



12 April 2020

SUPPORTING OUR MOVEMENT DURING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The impact of Australian and state government health directives and restrictions in place to combat the coronavirus pandemic are rightly receiving the support and co-operation of communities across the nation.

Our pipe band movement is adjusting to what for an unknown time will be the new “normal” – some bands have embraced online platforms to continue the practice and development of musical skills and retain contact with and between members. Congratulations to branches and bands that have already adopted online platforms for tuition and member engagement. To those players who have already participated in impromptu thank you performances to key workers around the world, bravo!

Bands have seen the cancellation or postponement of paid performances and fundraising activities that are core to the sustainable operation of our community music ensembles. Event and contest promoters are facing the same challenges, without the benefit of certainty on the duration of restrictions. Contests and gatherings have been cancelled or postponed and promoters, many of whom rely on support from small businesses to make events possible, have incurred costs they will be unable to recover.

National Management Committee has spent recent weeks reviewing planned activities over the coming year. We have already endorsed the decision of Pipe Bands Victoria and Maryborough Highland Society to now hold our Diamond Jubilee year Australian Pipe Band Championships in April 2021.

Our review has been shaped by the need for commonsense, flexible considerations in any decisions that can assist us all in continuing support for the endeavours of our branches, bands and members, taking into account the greatly reduced earning capacity of our bands into the foreseeable future.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

A series of free online workshops in piping, drumming and ensemble has been announced with the first scheduled for Thursday 16 April. These workshops are for Pipe Bands Australia members and of affiliated associations and it is pleasing that there has already been a steady uptake of the program. Further workshops in the series will be announced.

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In further assistance to members:

- The enrolment fee for Preliminary and Elementary examinations has been reduced to \$5 until 30 June 2021 and the principals are developing online capabilities for practical and aural assessments and completion of written examination components for these levels.
- The enrolment fee for all other level examinations has been reduced by 50 per cent until 30 June 2021. Again, the principals are developing online capabilities where appropriate for assessment of modules at these levels.
- The enrolment form for examinations can be downloaded at:
<http://www.pipebandsaustralia.com.au/piping> or /drumming, /drill-dress, /rules-administration

BAND AND PLAYER FEES

- The annual band membership renewal will become due on 1 July 2020 and the fee for 2020-2021 has been reduced to \$50 for one year only.
- The normal grace period applied to payment of band renewal will, for this occasion only, be extended to 10 September.
- The annual player registration renewal will become due on 1 July 2020 and the fee for 2020-2021 has been reduced to \$25 for only year only.
- The player clearance fee has been reduced to \$25 for one year only. Band's registering player/s who have to relocate for employment during this period, may make application for the fee to be waived.
- Band and player renewal packages will be forwarded in early May.

CONTESTS

To assist contest promoters in their recovery from cancellation or postponement of events and recognising their reliance on support from sponsors, National Management Committee recommends to branches the following adjudicator fee structure (excluding Australian championships) apply until 30 June 2021:

- A maximum fee of \$50 per day
- Travel reimbursement to cost of fuel only
- Accommodation as required

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PERFORMANCE

- Detail of the ANZAC Day commemoration has already been announced with pipers invited to perform Amazing Grace at 11am. This initiative has grown and we are co-operating with the 6am Last Post collaboration, two musical genres working together as one following discussions between Pipe Bands Australia and the Last Post organisers. We are also pleased that our friends at the Royal New Zealand Pipe Band Association have taken up our initiative and is encouraging its pipers to be part of the 11am Amazing Grace tribute.
- VP 75 – The exact format of this planned community engagement initiative in August remains under review. However, it will proceed in some form and the specially-composed tune from the creative pen of Mark Saul will be released this month.

National Management Committee will continue to review support for branches, bands and members during these difficult times and also welcomes any suggestion you may have to ensure our pipe band family remains connected and ready to be at the fore of bringing communities back together when restrictions on public gatherings and social distancing can be lifted by government. It is a constantly and rapidly evolving situation that requires, and has, our commitment to review situations as circumstances change.

We encourage you to stay safe, fondly cherish the great times we have already enjoyed as members of pipe bands and focus on a future, we hope not too far away, when our music and performance will give new hope in our cities, towns and communities.

Kindest regards



Chris Earl
President

On behalf of National Management Committee

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