



NATIONAL BOYS CHOIR  
— OF AUSTRALIA —

# Handbook

**2019 edition**

Published by  
The National Boys Choir of Australia Inc.  
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Dear Parent,

Welcome to the Performing Choir of The National Boys Choir of Australia Incorporated. Your son has progressed in an organisation that not only promotes music, but one that will help him develop personal skills, confidence and self-discipline.

Involvement with the Choir will create many opportunities that are not readily available to other boys in the community and your son stands to benefit substantially from his participation.

Naturally for a boy to be successful in the Performing Choir, he will require a commitment of support from his parents. As with most parents who have had boys in the Choir, you will find that your commitment is more than compensated for by the benefits and opportunities flowing to your son.

In extending to you a very sincere welcome to the Performing Choir, we hope that our association will be mutually beneficial and will hold for you many lasting and satisfying memories long after your son's involvement with the Choir. We hope that this handbook will be a useful guide in enabling you to quickly gain an understanding of the Choir's principles and guidelines.



Rex Wenn  
Chairman  
Management Committee  
NATIONAL BOYS CHOIR OF AUSTRALIA INC.



# National Boys Choir of Australia Inc.

## **VISION**

To be recognized as one of the finest boys choirs in the world.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

To foster and encourage a musical community committed to providing choristers with:

An excellent choral music education

An opportunity to develop a love of singing

The opportunity for music and performance to contribute to their overall development, including self discipline, self confidence and interpersonal skills

Leadership opportunities

The guiding principles in focusing on our mission are:

Respect for each individual chorister

The value of music as a contributor to the all round education of the young

A commitment to best practice in choral education

# National Boys Choir of Australia Inc.

The National Boys Choir of Australia is a not for profit incorporated association. The Committee of Management is comprised as follows:

<b>President</b>	Rex Wenn
<b>Artistic Directors</b>	Andrew Bainbridge Philip Carmody
<b>Finance Director</b>	Joe Arena
<b>Board Members</b>	Alexandra Boemo Jan Eldred Judy Hooper Linda Latimer Stephen Mansour Keith Mortimer

All operations of the Choir are the responsibility of this Committee, and all activities conducted in the name of National Boys Choir of Australia Inc. come under its guidance.

<b>Administrative Staff</b>	<b>Andrew Bainbridge</b>	ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR <a href="mailto:andrew.bainbridge@nationalboyschoir.com.au">andrew.bainbridge@nationalboyschoir.com.au</a>	
	<b>Jan Eldred &amp; Justine de Jonge</b>	OFFICE ADMINISTRATION <a href="mailto:office@nationalboyschoir.com.au">office@nationalboyschoir.com.au</a>	9872 4480
	<b>Joe Arena</b>	FINANCE DIRECTOR <a href="mailto:office@nationalboyschoir.com.au">office@nationalboyschoir.com.au</a>	
	<b>Maddy Connellan</b>	WARDROBE All clothing requirements – wardrobe and stagewear <a href="mailto:madagazkah@hotmail.com">madagazkah@hotmail.com</a>	0488 089 552
<b>Artistic Staff</b>	<b>Andrew Bainbridge</b>	CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTOR	9872 4480
	<b>Philip Carmody</b>	CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTOR	9872 4480
	<b>Robyn Cochrane</b>	ACCOMPANIST -Performing Choir	9872 4480



<b>Mandy Lyn Brook</b>	ELEMENTARY & JUNIOR CHOIRS DIRECTOR TUTOR - Performing Choir
<b>Iris Ferwerda</b>	TUTOR - - Elementary Choristers - Junior Choristers
<b>Ben Taylor</b>	ACCOMPANIST - Elementary Choristers - Junior Choristers

## Staff

NBCA has a policy of selecting qualified and highly competent staff. Many are trained teachers and have developed the special skills required for handling large groups of children. This policy has served the Choir well over many years and is reflected in the tone and discipline exhibited by the choristers.

The behaviour of the choristers and the manner in which they conduct themselves are the subject of continuing favourable comment, and the Choir has a strong sense of pride in maintaining these standards.

All Staff hold a current 'Working with Children' card.

All Staff hold a nationally recognised Level 2 First Aid and Management of Anaphylaxis Certificates and undertake annual refresher courses.

## Office/Rehearsal Venue

3/9 Pilgrim Court, Ringwood 3134 +61 3 9872 4480

Email: [office@nationalboyschoir.com.au](mailto:office@nationalboyschoir.com.au)  
[www.nationalboyschoir.com.au](http://www.nationalboyschoir.com.au)

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9am – 3pm  
Wednesday 10.30am – 6.30pm  
Friday 1.30pm – 7.30pm

An answering machine will operate outside these hours

# The National Boys Choir of Australia

The National Boys Choir of Australia is a special and unique organization.

Founded in 1964, it is conducted by a skilled, professional group dedicated to developing and maintaining a world-class youth choir. The boys, aged from seven to fifteen are drawn from all over Melbourne. They commence their training with twelve months as elementary choristers, followed by a further twelve months as junior choristers. These two years introduce the boys to the basic tenets of choral work and prepare them for graduation into the Performing Choir.

It requires no small degree of commitment and self-discipline to attend weekly or twice-weekly rehearsals and regular music workshop weekends, sometimes at the expense of other activities. However, the boys enthusiastically present ever more challenging repertoires with music ranging from early motets and madrigals through to the Baroque, Classical and Romantic periods to musical comedy, art songs and folk songs from many lands and contemporary works.

It is indeed a credit to both the music staff and the boys that the Choir consistently performs with such enjoyment and polish, always attaining a high degree of excellence.

## **Aims of the National Boys Choir of Australia**

1. To cultivate a fine choral singing standard in order to promote Australia and Australian music making.
2. To develop in choristers good essential vocal production, based on the traditional European bel canto style.
3. To develop self-discipline and poise in choristers through attaining excellence in voice production and presentation.

## **Behavioural Policy**

For any organisation the size of NBCA to function professionally and efficiently, it requires a good tone of co-operation and respect for each other among its members.

NBCA has a behavioural policy which encourages these attributes among its members. This should not be interpreted as something harsh or demeaning. On the contrary, the choristers are encouraged to respect each other while acknowledging the fact that each of them is different in some way and that we all have different strengths and weaknesses.

The policy of the Choir is also aimed at developing self-control and self-discipline within each chorister by making him responsible for his actions. We believe that each chorister should have the opportunity to learn without interference from others and that time spent in the Choir should serve as a memorable experience of personal satisfaction and achievement with the passing years.

## **Attendance**

The music sung by the choristers can be quite complex. It is important for choristers to attend all scheduled rehearsals, and music workshops. Absences should be rare and only where very special circumstances exist. If your son has a reason to be absent, please call the office and leave an apology - an answering machine operates outside office hours.

Attendance records are perused when choristers are selected for specific functions and engagements.

## **Punctuality**

Punctuality is a most important aspect of self-discipline and it is essential boys are punctual for rehearsals and at performances. Arrival and departure times for performances are communicated to parents through the weekly circulars.

## **Absenteeism**

If your son is selected for a performance and is unexpectedly unavailable, you must contact the Artistic Administrator, Mr Andrew Bainbridge, so a suitable replacement can be found. This is to ensure a balance of voice parts.

## **Leave of Absence**

Any chorister who is intending to be absent from Choir for an extended period may apply for leave of absence. Whilst this would, depending on the circumstances, normally be granted, the duration of such leave may affect a chorister's selection for certain performances and other activities.

As a general guide, choristers who take approved extended leave of a full term or more due to family temporary relocation/sabbatical etc will be expected to pay 50% of tuition fees during their absence. Choristers taking part term leave, including for short term illness, will be expected to pay fees in full.

## **Rehearsals**

Every Friday night during school terms at 3/9 Pilgrim Court, Ringwood, Victoria.

Arrive 6.50pm

Rehearsal commences 7pm

Rehearsal concludes/depart 9.30pm

Monday sectional rehearsals 5pm - 7pm

A schedule for Monday rehearsals is distributed at the beginning of each term.

Parents are requested to adhere to the following:

1. Rehearsal rooms are closed to all but choristers and staff.
2. Punctuality is essential.
3. Pre-rehearsal preparation by the Artistic Staff is a most important element of the efficient

running of any rehearsal. Accordingly, interviews/discussions involving Artistic Staff at those times are discouraged. An Administrative Staff member is in attendance to handle enquiries or take messages for Artistic Staff. As a general rule, Artistic Staff are available for discussion at the conclusion of rehearsals.

There is an area set aside where parents can wait during rehearsals. Parents are encouraged to use this area and to get to know each other. Tea and coffee facilities are available.

## **Contacting the Choir**

Parents needing to contact the Choir can do so by phoning the Choir's office on 9872 4480 during office hours – refer page 9. Alternatively, you may communicate with staff in writing via email [office@nationalboyschoir.com.au](mailto:office@nationalboyschoir.com.au)

During the year, meetings of parents are called by the Choir's Management to communicate practical developments or future planning (eg. tours).

## **Communication**

(Weekly Circulars)

The main form of communication with parents is by weekly circular every Friday night, sent as an email and available on the Choir website - via the Choir Community on the NBCA website.

A hard copy is available on request. Weekly circulars are dated and numbered.

We urge parents to regularly access and check circulars to avoid missing any important information.

Please file them away carefully for future reference.

## **Distribution of Notices**

Notification other than weekly circulars will be distributed via your son's numbered pigeon hole. These may include, child employment papers, any tour/travel information, special occasion events etc.

Any return correspondence or payments can be handed into the office – there is an after-hours drop box directly beneath the office reception window if the office is unattended. This is a locked box and will be cleared when the office is next attended.

## **Fees**

The NBCA is a not-for-profit organization.

Fee invoices will be emailed in the first week of each term and payment is due within 14 days. Prompt payment is appreciated. We accept EFT transfer, MasterCard & Visa payments.

Term fees and levies are normally not refundable.

Tuition fee income alone does not maintain the Choir as a self-sufficient organisation so consequently the Choir supplements its income from other sources (eg. levies, performances, fundraising) in order to meet staffing costs, building maintenance, expenditure on music library, wardrobe and administrative overheads.

Separate to music and wardrobe levies parents are also required to pay refundable deposits totalling \$300.00 (covering Music \$50.00, Wardrobe \$150.00 and Stagewear \$100.00). These 'once off' deposits are collected progressively during the Elementary year and are refunded when a chorister leaves the Choir and all loaned Choir music, wardrobe and stagewear items have been returned in good condition.

In circumstances where parents experience a temporary inability to pay choir accounts, the Choir will be willing to consider an alternative payment schedule. Parents may approach the Treasurer to discuss such situations which will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Term fees and levies are normally not refundable.

## **Refunds for departing choristers**

Where a chorister has attended choir rehearsals, but decides not to continue with the Choir, a refund of up to 50% of the current term's fees and levies may be allowed. If more than half of a term has expired at the time of departure, there will be no reduction and the full term fees/levies must be paid.

Where a chorister departs due to voice change, fees/levies will be charged up to the date of last attendance

## **Refundable Deposits**

Refundable Wardrobe, Stagewear & Music Deposits – collected during the choristers first year – will be returned when the following items are returned clean and in good condition.

(also refer section on Wardrobe page 24)

Robe

Black Trousers

Uniform bag (short) and Robe bag (long)

NBCA Blazer

Taupe Trousers

White Shirts - long and short sleeved

NBCA Tie

and all NBCA Music, including photocopies

When a chorister leaves, the Choir reserves the right to offset refundable deposits against any unpaid choir fees/levies.

## **Fundraising**

The income from fundraising events makes an important contribution in offsetting some of the Choir's operating costs; these activities also provide the opportunity for the Choir Community to meet and socialise.

A plan of fundraising events is established at the beginning of each year and this is overseen by the Choir's Fundraising Co-ordinator. Parents are invited to join or assist the committee set up to organise each activity.

## **Health and Emergency Contacts (HEC) details**

Parents are asked to complete a **Health and Emergency Contacts** (HEC) form at the beginning of each year. The care and wellbeing of all boys is of primary importance and informing staff of any special medical conditions (ie allergies, respiratory issues etc) is essential.

While this information is sought and revised annually, it is important that parents update this progressively as necessary, so that the Choir is always in the position of ensuring the well-being of choristers when undertaking any choir activities.

## **Consent to use Image**

Over the course of your son's commitment with the National Boys Choir of Australia there may be opportunities for him to participate in commercial ventures on behalf of the Choir.

No boy is individually remunerated for activities which may promote the National Boys Choir of Australia through use of sound recording or vision either electronically or in print media.

## **Music Workshops**

The Choir conducts Music Workshops at the Choir premises for the choristers to perfect their repertoire before major concerts and tours. These are fairly intensive but the results are well worth the effort. Parents are notified well in advance of the workshop dates.



## **Performance Selection**

Once choristers enter the Performing Choir they are eligible for selection for all performances. Choristers who pass their initial training years and enter the Performing Choir are all given the opportunity to perform. However, the whole Choir is not always required and selection of choristers has to be made. In general, Artistic Directors choose choristers on the basis of obtaining a balance between singing parts and the criteria listed for tour selection. The part balance is most important for the sound of the Choir.

Choristers are notified by weekly circular when they are selected for a performance.

## **Tour Selection**

In planning tours interstate or overseas, parents are asked via the weekly circular about the availability of their son to tour. A selection of choristers is made using the following criteria:

1. Quality of the voice at the time of selection audition.
2. Knowledge of the program demonstrated by the chorister.
3. Good attitude and behaviour in evidence at rehearsals, performances, and weekend workshops.
4. Maturity of the chorister (i.e. the ability to be independent enough to cope with the tour). This is not gauged by the chronological age of the chorister - some nine year olds are more mature, capable and reliable than some eleven or twelve year olds.
5. Obtaining a balance of voice parts.

Because selection takes place some months prior to the commencement of the tour, the Management of NBCA reserves the right to review the selection of any chorister chosen to tour if it believes that the chorister fails to meet any of the criteria prior to the tour commencing.

## **Non-choir Performances**

It is our policy to encourage choristers in a variety of musical experiences. Performances by choristers outside choir are often a source of rewarding experience for both choristers and the Choir collectively. Conversely, poor performance or bad behaviour from a chorister involved with such a performance will reflect on him and the Choir's reputation.

For this reason, we expect choristers to discuss any invitation to take part in such performances. The upholding of our reputation as an organization and our confidence in a chorister's ability to both perform and behave well are factors considered.

Choristers should also discuss with one of the Artistic Directors any request to perform in optional school activities such as a musical. It is our policy to support all school activities. Where these activities are not compulsory and may impinge on a chorister's involvement with the Choir, some discussion should be sought.

The main concern of the Choir is to ensure choristers don't take on too many commitments and restrict the possibility of their participation in a choir activity.

## **Retiring or Departing the Choir**

Boys generally remain as Performing Choristers until their voice begins to change. Awards for extensive service are presented to choristers who meet one of the following criteria:

1. The chorister is leaving due to voice change  
*or*
2. The chorister is completing Year 8 at school and has decided to leave after discussion with Mr Bainbridge and Mr Carmody. (Boys in this category are generally very close to the voice change.)

Boys who leave and do not meet the above criteria

are not entitled to receive an award on stage formally acknowledging their time with the Choir. However, after leaving the Choir they will be forever an Old Boy of the National Boys Choir of Australia and receive any notices and invitations that are sent to Old boys.

## **Parents**

Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the progress of their son through the Choir.

It is important for parents to have a good understanding of the aims and ideals of the Choir and its method of operation. The Management of the Choir is always mindful of costs and every effort is taken to ensure that expenses are responsibly managed.

Parents are therefore asked, in addition to paying the fees required, to support the Choir in every way possible. It is anticipated that parents will promote the sale of tickets to the two major concerts (mid-year and Christmas) as this enables Management to minimise fees and charges paid by parents. After so many weeks of striving for perfection during rehearsals, a large audience provides a sense of achievement and incentive for the choristers.

## **Parental Involvement**

Parent support is strongly encouraged and parents are asked to register their names and occupations to enable Management to best utilise our combined talents in the better interests of the Choir.

### **Areas of Parental involvement include:**

- Building/Maintenance and Improvements
- Chorister Supervision\*
- Fund Raising
- Medical/Nursing Assistance\*
- Music Library
- Transport of Concert Equipment
- Wardrobe Assistance\*

\*Volunteer Parents who come in direct contact with boys will require a current Working With Children Card.

## Grooming

The visual presentation of the Choir should complement the musical proficiency of the Choir. Engagements on television in particular are as dependent on our image as our sound. For this reason we point out some simple policies regarding grooming:

**Hair** - extremes of style are unacceptable. Any hairstyle which draws unnecessary attention to a particular chorister would detract from the collective image we are endeavouring to project.

**Jewellery** - In keeping with our collective image, choristers are not permitted to wear jewellery of any kind whenever street uniform or stage wear is worn.

## WARDROBE

For professional reasons the Choir has specific uniforms for rehearsals, touring, official functions and performances.

Choir uniform, or parts of it, should only be worn when attending choir functions. The Choir uniform identifies the Choir, not the individual chorister, therefore it is not to be worn as every day wear. It is expected that choristers' behaviour will be exemplary while in uniform.

When travelling with the Choir, choristers are to wear choir uniform as stipulated by notice. Please ensure your son is in the correct designated dress for each occasion.

All articles of clothing must be clearly named. On no account must hired clothing be permanently marked. No iron-on tape is to be used. Sew-on name tags only please.

## **What to Wear When**

Clothing requirements for each performance and associated rehearsals are stipulated in choir weekly circulars, usually in the week prior to the engagement.

### **Rehearsals**

#### **Rugby Top and Polo Shirt**

Each chorister will purchase a choir polo shirt and blue rugby top. They are to be worn to rehearsal and music workshops unless specifically instructed otherwise.

Choristers are to wear their polo shirt with neat casual trousers/shorts to all rehearsals, and their rugby top as the weather dictates.

### **Stagewear**

- Robe

#### **Robe and Accessories**

Robes are choir property and while you have the use of these robes they must be cared for appropriately.

Robes are never to be washed - remove the fur collar which is attached with Velcro and dry clean only.

Robes are to be pressed and checked in advance of each function to ensure that all buttons are securely fastened and robe and sleeve hems are secure. Failure to do so may result in your son being asked to sit out of a performance - an uncared for robe detracts from the professionalism of the total performance.

#### **Fitting Instructions**

Robe length must be checked regularly. Check without chorister wearing shoes or belt, hands by side and looking straight ahead.

Choristers of slight build: robe must actually touch the floor all around.

Choristers of stockier build: robe must not only touch

the floor all round but must overlap by 1.25cm to 1.8cm.

If length of robe has been inspected by wardrobe staff at rehearsal or special robe check, please ensure any necessary alterations to the hem are completed.

**Robe Bag** – longer version of the Uniform (Stagewear) bag

Every chorister is issued with a robe bag to protect his robe. Robes must always be brought to a performance (or to rehearsal for refitting, etc.) inside the robe bag. Please wash the robe bag periodically.

**Pocket in robe bag must contain:**

**White low neck T-shirt:** plain style cotton with a 'V' neck. If necessary cut 'V' neck into T-shirt, if this is not done the shirt will show above the robe collar. Wash after each performance.

*Please note:* White T-shirt must be worn at all times underneath the robe. This is not for warmth but for hygiene, and helps extend the life of the robes.

**White socks:** medium length cotton socks. Wash after every performance.

**White Jiffies:** plain styling, plain white (to be purchased from Choir). Clean when necessary with White Lily, Jiff or similar.

**Comb or Hair Brush.**

*\*White robe belts and sashes, are retained by the Choir and are given out before each performance and collected afterwards.*

- Blacks

**Black Performance Trousers:** are issued to each chorister and are to be hemmed to just touch the instep so that the front crease is perfectly straight.

**Uniform Bag** (sometimes referred to as Stagewear bag) – shorter version of Robe Bag

Every chorister is issued with a uniform bag to protect his NBCA wardrobe items. Stagewear must always be carried to a performance (or rehearsal, for refitting, etc.) inside the uniform bag. Please wash this bag periodically.

When stagewear has been checked or refitted, check to see whether alterations are required.

### **Spare Clothing**

A limited number of spare T-shirts, socks and jiffies are available for loan at concerts should any boy forget an item. Clothing so loaned should be taken home after the performance and washed and returned to the next rehearsal (or performance if sooner).

## **Streetwear**

**Full Uniform** Consists of:

- NBCA blazer,
- taupe trousers
- white long or short sleeve shirt,
- NBCA tie,
- Black belt\*
- black socks\* and black shoes\*

\*items to be provided by chorister.

Short or long sleeve shirts will be nominated in 'What to Wear' when full event details are listed in the circular.

All clothing should be well named with sew on labels.

Full uniform must be worn to all official NBCA functions.

## Hiring (Levy) and Deposit System

All stagewear/streetwear remains the property of the National Boys Choir of Australia.

Stagewear/streetwear levies must be paid before stagewear/ streetwear will be issued.

Stagewear/ streetwear is not to be worn under any circumstances for anything other than NBCA concerts or other official engagements.

When leaving the Choir, choristers must return all stagewear/ streetwear promptly.

Stagewear/ streetwear charges are divided into:

**Deposits** – refundable.

When all stagewear/ streetwear is returned in good condition.

**Annual Hiring Fee** (Levy) - non-refundable. Covers wear and tear and replacement of stagewear/ streetwear due to normal, careful use. It does not cover loss or neglect.

## Care of NBCA Clothing

### **Robe**

Press before each performance. Dry clean as required and before exchange.

### **Black Trousers**

Press before each performance. To be dry cleaned as required

### **Robe (long) and Uniform (short) Bags**

Wash periodically.

### **Taupe Trousers**

Hem to just touch the instep so that the front crease is perfectly straight. Wash or dry clean as required.



**White Streetwear Shirts**

Wash separately from other laundry after each use and dry out of direct sunlight.

**NBCA Tie**

Dry clean as required and before exchange.

**NBCA Blazer**

Dry Clean Only

**NBCA Woollen Jumper**

Dry Clean Only

**Uniform & Stagewear Exchange**

All uniform clothing should fit the chorister comfortably at all times.

For hired clothing there is no cost involved in the exchange from one size to another.

Please ensure that all clothing is returned in good condition for exchange, otherwise dry cleaning costs will be deducted from the refundable deposit.

All clothing for return or exchange must be bagged, with the name of the chorister inside the bag and a list of items returned.

## **Clothing**

- Hired from Choir

### **Stagewear**

Robe (long) Bag  
Robe  
Black Performance  
Trousers  
White Performance Shirt

### **Streetwear**

Stagewear (short) Bag  
NBCA Blazer  
Taupe Trousers  
NBCA Tie  
White long sleeve shirt  
White short sleeve shirt

## **Clothing**

- Purchased/  
Provided by  
chorister

### **Purchased from Choir**

NBCA Polo Top  
NBCA Rugby Top  
White Jiffies

### **Provided by Choristers**

Black Belt  
Black Socks  
Black Shoes  
White low neck T-Shirt  
White Socks





