We made the journey a bit earlier than most, hoping to overcome any jet-lag in plenty of time before competing and also to enjoy some of whatever Pittsburgh had to offer. Pittsburgh is an interesting city, 3 pro sports teams, a bunch of history and a stack of bridges gave us plenty to take in before getting into our final days of rehearsal.

We had the amazing opportunity to work with Matt Gifford, of 2014 champion Musical Island Boys, in the Dream Lounge. Matt was generous enough to spend a couple of sessions working on our performance as well as walking us through most of the contest pattern. Needless to say, it was pretty awesome having an experienced champ taking us under his wing and helping us through the journey. Before all that though, we got to sit back and support BHA’s collegiate reps, Blindside and The Grand Angus. Both were amazing, Blindside winning their medal and TGA with their comedy and ‘those suits’, gaining BHA some real recognition on the international level. We were particularly proud of our Tenor, Mark, singing lead with TGA.

Getting to sing on the International contest stage is a dream come true for many barbershoppers, including us, and it was all that we imagined. Reaching this stage was a big time goal achieved and, unfortunately for our bank accounts, achieving this has sparked a red hot fire in the four of us. After being constantly inspired at almost every turn to dream and dream big, Lockout is definitely planning on heading back to that stage in a big way........ Come and chat to us in Melbourne for more stories! We can’t wait to see you all!

Mark, Stefan, Ash and Ali
(Lockout was placed a very creditable 36th out of 53 quartets with an average score of 78.3%...Ed.)
A Lot to Look Forward To

In a little over four weeks from now we will all be gathering to celebrate barbershop harmony at our 13th Convention in Melbourne. We will be treated to the best barbershop singing in Australia from our quartets and choruses who have spent months preparing to be at their very best to entertain us all.

In addition, our headline International champion quartet, Vocal Spectrum, will be there to thrill you with some of the absolute best singing you will ever hear. With four CD recordings to their credit and a history going back at least 12 years, this very special quartet is not to be missed.

There are a number of events being run in Melbourne, and I encourage you to attend them all. Don’t miss a thing! Start with the Youth and Schools quartet and chorus contest on Wednesday afternoon at the Deakin Edge Theatre, followed by the Youth concert, and then the John Little Show in the same venue. Entry is free to registered delegates.

Start your Thursday with the massed sing in Federation Square where you will hear our headline quartet, and enjoy singing with your fellow members from around Australia. Brush up on those polecat songs! Then head to the Chorus Corral in the Deakin Edge Theatre on Thursday afternoon to enjoy some SHOWTIME barbershop from our competing choruses. Then head to Etihad Stadium for the welcome dinner, opening and membership awards ceremonies. This has become THE must-attend event of our Conventions. Break bread and share harmonies with 700 fellow singers from around Australia, and hear our headline quartet sing again.

Be on time to see the start of the quartet contest on Friday morning in the famous Hamer Hall. Marvel at the skill and dedication of our quartet singers who take on one of the hardest musical art forms in the world. Be sure to be back in time for the evening quartet final and sing off by our past champions.

Saturday looms HUGE at Hamer Hall with the chorus contest followed by the Showcase concert, featuring our winning quartets and choruses, and of course, Vocal Spectrum. Enjoy the afterglows on both Friday and Saturday night.

With such a crowded schedule it is inevitable that there will be some overlaps on Sunday morning. Events include the traditional church service, and also the BHA Forum. These will be followed by the Farewell Lunch back at Etihad Stadium.

I am often impressed by the huge amount of work your National Council does, often without much recognition or appreciation. If you see one of our National Councillors or Regional Chairmen at Convention, please take a moment to personally thank them for their efforts on your behalf.

Each of your Councillors volunteer conservatively 7-10 hours per week of their time. They often need to juggle and sacrifice work and family commitments to ensure that our Association runs smoothly and seamlessly. They happily do this so you can enjoy your weekly night of harmony singing, and have a yearly Convention to gather together to celebrate singing barbershop harmony with your friends.

Your Membership VP, Richard Reeve, for example, has designed and is conducting a number of Club Leadership workshops around the country. He is devoting literally hundreds of hours (and giving up numerous weekends) to this initiative so that members can have better run Clubs and derive more enjoyment from their singing.

The job of the Events VP in a Convention year, is a huge one, and your Events VP, Dan Millgate, is working long hours with the Convention Committee almost daily to ensure that your every need is catered for at the Convention. As Convention grows near, the stresses of this organisation role becomes more and more intense. If you see Dan or one of the Melburnaires Convention Organising Committee (led by Chairman John Howell) at Convention, please take time out to thank them personally.

Your Music VP, Alex Morris, is juggling organising judges for the Convention (and the Regionals we’ve had this year) as well as planning and implementing a strategic music
director education and training program that commenced this year with the visit of Dr Don Campbell. Alex will also be running our Harmony College after the Convention and coordinating all of the educators.

Finally, your Youth Development VP, Trevor Rootes, is working very hard on youth development initiatives and teacher professional development resources so that we can attract and retain young members who will be the future of this organisation. The progress down this path has been impressive.

I choose the above four examples, because they are probably the most visible to members, but I can assure you that every member of your National Council is working extremely hard on their individual portfolios, so that you can continue to enjoy your hobby.

Sing-cerely,

Ian Mulholland - President

REGISTRATIONS
Warning!! Warning!!
We know there are probably many people who intend coming to Convention but just *haven't* got around to registering yet - well, this message is for you. We would hate for you to miss out!
Convention Registrations (this includes registrations for what should be a truly memorable Harmony College) close in less than 2 weeks on Monday 31st August. If you are not registered BEFORE this date, you will not be able to participate in the Convention, either as a delegate, or as a competitor (quartet and/or chorus). NO EXCEPTIONS.

Please go to barbershopconvention.com.au to register. If you're not absolutely certain that your registration has been successful then you can also check this at Convention Orders by searching for your email address and resending the order to yourself if you want to know exactly what you've paid for.

COMPETITORS
We have over 20 choruses and 44 quartets competing in the Harmony Goldrush contests. As well as the Open competitions in Hamer Hall on Friday & Saturday (18th & 19th) we will have a world class field in the Youth and other events at Deakin Edge Theatre and Fed Square on Wednesday & Thursday (16th & 17th). The Youth competition will include Australia's highest ranked barbershop group ever (Blindside - 4th this year in the International Collegiate competition) so Deakin Edge Theatre will be packed to the gunnels. With just over 400 seats for these youth events you will need to turn up early for the good spots.

All delegates in Hamer Hall will be seated in the stalls.

HAMER HALL
Tickets are selling well so if your friends and families want to get extra tickets then go immediately to the artscentremelbourne.com.au website to book you tickets online. You may care to forward them the following information:

All four Hamer Hall events provide concession pricing for Seniors, Pensioners, Full-time Students and Children Under 16. (See the flyer on Page 16 for times and prices.)

If you are not entitled to concession pricing then there is a special offer which you can only access by phoning the Arts Centre on 1300 182 183. This offer allows you to buy a $45 ticket for Friday 18th Sept covering both the Quartet Finals (top 11 quartets) and Preliminary Competitions (44 quartets including the recent world Collegiate 4th place medalists, Blindside and the Australian 8-time Seniors Champion quartet Benchmark [Australia's Got Talent Finalists] and currently world Seniors 8th place medalists).

Current Pan-Pacific Gold Medalists The Establishment from the Gold Coast will also be vying for the BHA Gold.

TRAM TRAVEL IN MELBOURNE CBD
We know we've said this several times already, but just in case you missed it, tram travel in the CBD will be free. The CBD, however, is only on the North side of the Yarra River and Federation Square, Deakin Edge Theatre, Etihad Stadium are all in the CBD. Hamer Hall, however, is just over the Princes Bridge on the South side of the river so if you want to travel free you must get off outside Flinders Street Station and walk over the bridge. Otherwise you will need to get a Myki Card to ride the tram to the door of Hamer Hall.

Just 4 weeks to kick off - we'll see you there!!

Harmoniously yours,

John Howell - Committee Chairman
At this year’s National contest, Council will introduce the Mature Chorus Award, where a chorus’s average age is multiplied by its contest score, and the highest multiple (rating) wins.

For example, a chorus with an average age of 70 that scores 60.0% would have a rating of 4,200. A chorus with an average age of 45 scoring 70% would have a rating of 3,150, and a chorus with an average age of 30 scoring 80% would have a rating of 2,400.

We already have the Bruce Okely Award for Youth Chorus, and the John Little Show for quartets, named after our first two Life Members, so to honour our third Life Member, the National Council has decided it will be called The Andy Aberle Mature Chorus Award.

In accepting the naming in his honour, Andy said “I think the concept is a wonderful idea, offering recognition, encouragement and appreciation of the contribution and example of the mature singers to our fellowship. I would be honoured, delighted and humbled for the award to carry my name”.

Andy will be on hand to present the award for the first time in Melbourne.

Ian Mulholland - President

Over the past month, as outlined in previous editions of In Harmony, I have begun a national series of Club Officer Training Seminars (COTS) with seminars in Sydney for Eastern Region on 26 July and Perth for Western Region on 1 August.

The purpose of the series is to introduce principles of club management to executives to implement as best suits their clubs, ensure all clubs are aware of available BHS and BHA resources and open more lines of communication between clubs and National Council.

The first year of this series covers the "5 M's of Club Management": Music, Marketing, Membership, Money and Mystique. It is intended that these seminars become an annual event with perhaps case-study issues being chosen from next year, such as recruitment, music team operation, sponsorship, repertoire and copyright, etc. The workshops are designed for current and aspiring club leaders, with the next workshop to be in Brisbane for Sunshine Region on August 30.

Richard Reeve - VP Membership

Central Region is a busy place for barbershoppers at present with BHA choruses and quartets preparing for the National Convention in Melbourne. Two pre-Convention concerts have been planned to assist all the singers to fine-tune their performances and hopefully put some much needed funds in the kitty.

The Regional convention was held for the first time over two days with a Cabaret concert following the competition on Saturday 2 May and a series of workshops after a BBQ lunch on Sunday 3 May. The competition involved 6 choruses including 3 female choruses and one mixed chorus and 9 quartets.

The Open Chorus competition was once again won by the Festival Statesmen directed by Jonathan Bligh with the Fleurieu Harmony Memorial Shield going to our newest female chorus High Spirits Harmony directed by Matthew Lykos. In the quartet competition
Fishbowl Boys came out of semi-retirement to just pip Now In Stereo for the gold medal.

Many thanks to our judges Dan Millgate, Andrew Howson and Andrew Carolan for their judging skills and excellent feedback during evaluation and to our Contest Administrators Vicki Donnelly and Linda Vinall for helping us to run a smooth and enjoyable competition. A special thanks to Kim Sebbage who travelled over from Perth and did a great job as MC for the convention; Jonathan Bligh and the Establishment quartet for running workshops as part of a great weekend; Andrew and Sarah Bradley and Linda and David Vinall for hosting our visitors and doing so much work behind the scenes.

In early June following the convention we welcomed Don Campbell BHS Professor of Music and Choral Coaching and Jill Rogers BHNZ Director of Music Education for a two day music directors and chorus singers workshop. All workshop participants learned a lot over the two days and we thank BHA for its efforts in bringing these two excellent educators to our shores.

Our sights now turn firmly towards the National convention with Festival Statesmen Chorus, Fleurieu Harmony Chorus and our newest club South Central Harmony (President Cam DuRieu) entering the chorus competition. The word on the grapevine is that Adelaide Vocal Union from South Central will turn a few heads in the small chorus competition. In addition Fishbowl Boys, Now In Stereo, Skyline, DQ and Senior quartet Recycled will give a good account of themselves in the quartet competition.

We are also very proud that mixed chorus Adelaide Allsorts and mixed quartet 3 Tarts and a Diva! have been included in the competition for the first time in what we think is a great step forward. The region wishes all our groups the very best for the competition.

Wayne Good – Secretary

Mount Tambourine is a beautiful part of the world, situated in the hinterland of the Gold Coast. We were lucky enough to spend some time there a few weeks ago when we were invited to sing at two sell out concerts in the Zamia Hall at North Tambourine. It was a great day and all reports suggested that the audience enjoyed the singing – we enjoyed singing for them.
And now we are looking forward to Melbourne and catching up with our Barbershop friends. We, like most other choruses, have been practicing our competition set and are looking forward to taking the new members of our chorus to their first Convention so that they can experience first-hand, the friendship and harmony that you can only get at a Barbershop Convention.

Finally, congratulations go to Blindside for their 4th place at the recent Collegiate competition in the US. For a group of young blokes who were singing barbershop a few years ago without much support from the barbershop community, to make it to the International stage in such a short time and win a medal says a lot about these blokes. They are great ambassadors for barbershop especially youth, and deserve every accolade that comes their way. Well done, Gareth, Tim, Trent and Michael – The Blenders are very proud of you all.

In Harmony

Ian Mackey - Secretary.

The Brisbane River City Clippers have been very busy leading up to the BHA National Convention. Since the appointment of Richard Reeve as our new Musical Director, the Clippers have moved up a couple of gears, with appearances at the Sunshine Regional competition, performances which included charity events for the Griffith University Melanoma Research Foundation, Qantas Longreach drought appeal, and our support for Men’s National Health Week with a special appearance at the Carina Men’s Shed Men’s Health Expo.

The Clippers promoted and hosted an introduction to Barbershop singing event, radio and press promotion focused on the benefits of singing in a community group like ours, invitations to men of all ages and walks of life to attend. Richard Reeve presented an informative session on the origins of barbershop music, the structure of chords and tags, and invited those in attendance up on the risers to sing. The night was a huge success with some past members and prospective singers enjoying the experience of ringing out some great tags.

Our final preparation for the National Convention will see the Clippers host a gold coin concert on Sunday 30th August at the McGellicott Theatre St Lawrence College South Brisbane. The concert will include other choruses and quartets that will be attending the national convention.

David Spillane - VP marketing

The Sunshine Statesmen ran the 2015 Sunshine region Regional Convention in Caloundra on June 13th. This was the first time the Statesmen have run the Regional Convention.

Our purpose in nominating to run this event was twofold.

Firstly to support the Sunshine Region in furthering the spread of Barbershop Harmony. Secondly, to promote Barbershop Harmony to the populace of the Sunshine Coast by arranging for both the competition during the day and the 'Barbershop Spectacular' at night to be run in our best venue, The Events Centre.

We started well with good planning in place however illness, travel and the changing requirements of BHA tended to test the best of planning, but due to some dextrous manipulation by Bill Leivesley, Bob Rutter and Graham Nicholson and all available members of the chorus also with the assistance and skill of certain members of other choruses, all obstacles put in our way were overcome.

The Sunday program provided by B.H.A. with Dr Don Campbell and Jill Rogers was very successful with many good pointers for both chorus and Music Directors, a very informative program was run by Dr Don and Jill.

I feel sure the 50 people who attended the workshop profited musically. It was a success.
both promotionally and financially with both the Sunshine Region and The Sunshine Statesmen profiting.

The following is just one congratulatory message of several received.

"From a visiting chorus I have to say that it was a very good event and seemed to run smoothly from the outside, I would like to congratulate you and the Sunshine Statesmen for all you efforts with a very limited number of members and I hope it pays off and you can attract some new members.

We at the Blenders and our Youth Chorus had a wonderful time with so many new faces in our ranks just trying to convey to them the experience that they will get from going to the regional convention and now they cannot wait to get to the National convention in Melbourne (bring it on)

In Heart and Harmony
Doug Goetze – President
and VP Membership  The Blenders

PS it was really great catching up with fellow singers from all the choruses in the Sunshine Region and I look forward to seeing you all in Melbourne
Doug "

Tony Eccles
Convention coordinator, Sunshine Statesmen.

Under the direction of Kieran O’Dea. AVU is built on fantastic group of singers with ages ranging from 17 to 70 and are ready to make their contest debut in September. Adelaide Vocal Union prides itself on being an exciting, open age chorus and has a couple of not-so-strict rehearsal policies.

- No learning notes at rehearsal.
- No leaving rehearsal without singing a ‘tasteful’ tag.
- Every member must make an appearance at the pub after rehearsal.

Find us on facebook to learn more about our members! www.facebook.com/adelaidevocalunion

That's all for now, see you in Melbourne!

Cam DuRieu - President

Novatones chorus was asked to sing at a function held at a Newcastle restaurant, organised for the Hamlin Fistula Foundation, which has been doing great work in Ethiopia repairing obstetric fistulae in women, caused by obstructed labour. It is a horrendous condition, and these women are shunned and outcast, unable to get the surgical help they need.
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We were more than happy to accept, and sang some carols (the theme of the night being Christmas in July), and a couple of our regular repertoire. It is always good to get some exposure of our musical style, and it was good to get most of our new members to sing out for the first time – always a bit harrowing.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable night for all concerned.

Rod Woodhouse – Secretary

High Altitude Harmony

How many sleeps ‘til Melbourne? I’m not sure but, I know that the work that HAH has been putting in on its contest set is pretty full on. We are off to annual camp in a couple of weeks to put the final polish on the routine and also have fun with our partners, wives, girlfriends and kids.

The winter has been pretty cold up here on top of the Great Dividing Range. I know. All you southerners are saying, “Not true. It’s Queensland.” Well at over 600 metres the southerly winds keep things pretty chilly for quite a few weeks.

We are also planning our annual Singing Restaurant along with the contest planning and it is going well. Quite a few new songs are being worked on and it is a challenge for many as we have had a serious shakeup of voice parts and some men are loosening their trousers; whilst others are pulling them tighter to sing some of the higher notes. Joking aside, it looks like our biggest fundraiser of the year will again be the place to be on Saturday October 31.

Want to come? Book now by going to our website haharmony.com and follow the links. See you all in Melbourne

Paddy Boxall - Secretary

Festival Statesmen

What a couple of months it has been for us!

Last you heard we were preparing for a tour to Hobart and I am very pleased to report that it was a massive success. Our stand-alone show, as part of The Festival of Voices, sold out weeks before we even arrived. Everywhere we went we were greeted by some of the most supportive, collaborative musicians you can meet outside of a Barbershop convention.

Our show went off well with a great reception by the audience. Special mention must go to chorus members Josh Belperio and Mitch Bartell for the premiere of their fantastic original compositions in that concert. Perhaps some of the most memorable moments though, were outside of our stand-alone show. We got to sing in the local community and collaborate with some of the fantastic artists there. It was a host of memorable moments like closing the festival with Melbourne folk ensemble Co-Cheol, tagging at the pub with local BBS group Deep South, singing with a heavy-metal acapella ensemble in front of a crowd of headbangers and many other fantastic moments.

That’s not all we got up to though! We’re proud to say the Festival Statesmen have released our new single: a cover of Get Back by The Beatles, featuring soloists Ben Catt and Daniel Maley. If any of you want to check it out, go to https://loudr.fm/release/get-back/azzXu

As convention fast approaches we’ve slipped into top gear and we’re busy fundraising to get our boys there so if anyone wants Community Lottery tickets, we’re still selling them at www.peopleschoicecu.com.au/festival-statesmen-youth-chorus

We can’t wait to share what we’ve been working on with you all in a couple of months. Bring on Melbourne!

James Moffatt - Committee member
As our last In Harmony article as champs, we have wedding, festival and CD news. With invitations continuing to come in to perform at music festivals, we've begun recording a CD. We've had one session and have scheduled another and are excited about the result. Some of the songs included on the CD will be live versions (such as "18 wheels" and perhaps "I was only 19") and others will be studio recordings. It won't be ready for Melbourne but will be soon enough. Watch this space and our Facebook page and web site for details on how to order.

In early August we were honoured to sing at a wedding, including performing a custom arrangement of Cosmo Jarvis's "She Doesn't Mind", by Mitch Bartel, as the bride walked down the aisle. Singing at a wedding is always special, and this was all the more so since it was a mate of Richard's. The wedding was in the Art Gallery of WA and we had a ball singing in the amazing acoustics.

Since the Perth convention when all four of us sang with Vocal Evolution, life has moved on and we now all sing with different choruses. Only Ash is still with VE, while Trev has returned to the Festival Statesmen, Adrian is Directing Men in Harmony and Richard is Directing the Brisbane River City Clippers. During our promo photo shoot for the CD we snapped this one with us all proudly in our different chorus shirts.

Finally we'd like to wish all competitors at nationals best of luck and we look forward to singing away our gold. See you in Melbourne!

Trev, Richard, Adrian and Ash

Welcome to our newest BHA members

Your Council would like to extend a BIG welcome on behalf of all BHA members to the following members who have joined us in recent months.

Westcoast Harmony
Jason Ayres

Men in Harmony
Peter Burns
Edgar Reynolds

Club-at-Large
David Murphy

Hobart Mens Barbershop
Jeremy Just
John Sandow

Gold Coast Barbershop Harmony Club Inc
Laurie Ehlers
John McGregor

Riverland Ramblers
Caleb Wilson

Barbershop Harmony Club of Canberra
Reagan Pillay
Chris John
Thomas Liu
Nick Steain

Hobart Mens Barbershop
Peter Venning

The Melbournaires
David Foxley
Michael Patton
Mark Bolton

Newcastle Harmony Club
Michael Calder

Sydney Harmony
Chris Fung
South Central Harmony
Yuri Vilmanis

Western Melbourne Men's Chorus
Christopher Downing
Joseph Beckitt

Sunshine Coast
John King
Doug McDonald

High Altitude Harmony
Jorden Totenhofer

We look forward to meeting you and hopefully seeing you all on the risers at our next BHA Convention in Melbourne in 2015

Debate on Mixed Harmony

Letter from Ian Mulholland
In previous newsletters I called for submissions on a number of topics that the National Council believes are positive steps for our organisation, and we received feedback from a number of members. This process started in October 2014. Based on the feedback the National Council then proceeded in March 2015, some 6 months after initiating the consultation process, to trial some changes to the way our Association operates.

One of these changes, but not the only one, was the trial of a mixed harmony contest at the Melbourne Convention. The trial required making some changes to the contest rules so that the contest could be properly judged and run. Without those changes the trial could not be run properly. It was always Council’s intention to seek feedback on the mixed harmony trial after the Convention.

I want to make it clear that there have been no changes made to our Constitution (the National Council does not have this power), and there are no changes made to the principles or structure of our organisation (the enjoyment of male barbershop singing).

If the trial results in the adoption of mixed harmony contests beyond Melbourne, there seems to be a fear that Clubs will be required to become “mixed”. That is not the case at all. Each Club can still determine how it structures itself, either as all-male membership, or mixed. Clubs have actually always had that option.

The National Council has now received a petition calling for immediate cancellation of the trial of the mixed harmony contest in Melbourne, and this has been presented with 77 member signatures. Of those 77 signatures, and according to the latest registration list, 27 of them (i.e. 35%) aren’t even attending the Melbourne Convention to hear the mixed harmony contest. The 77 signatures on the petition do not represent the 20% of our membership required under our Constitution to requisition a Special General Meeting to vote on the issue.

In response to the petition the BHA Council has determined the following:

1. The mixed harmony contests will proceed as planned in Melbourne. It would be unfair to the mixed harmony groups who have spent months of preparation, and spent thousands of dollars on travel and accommodation expenses to cancel the contests now.
2. As part of the Convention programme there will be a feedback form that members can fill out and submit (in the same way that voting for the audience favourite is carried out).
3. The feedback will be compiled and a discussion held at the BHA Forum to be held on the Sunday morning of the Convention. To have your say you need to be there.
4. Based on the results of this, the National Council can put the issue to a vote at the AGM in early December if members wish.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find more letters on the issue. A letter by John Lightfoot, contains distortions and selective extracts from my previous communications with members. In particular he states that I said that the trial of mixed harmony was “controversial”. What I said was that some of the changes (general term referring to the several changes that the National Council was considering) might be considered controversial, and we should be cautious how we proceed, so therefore we would be seeking member comments. What John Lightfoot doesn't mention was that I then sought those comments from members for six months and the responses were 5 to 1 in favour of trialling mixed harmony. This resulted in the Council’s decision to announce the trial of mixed harmony contests in Melbourne. Council needed to act in March so that mixed harmony groups had time to prepare for Regional...
qualifying in April-June and then make plans to attend Melbourne. The decision was not rushed through, and a trial is a suitably cautious step forward.

I do encourage you to attend the contest sessions in Melbourne, listen to the mixed harmony groups with an open mind, and then come along to the BHA Forum and have your say.

Sing-cerely,

Ian Mulholland - President

Letter from John Lightfoot

I refer to the comments about mixed harmony singing made by the President since late last year in our Newsletter, IN HARMONY, which took an unfortunate turn recently in the form of a disappointing response by the President to a Letter to the Editor from one of our members in the last issue of IN HARMONY No.148 June/July 2015.

Members who have been following the issue will have noticed the initial thoughts put forward by the President in the IN HARMONY Issue 144 October/November 2014 following the Eastern Region Contest which included mixed groups.

The President made reference to a growing movement around the world of mixed harmony singers and growing interest in Australia with potential opportunities for BHA. He mentioned that mixed harmony contests were already in our Regional Conventions and that now was the opportunity for a more formal “official” basis.

The President went on to say that we have the facility in our Constitution to have Associate Members who could be female members of mixed harmony groups and a simple change would enable the addition of mixed harmony to our contests. The President hoped members shared his enthusiasm and vision for this important move and sought comments especially as the idea was a little “controversial”. However, it was notable that the President cautioned that we do need to be careful about how we change and how rapid that change might be.

The IN HARMONY Issue 145 December/January 2015 included more comments by the President about mixed harmony singing. The President made reference to the controversial idea of introducing mixed harmony into our contests and that the National Council wanted feedback.

The President also mentioned his invitation for comments on the idea in the last Newsletter and that none had been received. He went on to say that the National Council would be meeting in Sydney at the end of February for their annual Face to Face meeting and that the introduction of mixed harmony into our contests would be discussed and possibly be decided upon. The President encouraged members to contact him ASAP if they had a view on this topic.

Maybe there was a lot of member apathy surrounding this important matter as is often the case in similar organisation administrative issues. History also shows that it is difficult to get a large majority of members to actively participate in these types of issues as typical statistics show:

• 5% of members participate in almost every issue;
• Another 15% of members regularly participate;
• Another 20% of members occasionally participate;
• The remaining 60% of members never participate!

There are ways that BHA member interest could have been stimulated in such an important issue. No doubt there are some members who agree with the concept of mixed harmony and others who disagree. Proposed changes and their impact could have been communicated to the whole membership by the National Council.

Draft changes to the Standing Orders could have been made available on the BHA website which would have explained the National Council’s ideas for introducing mixed harmony into BHA. This would have opened up discussion and debate by the membership which is an obvious duty the National Council has to the members. This would have extended the decision making process, but in the end, provide a much better outcome. However, the President, by simply calling for “submissions on this topic”, would obviously shut down the discussion and debate. This would shorten the decision making process but would lead to an unfair, unreasonable and unrepresentative result of the feelings of the whole membership.

Judging by the President’s comments to members via Newsletters 144 and 145 it can be seen that he and the National Council were anxious, for whatever reason, to bring this issue to a rapid conclusion even though (as
mentioned previously) the President said that we do need to be careful about how we change and how rapid that change might be.

The President’s email 5 March 2015, announcing the introduction of mixed harmony into our Association, caught many members by surprise. Many were completely bewildered with the impact of the changes to the Standing Orders and by what had happened so rapidly with minimum consultation and feedback from the National Council.

The President mentioned several times about the controversial nature of the idea and thus, by this very description, implied that a rigorous discussion and debate was necessary, but it was not implemented.

Clearly, this most important issue has been managed poorly by the National Council failing to provide members with a proper forum for open discussion and debate. Such a significant change to the basic structure of our Association is one which, by its very nature, deserves the thoughtful consideration of every member of the Association regarding the ramifications the change may bring about.

The National Council now has a duty to revisit this most important issue which affects the basic structure of our Association and which, at present, has been compromised beyond the comprehension of many members. The National council should immediately rescind the changes to Standing Orders, which were introduced to allow mixed harmony into our Association, and facilitate a proper discussion, debate and vote by the members on all matters relevant to this issue.

This is the proper and right thing to do and all members should then be comfortable with the decision of the majority.

Yours faithfully,

John Lightfoot - Member No. 2736

Letter from Mike Donnelly

The topic of “mixed harmony,” men and women singing barbershop music together in quartets and choruses, is a point of current discussion here in Australia. But barbershop is a truly global phenomenon, and I want to share some observations. My perspective comes from 12 years as the immediate past BHA President, and 6 years as the current World Harmony Council President.

Mixed harmony is alive and well throughout the fourteen formal barbershop organizations around the world, including North America (BHS), Germany (BinGI), Britain (BABS), the Netherlands (Holland Harmony), and New Zealand (BHNZ). It is performed at BHS Regional competitions, at the European World Mixed Harmony competition, and throughout Britain. A highlight of the Internationals Convention in Pittsburgh was the inspiring sound of the mixed quartet “Hannah and the Hurricanes.” Performing on the Jamboree show, with Vocal Majority and Musical Island Boys, they received a standing ovation from the conservative barbershop audience.

In our neighbourhood, mixed harmony was enjoyed at the recent Pan Pacs in Wellington, and at most of our BHA Regionals……..some for over 20 years. And now BHA is joining the rest of the world by hosting mixed quartet and chorus competitions at our Melbourne Convention. In introducing this initiative it is my opinion that Council acted properly, and within the Constitution, and that this will be an excellent addition to the culture and esteem of BHA.

Our full Youth, Open and Seniors competitions will be there as always……but something new has been added for us to enjoy, evaluate, and celebrate. Let’s give it a go!

In Harmony,

Mike Donnelly
President, World Harmony Council

Letter from David Reid

There has been bit of discussion surrounding the decision to change BHA standing orders to allow a trial of mixed harmony inclusion at the 2015 National Convention. Having read through the correspondence, I felt compelled to write in support of the National Council and the decision to trial this concept in a more formalised and welcoming way.

My support of the following is based on the following;

- Many regional contests in Australia have already been supporting female and mixed group participation. Formalising this will enrich the experience for participants and ensure all participants perform under the proper protocols and
rules.

- Nobody is asking clubs to change their constitution or to accept female members into their choruses.
- Mixed choruses and quartets will not be competing directly against the male groups. Even the open categories are open only to male choruses and quartets.
- Council clearly has the authority to make changes to standing orders when it comes to the conduct of national and regional singing contests.
- Many international affiliates of Barbershop Harmony Society are embracing mixed harmony.

Sound Connection has embraced mixed harmony as an extension to our regular activities. We have no desire to become a mixed chorus but we do enjoy the musical challenge and the expanded network of those that love harmony singing. It also greatly improves the appeal of our concerts and attracts a much bigger audience.

In short, I find your initiative to be a welcome addition to our art form that does not require any change from those that choose to do things the way they have always done them. I also support the National Council’s efforts to enhance the enjoyment and appeal of our genre.

Kind Regards

David Reid
President - Sound Connection

Letter from Ali Jamison

I wanted to pen a letter with my thoughts on the recent discussion and “change” that has occurred within BHA, with the introduction of Mixed Harmony at the Melbourne Convention this year. I first read about this issue in the previous edition of In Harmony, where Ian Fraser’s letter, and Ian Mulholland’s reply, were both printed. I appreciate that In Harmony printed both of these, as it gave context and the chance to fairly interpret both opinions.

Whilst I am still relatively “young” in comparison with the BHA median age, I have been singing Barbershop for 11 years, and first competed in 2005 at Nationals in Queensland. I have been heavily involved in music since a very young age, initially from a choral background...but I “live in the seventh” and can’t imagine a life without Barbershop.

In my current role of President of Vocal Evolution (VE), I received an email from Ian Fraser containing a petition to “withdraw, reverse and in every way render inactive all changes” that were recently made by the BHA Council, on behalf of the membership. Signing this petition would result in the removal of the Mixed Harmony competition at Melbourne this year. This petition was put to the membership of VE and received no signatures. Mixed Harmony has been a staple of Western Region competition for a number of years, and has only been positive – it has resulted in greater attendance, better camaraderie between BHA and Sweet Adelines International, and has improved the nature of BHA within Western Region.

What needs to be remembered is that this year at Melbourne, the introduction of Mixed Harmony is a trial, and I am certain that the BHA Council will ask for feedback and plan for further conventions dependent on the response to this trial.

I have been privileged to attend BHS International on 3 occasions, twice as a member of a chorus, and once (most recently) as a quartet member. It is important to note that BHA is not taking these steps towards introducing Mixed Harmony as pioneers – in fact, we are already lagging behind the rest of the Barbershop world in comparison. At International this year, Mixed Harmony was a feature of the program and embraced by all attendees. What BHA is proposing is nothing different to what is already happening around the world in our wonderful art form.

Change is necessary to prevent stagnation. Without change, Barbershop would be limited to quartets and no choruses would perform at International. Without change, Ringmasters or Musical Island Boys would never have been eligible to compete internationally as Affiliate Members. Without change, I wouldn’t have been able to represent Australia at International on 3 occasions and share the joy of barbershop. Without change, we wouldn’t have Barbershop.

Ali Jamison
President, Vocal Evolution
Letter from Richard Wadick

I am writing in support of BHA’s initiative to introduce Mixed Quartets and Choruses in the Contest at the Melbourne Convention this year. I believe this decision has created an exciting element to the event with many of our members already taking on this challenging aspect to our craft. I enjoyed the Mixed Choruses and Mixed Harmony Ensembles performances in the Pan Pac Contest in Wellington in 2014 which really gave the event a positive edge.

Contrary to the concerns of some members, I do not believe that inviting women to participate in BHA activities will result in a dilution of the men’s barbershop movement, but will have more of the opposite effect – an enhancement of the movement and making it more attractive for potential recruits to the organisation. There has not been a significant loss of members from BHA in those Regions that have actively encouraged participation by SAA members in their events for several years. I am very proud to be part of an organisation whose leaders seek to be progressive, generate methods to improve membership growth and promote ways to keep our members interested, challenged and rewarded.

Yours in Harmony,

Richard Wadick - Chairman
BHA Eastern Region

Further Letter from Ian Fraser

A further letter has been received from Ian Fraser on this matter. It was considered by the Newsletter Editorial Committee that it did not add anything new to the debate. It was felt it was merely repeating the points from his previously published letter and has not been published in this Edition. If any readers wish to contact Ian Fraser directly to obtain a copy of his letter they can find his contact details through the Members List in the BHA Website.

Positions Vacant

MUSIC DIRECTOR WANTED

Following the retirement of our previous Director, Hills Harmony Chorus, based in the Hills District of Sydney, is seeking a new Music Director.

Hills Harmony membership currently stands at 30 enthusiastic and experienced singers. Our current repertoire includes over twenty popular songs. In addition, we have a substantial repertoire of Christmas songs.

We rehearse from 7.30pm until 10pm at Kellyville on Thursday nights.

We have competed with distinction at all BHA (AAMBS) Convention since forming in 1994 and will compete in the forthcoming Convention in Melbourne in September.

Our Chorus has two established Quartets including the current Eastern Region Senior Champions, HighJacked.

For further information about our Chorus refer to our Website www.hillsharmony.com.au

To express interest or find out more details about this exciting position please email our Club President Dick Bushell at president@hillsharmony.com.au or phone on 0423 343 565
**BARBERSHOP EVENTS**

Promote upcoming Events - send full details for inclusion in the BHA Calendar below and on the BHA Website. This helps other Clubs and Council plan events to ensure that they do not clash with other events in your Region, and allows the opportunity to support your local fellow barbershoppers. Send all your details to admin@barbershop.org.au

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>Start time</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>General Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sun, 23 Aug</td>
<td>7.30pm EST</td>
<td>BHA Council Teleconference</td>
<td>Australia wide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun, 30 Aug</td>
<td>2:30pm</td>
<td>SOUNDWAVES Concert (SOUNDWAVES)</td>
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<td>Sun, 30 Aug</td>
<td>3:00pm</td>
<td>The River City Clippers Gold Coin Concert (Brisbane River City Clippers)</td>
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<td>Sat, 5 Sep</td>
<td>2:00pm</td>
<td>Life is a Cabaret - Annual show - Matinee (Sound Connection)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat, 5 Sep</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Life is a Cabaret - Annual show- Evening (Sound Connection)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu, 10 Sep</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Special Concert (High Altitude Harmony)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed, 16 Sep</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>13th BHA National Convention - Harmony Goldrush</td>
<td>Melbourne Vic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu, 17 Sep</td>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>BHA Council Teleconference</td>
<td>Melbourne Vic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun, 20 Sep</td>
<td>6pm</td>
<td>2015 BHA Harmony College</td>
<td>Melbourne Vic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun, 20 Sep</td>
<td>5:00pm</td>
<td>Harmony College (Melbournaires Harmony Chorus)</td>
<td>Campaspe Downs Country resort</td>
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<td>Sun, 18 Oct</td>
<td>7.30pm EST</td>
<td>BHA Council Teleconference</td>
<td>Australia wide</td>
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<td>Sat, 24 Oct</td>
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<td>Vocal Evolution and Perth Harmony Chorus Combined Show</td>
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<td>Thu, 29 Oct</td>
<td>5:30pm</td>
<td>Body Donor Thanksgiving Service - UQ 2015 (Sound Connection)</td>
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<td>Sat, 31 Oct</td>
<td>6:30pm</td>
<td>2015 Singing Restaurant (Good Fortunes, Hat Hatta, High Altitude Harmony, Joining Forces)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun, 22 Nov</td>
<td>7.30pm EDST</td>
<td>BHA Council Teleconference</td>
<td>Australia Wide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat, 5 Dec</td>
<td>12:00pm</td>
<td>Goodies Annual Christmas BBQ (SOUNDWAVES)</td>
<td>Fountaindale, NSW</td>
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<td>10:00pm</td>
<td>End of Year Show- Date claimer (Sound Connection)</td>
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<td>Sun, 6 Dec</td>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td>Break A Leg Talent Quest (Artsfest 2015) (Sound Connection)</td>
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<td>Thu, 10 Dec</td>
<td>6:00pm</td>
<td>Christmas at Westmead (SydneySiders Express)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu, 17 Dec</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Holy Spirit Care Services Christmas Carols (Brisbane River City Clippers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue, 26 Jan 2016</td>
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<td>BHS 2016 Mid-Winter International Convention</td>
<td>Reno Nevada USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed, 5 Oct 2016</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>NZABS 2016 Convention</td>
<td>Marlborough NZ</td>
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For more details on the above events click on this [LINK](#) to visit the interactive page on the BHA website.

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**All enquiries to:** The Secretary, Barbershop Harmony Australia
16 Brentwood Avenue, Point Clare NSW 2250 Australia
Phone: 02 4324 1977
E-mail: secretary@barbershop.org.au

**Australian Association of Men Barbershop Singers Inc**
trading as Barbershop Harmony Australia
ABN 54 083 784 810
An Affiliate of Barbershop Harmony Society

Please send all your contributions for *In Harmony* to Richard Bushell editor@barbershop.org.au

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*In Harmony Issue 149* August – September 2015
MELBOURNE SEPTEMBER 2015
A chance to see Australia’s best Harmony choruses and quartets competing for medals in the

HARMONY GOLDRUSH
CONVENTION
16–19 SEPTEMBER 2015

Limited Time Only!

Lovers of a cappella singing, you will be able to witness quality choruses and quartets from all over Australia presenting a feast of amazing harmony singing. They will be competing at both youth and open levels for a range of medals and the honour of representing Australia at International Competitions. Also a rare opportunity to see one of the greatest Quartets in the world “Vocal Spectrum” in the “Showcase of Champions” concert, together with all the medal winners from the weekend’s competitions. The Concert will be presented by Melbourne’s very own favourite singer, star of stage, television and Radio 3AW, Denis Walter. An evening not to be missed. This will all take place in Melbourne’s premier venue Hamer Hall, with the Youth Festival in The Deakin Edge Theatre.

EVENTS & TICKETING

16 SEPT | Youth Contest & Concert
Deakin Edge Theatre | Donation

17 SEPT | Massed Sing
12:30pm Fed Square & Stage | FREE

18 SEPT | Quartet Competition
Hamer Hall
9:30am – 5:30pm Prelims | $25 adults/$20 conc.
7:30pm Finals | $30 adults/$25 conc.

19 SEPT | Chorus Competition
Hamer Hall | 10am – 3:30pm $25 adult/$20 conc.

19 SEPT | Showcase of Champions
Hamer Hall | 8:00pm $55 adult/$48 conc.

www.blameysaundershears.com.au
(PRINCIPAL SPONSOR)

For further information and to purchase tickets online go to

www.barbershopconvention.com.au

DENIS WALTER

HAMER HALL

VOCAL SPECTRUM

11/5/2015