

Special Recess Bulletin No 5 – 17 April 2020

To Leaders and Members

Hi everyone

How are you all managing? I reckon you will be starring! I do think we are starting to get to know ourselves pretty well by now. It's probably the first time in quite a while when we can just sit and think about who we are but even more importantly about others. It gives us time to put a few things in perspective. It certainly makes one think about the things that are most important. For all these reasons and more we will probably find some very positive outcomes when we come out of our confinement. We will most certainly have a greater awareness of the power of friendship not only just from our nearest and dearest but from those in our Sing Australia network where we are all willing each other to be safe and to take care.

A thought

One of the things I love to do is to use my imagination as a way of feeling close to all of you. So let me try this on. When we start our Tuesday night sessions and I start seeing all the frantic clicks of comments on Facebook going flat out with messages of 'Hi', 'It's Port Lincoln here', 'Hi Betty', 'Loving this' 'Hi Gian' and so on, I start to feel deeply emotional in exactly the same way as I do at an opening event at a National Gathering. My eyes well up and I get the old classic lump in the throat. What is it? Well, I think there is much to know about the metaphysical as there is about the physical. I feel that when we think about someone or even a group who we are separated from by distance our thoughts in some ways travel to where they are. So in reverse when we feel the presence of people – they are actually with us but just not physically. So in my imagination I never feel alone. When I sing with Gian in the room where I am watching her session I am not only singing with her I can actually feel the very powerful presence of everyone singing with me. This feeling has become more pronounced in our time of isolation where we can dispense with the usual and perhaps mundane things of a normal day. We haven't just come home from work or from shopping or a walk we know we are in isolation. That can give way to a new form of communication – one that is more identifiable to how for instance we might love someone or care for someone. When we sing with Gian in the solitude of our homes I imagine our voices are all in fact mingling in a spiritual dimension with each other – creating a wonderful sense of community and a bonding that transcends our normal expectation of communication. We are not alone. We are not singing alone and yet we can more honestly hear our own voice and come to love it as one of our most important forms of emotional expression. A time that sees no place for self judgement or criticism but a precious time that gives way to a thankfulness that our voices in all their array of colour and expression can help us be part of this universal truth. When we sing anywhere we leave our spirit to dance with the spirits that have been before us. When we sing, our voices cry out into the wilderness of the universe and makes sense out of it all. I just wanted to share that with you. Don't freak out – be comforted by the notion that we are all together at all times - Loving and caring for each other. We are experiencing perhaps the greatest gift of all. Stay safe.

Now for some news.

Tuesday night

This Tuesday we are singing with Gian from Songbook 4 on the Sing Australia Members Only Group facebook site. We have run a poll and the outcome of that will mean that we will be singing the top 10. Just remember the session starts at **7.30pm Melbourne time and its best to log on to the site at 7.25pm** in readiness for the start right on 7.30pm

Anzac Day

We are working up a great Anzac Day commemoration on our special Facebook site. We have made contact with our friends in Turkey. They will be sharing with us. In reverse they have requested that I make a recording of me singing the anthems of Australia, New Zealand and Turkey. We will also have the involvement of our friends from Norfolk Island where we were supposed to have been for this Anzac Day. I have also sent them a recording of the hymns that we normally lead and they will be played on their radio station for Anzac Day as they are in absolute lock down. In return I have asked Terrence Grube from their RSL to send us his rendition of the Pitcairn Anthem that he normally sings on Anzac Day. We are proposing to run this session at **11am Melbourne time (log on at 10.55am** on Anzac Day as many of you will probably want to see your own services in your towns and cities. Gian will post more information next week. But we will be singing from the Sing Australia Anzac Songbook.

A big thanks to Gian for the wonderful sessions to date. Your leading and encouragement is brilliant. A big thanks for her partner Chris who is providing some technical support. He also has to entertain the kids in another room. Thanks a lot both of you. Thanks to Mardi for logging on the many members – we have 1200 on this group site now.

Connecting to the Facebook Site.

(thanks to the simple explanation provided by Brendan Hagstrom (Co Leader Ringwood) Please see instructions in the second attachment with visuals.

1. Login to Facebook
2. On your profile page enter the name of the Group '**Sing Australia Members Only Group**' in the search area next to the f symbol at the top left of the page
3. Click on the + Join button.
4. That will be accepted when Mardi gets to it. Once you are on you can just enter the Facebook group each time and you will be on.

You may first have to join Facebook but that will be just a matter of following the prompts.

Could I just make a special plea – do not invite non-members to this member's only site because they will of course be declined. That is they must be current members.

Membership

Our membership is increasing on the Direct Debit – we are now approaching 1500 and we have by no means reached the halfway point of renewals as yet. Thanks Mardi and Di for your great work on this.

Ideas for your group

Lots of groups are finding excellent ways of engaging with their members in this period of isolation

1. Leaders send out a weekly Bulletin to their members providing information on ideas to occupy the time. They invariably share what they are doing or they may share an activity brought to their notice by a member.
2. Leaders organise to send a list of songs for the week and they provide a link to a Youtube version that they can sing along to
3. Leaders organise a Zoom chat with various members. Just remember zoom is more successful as a chat forum than it is for singing. The latter can get quite seriously out of sync.
4. Leaders are organising with their accompanist or conductor to provide a short video of a few songs from our songbooks that members can sing along to.
5. Some groups share experiences of a song from our songbooks that relates to an important time or place in their life
6. Ring someone you are thinking of or write to someone who does not have a computer. Just remember when you write – wash your hands first and the wash your hands after you have opened it and read it. Now that's taking it seriously but we do have to.

Finally, **a tip.** If you are by yourself and you start arguing with yourself just make sure you are even handed. It's not nice if it gets one sided! To get the right balance always argue in front of a mirror.

Lots of love from Margaret, Mardi, Gian and Di and Me.

Colin

Colin Slater
National Director