

Special Recess Bulletin 4 - 9 April 2020

Dear Leaders and Members

Well I can see lots and lots of things happening around the traps and what I see is all very impressive. Lots of great initiatives to connect up all your members and embrace them with love and concern.

It has been a fairly long and challenging journey to bring Sing Australia to the point we are now in with all the ups and downs along the way. However, without the support and the great contribution of Leaders and the warm and enthusiastic embracing of the concept by the members we would not now be here helping each other out in what is quite possibly our greatest need for connection in our lives so far. I can't remember ever being advised to stay home and I can't remember a time when we had such an insidious enemy in our midst. I have a feeling though that staying at home and singing and enjoying lots of different things will in fact reshape our thinking and how we do things in many areas of our lives in the future.

With the signs of some improvement in the outlook on our nations response to the Coronavirus we are strongly advised to still maintain our strict regime of social distancing. We must not be tempted to catch up with friends. This enemy has no regard for friends. We do need to heed the messages and stay home with the exception of acquiring important things you need.

I have heard lots of comments about how you miss your singing nights and I can appreciate that of course and I feel for you. I really do. However, just imagine how great it will be when this is all over. So lets occupy our minds about what **will be** and what **can be** when we get through this. I am sure by then we will know more than ever how singing and the contact with each other across our vast country can just be so energising, affirming, supportive, inspirational and strengthening.

The big lesson in our circumstance at the moment surely must be that we just never know what is around the corner and we must know that to shore up our resilience and communication with each other is best done in the good times. I am so proud that our wonderful network has done exactly that. **We were prepared for this time and you are doing brilliantly well.** To help maintain our communication we will continue to present a weekly program of singing with Gian on our special Facebook site – **'Sing Australia Members Only Group.'**

From the many comments, something like 721 (last count) just from Tuesday night, I can see you are enjoying Gian's presentations. She is loving the whole project as well and she asked me to let you know that she

appreciates your very lovely supportive words and encouragement as well. Bringing her into our homes in such a relaxed format does feel very homey and family-ish. Its great! Besides you can sing as loud or as soft as you like!

We are planning to use her next week's presentation as an opportunity to celebrate Sing Australia Day. While Sing Australia Day (12 April) falls on Easter Sunday we thought it best to stay with our Tuesday night routine given that some of you will have locked yourselves into other 'online' things . **Don't forget to choose your favourite 5 songs from the poll on our special Members Only Facebook page. It closes tomorrow. The response to this has been great.**

We are also planning to have an Anzac Day commemoration using our Anzac Book. I am sure that will be very meaningful for many of you. We will be mindful of our WA members so the service will more likely to be at say 2pm Melbourne time. This session will also be seen in Norfolk Island, Turkey, Italy, Spain, Vietnam and Canada. The people in those countries have just been so marvellous to Sing Australia. The good news is that I have been delighted to award **Life Membership** to our contact in the Norfolk Island RSL, **Terrence Grube** as well as one of our contacts on the Gallipoli Peninsula, **Abdurrahim Boz**. **Terrence**, has involved us not only in the Anzac Services on Norfolk Island but also at the RSL and at St Barnabas Chapel over our last 5 visits. **Abdurrahim** was very involved in assisting our 7 tours of Gallipoli and regularly comments or interacts with our Facebook posts. We have two other existing Life Members in Turkey – they are **Haydar Cecic** (our guide) and **Hanifi Araz** (the owner of Hassle Free Travel at Gallipoli). **Haydar** was our fabulous guide for 7 years. He took us all around Turkey. He is a great friend and big supporter of Sing Australia. **Hanifi** has been a big supporter of Sing Australia as well. We loved staying in his Hotels and dining and singing at his Maydos Restaurant at Aceabat. We have maintained contact with them. They will love the connection with us on Anzac Day. Our service will include 'the Ode' of course.

I will also post a separate rendition of the **Turkish Anthem (also in the Anzac song book)** for the benefit of our Turkish friends and for those who have travelled with me to Turkey. I am sure they and you will forgive any mispronunciations. It has been a while since we toured there. Sing Australia conducted 7 tours on consecutive years from 2005 to 2011. Some 300 or so members participated in those tours over the years. I used to sing the Turkish Anthem at the Dawn Service and at Lone Pine, very ably supported by members of the Sing Australia tour group. Those opportunities presented very memorable and lasting experiences for all of us.

I also intend to sing a few songs from time to time on this special Facebook Page that I hope will be uplifting. It is strange how things work out. I decided to put my singing career aside many years ago to set up and manage Sing Australia because I thought it was far more satisfying to encourage others to sing than to pursue a singing career. As it transpires, my solo singing may now, after all the years, play its most important role in uplifting people at this difficult time. I hope that is what it does.

Membership

Direct Debits – Progress report. We now have 1,380 signed up. Di in our Melbourne Head Office is doing a great job assisting members not only to sign up but to help them understand how it all works and to put their mind at rest.

Piano Backing

Given that CD production is now fairly expensive and that fewer people have CD players now we are producing USB sticks of the piano accompaniments of Songbook 1, Songbooks 6 and Songs around the Piano Book 4. They can be ordered on the Leader Merchandise, which is now on the Sing Australia Website under Members Information.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Easter. We hope you can make the best of it. Keeping safe will obviously be a high priority and staying in touch with family and friends. Easter for many is a special time of the year but probably for everyone a special time for reflection. Easter speaks to the heart of being positive. Regardless of your beliefs it is about death and about resurrection. It is about despair and hope. It's about darkness and light. It gives us the optimism of new life – afterall the symbol of the Easter Egg in many cultures.

We will get through this bleak and uncertain time, Easter Eggs and all.

Take care everyone – stay safe – Just remember to think about writing a letter to those not on computers and always remember that you can contact the Head Office during the week and me at any time on info@singaustralia.com.au

Love and best wishes from our mighty team Margaret, Mardi, Gian and Di .

Love

Colin

Colin Slater
National Director