

Brisbane Chorale Inc.

Strategic Plan 2014-2018







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About us

The Brisbane Chorale is a symphonic chorus of over 100 voices based in Queensland, Australia, with a reputation for exceptional choral performances. We perform a wide variety of complex musical literature either accompanied by a full orchestra, smaller ensemble or without musical accompaniment. Our repertoire is broad and extensive. In recent years this has included the great oratorios, e.g. Mendelssohn's Elijah, Verdi's Requiem, Mozart's Requiem and Handel's Messiah, and compelling performances of contemporary works such as Orff's Carmina Burana, Vaughan Williams' A Sea Symphony, and the world premiere of Elena Kats-Chernin's Symphonia Eluvium.

Since its beginnings in 1983 as a new force in choral music the Brisbane Chorale has made its mark in the cultural landscape of Brisbane, Queensland and Australia. In 1997 the Brisbane Chorale became an independent incorporated association, Brisbane Chorale Inc., with its own constitution. Its path has traversed

exciting repertoire, events and collaborations.

We have performed Australian premieres of numerous works, commissioned various works by Australian composers and recorded several works for ABC Classics and other labels. The Brisbane Chorale has sung in staged productions, film screenings and concert versions of musicals. We've been privileged to work with Brisbane's major orchestras, choirs and many performance organisations and festivals. We are indebted to the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University for its support and appreciate the continued mutually beneficial affiliation. We also value our association with 4MBS Classic FM.

We are intent on bringing audiences the joy, wonder and beauty of great works by composers past and present and giving back to the community where we can. Today, the Brisbane Chorale is a much-loved fixture in the musical calendar of our city and beyond.

"I don't sing because I'm happy; I'm happy because I sing."

- William James



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About this strategic plan

"In all of life, there are sequential stages of growth and development. ... Each step is important and each one takes time."

- Stephen Covey

For more than 30 years the Brisbane Chorale has seen several major phases of strategic development, including the establishment of the Brisbane Chorale as a community choir by the Queensland Conservatorium and our growth towards incorporation as Brisbane Chorale Inc. in 1997. Our strategic directions have focussed on establishing our product, the Brisbane Chorale, maintaining mutually beneficial associations with the Queensland Conservatorium and key performance partners and perfecting what we have.

The world of classical music entertainment is changing. It is important we prepare for this changing environment and that our revised future direction, strategies and programmes of Brisbane Chorale Inc. be carefully considered and changes put in place to address the requirements of the market place for our product, the Brisbane Chorale.

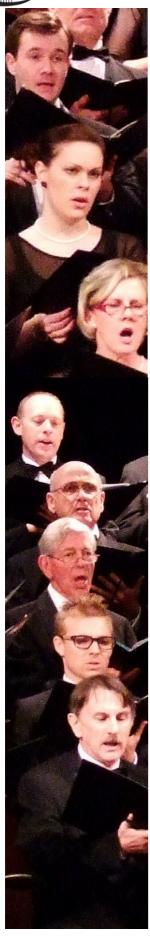
A Strategic Planning Day was held in October 2013 to explore the next stage of development for Brisbane Chorale Inc., the outcomes of which have informed our revised and updated strategic plan. Brisbane Chorale Inc.'s strategic plan aligns our vision, mission and core values with highly appropriate strategic goals, priorities and actions required to meet the changing expectations of the unpredictable terrain of the performance arts over the next five years.

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us"

- Oliver Wendell Holmes







Our vision

Our vision provides the focus for the association.

To be one of Australia's premier symphonic choirs.

Our mission

Our mission is our reason for being and is a simple commitment to our audience, artists and members.

To provide lovers of fine music the opportunity to experience high quality choral music at an exceptional level for the benefit of the wider community.

To deliver on our vision and our mission, over the next five years we will explore alternative performance approaches and develop new collaborative opportunities.

There are many factors that will affect our ability to achieve our vision and mission:

- demand for, and quality of, our performances
- changing audience expectations
- shifting community demographics
- sustainable membership and philanthropic mechanisms.

In five years, we will:

- be a high profile arts organisation in Queensland
- be collaborating with a broader spectrum of arts organisations
- have extended the diversity of our repertoire
- have a sustainable membership base that reflects changing community demographics.



Our core values

Our core values describe how we conduct ourselves.

Quality

We embrace the highest levels of artistic expression and professionalism. We encourage choristers to stretch their boundaries and creativity. We are committed to supporting and inspiring choral singers. We believe that our professionalism is vital to maintaining a robust and prosperous arts community.

Artistic

We inspire people of all ages to develop an appreciation for the choral arts. We provide educational enrichment for the people we touch. We collaborate with other arts organisations to provide our audiences with extraordinary musical experiences.

Planning

We share commitment to the Brisbane Chorale and plan for a sustainable association that uses our collective intelligence. We value sound organisational governance, operational efficiency and fiscal discipline.

Social engagement

We enjoy the regular contact with people who share our passion for choral singing. We value the joy, teamwork, support and friendships it brings. We share our joy of choral singing with our families and friends and provide them with opportunities to be involved. We enrich our community and those who support us. We believe that choral singing can bring about positive social change and well-being.

Fun

We believe our experience with the Brisbane Chorale should be joyful. We enjoy the health benefits of choral singing. We have fun while maintaining the quality of our music.





Our objectives

Our objectives are the overall goals of Brisbane Chorale Inc.

- To perform outstanding choral music in all its genres and eras.
- To perform as a symphonic chorus to the highest standard.
- To seek engagements or collaborate with other groups or organisations in the performance of choral music.
- To foster and promote the performance and appreciation of choral music.
- To provide practical support to assist others who share our core values.







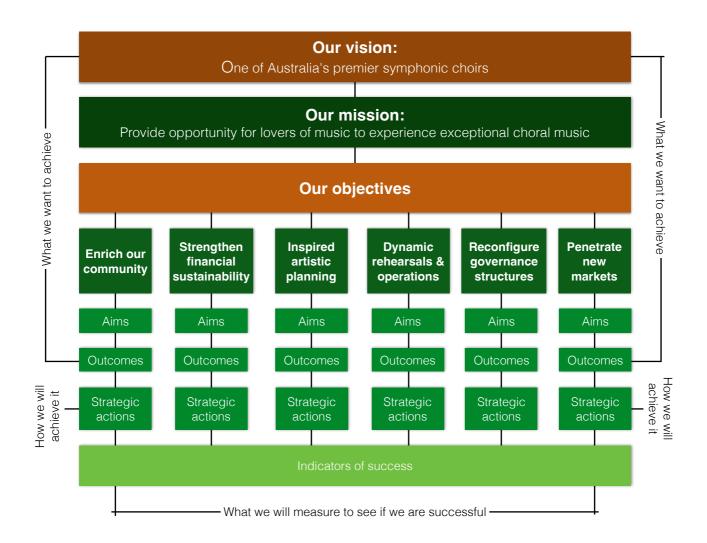


Strategic priorities

To achieve our vision and our objectives we are focussed on six (6) key priorities:

- 1. Enriching our community
- 2. Strengthening financial sustainability
- 3. Inspired artistic planning
- 4. Dynamic rehearsals and operations
- 5. Reconfigured governance structures
- 6. Penetrating new markets.

The following diagram shows how the elements of the strategic plan fit together:





1. Enriching our community

Members of Brisbane Chorale Inc. feel a strong need to give something back to those who have supported us over the past 30 years and to share our skills and knowledge with others. This strategic priority is about the human need to leave a legacy; it is about us saying 'thank you' to the people of Brisbane and South East Queensland. This strategic priority embraces our values of fun and social engagement - sharing our joy and passion with family and friends. It fulfils our need to have a sense of meaning, purpose and, most importantly, contribution, because we believe that choral singing can bring about positive social change.

"I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can"

- George Bernard Shaw

Aims

- To share our stories and history with our community.
- To enhance our community's appreciation of choral music.
- To continue to provide support to those who appreciate music performance.
- To share our skills and knowledge with one another and with our community.

Desired outcomes

- We will have a more vibrant community that appreciates choral music.
- We will be an integral part of building the choral strength of Brisbane and South East Queensland.
- We celebrate our success together with our friends, family and supporters.

"Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it."

- Edmund Burke



- 1A Compile the archives of Brisbane Chorale Inc. and its forerunners.
- 1B Capture the oral history of Brisbane Chorale Inc. and its forerunners.
- 1C Seek a grant for the writing and publishing of the history of Brisbane Chorale Inc.
- 1D Establish a support and social group, e.g. Brisbane Chorale Friends and Alumni, that can assist with front of house operations and fundraising, arrange social events and allow family and friends to share in our appreciation of choral music. Include modest joining fee and benefits package.
- 1E Ensure that we celebrate our success following performances. Invite family, friends and guests.
- 1F Provide pedagogical workshops and master classes for members and those with a passion for choral music.

See also strategic actions 3F, 3G, 3H and 4C.





2. Strengthening financial sustainability

Any organisation cannot sustain itself without sound financial practices and governance. Brisbane Chorale Inc. has gone from strength to strength since its formation and is in a strong fiscal position as we move forward. We need to not only maintain, but strengthen, this position as we set our vision and priorities to higher things - the subject of this strategic priority.

Aims

- To have stable arrangements for the management and storage of our physical and intellectual property.
- To have a reviewed membership structure that better supports our future direction.
- To ensure long-term sustainability of Brisbane Chorale Inc. through enhanced strategic and financial planning.
- To ensure that revised processes, technology and funding mechanisms are in place to support a robust, efficient and financially stable association.
- To expand and diversify the donor base by strengthening relationships with existing donors, renewing relationships with former donors and establishing relationships with new donors and funding sources.
- To review ticketing structures and arrangements to better support our strategic priorities.
- To enhance our open and accountable reporting on our financial health.

"When you're building a business with no financial backing, the word *survival* is what counts."

- Richard Branson

Desired outcomes

- We will have stable arrangements for the management of our physical and intellectual property.
- Our structure and approach to membership fees and event pricing will better meet our future needs.
- Our relationships with our patrons, donors and sponsors will be more robust and fruitful.
- Our financial health will be stronger.



Pricing and fees

- 2A Review and align membership fees, payment arrangements and publication to better meet our future needs.
- 2B Review and align ticketing prices, purchase arrangements and policies to better meet our future needs.

Philanthropy and fundraising

- 2C Review and update our list of potential fundraising mechanisms, including likelihood of success and timeframe for realisation. This includes:
 - * information on available grants and application criteria
 - * potential sponsors and their contact details
 - * potential donors
 - * donor recognition and reward procedures
 - * ideas for fundraising events.
- 2D Actively pursue identified and approved fundraising mechanisms, and enhance and extend our annual fundraising programme.
- 2E Continue to build relationships with philanthropic and service organisations. Connect to a variety of organisations including:
 - * local service organisations
 - * charitable organisations that need support for individual projects.
- 2F Continue to seek out specific corporate and business partnerships.
- 2G Seek out and strengthen relationships with current donors, increase the pool of donors and provide other means of sponsorship (scholarships, grants etc.) in order to continue growing the budget to meet the needs of the association.
- 2H Send out fundraising letter to mailing list and members inviting them to donate for one or several of our forthcoming concerts.
- 2J Send an email to potential donors before the end of each tax year to remind them of the tax deadline and how to donate and obtain the tax benefits.
- 2K Implement an annual programme to seek out grants that will support the work of Brisbane Chorale Inc.
- 2L Revise and update patron benefits and privileges tied to contribution levels, e.g. plan and manage exclusive patron events.
- 2M Review and enhance our bequests programme.



Administration and support

- 2N Review and update the Brisbane Chorale Inc. website material and content relevant to fundraising.
- 2O Expand our reference library of all documentation relating to fundraising, e.g. grant and sponsorship submissions
- 2P Review the support structures of the management committee to assist the Treasurer and support the management committee to achieve our vision and strategic actions to strengthen our financial sustainability.
- 2Q Review and, where necessary, ensure stable arrangements for access to, and accessible storage of, our physical and intellectual property.





3. Inspired artistic planning

The Brisbane Chorale performs choral music in all its genres and eras through organising and holding concerts and events, either in collaboration with other groups or organisations or on its own with a view 'to foster and promote the performance and appreciation of choral music'. This strategic priority contributes to the achievement of six of Brisbane Chorale Inc.'s objectives that will create an amazing experience for lovers of choral music.

Aims

- To foster, share and promote a greater appreciation of choral music within our communities, regional Queensland and beyond.
- To reach the broadest possible audience by engaging new listeners, increasing listener loyalty and enriching the audience experience.
- To develop additional programmes and events of cultural and artistic enrichment in order to broaden the appeal of Brisbane Chorale Inc. and to provide the region with additional educational and entertainment options.
- To enhance existing relationships, and explore new opportunities, with major arts organisations, e.g. Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Brisbane Symphony Orchestra, Canticum Chamber Choir.

- To explore new collaborative relationships with other community, education and arts organisations throughout Queensland and beyond, e.g. QPAC Choir, Education Queensland, Queensland Pops Orchestra, Brisbane City Council.
- To broaden our standard (core) repertoire and the types of ensembles through which this is realised.
- To penetrate new audience markets.



The only thing better than singing is more singing.

-Ella Fitzgerald



Desired outcomes

- We will fulfil our vision and our mission through the creation of amazing and imaginative artistic programmes. Our repertoire will be exciting and diverse, involving a greater variety of ensembles and collaborations.
- We will have enhanced the appreciation of choral music in Brisbane and regional South East Queensland. We will reach the broadest possible audience and have engaged listeners, listener loyalty and deliver enriched audience experiences.
- We will have enhanced and inspiring relationships with other artistic organisations.
- We will engage directly with the community and share our appreciation of choral music with our friends and families.
- We will have amazing and exciting longer term programming plans that include Brisbane, regional Queensland and extended tours to other states and overseas.
- We will feel a sense of accomplishment through the successful mastery of our exciting, new repertoire.

"Don't think what's the cheapest way to do it or what's the fastest way to do it . . . think what's the most amazing way to do it."

- Richard Branson

Strategic actions

- 3A A programme development working group will, in liaison with the Music Director, management committee and sub-committees, explore new programmes and events of cultural, artistic, and community enrichment for both our members and our audiences, taking full account of financial and operational requirements.
- 3B A programme development working group will explore ways to enable audiences and members to provide feedback and comment on programming.
- 3C Extend the plan of concert programming to a rolling three year plan that explores the richness and complexity of choral music and includes at least one tour beyond South East Queensland. Consideration will be given to results from audience and member surveys.
- 3D Extend our annual programme to include performances held both in Brisbane and regional South East Queensland that support community and civic events.



- 3E Enhance and extend relationships with our current core collaborators, e.g. Queensland Conservatorium, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Performing Arts Centre and Brisbane Symphony Orchestra.
- 3F Enhance and extend relationships with South East Queensland universities and other tertiary education institutions, e.g. Griffith University, and explore opportunities to enhance music curricula.
- 3G Enhance and extend relationships with other community choirs.
- 3H Explore and extend relationships with Brisbane City Council, South East Queensland education institutions and Education Queensland, e.g. invite school choirs to perform in some of our concerts and consider performing at schools. Explore opportunities in which we can contribute to the enhancement of music curricula.
- 3J Explore avenues to perform at corporate events, with visiting orchestras and with entertainment shows.
- 3K Increase opportunities for smaller *ad hoc* ensembles from among Brisbane Chorale Inc. members to perform for single, smaller or more intimate events.





4. Dynamic rehearsals and operations



Dynamic rehearsals and operations support the crafting and honing of our art and our product. We recognise that through gifted, inspirational musical leadership we produce the performances that give us our reputation. We must ensure the health and safety of our members when in performance and rehearsal. If we are to be amongst Australia's leading choirs we will be required to perform to the highest standards of choral performance. To achieve this we must ensure that our tool of trade, our instrument -

our voice - is of the highest possible quality and well-being and that we have all that we need to make it so.

Aims

- To enhance our rehearsal experience and share our collective expertise to achieve the highest of choral standards.
- To be singers with high quality instruments a well developed and healthy voice.
- To share our developmental process with our friends, families, peers and colleagues.
- To support the Music Director so that he or she can focus on crafting the choir to the highest choral standards.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit."

- Aristotle

Desired outcomes

- We have a vocally healthy choir that helps us achieve superior choral standards.
- We are motivated to attend rehearsals and we enjoy the experience.
- We share an environment of mutual coaching and mentoring.
- We have the skills and resources necessary for our professional staff to deliver to the highest levels of quality and professionalism.



- 4A Review the Brisbane Chorale Handbook to ensure it remains aligned with the new strategic plan.
- 4B Review the feasibility of alternative rehearsal venues, and undertake subsequent action where relevant.
- 4C Develop a programme of open rehearsals, possibly those in the lead up to performances, e.g. final dress rehearsal, at low or no cost, for family, friends, educational groups (primary, secondary and/or tertiary) or the general public.
- 4D Consider the appointment of an assistant to the Music Director.
- 4E Review the audition process for all members, new and returning, and take appropriate action to implement approved changes, including a planned sectional timetable for re-auditions.

"... each musician must learn to play, on the one hand, as if he were a soloist, and on the other, with the constant awareness of being an indispensable part of a team. It is this quality of human teamwork – the sense of being one of a group working together to achieve the ultimate in beauty – that has always afforded me a joy ... that no solo performance can duplicate."

- Pablo Casals





5. Reconfigured governance structures

This strategic priority focusses on sustainable management and leadership of Brisbane Chorale Inc. It covers strategic actions for the operation of the management committee and communications between the management committee and Brisbane Chorale Inc. members and the corporate foundations of the association. This strategic priority builds on our values of sharing commitment, planning for sustainability and sound governance and operational efficiency. These activities are critical if Brisbane Chorale Inc. is to achieve its vision.

Aims

- To enhance our open and accountable governance to meet the changing operating environment.
- To review and update our business continuity strategies and supporting resources.
- To review management and material infrastructure to provide continuity and foundation for the continued growth and stability of our association.
- To revitalise support mechanisms for the management committee.

- To review and optimise mechanisms for succession planning and skills and knowledge transference to enhance our organisation capability.
- To enhance our awareness of, and to better use, the collective skills, knowledge and capability of our members.
- To ensure that our corporate foundation is strategically aligned with the future direction of Brisbane Chorale Inc.

"A well balanced, inclusive approach, according to certain standards and ideals, is essential for proper governance."

- Laisenia Qarase

Desired outcomes

- We will have realigned position descriptions for all positions on, or assisting, the management committee.
- We will have revised terms of reference for all sub-committees that are aligned to our latest strategic plan.
- We will have revised and improved practices for contracts management, succession planning and mentoring.
- We will enhance our understanding of the available skills and knowledge of our members.



- We will have a clear idea of our strategic direction for the next five (5) years.
- We will have reconfigured corporate structure and constitution appropriate to our strategic direction.
- We will have an enhanced and improved system for incurring expenses and making financial commitments.

- 5A Review & update management committee protocols within the Brisbane Chorale Handbook and constitution.
- 5B Reinvigorate mechanisms for members to contribute ideas and suggestions to the management committee.
- 5C Revise and update roles and responsibilities of all positions connected with the management committee and the carrying out of its duties. Ensure all updated job descriptions are published for members.
- 5D Review and realign terms of reference for all sub-committees and working groups.
- 5E Enhance our approach to contracts management.
- For Review and update succession plans and mentoring strategies for all positions on the management committee.
- 5G Ensure that the role of Vice President is, in accordance with the constitution, always filled either at the annual general meeting or, if a vacancy occurs later, as soon as possible thereafter.
- 5H Enhance our understanding, and record the skills, knowledge, experience and expertise, of members to further harness the wealth of experience.
- 5J Examine our corporate foundation to consider its appropriateness and relevance to better support our strategic priorities and future direction.
- Review and revise, where required, the constitution of Brisbane Chorale Inc. for vote by the members no later than the 2015 annual general meeting to ensure that it reflects the ongoing evolutionary changes of our association. Consider matters of tenure and fixed terms, external appointments to the management committee, procedures and notice of annual general meetings, and engagements and appointments as part of the review.
- 5L Review our strategic direction and update our five (5) year strategic plan.
- 5M Develop actions to implement and deliver on the updated strategic plan.

See also strategic action 4D.



6. Penetrating new markets

Brisbane Chorale Inc. seeks 'to foster and promote the performance and appreciation of choral music' and 'to seek engagements or collaborate with other groups or organisations in the performance of choral music'. Seeking out new audiences and the promotion of our activities, events and concerts are integral to the success of our vision. This strategic priority seeks to enhance and promulgate our brand to increase our membership and our audience in new and exciting ways.

Aims

- To increase our recognition and utilisation of our members' skills and talents.
- To extend and enhance our sustainable membership base.
- To better understand our audiences, who they are and why they come.
- To better target our promotions and activities and increase audience attendance rates.

- To build upon our competitive advantage.
- To improve our visibility to increase performance and collaboration opportunities.
- To canvass new strategies to enrich the audience experience and thus increase listener loyalty.
- To enhance and optimise our use of social media and additional electronic promotional tools.

"If you get your face and your name out there enough, people will start to recognise you."

- Richard Branson

Desired outcomes

- We will have broader visibility in Brisbane and South East Queensland amongst arts organisations and the public.
- We will have a sustainable membership base of mixed and broad demographics.
- We will have sold out concerts and events.
- We will broaden our audience base, better engage our listeners, foster and reward listener loyalty, and deliver enriched audience experiences.



- 6A Review the support structures of the management committee to provide a focal point for the coordination of marketing and promotions activities to support the management committee to achieve our vision and strategic priorities.
- 6B Gain an improved understanding of the membership of Brisbane Chorale Inc.:
 - * Better understand the social demographics that make up our membership.
 - * Better understand the talents and skill sets of our members.
- 6C Gain an improved understanding of the audiences attending Brisbane Chorale performances:
 - * Identify the demographics and music preferences of our audiences and target markets.
 - * Identify potential future audience markets.
 - * Enhance our understanding of what makes up our competitive advantage.
- 6D Extend strategies and actions to increase the membership of Brisbane Chorale Inc.:
 - * Review and extend strategies and actions to increase in a sustainable manner the membership of Brisbane Chorale Inc.
 - * Enhance our understanding of what makes up our competitive advantage.
 - * Enhance strategies and actions to market singing opportunities to potential singers.
- 6E Review and enhance strategies and actions to increase audience attendance and the public profile of the Brisbane Chorale:
 - * Enhance opportunities for cross-promotional activities.
 - * Review and extend actions to market performances to the community.
- 6F Enhance and optimise our use of social media and our website.
- 6G Improve our use of advertising and media releases, surveys and questionnaires to inform and support strategies and actions.
- 6H Explore opportunities to influence through education.
- 6J Review and adjust pricing approaches and strategies for concerts and events.

See also strategic actions 3C, 3D, 3F, 3G, 3H, 3J and 3K.





Appendix: Indicators of success

- 1. Brisbane Chorale Inc. is a sought-after partner that is valued by other organisations.
- 2. More community celebrations and ceremonies include the Brisbane Chorale in a prominent role.
- 3. Positive audience response reflected in increased audience diversity and size.
- 4. Positive feedback and repeat engagements from contracting organisations or collaborating partners.
- 5. Expectation of an organised annual concert programme is met.
- 6. Increased skill level and enjoyment of singers.
- 7. Increased applications to audition for and join Brisbane Chorale Inc.
- 8. Improved choral competence and confidence within the whole choir, evident in the performance of more challenging pieces.
- 9. Singers feel valued and are willing to contribute to the overall benefit of the choir.
- 10. A successful programme of open rehearsals will be in place.
- 11. The appointment of an assistant to the Music Director has been considered and appropriate action taken.

- 12. Job descriptions for all positions have been updated and published.
- 13. Terms of reference for all subcommittees and working groups have been updated and published.
- 14. Revised succession plans or mentoring strategies are documented and available.
- 15. Skills audit has been conducted and results are available for use.
- 16. Reviewed and updated constitution has been approved by members and accepted by the Queensland Government Office of Fair Trading.
- 17. Membership base reflects a broader demographic than previously.
- 18. Positive response is seen in increased public awareness and appreciation.
- 19. Break even or better against the revised annual and other budgets.
- 20. Increased balances in savings, funds and investments.
- 21. Community stakeholders, community members and funders see Brisbane Choral Inc. as an increasingly vital organisation and are generous with their support.
- 22. A published history of Brisbane Chorale Inc. is available.
- 23. A group for friends of Brisbane Chorale Inc. is established and active.







Supporting documents

The following support documents are recommended reading:

Strategic Planning Day Outcomes

This report by Steve Scott documents the output from Brisbane Chorale Inc.'s Strategic Planning Day held in October 2013. It includes specific actions and options that should be considered when addressing the strategic priorities and is the core source document for the strategic plan.

Constitution of Brisbane Chorale Inc.

This documents details the rules by which the incorporated association will manage its affairs. These rules have been approved by the Queensland Government Office of Fair Trading and include the association's objects.

Credits

All photographs are used with permission of Brisbane Chorale Inc. and its members.







Brisbane Chorale Inc. is a member of

Brisbane Chorale Inc. acknowledges the gracious support of





Approved by Brisbane Chorale Inc. Management Committee on 7 September 2014 (v1.0)





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