

John Middleton – our Major Concert Coordinator received an award from the Ku-ring-gai Lions Club to recognize his service to the Arts – particularly for his work with the Killara Music Club and the Ku-ring-gai Male Choir.

Congratulations to you too John. Your contribution to organizing our Major Concerts is truly appreciated.

While our accompanist Grace Edwards-Barnetson didn't receive a Public Award, I'm recognizing her now.

Thank you Grace for your long service with our choir. You earned a good rest when you went to Scotland for a holiday during the year and we wish you well for your next holiday.

During Grace's absence we were fortunate enough to have Louise Scott play for us.

Louise quickly adapted to our choir's needs and her musical skills were greatly appreciated.

How grateful we are to have our Associate Artists -Anita Kyle and Naomi Giselle sing with us over our entire Annual Concert Program.

These wonderful women enrich our concerts with their beautiful singing and great personalities. Thank you both and we wish you well for your future musical careers.

Thank you also to our two Assistant Conductors Bob Cameron and Chris Moore.

We are fortunate to have these capable men in the choir and so willing to step in when Paul is not available.

Also - to those choir members who have performed as soloists at concerts during the year - thank you.

Our choir membership now stands at 56 members. That's the highest number of members since the establishment of the choir in 1946.

As a result, it is believed the balance and tone of the choir has improved significantly.

It is encouraging to welcome our new members and hope that our numbers will continue to grow.

Logistically it may be necessary to restrict the number of singers at venues that don't have the space to accommodate us all, but the fact that we are meeting a community need where men want to join a choir is indeed rewarding and we continue to welcome new members

In October, once again, Rasa and Joe Blansjaar (an ex member) invited the choir to their home in Medlow Bath. It was a beautiful spring day – the garden was magnificent and the food sumptuous. Thank you Rasa and Joe – a good time was had by all.

Planning by MCAA for a massed choir event in October 2017 at Wollongong is continuing, and Paul and Bruce Sharpham are our representatives and will keep us informed of details closer to the event.

During the year we applied for a grant from Ku-ring-gai Council in order to have our website updated.

Our application was successful – thanks to the hard work of the Executive Committee and we have now been advised we will receive the sum of \$1800 towards the project.

Individual nametags are now available and everyone is encouraged to wear them at appropriate times.

In closing, 2016 has been a special year with many opportunities to celebrate our 70 years of existence. May we continue to advance the spirit of those Returned Service Men who formed the choir in 1946.

Ladies and gentlemen that concludes my report for 2016.

On behalf of the Executive Committee and myself, Happy Christmas to you and your loved ones and all the best for the New Year.

Ken Taylor
President

