

Brisbane Chorale Inc.

Strategic Plan 2019-2023



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Contents

About us	2
About this strategic plan	3
Our vision	4
Our mission	4
Our core values	5
Our objectives	5
Strategic priorities	6
Enriching our community	7
Strengthening financial sustainability	8
Inspired artistic planning	10
Dynamic rehearsals and operations	12
Governance structures	13
Penetrating new markets	15
Appendix: Indicators of success	16



About us

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 and includes the great oratorios, e.g. Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and *Paulus*, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* and Handel's *Messiah*, the great Requiem Masses by Verdi, Mozart and Fauré, and other major works such as Rachmaninov's *The Bells*, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, 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, Brisbane Chorale has made its mark in the cultural landscape of Brisbane, Queensland and Australia. In 1997 Brisbane Chorale became an independent incorporated association, Brisbane Chorale Inc., with its own Rules of Association. Its path has traversed exciting repertoire, events and collaborations,

and has been documented in a book titled *Our Journey* launched in 2017. The publication was made possible by a Brisbane City Council History Grant and was written by Professor Peter Roennfeldt.

We have performed Australian premieres of numerous works, commissioned works by Australian composers and recorded for ABC Classics and other labels. 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, performance organisations and festivals. We also value our association with 4MBS Classic FM. We are indebted to the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University for its support and appreciate the continued mutually beneficial affiliation.

Our aim is to bring audiences the joy, wonder and beauty of great works by composers past and present and to give back to the community where possible. Today, Brisbane Chorale is a respected part of the classical music scene in our city and beyond.



About this strategic plan

In its more than 30 years of existence Brisbane Chorale has seen several major phases of strategic development. These include the establishment of the Brisbane Chorale as a community choir by the Queensland Conservatorium, our growth towards incorporation as Brisbane Chorale Inc. in 1997, and significant strategic planning occasions. A Strategic Planning Day in October 2013 and a subsequent extensive consultative process resulted in the comprehensive document *Brisbane Chorale Inc. Strategic Plan 2014-2018*.

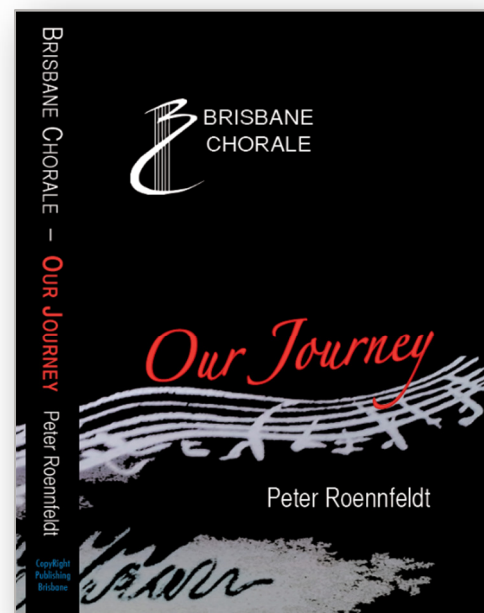
We have reviewed that document, noting major strategic priorities and actions that have been completed (see below), and those that are ongoing into the future. We have also

discovered some that are no longer relevant. These have now been removed. At the same time the opportunity has been taken to simplify and streamline some concepts.

This has all been done with the assistance of a generous grant from the Queensland Community Foundation (QCF) which allowed us to engage a facilitator to steer the consultation and discussion process, and to produce this updated document *Brisbane Chorale Inc. Strategic Plan 2019-2023*. This plan aligns our vision, mission and core values with strategic goals, priorities and actions required to meet the expectations and challenges in the performing arts world over the next five years.

Major strategic actions completed 2014-2018

1. The history of Brisbane Chorale *Our Journey* was published in 2017 with the assistance of a Brisbane City Council History Grant.
2. A planned timetable for re-audition processes for all members is in place.
3. The Rules of Association of Brisbane Chorale Inc. were reviewed and revised in 2015 as required at the time, approved by members and accepted by the Government Office of Fair Trading and are subject to continual review.
4. Position descriptions for all management committee positions are in place and are continually reviewed and updated as necessary.





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 commitment to our audience, artistic associates and members:

To provide lovers of all forms of music the opportunity to experience high quality choral music at a consistently exceptional level.

To deliver on our vision and our mission, over the next five years we will work to extend and refine our performance approaches and develop new collaborative opportunities.

Factors currently affecting our ability to achieve our vision and mission include:

- demand for, and quality of, our performances
- achieving sustainable membership
- surmounting financial limitations
- shifts in community demographics, both within the choir and in our audience
- local competition (i.e. the number of Brisbane based choirs)
- difficulty of undertaking regional, interstate and overseas tours because of the varied obligations of members.

In five years, we will:

- be a high-profile arts organisation in Queensland
- collaborate with a broader spectrum of arts organisations
- have extended the scope of our repertoire
- have a sustainable membership base that permits us to realise our mission.

Our core values

Quality

To aim for the highest possible levels of artistic expression and professionalism. We encourage choristers to stretch their boundaries and creativity. We are committed to supporting and inspiring choral singers.

Artistic

To inspire people of all ages to develop an appreciation and understanding of choral music of many styles and periods.

Planning

To commit fully to the Brisbane Chorale and to plan for a sustainable association that uses our collective intelligence, skills and efforts. To value sound organisational governance, operational efficiency and fiscal discipline.

Social engagement

To make the most of our regular contact with people who share our passion for choral singing. To value the joy, teamwork, support and friendships it brings. To share our joy of choral singing with our families, friends and neighbours and inform them of opportunities to be involved because we believe choral singing can bring about positive social change and increased well-being.

Our objectives

Our objectives are the overall goals of Brisbane Chorale Inc.

- To perform high quality choral music from a range of genres and eras.
- To perform as a symphonic chorus to the highest standard.
- To seek engagements and collaborations with other groups or organisations in the performance of choral music.
- To foster and promote the performance and appreciation of choral music.

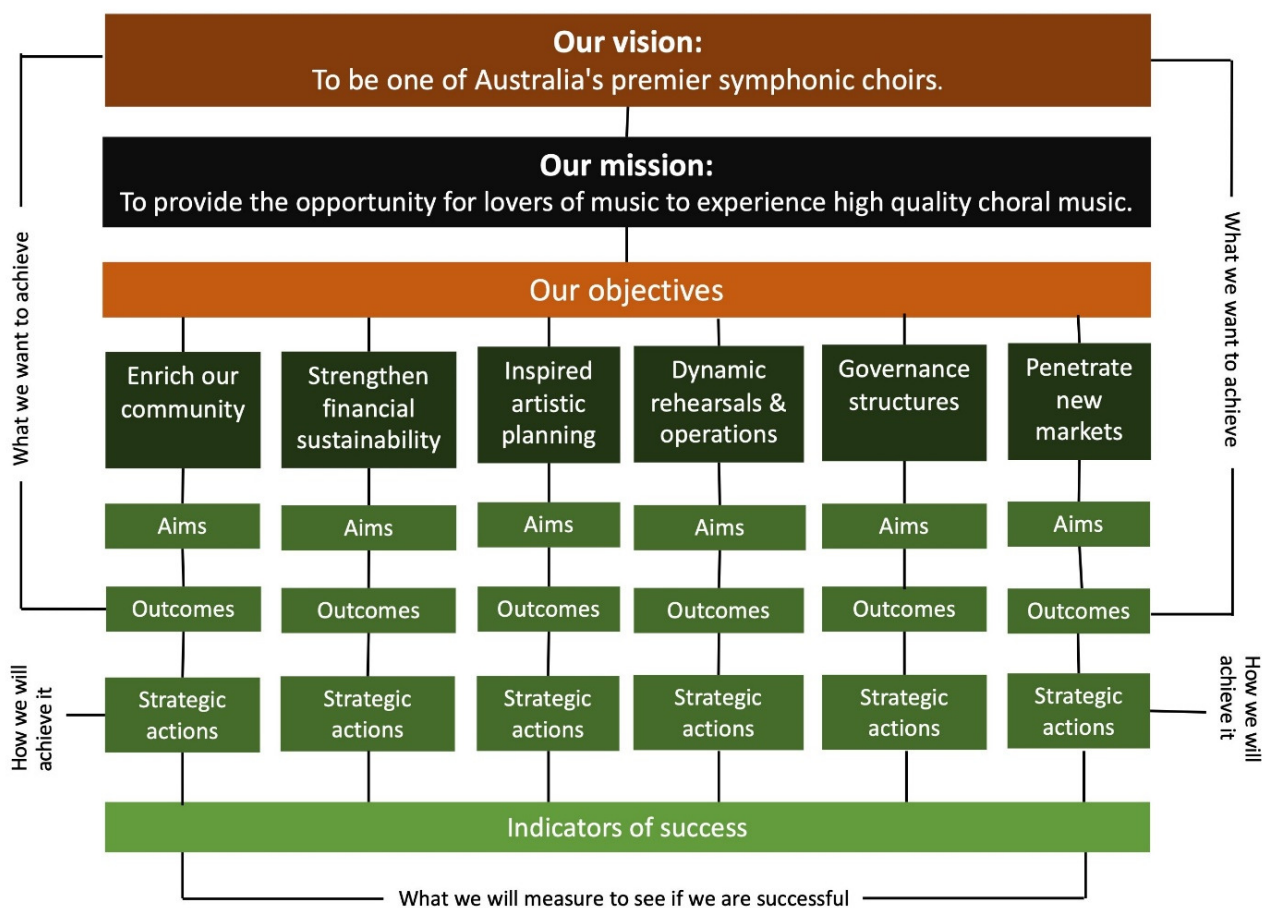


Strategic priorities

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. Governance structures
6. Penetrating new markets.

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



1. Enriching our community

The concept of community is two-fold: our audience and associates in the music world; and Brisbane Chorale itself as a community of singers drawn from all walks of life. Brisbane Chorale Inc. is committed to giving something back to those who have supported us over the past 30 years by nurturing and sharing our skills and knowledge. 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.

Aims

- To enhance our community's experience, appreciation and understanding of classical choral music.
- To share our stories and history with our community.
- To provide a supportive and enriching environment for members to develop their choral expertise.
- To share our skills and knowledge with one another and with our wider 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 commitment to singing by sharing it with our wider communities.

Strategic actions

- 1A Establish a support and social group, e.g. Brisbane Chorale Friends and Alumni, which 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.
- 1B Provide pedagogical workshops for members and those with a passion for choral music.
- 1C Access new technology to assist in promotion of the Brisbane Chorale Inc.



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. Future aspirations include having our own office space and the capacity to engage paid administrative assistance.

Aims

- To effectively manage and store our physical and intellectual property.
- 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 our donor base.
- To enhance our open and accountable reporting on our financial health.
- To have a sound system for incurring expenses and making financial commitments.
- To retain and extend a sustainable membership base.

Desired outcomes

- We will:
 - have stable arrangements for the management of our physical and intellectual property.
 - have a sustainable membership base.
- 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.



Strategic actions

- 2A Review and align membership fees, ticketing prices, payment and reporting arrangements to better meet our future needs.
- 2B Increase the size and diversity of the membership of Brisbane Chorale Inc.
- 2C Develop a fundraising program and increase the diversity of our sponsor network.
- 2D Develop a formal grant funding program and increase funding generated from grant submissions.
- 2E Develop and manage a sponsor and stakeholder recognition and communication program to maximise engagement with existing stakeholders, sponsors and donors and proactively manage relationships.
- 2F Review and enhance our bequests programme.
- 2G Manage effective storage and access to our physical and intellectual property.



3. Inspired artistic planning

The Brisbane Chorale performs choral music from a range of genres and eras through organising and holding concerts and events, either in collaboration with other organisations or on its own with a view to fostering and promoting the performance and appreciation of choral music. The formulation of a year's programme lies at the core of what we do, to carry out our aims of creating an engaging experience for lovers of choral music. Artistic planning is a complex process, needing the consideration of many factors. It involves the Music Director, Management Committee and other players in the arts scene, as repertoire is matched with the skills of the group, response to requests for our services by outside organisations, as well as the desires of the group. All these factors are considered in the formulation of the yearly programme.

Aims

- To foster, share and promote a greater appreciation of choral music within our city, regional Queensland and beyond.
- To reach the broadest possible audience by engaging new listeners, increasing listener loyalty and enriching 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 increased educational and entertainment options.
- To enhance existing relationships, and explore new opportunities, with major arts organisations.
- To explore new collaborative relationships with other community, education and arts organisations throughout Queensland and beyond.
- To broaden our standard (core) repertoire and the types of ensembles through which this is realised.
- To penetrate new audience markets.

Desired outcomes

We will:

- fulfil our vision and our mission through the creation of imaginative artistic programmes. Our repertoire will be exciting and diverse, involving a variety of ensembles and collaborations.
- 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.
- have enhanced and inspiring relationships with other artistic organisations.
- engage directly with the community and share our appreciation of choral music with our friends and families.
- develop exciting longer-term programming plans that include Brisbane, regional Queensland and extended tours to other states and overseas.
- feel a sense of accomplishment through the successful mastery of our repertoire.

Strategic actions

- 3A Explore new programmes and events of cultural, artistic, and community enrichment for both our members and our audiences.
- 3B Develop a rolling concert programming plan that explores the richness and complexity of choral music.
- 3C Extend our annual programme to include performances held both in Brisbane and regional communities that support community and civic events.
- 3D Develop relationships with other choral ensembles interstate and overseas with a view to touring when opportunities arise.
- 3E Enhance and extend relationships with our current core collaborators, and other orchestras and choirs.
- 3F Enhance and extend relationships with community stakeholders.
- 3G Explore avenues to perform at corporate events, with visiting orchestras and with entertainment shows.



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 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 (i.e. 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 as singers 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.

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.

Strategic actions

- 4A Keep under review the rehearsal process and explore opportunities to increase effectiveness of the rehearsal programme.
- 4B Keep under review the audition process for all members, new and returning, and maintain a planned sectional timetable for re-auditions.
- 4C Use external expertise to support improving the standard of the choir.

5. Governance structures

This strategic priority focuses 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.

Desired outcomes

We will have:

- position descriptions for all positions on, or assisting, the management committee.
- terms of reference for all sub-committees that are aligned to our latest strategic plan.
- practices for contracts management, succession planning and mentoring.
- a clear idea of our strategic direction for the next five (5) years.
- a corporate structure and Rules of Association appropriate to our strategic direction.
- a structured audit and risk management program.
- We will enhance our understanding of the available skills and knowledge of our members.

Strategic actions

- 5A Ensure all policies and procedures are documented and periodically reviewed in line with our strategic and operational objectives.
- 5B Provide mechanisms for members to contribute ideas and suggestions to the management committee.
- 5C Develop and implement an Audit and Risk Management program for the organisation.
- 5D Enhance our understanding, and record the skills, knowledge, experience and expertise, of members to further harness the wealth of experience.
- 5E Regularly review the Rules of Association of Brisbane Chorale Inc. to ensure that they reflect the ongoing evolutionary changes of our association, and compliance with emerging legislative requirements.



6. Penetrating new markets

In keeping with the requirements of our Rules of Association, 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 better understand our audiences, who they are and why they come.
- To better target our promotions and activities and increase audience attendance rates.
- 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 online platforms, social media and additional electronic promotional tools.

Desired outcomes

We will:

- have broader visibility in Brisbane and South East Queensland amongst arts organisations and the public.
- sell out concerts and events.
- broaden our audience base, better engage our listeners, foster and reward listener loyalty, and deliver enriched audience experiences.

Strategic actions

- 6A Improve our understanding of the audiences attending Brisbane Chorale performances.
- 6B Enhance strategies and actions to increase audience attendance and the public profile of the Brisbane Chorale.
- 6C Optimise our use of social media and our website.
- 6D Improve our use of advertising and media releases, surveys and questionnaires to inform and support strategies and actions.
- 6E Explore opportunities to influence through education.

Appendix: Indicators of success

1. Improved choral competence and confidence within the whole choir, evident in the performance of more challenging pieces.
2. Positive feedback and repeat engagements from contracting organisations or collaborating partners.
3. Brisbane Chorale Inc. is a sought-after partner that is valued by other organisations.
4. Positive audience response reflected in increased audience diversity and size.
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. Singers feel valued and are willing to contribute to the overall benefit of the choir.
9. A successful programme of open rehearsals will be in place.
10. The appointment of an assistant to the Music Director has been considered and appropriate action taken.
11. Revised succession plans or mentoring strategies are documented and available.
12. Skills audit has been conducted and results are available for use.
13. Positive response is seen in increased public awareness and appreciation.
14. Break even or better against the revised annual and other budgets.
15. Sustainable balances in savings, funds and investments.
16. Community stakeholders, community members and funders see Brisbane Chorale Inc. as an increasingly vital organisation and are generous with their support.
17. A group for friends of Brisbane Chorale Inc. is established and active.



Supporting documents

The following support documents are recommended reading:

Brisbane Chorale Inc. Strategic Plan 2014-2018

This document was the basis from which the new strategic plan was developed.

Brisbane Chorale Inc. Rules of Association

This document 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.

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 support of



and

Exclusive Community and Sports Management



Approved by Brisbane Chorale Inc. Management Committee on 20 September 2019.





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