Welcome to the 2008 AAMBS Annual General Meeting. Tonight we meet to reflect on our achievements and the exciting events of the coming year. This was another great year for AAMBS. The hard work of musical and administrative leaders, combined with the dedicated efforts "on the risers" resulted in more fun, more performances, and an overall improvement in our singing in the barbershop style.

Our choruses and quartets participated in countless shows and sing-outs around the country, and attended workshops, retreats, and regional competitions, including the inaugural Australian Barbershop Challenge event in Sunshine Region. And while I can't highlight all the great initiatives this year, I do want to especially congratulate our Gold Medal chorus, The Blenders, for giving barbershopping an unbelievable amount of publicity in the nationally televised Battle of the Choirs. Their spirit and performances were superb, and they proved that barbershop choruses can hold their own with anybody.

This year AAMBS has been guided by the leadership and hard work of your national Council, consisting of Secretary Kevin White; Treasurer Barry Joy; and Vice Presidents; for Conventions, Richard Gardam; Music, Ian Miller; Marketing and Development, Derek Churchill; Membership, Tom Smith; and Youth Development, Steve Griffin. In addition we have had the valued services of Ian Mulholland as our Dean of the Australasian Judges Guild, and Nerida White who works tirelessly on all things administrative, and publishes our superb magazine Barbershop Notes. Thanks are also definitely in order for the initiatives of our Regional Chairmen and their committees: John Gerber in Eastern Region; Harry Owen in Western Region; and Trevor Remphrey in Sunshine Region. I am delighted to announce that all of these hard working members are willing to continue in their positions as we lead up to the unique and very special AAMBS 10th National Convention, Heritage Harmony, in Hobart.

So what does the next year hold in store for us? Well, right now choruses and quartets around the country are sharing our love of a capella close-harmony music with tens of thousands of men, women, and children, as we participate in the Holiday Season. It's a given that music is good for the soul, and we can be proud that in the traditional season of "giving," we are indeed doing our part to make a difference to people's lives. Whether in shopping malls, candlelight concerts, retirement villages, schools, or care facilities, we bring joy and comfort, smiles, and a little bit of happiness to all. It's who we are, it's what we do, and for this, we get great rewards.

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We know there is quite a diversity within our choruses…..from those willing to do whatever it takes to be the best barbershop chorus in the land, to those that want to be “good enough” to do a credible local performance. A difference sometimes referred to, incorrectly, as being good, or having fun. Incorrect, because as everyone that has really “nailed” a song in performance knows, being good is fun.

So I ask each of you to work toward the middle ground with your riser-mates. If your personal goal is touching a member of an audience I can guarantee you it will be more likely to happen if your performance is top notch.

Being in a chorus is the classic team experience. We train continuously, working and drilling in practice on all our technical points simply because it leads us directly to those magical moments in performance. And how better to see how your team has improved, than at Convention. The categories that are evaluated in the sessions there: musicality, presentation, and singing, are the absolute foundation of any good performance at home.

I hope every barbershop chorus in Australia will join us at the Convention in scenic Hobart, 24-27 Sept, followed immediately by Harmony College…… a wonderful opportunity to experience days of harmonizing, tag-singing, performing, classes, fellowship, and the thrill of hearing an International Gold Medal quartet singing just for you. Convention Convenor Trevor Rootes and his committee have already put in hundreds of hours, just for you, to make Heritage Harmony the best barbershop experience you’ve ever had.

In conclusion, I want to thank all of the members of AAMBS for giving me the opportunity to serve as President of this outstanding organisation. I look forward to the challenges and opportunities of 2009.

In Harmony
Mike Donnelly, President, AAMBS

Election Results – 2008 AGM

This year the positions which were up for Election were Secretary, VP Membership, VP Music and VP Youth Development. We are delighted to announce that the 4 members who have held these positions for the last two years each stood for re-election and were elected unopposed.

Our sincere thanks go to Kevin White, Tom Smith, Ian Miller and Steve Griffin for being willing to put their time and effort into these important jobs on the AAMBS Council once again. We look forward to your continuing dedicated input into AAMBS - your Association – AAMBS.

From our VP Marketing

President Mike Donnelly highlights a valid point in his latest Barbershop notes. The AAMBS Community has a lot to offer to the general public by continuing to showcase their talents wherever and whenever the opportunity arises. To sing carols at retirement villages brings great joy to all those residents and we all benefit by the immeasurable and continuing marketing word of mouth publicity that this brings. Club Presidents (we have actually heard that some do not read Barbershop Notes), pick up the phone today and offer your chorus’ services this Christmas, even without payment for the appearance. You will both spread the genre and bring great joy.

The Pan Pacific Convention in Hawaii recently featured no mass sing-out and this opened up discussions amongst those Aussies attending. How effective have our own mass sing-outs been? Have they reached an untouched audience? Have they been of significant benefit to the publication of Barbershop singing. How has the sound been in open-air performances? Was everyone singing or were they saving their voices for the Competition stage? Perhaps future events will give greater thought to ensuring that the sing outs, if they are to occur, take place inside a theatre with FREE PUBLIC ENTRY which receives plenty of advance build up publicity. Hobart? Over to you.

Whilst the administration in Hawaii ran like clockwork again the Aussies seemed to miss the opening night dinner at which we are mixed up and meet so many other Chorus members prior to competing.

At the Sweet Adelines Convention following the week after our Pan Pacific competition, large banners proclaimed “Grow Big, or Go Home” and Americans are very proud of their larger choruses. The Kiwis proved by combining Choruses with only the barest of preparation that Judges are impressed by the rounder sound and seemingly more joyous participation by all those on the risers. Now here is a New Year’s resolution that every AAMBS member can make. In 2009 make a new member mine!!! It is the quickest way I know to help you chorus grow bigger and less reedy.

Derek Churchill

A note received from Doug Moody of The Melbournaires:

Joe Liles has had a serious heart attack. As you would know, Joe is the Music Publications Editor of the BHS and the Tagmaster in The Harmonizer. He is also a well-published arranger.

In response to my email Joe said that the heart attack has left him with only 25% heart function but he is undergoing rehabilitation with the latest drugs and a good cardiac rehab. program.

Our thoughts are certainly with Joe and we all wish him a speedy recovery.
Secretary’s Report to AAMBS Inc Annual General Meeting on 9 December 2008

1. Introduction

1.1. This Report covers the period 1 October 2007 to 9 December 2008

2. The Membership

2.1. As always, it is difficult to establish an exact membership at this time of year. There are only three clubs yet to make arrangements for their members’ AAMBS membership fees, which fell due on 1 October 2008. Nevertheless, it seems that membership numbers have been decreased slightly over the last year

2.2. Financial members at 30 September 2008 numbered 774. Unfortunately the present registered membership has dropped back to 730, although I have to date been advised by a few Club secretaries of a number of late registrations and that they are hopeful of re-registering a number of members (64) who are presently on leave or are simply laggard in returning to the fold of current membership, which will give us a total of around 794 members, to be hopefully increased as the new membership drive unfolds.

3. The Members’ Groups

3.1. Registrations

3.1.1. Almost all Clubs which were financial at 30 September 2007 have re-registered. It is important that Club Secretaries and Treasurers realise that until members (old or new) are registered they effectively disenfranchise those members from protection under the AAMBS Public Liability and Personal Accident Policies and from voting rights at AAMBS meetings, as their current AAMBS membership fees will have not been paid nor their membership recorded. This matter is of considerable concern both to the AAMBS Council and needs to be carefully noted by each AAMBS Club.

3.2. Clubs

3.2.1. At this stage, the number of currently registered individual Clubs in AAMBS presently stands at 32, including the newly registered Newcastle Barbershop Harmony Club and High Altitude Harmony and the Club-at-Large presently of 3 individual members, but about to increase with the advent of a new unaligned quartet.

3.3. Unaligned Quartets

3.3.1. We now have two Unaligned Quartets, a third having merged into Hills Harmony; another – from South Australia – is expected to be registered shortly

3.4. The Club-at-Large

3.4.1. We currently have three members of the Club-at-Large. From last year, only two have not renewed their membership, while seven have joined two of the clubs.

4. Insurance

4.1. The Public Liability insurance policy has been renewed, and Certificates of Currency issued to those clubs and Unaligned Quartets that have paid their members’ AAMBS membership fees, and re-registered.

5. Performing Rights Licence

5.1. The Australian Performing Rights Association (APRA) licence has been renewed. The licence covers 35 groups, which is slightly in excess of our usual Club and Unaligned Quartet total of 32; this allows for future growth. Quartets affiliated with clubs are also covered by this insurance through that affiliation.

6. Casual Recording

6.1. Licences from Australian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society (AMCOS) are able to be obtained by AAMBS on behalf of the membership. These cover, respectively, casual audio and video recording where the music being performed is under AMCOS control.

7. Library

7.1. The AAMBS library is expanding slowly, being augmented by video tapes of our own and international convention material, as well as CDs and DVDs of this year’s top quartets and choruses, presently on order.
7.2. There has been no difficulty with the return of borrowed material.

8. Barbershop Notes

8.1. The quality has, I believe, been maintained extremely well with a constant and enthusiastic supply of material from the Clubs. The Barbershop Notes are on the AAMBS Website in colour and are also distributed in electronic (pdf) form to all Secretaries. Members are reminded that they are able to download directly from the Website and print a particular article or notice which interests them.

9. Cultural Organisation

9.1 AAMBS is awaiting approval by the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts for registration of AAMBS as a Cultural Organisation in view of its arts-related activities – with the establishment of a special fund entitled “The AAMBS Donations Fund”. Registration will enable donations to the Association’s Fund to be recognised as donations to a deductible gift recipient for the operation of a public fund. This will be a clear tax benefit to donors.

10. Summary

I thank in particular the other members of National Council, the 2007 Convention Organizers and the many Club Executives for their assistance, friendship, and significant support.

Kevin White
Secretary, AAMBS Inc.
9 December 2008

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**RIVER CITY CLIPPERS**

The Clippers returned from competing in the Pan Pacific Convention in Hawaii, disappointed but wiser for the experience. Many positives were gleaned from the trip which will enable them to perform better in the future as they continue to improve. As so often happens their final rehearsal the night before the event was a doozy encouraging Guru Mel Knight to enthuse that the Clippers were on the cusp of greatness. Alas the next morning under the lights and the atmosphere, they wilted and scored badly.

Tragedy hit the Chorus and the Hocking family when Rosa Hocking had a heart attack on the day of competition. Long time Clippers and Blenders stalwart Michael Hocking arrived back at the Ala Moana Hotel after our appearance to receive the dreadful news. It was a sombre day and our hearts went out to Michael and his family.

Musical Director Don Godfrey is enjoying singing lead again within the chorus as he earns a well deserved break whilst Bass Rob Strickland steers the ship coming into the festive season. The Clippers appeared in Concert on the “Pride of America” as it visited the other Hawaiian Islands and were farewelld at the Waikiki Yacht Club on their return to Oahu by the Sounds of Aloha Chorus who handed the host baton over to Committee chairman, John Shelton, as the Clippers will be hosting the next Pan Pacific Convention in Brisbane in 2011 at the Brisbane Convention Centre.

The Clippers understand the Blenders deep unity now that they have travelled together overseas. The trip was an outstanding success and closer links were forged by the continual interaction of chorus members, in the pool, at breakfast, in the bar. “Really George, I didn’t realise you had served that long. How long were you in prison?”

Happy Christmas to all Choruses and Quartets. See you all in Hobart.

Derek Churchill

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**The Sunshine Statesmen**

It’s all go at the “Sunshine Statesmen” Chorus in Buderim, Qld. Determined to get to Hobart in September 2009, fundraising is well underway. With a busy committee contributing ideas, it seems the Chorus is going to be busy between now and September.

Preferring to fundraise by singouts, and doing what we love and enjoy (and after all ...rehearse for!) instead of cake raffles and the like.....we have got planned a series of mini-concerts with a donation entry fee...at many of the over 50’s villages on the Sunshine Coast.

Plus possibly Valentine’s Day quartetting and Mother’s Day...it will all help. At Kawana Shopping World....with a surfing and beach Christmas theme mall-wide, several quartets from the chorus, resplendent in loud beach shirts, board shorts and Hawaiian leis, entertained pre-Christmas shoppers with mainly Carols and the occasional chorus repertoire song thrown in. These gigs over three separate dates in December brought in a sizeable amount towards the Hobart fund. With the proceeds from our Annual Concert also , it all looks good.

Mid November, the chorus enjoyed hosting a quartet from the Isle of Wight...."Ebb Tide"...from the" Wight Harmony Barbershop Singers....Garden Isle Chorus".

Coincidentally, intrepid tenor, Russell Thomas, was just about to leave for an extended overseas holiday which was to include visiting friends, Clive and Valerie, on the Isle of Wight....when our chorus received an email from the boys there informing us that they would be in Oz in November. So Russell contacted them once he arrived in the Isle of Wight and had a dinner and of course, a sing with them. In the way of the Barbershop fraternity world wide, a terrific friendship was formed.

When the boys, Peter (lead), Chris (tenor) , Eric (bass) and Gary ( the Bar) arrived on the Sunshine Coast it was anything but sunny.....that time being the era of the bad storms. But the warmth they received from a reciprocal dinner at Russell Thomas’ house—plus a combined singout at “M1” apartments
for a birthday girl...and a fun night at our Wednesday chorus rehearsal where the boys sang “When I'm 64” (well it does mention the “Isle of Wight!”) and a parody about giving up smoking called “Tobacco”…more than made up for the lack of sun and blue sky. In fact they probably felt quite at home.

Other fun singouts recently…one of our quartets…”Just 4 Fun”…entertained a huge crowd in the cavernous Wise’s Rd Baptist Church, as supporting act for Jazz legend Johnny Nicol’s concert to fundraise for a hospice on the coast. And again…on 17th December, they wowed ‘em at the Cittamani Hospice’s Christmas do.

“The Barbertones” did two gigs in one afternoon at Caloundra Craft Centre Open Day Fair, followed quickly by another gig at Coolum Beach Retreat. Even though the tenor was practically voiceless, the guys made it admirably through both gigs on sheer terror and smiling inanely at the audience!

Patients at the Nambour Public Hospital once again this year got the thrill of the chorus in their dinky Santa hats, some with flashing pom-poms! Cheering those poor folk who are bed-bound in hospital over Christmas has become a tradition with our chorus and always gives us the warm fuzzies. With the thankful assistance of one of the security guards, without whose help we'd have lost ourselves in the rabbit warren of stairwells and corridors, we sang carols and repertoire songs to all. We did however, omit singing “Heart of my Heart” in the cardiac ward!

Another Christmas appearance at the annual “Joy to the World” Christian Festival in North Buderim rounded out 2008 followed shortly after by the much awaited chorus Christmas party….this year at the “Rustic Cabin” near Caloundra. This gave all of us a chance to let off steam, have a good sing with a glass of red in our hands and generally prove to our partners just why we disappear from home every Wednesday night. All visiting Barbershoppers are always welcome every Wednesday night at Buderim Uniting Church Hall, Cnr. Gloucester Rd, Buderim

Cheers till next time,
Shane Bycroft

COMING EVENTS

2009

Feb 20-22  Eastern Region Workshop – Greenhills Conference Centre, Canberra.

April 5 – SOUNDWAVES sings for The McGrath Foundation at Castle Hill RSL. Time TBA

May 2 - 3rd Annual Hills Harmony Barbershop Contest – details TBA

May 17 – Miner Chords at Ipswich Heritage Fair at Woodlands in Marburg.

May 30 – Eastern Region Qualifying Competition – Details TBA


Sept 20 – 22 – AAMBS Eastern Region Weekend Workshop
Greenhills Convention Centre  CANBERRA
1437 Cotter Rd. WESTON  ACT


Sept 27-30 – AAMBS Harmony College, Hobart

2011

AAMBS 11th Annual Convention and Pan Pacific Convention, Brisbane Qld – Hosted by The Brisbane River City Clippers

1. Send details of your events for Barbershop Notes and the AAMBS Website

2. For more details of what is happening in Barbershopping in Australia and overseas check Coming Events on the AAMBS Website - www.aambs.org.au
AAMBS' CONTACT INFORMATION

Please make contact with AAMBS through the Secretary at our permanent addresses and 'Phoneone number:-

Postal address: AAMBS Inc.
P O Box 6026
WEST GOSFORD NSW 2250
Website: www.aambs.org.au

VP Membership
Tom Smith
50 Hinkler Drive
MILL PARK VIC 3082
Phone: 03 9404 1216
Fax: 03 9437 7847
Email: membership@aambs.org.au

VP Music
Ian Miller
20 Mimosa Road
BUDGEWOI NSW 2261
Phone: 02 4390 3893
Mobile: 0408 620 921
Email: music@aambs.org.au

VP Youth Development
Steve Griffin
330 Rio Vista Boulevard
Mermaid Waters QLD 4218
Phone: 0411 951 259
Fax: 07 5572 3659
Email: youth@aambs.org.au

President
Mike Donnelly
12 Jutland Rise
OCEAN REEF WA 6027
Phone/fax: 08 9300 5430
Mobile: 0432 802 296
Email: president@aambs.org.au

Secretary
Kevin White
P O Box 6026
WEST GOSFORD NSW 2250
Phone: 02 4369 8369
Fax: 02 4369 8379
Email: secretary@aambs.org.au

Treasurer
Barry Joy
1 / 23 Hooker Boulevard
Broadbeach Waters QLD 4218
Phone: 07 5572 0284
Mobile: 0403 979 643
Email: treasurer@aambs.org.au

VP Conventions
Richard Gardam
P O Box 88
SNUG Tas 7054
Phone: 03 6267 9265
Mobile: 0403 396 515
Email: conventions@aambs.org.au

VP Marketing & Development
Derek Churchill
95 Montpelier Street
Wilston Qld 4051
Phone: 07 3356 7379
Email: marketing@aambs.org.au