



Lyn Williams OAM – Artistic Director & Founder

2010 ANNUAL REPORT OVERVIEW



WHAT WE DO

- Identify and develop gifted young musicians from across Australia and provide them with the skills, opportunities and inspiration to achieve excellence in performance;
- Seek out young people who would otherwise have no access to music education and involve them in our choral education programs;
- Give these young people life changing opportunities to perform and collaborate with leading artists, both nationally and internationally;
- Be known nationally and internationally for exciting and original choral repertoire; and
- As ambassadors of Australian music, share this with the world.

WHY WE DO IT

- To develop a unique Australian choral voice whilst providing training and opportunity for talented young Australians to perform with innovation and excellence alongside artists of the highest calibre in Australia and throughout the world.

HOW WE DO IT

- Through our **Sydney Children’s Choir**, **Gondwana National Choirs** and **Gondwana National Indigenous Children’s Choir**;
- Led by Australia’s and the world’s best conductors and music educators and an inspiring artistic team; an enthusiastic Board of Directors and dedicated administration team;
- With the support of many generous volunteers; and
- All underpinned by funding from federal, state and local government, generous donors and corporate sponsors, venues and presenters, and the families of our choristers in the Sydney Children’s Choir and Gondwana National Choirs.

WHAT DRIVES US?

- **Excellence:** to ensure that young people have the opportunities to fulfil their musical potential by offering them the highest level of training and a chance to collaborate with their talented peers from across Australia and the world;
- **Professionalism:** to offer young people the skills and opportunities to succeed in a professional environment with the very finest artists in Australia across a broad range of art forms;
- **Creativity:** to continue to develop our unique Australian repertoire of choral works and to encourage choristers to participate in composition and the creation of new works;
- **Accessibility:** to ensure that any suitably talented child has the opportunity to participate in our programs without financial, social, physical or distance barriers;
- **Community:** to provide a happy and a safe environment in which young people are proud to learn, perform, compose, be inspired, socialise and flourish.

I am never happier with music than when I am at a Gondwana Choirs concert. The sound is superb, the precision and discipline including the memorising of sometimes very difficult works is astonishing and the concentration and animation of the children is a joy. And what a wonderful experience for them! Such a beginning to their lives must give them an advantage so great that it is almost unfair.

Richard Letts, Executive Director, Music Council of Australia & Past President, International Music Concert
Writing on the occasion of Gondwana Choirs’ 21st Birthday, 2010



SCC & GNICC Choristers at National Centre of Indigenous

2010 AT A GLANCE

2010 was the biggest year in the history of Gondwana Choirs! Here is a snapshot of our activities in line with our goals:

ACCESS

- **1,655** choristers in our programs (including approx. 1,060 in Gondwana National Indigenous Children's Choir programs) - **an increase of 38% on 2009**
- Age range: 6 – 21
- **55%** of choristers in our national programs were from regional, remote & very remote Australia
- **100%** of Gondwana National Indigenous Children's Choir programs provided at no cost to participating schools, communities and children
- **31** bursaries provided to children in the Sydney Children's Choir and Gondwana National Choirs facing financial and / or geographic disadvantage

EDUCATE

- **Over 2,100** hours of music education provided to choristers within our programs
- **43** workshops provided through our Gondwana National Indigenous Children's Choir
- **8** young and emerging conductors and composers employed and or mentored
- **51** school and music teachers offered professional development opportunities

CREATE

- **9** new works either commissioned by Gondwana Choirs or directly involving our choristers in their composition through song-writing workshops facilitated by our artistic team

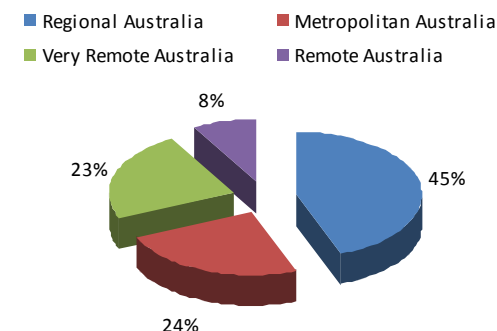
PERFORM

- **55** public performances, including our 21st Birthday Concert in the Sydney Opera House
- **Live audiences of approx. 350,939** and a **worldwide TV audience of over 71.9 million** people in approx. 145 countries. **A total audience of 72,250,939** - **an increase of 924% on 2009**
- **Over 145** works performed including **over 70** Australian works
- **11** world premieres (**8** of those commissioned by Gondwana Choirs)

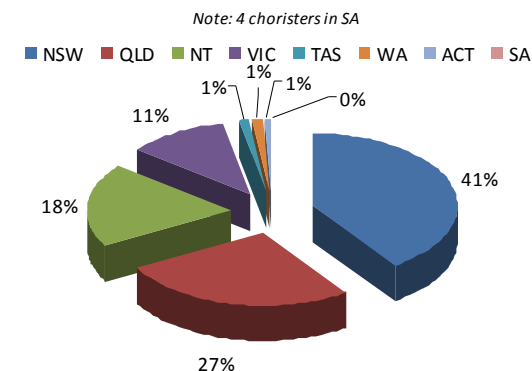
SUPPORT

- Donations received from **178** generous individuals and philanthropic trusts & foundations
- We won the **City of Sydney Business Award for Cultural and Creative Services**
- **Annual funding** secured from the Department of Environment Water Heritage & the Arts Indigenous Cultural Support program to fund part of our GNICC activities
- **Over 130** volunteers gave their time to assist Gondwana Choirs in our activities, between them volunteering **over 13,500 hours** of their time.

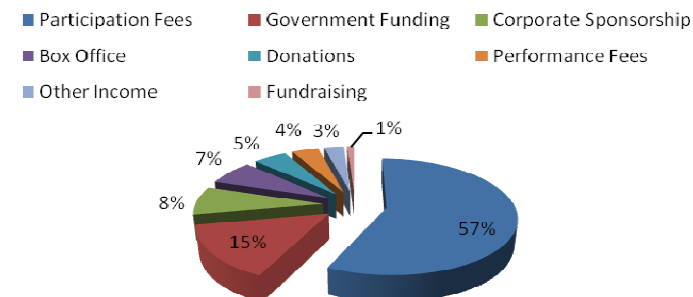
Geographic Distribution of Choristers in our National Programs



State Breakdown of Choristers



Sources of Income 2010



FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

As well as our 27 Sydney Children's Choir weekly rehearsals and classes, here is what else kept Gondwana Choirs busy in 2010!



Lyn Williams OAM

January

- **Gondwana National Choral School** brought together 221 choristers old and new and four conductor interns from across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote Australia for a fortnight of music, learning & friendship. 2010's program featured a collaboration with Synergy Percussion and included new works commissioned from Christopher Gordon & Graham Leak. The choirs learnt and performed a diverse repertoire of music from all over the world – led by myself and guest conductors Allison Harrigan, Harley Mead, Claire Preston, Ben van Tienen, Mark O'Leary, Paul Holley and Karen Grylls.
- During National Choral School we ran our first **professional development open rehearsals** for interested music teachers. 12 teachers attended.
- Four choristers from our Gondwana National Indigenous Children's Choir (GNICC) from the Torres Strait and Cairns appeared as part of the Qantas Choir for **G'Day USA activities in LA** and one GNICC chorister from the Torres Strait appeared at the **Sydney Festival's Festival First Night in Hyde Park** as part of the Qantas Choir.

February

- **Sydney Children's Choir's (SCC) Senior Choir** started the year with their **annual weekend camp** at Naamaroo Conference Centre Lane Cove.
- Our **SCC collaboration with the Art Gallery of NSW** commenced. During the year this saw each chorister in the SCC visit the Art Gallery, undertake a specially created tour with the Art Gallery education guides and then take part in music composition and visual art workshops based on their experiences in the Gallery. As part of this collaboration, our **2010 Composer-in-Residence Ben Van Tienen** was commissioned to write a suite of works for all choristers in the Sydney Children's Choir based on the gallery visits.
- Our celebrated Gondwana Voices and Sydney Children's (Senior) Choir (SCC) performed **Mahler's Symphony No.8 (Symphony of A Thousand)** at the Sydney Opera House with the Sydney Symphony, Western Australian Symphony Orchestra Chorus and Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, under the baton of Principal Conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy.
- **GNICC Community Workshops** were held in **Shepparton, VIC** where I worked with Aboriginal soprano Deborah Cheetham and met many children with much musical potential.
- **SCC Junior Performing Choirs annual weekend camp** took place at Naamaroo Conference Centre, Lane Cove.



Children at a GNICC workshops on Thursday Island

March

- SCC Senior Choir gave a special performance at the **Australia Council for the Arts** in Sydney.
- SCC Junior Performing Choir and Sydney GNICC choristers performed together at the launch of the **Clayton Utz Reconciliation Action Plan** in Sydney.
- 10 Cairns based GNICC choristers travelled to the **Melbourne Grand Prix** for a very exciting appearance trackside with Gabriella Cilmi and the Qantas Choir.
- **GNICC Community Workshops** were held in the **Torres Strait Islands** (Horn, Badu, Moa, Saibai, Dauan, Yorke, Darnley and Thursday Islands) and Cairns and were led by myself and Torres Strait Islander choreographer Sani Townson.
- 60 Year 1 & Year 2 SCC choristers took part in the second year of **Mini Up** - our longitudinal study of the musical development of SCC choristers.
- The SCC Junior Performing Choirs, Dan Walker and I toured to Brisbane to take part in **Next Generation Sings** with the training choirs of Birralees Voices and the Young Voices of Melbourne.

April

- I presented at a **professional development day** for music teachers from across Sydney coordinated by **The Song Room**.
- The **annual weekend camp for our SCC training choirs** took place at Naamaroo Conference Centre, Lane Cove.
- **Weekly music theory classes** for GNICC choristers commenced on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait Islands, led by dedicated local school teacher Lasmintan Ah-Boo.

May

- The SCC Senior Choir performed to great acclaim at Verbrugghen Hall as part of **International Society of Contemporary Music Conference World New Music Days**.
- GNICC choristers from Sydney, Shepparton and Cairns appeared with the Qantas Choir at the **Socceroos World Cup Farewell Game** in Melbourne.
- **Ngailu – Boy of the Stars** – the Torres Strait Islander children’s opera we commissioned from choreographer Sani Townson and composer Dan Walker and premiered to critical acclaim in 2009 with our Sydney Children’s Choir and Torres Strait Islander members of the Gondwana National Indigenous Children’s Choir - commenced screening on SBS’ arts channel **Studio**.

June

- 10 GNICC choristers and I travelled to China to perform with the Qantas Choir at Australia’s National Day at the **World Expo in Shanghai** as special guests of the Australian government.
- **Street banners** celebrating our 21st birthday lined Macquarie & Bridge streets in Sydney!

July

- We celebrated our coming of age with a critically acclaimed **21st Birthday concert, ‘Voices of Celebration’**, to a full house in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall. The Voices of Celebration season brought together over 700 choristers from Gondwana National Choirs, the Sydney Children’s Choir, Gondwana National Indigenous Children’s Choir and special Alumni Choir of over 100 choristers for the very first time. Sydney Morning Herald music critic Peter McCallum wrote: “Today these choirs are among the freshest and exciting musical organisations in Australia...Williams’ philosophy has always been to aim for quality. All the rest – their notorious precision with pitch, their purity of sound, their professionalism and their joyous energy – flows from this.”
- Preparation for the Voices of Celebration concert saw GNICC choristers from Qld, NSW and VIC and Gondwana Voices choristers from across Australia in residence for a week at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence in Sydney; our Gondwana Chorale at Naamaroo Conference Centre Lane Cove and our other Gondwana national choristers billeted across Sydney in the homes of generous Gondwana Choirs and SCC families.
- During the rehearsal seasons we ran our second **professional development open rehearsal** for interested music teachers. 39 teachers from across Sydney attended.
- Following the concert, Gondwana Voices and I toured to Tasmania as special guests of the **Festival of Voices**, where they performed at Hobart Town Hall, Federation Concert Hall and Hobart Cathedral. I was also invited to be the Guest Conductor of the Festival of Youth stream.
- Gondwana Chorale performed at the Australian National Association’s **Choralfest** in Port Macquarie’s new ‘Glasshouse’ Theatre and then travelled to Brisbane to perform with the New Zealand Youth Choir - one of the world’s finest choirs for young people - under the baton of Karen Grylls.
- SCC Senior & Leek choristers recorded the soundtrack and were filmed for a new Australian feature film, **33 Postcards**, starring Claudia Karvan & Guy Pearce.



*Voices of Celebration – our 21st Birthday Concert
(Photo: Tim Williams)*

August

- 32 Cairns based GNICC choristers performed at the opening of the **Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair**, watched by an enthralled audience including the Qld Premier and Governor.
- The SCC Senior Choir and I undertook our first **China tour** - performing to large and appreciative audiences at the **International Society for Music Education World Conference** in Beijing; at the **Forbidden City Concert Hall** in Beijing (a concert which was filmed and re-broadcast on Chinese Central Television several times). We were given a 'rock-star' welcome on the Bund in Shanghai, delighted other tourists with an impromptu performance of 'Happy Birthday' atop the Great Wall, and gave a wonderful performance at Beijing's spectacular Capital M restaurant!
- Members of Gondwana National Choirs performed at a **memorial concert for Ken Tribe AC** at the City Recital Hall along with Australian musical luminaries including Nathan Waks, Trioz and the Goldner String Quartet. Sydney Morning Herald music critic Peter MacCallum wrote: "Tribe's work was always about the future, captured in an exquisitely beautiful performance of Lyn Williams's *Uphill* by the young voices of Gondwana Choirs."
- The SCC Elena Kats-Chernin & Stephen Leek choirs hosted a visit and performed a concert with Vancouver's **British Columbia Boys Choir**.
- Choristers studying Music Craft with the SCC sat their annual **AMEB Music Craft exams**.

September

- Marked the first **GNICC Community Workshops in NT and Arnhem Land**. GNICC Mentor Sani Townson, Aboriginal singer Shellie Morris and I conducted workshops and visited several schools in Darwin and a small community called Belyuen, located on the eastern side of Cox Peninsula. Sani and I then travelled to Jabiru and into Arnhem Land to the community of Gunbalanya where, after fording a crocodile-infested river, we met some extremely excited children ready to give singing a red hot go!
- The **annual Gondwana Choirs National Audition Tour** commenced. During the next 2 months, this tour saw me travelling to every capital city in Australia – plus Rockhampton to hear young singers audition for 2011 Gondwana National Choral School. Auditions also took place in Armidale and Toowoomba and any young person more than 500kms from the audition centre were able to submit an audio visual audition.
- Our SCC Saturday School Choirs presented a **concert for friends and family** in the hall at SCEGGS Darlinghurst School.
- **GNICC Community Workshops took place in Western Sydney**. These were led by conductor Dan Walker, with former Aboriginal SCC chorister Corey Kirk.
- Our SCC Kats-Chernin & Stephen Leek choirs took part in a **workshop with Fernando Malvar-Ruiz**, Music Director of the internationally acclaimed American Boy Choir at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.
- **Studio Day:** SCC's annual (& ambitious) project of making a studio recording of all of our fourteen training choirs at Trackdown Studios. All 370 SCC choristers and a group of Sydney GNICC choristers abandoned their shoes, practiced absolute stillness and silence in a professional recording studio (no mean feat for a choir of forty five 6 year olds!), learnt that recording involves much repetition and had the opportunity to have a look in the control room. Their enthusiastic singing voices were captured on the CD Studio Day 2010 - a wonderful artistic record of the choral journey, as it shows our younger choristers where they are heading and reminds our oldest choristers where they have come from. Our youngest choristers will be 'old hands' at recording by the time they progress into Senior Choir!



GNICC Cairns choristers performing at the Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair (Photo: David Campbell)



SCC Senior Choir singing on The Great Wall of China

October

- The **NRL Grand Final** brought together choristers from the SCC, Sydney and Cairns-based GNICC and the Glebe Public School Choir (with whom I, Gondwana Alumni Eavan Dowse and Kate McCallum have been volunteering our time), for the chance to perform the Australian National Anthem with Jessica Mauboy in front of thousands and a TV audience of millions.
- GNICC choristers from Shepparton sang with the children's chorus in the premiere of the opera **Pecan Summer** by Aboriginal soprano Deborah Cheetham in Shepparton.
- The GNICC **Torres Strait Island Regional Camp** took place on Thursday Island over 4 days. 43 children participated, from across 10 islands, and were accompanied by Gondwana Choirs staff including choreographer Sani Townson, conductor and composer Dan Walker, pianist Luke Byrne, 4 Gondwana Choirs musical mentors, and volunteer supervisors. Choristers sang songs in local languages, accompanied by choreography by Sani Townson, and the camp culminated in a performance to a packed house at the Port Kennedy Community Hall. Among the works on the program included a world premiere by Dan Walker called *Scattered Islands*.
- The SCC Elena Kats-Chernin Choir and Sydney GNICC choristers performed together at the **National Centre for Indigenous Excellence gala dinner**, inspiring an audience of some of Australia's key business and Indigenous figures.
- The SCC Senior & Stephen Leek Choirs performed **Berlioz' Te Deum** with the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs at the Sydney Opera House.

November

- The **GNICC Sydney Regional Camp** at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence involved choristers from across Sydney, including the outer Western Suburbs. Choristers spent time at the Art Gallery of NSW (as part of our year-long collaboration with the Gallery) and took part in visual art workshops and rehearsals. The camp culminated in a performance with acclaimed didgeridu player William Barton at the beautiful Kingcoppal Rose Bay School Chapel.
- GNICC choristers, straight from the Sydney Regional Camp, appeared at **Qantas' 90th birthday gala dinner!**
- Sally Whitwell, Sani Townson and I donated our time to present a **workshop day for The Song Room**, involving 52 primary school students from outer Western Sydney at our Sydney Children's Choir rehearsal space in Millers Point.

December

- The SCC Senior Choir performed **Mahler's Symphony No. 3** with the Sydney Symphony, internationally acclaimed mezzo-soprano Lilli Paasikivi and the Ladies of the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, under the baton of Vladimir Ashkenazy. Critic Steve Moffatt wrote: "Ashkenazy deployed his massive forces with aplomb, with the Ladies of the Sydney Philharmonia Choir and the Sydney Children's Choir sounding jubilant as well as angelic in the fifth movement".
- **Oprah's Ultimate Australian Adventure!** 39 of our GNICC choristers from Cairns, Sydney and Thursday Island were involved in the filming of Oprah's Grand Finale with the Qantas Choir at the Opera House. The choristers were very pleased to share the stage and sing with Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe, Olivia Newton-John, Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban, and of course the star herself. Chorister Tyus sang the introduction to *I Still Call Australia Home* in Kala Lagaw Ya language and received a hug from Oprah!
- SCC Mini Singers Year 1 choristers performed the children's opera **Of Mice and Mozart** to an appreciative audience at St Mary's Chapter Hall.
- Sydney Children's Choir and Gondwana Voices presented our much-loved and annual festive Christmas concerts, **Voices of Angels**, at the City Recital Hall, Angel Place. Highlights included a newly commissioned work from Australian composer Ben van Tienen, a solo from one of Australia's foremost cellists Julian Smiles, a selection of traditional Christmas carols, excerpts from Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*, and a medley of traditional Jewish songs.



GNICC choristers at Oprah's Australian Adventure

FROM OUR CHAIR

Turning 21 is a major milestone for anyone - not least for Gondwana Choirs. As you will see in this report, our 21st year was a great year of celebration, bringing the unique talents of so many to a wide audience. From the mega events like the Opera House birthday concert to small workshops all around the country, seeing the impact of top quality music-making on everyone involved was further impetus to our goal to bring these opportunities to even more young people.

We finished the year in a strong financial position, with a surplus of \$91,016. This surplus includes \$27,459 in donation and fundraising income raised in 2010 for 2011 projects, including touring and bursaries for disadvantaged young people. The remainder of the surplus will contribute to our organisation's reserves to ensure a sustainable future for Gondwana Choirs.

Your Board is committed to making this next year one of wise investment in the future, to ensure we can expand our reach, particularly to less advantaged children across the country. Our strategic goals include:

- Improving access to our programs, including smart use of technology;
- Providing the highest quality, holistic education opportunities to young choristers, conductors and composers;
- Creating a new Australian repertoire, including more music in Indigenous languages;
- Performing at the highest level, both on our own and with world class artists and ensembles;
- Increasing our profile and promoting quality choral music; and
- Improving our support base - from government, corporate and philanthropic sources, to ensure we remain sustainable and to enable us to deliver on our growth goals.

I would like to acknowledge Board members who were elected to our Board during 2010 - David Lumb and Warren Lee - and also welcome Karen Mundine to our Board in 2011.

It is also worth sending a few special thank-yous. To Lyn Williams of course, whose vision and continuing flood of great ideas is an inspiration to us all; to all our staff - musical and administrative - who make it all happen; to my Board colleagues for their valuable contributions to our strategy; to all our families who provide support and encouragement to their children; and all our wonderful musicians who make our hearts sing as they bring their talents to us and the world.

Finally, this year will be one of change as our wonderful Alexandra Cameron-Fraser moves to new opportunities. We are so grateful for her leadership as our General Manager and wish her much happiness and success in her new role at the Australian Chamber Orchestra.



Rebecca Davies



*SCC Choristers at the recording of SCC Studio Day CD
(Photo: Angus Wilkinson)*

SUPPORT

Gondwana Choirs is grateful to the following organisations and individuals for their support during 2010, as well as to those supporters who wish to remain anonymous.

Government Support



Corporate Support



Major Partner
Gondwana National Indigenous
Children's Choir

Partner
Gondwana Choirs 21st Birthday Season

Partner
Gondwana National
Indigenous Children's Choir

HR Partner
Gondwana Choirs

Piano Partner
Gondwana Choirs

Pro Bono Advice Support

Clayton Utz, Herbert Geer

Philanthropic Support

Trusts & Foundations: Ian Thorpe Fountain for Youth, Clayton Utz foundation, Telstra Kids Foundation, Private Philanthropic Foundation x 1

Individual & Corporate Donors (over \$200)

Bursary Programs: Geoff & Vicki Ainsworth, America Family, Melanie Bruce, Anne L. Cameron, Stephen & Judy Collier, Elliott Family, Warwick Benson & Sally Greenaway, Michael & Sue Gregg, Dimity Hall, Hughes Family, Ralf Ilchef, Frame it all Toowoomba, John Barnes & Co (QLD) P/L, Nicholas & Deborah James, MacNamara Family, Roshana May, O'Hanlon Family, Pieter & Elizabeth Oomens, Nigel & Katherine Peck, Pooley Family, Queensland Arts Council, Shaw Family, Kay Salvair Smith, Michael Stuart-Watt, The Late K.W. Tribe, Walker Family, Wesiak Family, J Waterhouse, A&L Whittle, Anonymous x 15

Touring Programs: Natalie Botha, Dr Anita Green, Deborah & David O'Hanlon, Jill Henry, Darryl & Katherine Hodgkinson, Steven & Meredith Huntingford, Nicholas & Deborah James, Darren Knight & Suzie Melhop, Phillip & Ellen Nicholson, Pieter & Elizabeth Oomens, Nigel & Katherine Peck, Mark & Sally Pierce, Jennifer & Kerry Pooley, Amanda Rutherford, Kay Salvair Smith, Syrkiewicz Family, Les & Sheila Thorne, Annie Whealy, Helen Williams, The Williams Family, Anonymous x 5

21st Birthday: Aghion Family, Alexandra Cameron-Fraser, Heather & Rowena Causley, Rebecca Davies, Hugh & Frances Dixson, Claire Duffy, Jonathan Field Sarah Foster, Jane & Richard Freudenstein, Alan, Pia, Elke & Stephanie Harrison, Gaye Headlam, Clara Tenniswood, Darryl & Katherine Hodgkinson, Nicholas & Deborah James, David Longmuir, Mr & Mrs J Ludher, David Lumb, Warren, Judi & James Martin, Pieter & Elizabeth Oomens, Imogen & Penny Sturrock, Helen Williams, Jill Wran, Anonymous x 1

Sydney Children's Choir Composer in Residence: Ray Wilson OAM

Gondwana National Indigenous Children's Choir: Accolade Event Management, Libby & David Longmuir, Lynn Ralph, Syrkiewicz Family, Anon x1