



PIPE BANDS AUSTRALIA

President CHRIS EARL

Secretary STEVEN PATTERSON

17 March 2020

KEEPING THE MUSIC GOING

Since the announcement last Friday that the 2020 Australian Pipe Band Championships were to be postponed due to the rapidly evolving coronavirus pandemic, the situation in Australia and around the world has continued to escalate and for us, cancellation of performances, events and competitions.

Our pipe band community, drawing together players and supporters from all backgrounds and across all age groups in their love of music, is again an accurate barometer to the challenges now being faced not only by our family of players, bands, promoters and supporters but by every community and every person, business and organisation across the country.

Whenever we perform in public, there is a sense of satisfaction and community belonging inside each of us for having shared our music. Postponement of the championships, cancellation of ANZAC Day commemorations and marches that for more than a century have been one of those non-negotiable commitments as a band member and many other community festivals and celebrations during this coronavirus crisis will leave a void for player and listener. There will also be the inevitable flow-on effects with performance fees and fundraising goals unable to be realised. Branches and bands are wisely considering the wellbeing of members in deciding whether to practise and perform in person or hook-up with technology.

This ANZAC Day will be very different. Could I encourage all pipers to still put the pipes on the shoulder, no matter where you are on 25 April and at 11am play Amazing Grace – on the front porch, in the front yard or back yard even – to continue our annual tribute of thanks and respect for those who have served Australia in times of war and peace.

THE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Pipe Bands Australia is facilitating assessment by the Victorian branch and 2020 Australian championships promoter Maryborough Highland Society of all possible alternative dates broadly in the October period for the rescheduled celebration. While a provisional date was indicated in last week's announcement, be assured no date has been confirmed and all options must and are being considered.

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I have asked branch and promoter to have a new date hopefully confirmed for the championships by the end of March. Factors being considered in the assessment include school holiday and examination schedules, the scheduling of major events within Australia and of other existing pipe band competitions.

The promoter has advised that all entries originally received for the April date remain valid. Following confirmation of the new date, a revised entry closing date will be advised both for confirmation of original entries and for receipt of any new entries.

Bands are reminded that under the Contest Regulations of Pipe Bands Australia, membership of PBA or their recognised overseas association for a minimum period of six months prior to the championships applies. For Australian bands, the annual band renewals will be due on 1 July 2020 and your prompt attention to payment will be required to conform to the Regulation.

Pipe Bands Australia again acknowledges the significant investment of time, money and resources already made by the promoter and our bands for the 2020 Australian Pipe Band Championships and natural disappointment that the championships have been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Pipe Bands Australia, branch and promoter will continue to provide updates as they are able to be given and thank bands and members for the patience and understanding while working through to process to reschedule.

National Management Committee has agreed that the announcement of the biennial Pipe Bands Australia awards for education and training, promotion and advancement, performance and elevation of two recipients to the Hall of Fame will still be made in the week commencing 30 March.

To all branches, my sincere appreciation for your level of prompt communication to bands and members of changes, cancellations and postponements that have become known in quick succession over recent days. At all levels of the association, the primary guide in all decisions has, and continues to be, the health of members.

Thank you all and, most importantly, continue to observe official government health directives and advice so that we are back together making music and performing once the crisis has passed.



CHRIS EARL
President

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