



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNUAL REPORT – 1 January to 31 December 2021

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1. OUR PEOPLE

Two long-serving office-holders – Michael Littlewood and Elizabeth Crayford - were accorded Life Membership at our 2021 AGM in May, in recognition of their outstanding contributions to NZCF. Michael drafted the NZCF Constitution in 2006 and was the inaugural Vice Chair of the NZCF Governance Board from 2007 until 2011. He returned to the NZCF Board in 2015, again as Vice Chair, and served continuously until May 2021. Michael was on the Board of Symposium 2020 Ltd and has been appointed to the Board of Chor2024, which will oversee the running of the 13th World Choir Games in Auckland. Elizabeth was nominated for Life Membership by both the Wellington Region and the Governance Board. She was National Coordinator of The Big Sing from 2009-2019, Regional Coordinator of the Wellington Big Sing from 2007 – 2020, and Chair of the Wellington branch of NZCF from 2009 until April 2022.

Two of our most dedicated volunteers in the East Coast region were acknowledged with Distinguished Service Awards in November: Glenys Kempshall and Ngaire Shand. Glenys was Treasurer of the East Coast branch from 2007 – 2021 and has also been the Coordinator for The Big Sing since 2021. She will step down from her TBS role following the 2022 regional festival. Ngaire has been a member of the NZCF East Coast regional committee since 2006 and ran the annual Kids' Sing festival for thirteen of those years. Both were highly deserving of their awards.

2021 ended with the announcement on 31 December that former NZCF Chair John Rosser was to be recognised in the 2022 New Year's Honours with a CNZM (Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit) award. John's contribution to choral music in Aotearoa has been vast and wide-reaching, earning him an NZCF Life Membership award in 2018. We were thrilled to see John's service to choral music recognised and honoured outside our organisation with a CNZM award.

a) Patron

Dame Patsy Reddy's term as Governor-General of New Zealand came to an end in late September 2021, at which point she relinquished her role as Patron of NZCF. We will now begin the process of seeking a new Patron.

b) Officers and staff

Governance Board

As mentioned above, we farewelled Michael Littlewood from the Governance Board in May 2021, after nine years of outstanding service. NZCF membership advised the membership of a vacancy for a Board member with finance and legal skills, but no nominations were received at the time of elections. The Board then sought recommendations and ultimately co-opted Kim Cunningham to the Governance Board in June 2021. Kim's input has proved invaluable and we are delighted that she has now been formally elected in the 2022 elections.

The New Zealand Choral Federation is very grateful to the members of the Governance Board, and especially to our outgoing Chair Juliet Dreaver, for the significant amount of time and energy they devote to the oversight and strategic direction of our organisation.

Juliet Dreaver	Chair
Warwick Harvey	Vice Chair; Governance processes
Toby Gee	Legal & Constitutional; Diversity & Reach
Megan Hurnard	The Kids Sing
Kim Cunningham	Finance & Legal
Pete Rainey MNZM	The Big Sing
David Squire	Association of Choral Directors; Youth
Robert Wiremu	The Big Sing; Diversity & Reach

Staff in 2021

Christine Argyle	Chief Executive
Emma Billings	Events Manager
Ann Gibbard	Finance & Membership Manager
Lisa Bates MNZM	Development Manager
Hannah Darroch	Communications Coordinator

We were delighted to welcome Lisa Bates to a part-time contract position as Development Manager in September 2021. We are hugely grateful to Creative NZ for additional funding to support Lisa's role in designing, implementing and managing a revenue generation strategy to enable NZCF to increase its capacity, capability and long-term sustainability.

Also in September 2021, we welcomed Hannah Darroch in a part-time contract as Communications Coordinator to assist with our digital communications: e-newsletters, website content, social media, and other communications-related activity.

NZCF National Advisory Committee

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) comprises the NZCF Board Chair and the Chairs of each NZCF region. The chairs and committee members from the ten regions are crucial to the Federation delivering its busy programme and services.

In 2021, Colin Bright stepped down from the two roles of Chair and Treasurer of the Taranaki region, after 9 years' dedicated service on the committee. He was replaced by Director of Music to Taranaki Community and Cathedral, Christopher Luke.

2021 NZCF Regional Chairs

Penny Christiansen (Auckland)
 Elizabeth Pilaar (Waikato-Bay of Plenty)
 Alison Thomson JP (East Coast)
 Roy Tankersley MNZM (Manawatu-Whanganui)
 Christopher Luke (Taranaki)
 Elizabeth Crayford (Wellington)
 Lucy Rainey (Nelson-Marlborough)
 Rosemary Fisher (Canterbury-West Coast)
 Carole Randall (Otago)
 Christine McLeod (Southland)

Regional Committees

The Board and National office are hugely indebted to the work and tremendous goodwill of hundreds of dedicated volunteers around the country who serve on regional committees, Big Sing committees and Kids Sing committees. Our Big Sing and Kids Sing coordinators are acknowledged later in this report, but special thanks are also due to the treasurers of each region, who often put in considerable time with funding applications, financial statements for committee meetings and coding transactions in Xero for the NZCF annual accounts.

In 2021 our **regional treasurers** were: Rowena Janes-Post (Auckland), Debbie Alexander (Waikato-BOP), Glenys Kempshall (East Coast), Anne Tucker (Treasurer Stanley Barnes (Manawatu-Whanganui), Tim Steedman (Taranaki), Greg Maxted (Wellington), Ann Tucker (Nelson), Christine Brennan (Canterbury-West Coast), John Buchanan (Otago) and Jane Blackmore (Southland).

2. MEMBERSHIP

The number of paid Personal members (not counting Life Members) remained fairly steady (153 in 2021 compared with 162 in 2020) and it was pleasing to see an increase in paid ACD members from 124 in 2020 to 142 in 2021. Since TBS choir numbers were down overall in 2021, and most of the Kids Sing festivals were cancelled, our complimentary ACD member numbers were down to 181 in 2021, compared with 260 in 2020. A comparison of membership numbers for 2021, 2020 and 2019 is as follows:

	As at 31 Dec 2021	As at 31 Dec 2020	As at 30 Dec 2019
Personal	153	162	168
ACD Total	323	384	335
*Paid	142	124	121
*free via TKS/TBS	181	260	214
Life	16	14	14
Total Individual	492	560	517
Choirs	207	204	203

Membership Survey

We conducted a Membership Survey in November to explore what people value most about NZCF, which of our resources and membership benefits they use most frequently, what they would like us to offer that we don't already, and what we might do better. There was a high level of engagement with the survey, which elicited 359 responses from people across all 10 regions, in all age brackets and from all types of choirs. Non-members were also invited (via eBreve and social media) to take the survey. While the survey yielded

predominantly deep appreciation for NZCF's Covid advice for choirs, our advocacy for the choral community and the professional development opportunities we provide, we were more interested in gleaning insights into ways in which we can increase the appeal of NZCF membership and reach out to more diverse communities and ethnic-based choirs.

Our Development Manager, Lisa Bates, has developed a Membership Acquisition and Retention plan to roll out in 2022, based on feedback from the membership survey, research into similar choral organisations around the world, and her own knowledge and research into other NZ-based arts organisations.

3. FINANCES

In 2021 NZCF had a consolidated surplus of \$275,751k. This comprises a surplus of \$8,533 from NZCF National, a deficit of \$10,828 from NZCF Regional branches and a surplus of \$278,046 by Chor 2024 Ltd (previously Symposium 2020 Ltd). Consolidated accumulated funds at 31 December 2021 were \$943,384 (\$347,935 NZCF National; \$232,727 NZCF Regional branches; \$362,722 Chor 2024 Ltd).

The NZCF National surplus of \$8,553 is after \$20k of funding has been transferred to 2022 for Youth Initiative projects. The consolidated Regional branch deficit of \$10,828 was largely a result of the last-minute cancellation of The Kids Sing gala concert in Auckland, due to immediate lockdown restrictions. The Chor24 surplus of \$278,046 was the result of funding received from Auckland Unlimited that will be used to pay costs in 2022-2024.

Sincere thanks to our NZCF Finance Manager Ann Gibbard, and to all our regional treasurers, for their meticulous management of NZCF's financial accounts.

4. FUNDING AND SPONSORSHIP

a) Creative New Zealand funding

2021 was the second year of NZCF's 6-year funding agreement under CNZ's Tōtara Investment Programme. CNZ acknowledged that we were not able to deliver on several of our planned activities in 2021, namely the South Island Cadenza and Finale and most of the regional SingFests and Kids Sing festivals, but appreciated that we ran some online and outreach activities instead.

Given the constraints and cancellations of 2021, we were pleased that CNZ feedback on our December 2021 report indicated that NZCF had met expectations overall in 2021, had a "Good" rating (above "Met Expectations") for *Alignment to CNZ Strategies* and *Organisational Health* and had exceeded the indicators for *Delivery to Contractual Requirements* and *Governance*.

b) Ministry of Youth Development funding

Our current contract with MYD is due to expire on 30 June 2022, after The Big Sing Regionals. However, we have been given a 6-month extension through to the end of 2022 to bridge the gap before their new funding period begins on 1 January 2023. MYD will open a contestable open tender process in June for multi-year contracts covering the period from 2023 onwards.

c) Tour Time sponsorship

We were grateful to Tour Time for continuing their commitment to The Big Sing in 2021, given the severe impact of Covid-19 on the tourism industry. Our current 3-year agreement with Tour Time runs until the end of 2022.

d) Other partnerships

Despite the impacts of the pandemic, both Trinity College London (NZ) and KBB Music confirmed their commitment to supporting The Big Sing in 2021. However, with the cancellation of Finale, our partnership with KBB (for Finale only) was not realised. We hope to finally welcome them on Board in 2022.

5. THE BIG SING (TBS)

The Big Sing Regionals

After the total cancellation of The Big Sing in 2020, we were delighted and relieved that all 10 TBS regionals were able to go ahead unhindered by changes in alert levels. Had that not been the case, we had a back-up plan that would have allowed schools to compete via video submissions, if their region went into lockdown. The quality of performances was high, but overall participation numbers were down in almost every region. A number of schools reported that their choir numbers were down in 2021 due to a residual loss of confidence amongst some students, and a reluctance to commit to something that may not be able to happen. Where schools had 2 or 3 choirs before, many consolidated into one or two, and this impacted on the number of choirs and total number of students taking part in The Big Sing in 2021.

Heartfelt thanks go to our 2021 TBS Coordinators: NZCF Eveline Harvey (Auckland), Kay Hancock & Jeremy Whimster (Waikato-Bay of Plenty), Glenys Kempshall (East Coast), Karen Hall (Manawatu-Whanganui), Juliet Woller (Taranaki), Toni Wilson (Wellington), Robin Randall (Nelson-Marlborough), Rosemary Fisher (Canterbury-West Coast), Rosemary Tarbotton (Otago), Alan Menzies (Southland).

The Big Sing Cadenza

The Lower North Island Cadenza (Whanganui) took place in full (workshops, recitals and gala concert). The adjudicator was Grammy Award-winning recent ex-Kings Singer Tim Wayne-Wright, who also worked alongside prominent NZ choral conductor John Rosser to rehearse massed items for performance at the gala concert. The Upper North Island Cadenza (Rotorua) recital sessions and workshops took place, however the gala concert on 17 August was cancelled immediately after the lockdown announcement.

South Island Cadenza and Finale cancellations

The South Island Cadenza (Timaru) had to be cancelled on 20 August due to the lockdown. Alternative dates for re-scheduling in term 3 were explored but the ability for schools to commit to a later date proved impossible.

Preparations for the Finale due to be held 26-28 August were in the final stages at the time we went into nationwide lockdown. Alternative dates were explored for term 3 but re-scheduling ultimately proved impossible, especially given that 15 of the 24 selected choirs were from Auckland.

Online showcases were offered to participating choirs instead (see below) and choir directors were also offered a free one-to-one Zoom session with adjudicator Tim Wayne-Wright.

Sincere thanks to our hard-working 2021 Cadenza and Finale Coordinators, Elizabeth Pilaar (Cadenza - Rotorua), Edwyna McDonald (Cadenza - Whanganui), Wayne Pahl (Cadenza - Timaru), Rosemary Fisher (Finale), and their committees.

TBS Cadenza & Finale Showcases

Following the cancellation of the South Island Cadenza and The Big Sing Finale, we offered a live-presented YouTube showcase to all 36 choirs that had missed out, giving them the opportunity to submit a video they had recorded prior to lockdown. 22 of the 36 choirs took up this opportunity and we curated the choir recordings into three playlists, with each item introduced on screen, on both YouTube and Facebook. Sincere thanks go to Emma Billings and Brent Stewart for their work on this project.

Special thanks go to our Events Manager Emma Billings, the TBS Director John Rosser, and the **TBS National Committee**, whose advice has been invaluable over the past two years as we have navigated The Big Sing through the ever-changing Covid landscape. Our Big Sing National Committee comprises Pete Rainey (Chair), John Rosser (TBS Director), Robert Wiremu (GB), Siliva Gaugatao, Katie Macfarlane, Peter Watts, Emma Billings (Events Manager) and Christine Argyle (CE).

6. NZCF/SOUNZ award

In addition to the pre-existing NZCF-SOUNZ Choral Composition Competition, NZCF collaborated with SOUNZ to introduce a new SOUNZ-NZCF Te Reo Māori Choral Composition Award to encourage young composers to write choral settings of texts in Te Reo Māori.

For the general competition, we received a record number of entries: 23, compared with the usual 12 or so, most likely because we removed the \$30 entry fee. The 2021 adjudicator was UK-based NZ composer Andrew Baldwin, and the winning entry was by Jonine Tiakia of Westlake Girls' High School. The new Te Reo Māori Choral Composition Award only attracted three entries in its first year, and was adjudicated by Robert Wiremu. The winning composition was by Jade Ponga, a student from New Plymouth, who travelled to Wellington in September to be presented with the new trophy at the SOUNZ offices by carver and taongo puoro maker Tāmihana Kātene.

7. THE KIDS SING

Of the 8 Kids Sing festivals scheduled for 2021, sadly only The Kids Sing Taranaki was able to go ahead fully as planned. TKS Auckland began promisingly, with the first day of recitals taking place on 17 August before the decision was made to cancel that evening's gala concert, as well as the following day's recitals and gala, following the lockdown announcement. Kids Sings had been planned for late August/early September in Hastings, Nelson and Whanganui and for October/November in Hamilton, Tauranga and Wellington, but these ultimately fell over as well due to prolonged level 3 restrictions in Waikato and residual reluctance from schools in Tauranga and Wellington to participate in inter-school massed events while vaccination rates were still shy of 90%.

Our thanks to our 2021 regional TKS Coordinators: Juliet Woller (Taranaki), Penny Christiansen (Auckland), Ngaire Shand (East Coast), Lucy Rainey & Emily Wragg (Nelson-Marlborough), Roy Tankersley (Manawatu-Whanganui), Lynda Cooney (Waikato-Bay of Plenty) and Anya Nazaruk (Wellington).

Kids Online Singalong

In response to the cancelled Kids Sing festivals, we reprised the Kids Online Singalong project from 2020, in collaboration with MENZA and the NZ Music Commission. The project saw primary school choirs record themselves singing (and signing) the winning song from the 2021 Hook, Line and Sing-a-long competition: Aroha I Aotearoa by 14-year-old Anna Feillet from Otago Girls' High School.

We created a massed virtual choir from all the footage, overlaid with professional animation, featuring 588 school children from 16 primary and intermediate schools around the country – including a group of non-verbal children from Kimi Ora School for children with disabilities and special needs. The resulting video is on the NZCF YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxGWfvKrea0> Sincere thanks to Emma Billings for coordinating this project, and to Juliet Dreaver for managing the production of the video.

8. SINGFEST

SingFests were planned for Wellington (The May Workshop), Palmerston North, Hastings, Auckland, Christchurch, New Plymouth and Invercargill in 2021 but all save the Wellington May Workshop were cancelled due to Covid uncertainties, lockdown and/or post-lockdown hesitation. Wellington's May Workshop offered participants the chance to sing Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* under Brent Stewart and was a resounding success, with record numbers taking part - several from outside the region, including from Northland, Bay of Plenty, Whanganui, Nelson, Marlborough and Dunedin).

9. THE ASSOCIATION OF CHORAL DIRECTORS (ACD)

a) Choral Connect

Our Choral Connect convention for choir directors took place in Auckland in July, with the entire 3-day event also live-streamed to delegates around the country. The hybrid in person/online delivery was a huge success and one we are keen to repeat. The response from delegates was enormously positive regarding the conference theme (*The Choral Traditions of Aotearoa New Zealand*) and the calibre of presentations. The opening Zoom presentation from American conductor, ethnomusicologist and human rights activist André de Quadros explored the topic of colonisation from a choral perspective and this theme was taken up in following presentations from Charles Te Ahukaramū Royal and Opeloge Ah Sam. Robert Wiremu, Ataahua Papa and Horomona Horo continued this exploration in their presentations and the conversations that evolved amongst delegates were rich and meaningful. Many felt we had reached a watershed moment for choral music in Aotearoa NZ with a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding cultural appropriation, seeking the relevant permissions to perform works in te reo Māori, and the importance of developing cross-cultural partnerships.

Each of the three days concluded with a concert featuring a total of 11 vocal ensembles plus taonga puoro performer Horomona Hora. Diversity was the theme of the concerts as well, with ensembles including a Chinese choir, a multi-cultural community choir from Kaitaia, the gospel choir Jubilation, Auckland Youth Choir, GALS (Auckland's rainbow choir), the NZ Secondary Students Choir, Voices NZ, a kapahaka group from Te Wharekura ō Hoani Waititi Marae, the massive community choir Everybody Sings, and two Auckland chamber choirs: Viva Voce and The Graduate Choir.

Sincere thanks to the Choral Connect Artistic Director Karen Grylls, Artistic Advisor Robert Wiremu, Artistic Programme Coordinator Jono Palmer, NZCF Events Manager Emma Billings and Volunteer Coordinator Warwick Harvey for all the work they put in to ensure the conference was such a success.

b) Fine Tuning

We delivered 9 workshops across two centres in 2021 (Auckland: 6 workshops & Invercargill: 3 workshops). We had planned to give workshops in Hamilton but ran up against date and availability clashes with the three schools that were to have taken part, so in the end offered three more in Auckland instead.

c) Giving Direction

Four Giving Direction workshops were planned for September-November 2021 but ultimately only one was able to go ahead in person (in Invercargill with Christine Argyle). We instead offered online Giving Direction workshops, which had the advantage of opening these out to anyone, anywhere around the country. These online workshops were delivered by David Squire and Rowan Johnston and were tailored to the needs of those taking part, with a one-hour plenary session first, and a one-to-one follow-up session.

d) Singing Matters

We re-branded Primary Gestures as 'Singing Matters' in 2021, to take the emphasis away from the conducting gesture and make it more accessible to leaders of children's singing of all levels and genres. Of the five workshops planned to take place through the year, one was held in Nelson at the end of June and another in Christchurch in August, just prior to the lockdown, but the remaining three workshops were unable to go ahead because of Covid restrictions. Instead, online one-to-one workshops (delivered by Megan Flint) replaced those scheduled for the North Island.

e) ACD Facebook group

The ACD Facebook group continued to be an important forum for choral directors to share their knowledge and expertise with each other in 2021. Over the course of the year there were 150 posts in the group, the majority of them from choir conductors asking for suggestions for repertoire, seeking advice on aspects of choral direction or sharing international choral news and overseas online courses. Each post attracted multiple comments – mostly from fellow choir directors responding with advice.

Our thanks go to 2021 **ACD Advisory Committee**: David Squire (Chair), Karen Grylls, Helen Charlton, Sue Densem, Megan Flint, Brent Stewart, Mark Stamper, Christine Argyle (CE) and Emma Billings (Events Manager).

10. WORLD CHOIR GAMES 2024

During 2021, progress was made on forming a board to oversee the NZ delivery of the 13th World Choir Games by Chor24 (an NZCF subsidiary entity formerly known as Symposium 2020). Warwick Webb and Michael Littlewood (previously on the Board of Symposium 2020) were appointed, as were Jane Blackmore, Peter Walls Caroline Williams and Juliet Dreaver (as the NZCF Board representative on the Board). The first Chor24 Board meeting was held in September via Zoom. Warwick Webb was elected Chair and Caroline Williams Vice Chair.

The dates for the games were set - Wednesday 10 – Saturday 20 July 2024 - and were announced by the rights holders, INTERKULTUR, in January 2022.

11. CONCLUDING REMARKS

2021 was another challenging year for us all. But the resilience, collegiality and strong sense of community that were apparent in 2020 prevailed once again.

Many choirs were faced with difficult decisions about implementing vaccine mandates for 2021, and NZCF endeavoured to help guide our member choirs through this uncomfortable process by tapping into the experience of our colleagues and sister organisations overseas who had already navigated this bumpy territory. We also offered advice on other safe singing Covid-related topics such as masks for singers. At each alert level change, and with the major change to the 'traffic light' system, we responded immediately with revised sets of guidelines for choirs that took into consideration both the legal requirements and the specific risks of our choral environment. The feedback from our member survey indicated that NZCF's regular communication on 'Covid & choirs' was greatly appreciated.

I want to thank the Governance Board for their sage advice at every step of the journey as we all traverse this hitherto foreign Covid territory together. But above all, I want to thank our outgoing Chair, Juliet, for her undimmed vision – even in the most challenging times - for New Zealand as a singing nation.

Ngā mihi nui



Christine Argyle
Chief Executive
New Zealand Choral Federation
Te Kotahitanga Manu Reo o Aotearoa