

# Songlines Choir Inc

## Handbook

Website [songlineschoir.org](http://songlineschoir.org) Facebook Songlines Choir Inc  
<https://www.facebook.com/songlinescommunitychoir/> YouTube  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj7GR9cAXuulFMzKKp1lqeQ>

### How we came together and why we continue

#### **1996**

We started as a project of the Combined Unions Choir to mark the Stolen Children Report in 1996, the call for Reconciliation and a significant change in relationships between Aboriginal peoples and post-1788 Australians. Our first gig was as the introductory act for the 1997 Australia Day Concert on the River Stage in Brisbane. We also sang at the first Sorry Day at Orleigh Park and at Reconciliation Week ceremonies.

As we learned more from Aboriginal people and after singing at Woodford Folk Festival in 2000 we broadened our focus. The Choir realised the need to support land rights, reimbursement of stolen wages, equitable resources for Indigenous health, housing and education.

#### **2003**

In March 2003 we were incorporated as Songlines Choir Inc., a not for profit Association. In the same year we welcomed our Patrons Sam Watson and Saba Abraham.

The Objects of Songlines Choir Inc are to:

- further the causes of reconciliation, peace, social justice and environmental responsibility by singing songs centred around these causes
- make the choir available to sing to all types of audiences and to encourage members of communities to participate in choral singing
- develop members' singing abilities and confidence

### History 2003 onwards

#### **Performances**

We aim to average 10 -12 gigs a year. Sorry Day and Reconciliation week events are key annual events. In addition to our annual performances, we have responded to events such as:

- Deaths in Custody, particularly Mulrunji Doomadgee ( 19 November 2004 on Palm Island)
- 10th Anniversary of the sinking of Siev X
- Women's prison facility Graduation
- World Environment Day
- Indigenous Old People's Retirement Village
- Visit by the son of Martin Luther King
- Bishop Desmond Tutu's Visit
- Launch of Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- Farmer's Group -- environmental issues

---

Songs that matter – social justice and peace

### **CDs and Songbook**

2004 produced a CD of our 2004 Community Concert

2011 recorded a song on the *2011 Songs for Queensland* in aid of flood and disaster relief

### **CDs and Songbook**

2012 produced ***Tracks for Change: Songs of Struggle and Hope CD***

Designed to provide accessible, singable songs for music teachers and community choirs, the CD has 7 songs relevant to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Some songs were written for Songlines and some were given to the Choir to sing.

2013 produced ***Tracks for Change: Songs of Struggle and Hope Songbook***.

The Songbook includes lyrics, music and cultural notes for people wanting to learn the songs. The Queensland Gambling Community Benefit Fund funded the CDs and Songbooks. The relevant cultural permissions have been obtained to reproduce music and lyrics. Songlines always acknowledges the authors of the songs and music at performances.

## **Community Concerts**

The Choir occasionally holds concerts to celebrate and showcase new songs and old favourites. Songlines also joins other choirs in activities such as Peer Sing.

## **Structure**

As an Incorporated Association, Songlines is governed by the *Qld Associations Incorporations Act 1981*, *Associations Incorporation Regulations 1999* and its *Rules of Association*. It has a management committee of members who manage the administrative, financial and organizational side of the choir. The committee is made up of a Chairperson, Deputy Chair, a Secretary, a Treasurer and ordinary committee members.

The committee appoints the musical director (MD). The MD in consultation with the committee makes decisions about song choices and performances. Input from choir members is encouraged and welcomed.

### **Potential Members**

Potential members are welcome to attend the first rehearsal for free. They may attend three rehearsals before committing to membership.

### **Members**

To sing and attend performances on a regular basis, you must be a financial member of the association. Annual Membership is from 1 July to 30 June in each year. At the beginning of each year an information sheet is handed out to each member which contains the relevant information for that year – fees, term dates and potential gigs. The sheet has been created so that there is no need to continually update this handbook. If you join through the year you will be given this Handbook and the information sheet. A copy of our Rules can be found on our website [songlineschoir.org](http://songlineschoir.org).

---

Songs that matter – social justice and peace

Your rehearsal and membership fees help in a number of ways – they contribute to the on-going costs of the choir – payment of our MD, public liability insurance (a legal requirement for incorporated associations), APRA fees – (*Australasian Performing Right Association*), and ANCA fees (*Australian National Choirs Association*).

Having a solid membership base is important to ensure consistently high quality performances. It is also important if we apply for government and other grants or sponsorships.

## Rehearsal Fees

**Current rehearsal fees for 2018** are \$130 per rehearsal term (10 weeks). Casual payment is \$15 per rehearsal, paid on the night (or what you can manage)

Rehearsal terms are aligned with school terms.

## Songlines Expectations of Members

Members are expected to

- Understand and agree to work towards the Objects of Songlines Choir Inc
- Attend rehearsals regularly and make themselves available for performances
- Keep the Secretary informed of their availability and contact details
- Inform the Secretary by email if they are resigning their membership

## Rehearsals

- Meet at 6: 50 for 7:00pm start.
- Acknowledge traditional custodians of the land, their descendants and the elders. All members are encouraged to offer to make the acknowledgement.
- Arrive on time.
- Learn the lyrics and music as quickly as we can
- Focus on Musical Director (MD), follow directions and avoid unnecessary talking while MD is teaching.
- Do any homework sent to help learn parts.

## Uniform

The choir uniform is black and bright orange in any combination.

## Gigs

- Songlines is a performing Choir so we need gigs and plenty of people to sing at them
- Members are encouraged to suggest opportunities for performances to the MD
- Although members aim to know songs well enough to perform without words, if necessary words should be in a black display folder with the black cover facing the audience

---

Songs that matter – social justice and peace

We acknowledge and honour our patrons Sam Watson and Saba Abraham.

## OUR PATRONS



**Sam Watson** of the Biri Gubba and Munnenjarl people is a vigorous advocate for reconciliation that goes beyond lip-service. Sam supports multiculturalism and the sustainable management of our environment in all its biodiversity. Sam is instrumental in assisting people from all communities to recognise that racism, injustice and environmental indifference are dangerous and intrinsically antagonistic to the well being of our country and people.



**Saba Abraham** has been a freedom fighter in her country of Eritrea. Twice forced to flee to neighbouring countries, she arrived in Australia as a refugee in 1991. Since then she has educated herself and done voluntary work with African women. She started catering with a group of women and together they have developed a restaurant, Mu'ooz, which has trained more than 60 women. She is an inspiration to many, both in African communities and also in the wider community.

---

Songs that matter – social justice and peace