New Orleans Bulletin #1 September 2018

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74th Annual Sweet Adelines International Convention

When: 16-21 September 2019

Where: New Orleans, Louisiana, USA (Smoothie King Centre http://www.smoothiekingcenter.com/about-us)
Smoothie King? It's a restaurant chain that specialises in healthy whizzed-up fruit and vege drinks. They have naming rights to the arena, where sports teams play. And Sweet Adelines sing!

What happens:

- In the lead-up, the first full dress rehearsals and big shows are in Christchurch on Saturday 7th September. The second full dress rehearsal is on Thursday 12th September at the Theatre Royal Christchurch, Young People in Harmony Show.
- We leave Christchurch and arrive in New Orleans on 13-14 September.
- There will be rehearsals each day from Saturday 14 September 7-9pm, to Wednesday 18 September.
- On the night of Monday 16 September we will perform in a show with Rönninge Chorus from Sweden, which will serve as the third full dress rehearsal.
- We compete initially on Thursday 19 September. During that week you'll also have the chance to watch some of the small and midsize chorus competitions and the quartet competitions.

Chorus competition dates: Semi-finals are all day Thursday 19 September. We are competitor #18 in the semi-finals, meaning we'll be on stage for our 7 minutes at about 3:30 in the afternoon (Central Time USA). There will be 34 choruses competing. https://sweetadelines.com/events/neworleans2019convention/

Final competition (the ten top-scoring choruses from the semis) is Saturday 21 September. Our goal is to be in that top ten! The 11th place chorus is asked to be the microphone testers and they do get to perform their package as well.

Contest songs for New Orleans

Semi-finals Package
Thursday 19th September

This Joint is Jumpin'
May I Never Love Again

Manhattan Transfer Finals Package
Saturday 21st September

Manhattan Transfer: Our group is high
A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square
Birdland
Twilight Tone
Trickle Trickle

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Preliminary travel and accommodation details

The chorus is having a final rehearsal weekend and shows in Christchurch on 6, 7 (shows) and 8 September 2019. On Thursday 12 September, we are scheduled to perform at the Isaac Theatre Royal in Christchurch, at the New Zealand Young People in Harmony Convention. This will give us further performance practice of our New Orleans song packages. You can travel to New Orleans on Friday or Saturday 13-14 September. Crossing the date line means you usually arrive in the USA on the same day you leave New Zealand. **Rehearsals begin in New Orleans on the evening of Saturday 14 September.**

The whole chorus stays together in a convention hotel, at the convention rates. This is organised by the chorus, through the Sweet Adelines International block accommodation booking system. The convention hotels are both on Canal Street: The New Orleans Marriott, and the Sheraton New Orleans. You have the option of sharing a room with a chorus member, rooming on your own, or sharing with a partner or travelling friend. But you **have to** stay with the chorus! This allows us to have rehearsal space, meals on site, and bus transport to the competitions.

Flight Options

The Chorus does not organise group airfare bookings. There is no financial benefit for individuals, given the airline pricing policies. Also, chorus members may fly to New Orleans around the same time, but afterwards we all head off in different directions, some straight back home, some to tour around the States, some travel to Europe or the Caribbean.

Air New Zealand flies directly from Auckland to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston, and Chicago. Other carriers, such as Qantas, Virgin Pacific, Hawaiian, Air Tahiti Nui, and Fiji Airways also go to the West Coast of the USA. Several of these airlines require stopovers at their home bases (Tahiti, Fiji, Honolulu, Sydney), and that may work well for some people wanting a holiday on the way home. Many airlines also offer group fares for 10 or more people, so you could get together with like-minded travellers and explore the options.

Sales to the USA often come up in February-March, and right now Air New Zealand has cheap tickets to the USA for September and October this year. But you may not want to gamble on that for September 2019!

Jan Mathieson mathieson.jan@gmail.com will help anyone who needs advice, and keep an eye on specials and let the chorus know. If you want to employ a professional to simplify the whole process of itineraries, bookings, and ticketing, there is a travel agent in the chorus– Liz Watts, an OOTM baritone from Palmerston North is a Senior Travel Consultant with Hello World. 06 357 4605 liz.watts@helloworld.co.nz

Travelling supporters – families and friends

Your family and friends are welcome to come along as supporters – we usually have a good contingent of travelling companions, but they have to understand that for the week of Saturday 14 to Saturday 20 September, **your main priority is the chorus:** training, rehearsing, and attending the singing convention! An option is to have them join you on 17 September, so they can watch us compete, and then you can travel and see all the sights following the convention. We often need some helpful supporters, and there is usually a group of reliable and understanding partners and friends who we welcome to help with collecting lunches for us, running errands, and helping in emergencies!

Letters of support from the chorus for your employers

We can supply you with a couple of letters, from our chorus and the NZ Region of Sweet Adelines, that specify that you are representing New Zealand in an international competition. A number of employers grant additional days of 'special leave' for this purpose. These letters are on the New Orleans page of the chorus website. Contact Jeannette McGrath jpmcgrath@xtra.co.nz for a personalised, signed copy if you want to approach your employer with a request for cultural or special leave to represent New Zealand in a world competition in the arts.

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Estimated costs and payment due dates

Estimated costs to you of travelling to and attending the 2019 Sweet Adeline's International Convention

Note: due to the current low exchange rate for the NZD, prices are considerably higher when USD are converted. It is hard to predict whether this rate will persist into 2019.

Item	Due date	Price NZD
Convention Registration $225 USD. Pay to Chorus on invoice.	29 March 2019	$345
Contribution to Chorus Shared Meals (lunches and dinners organised for competition days). Pay to Chorus on invoice.	30 May 2019	$250
Air Travel – book your own, Christchurch to New Orleans return approximate price based on current flight specials	From February 2019	$2000
Accommodation – 9 nights, sharing a room. $110 USD per person per night. Total $990 USD. Pay on checkout from hotel 22 September.	September 2019	$1,522
Ground Transport (personal travel, taxis, shuttles, airport to hotel) $50USD. Have cash on hand.	September 2019	$80
Travel Insurance – purchase it yourself.	From Feb 2019	$150
Food ($50 USD per day, 9 days, total $450USD). Pay for your own breakfast, lunch, dinners, coffee etc.	September 2019	$700
TOTAL (Estimated)		$5,047

Passport validation, ESTA, visa, travel insurance

Some visitors traveling to the U.S. are required to be in possession of passports that are valid for six months beyond the period of their intended stay in the U.S. However, NZ and Australia are on the list of countries whose citizens are exempt from the six month requirement.

Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) is a visa waiver programme run by the USA which means depending on your passport, you may not need a visa to enter the USA. NZers and Australians are eligible to apply for an ESTA online. Be certain you apply for your ESTA on the official USA government website, so you pay the official price of $14USD, by credit card only. https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/esta. If you use another passport, check the status of your country. If it is not part of the Visa Waiver Programme, you may have to go to the American embassy in Wellington to get a visa for the USA.

You should definitely buy travel insurance: purchase it at the time you pay your air fares, to protect you in the case of unexpected occurrences, such as medical emergencies or travel cancellation.

What will our New Orleans fundraising go towards?

We will use the money raised in the coming year for expenses that benefit the whole chorus: hiring risers and venues for rehearsals in New Orleans, shared meals for the whole chorus (lunches and dinners on competition days) and paying for our coaches (hotel rooms, and meals) who work with us in New Orleans in the run-up to competition.

In 2016 the chorus took 133 singers to Las Vegas and spent an additional $21,000 on in-house coaches, transport, printed material, rehearsal venue hire, riser rental, and lunches on competition day. There will be fundraising for New 0rleans, and this means that we do not individually have to contribute to those costs.

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Kiwi Express

This coach tour departs New Orleans the day after the Convention finishes (22 September) and travels through Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida. Options include a 7 day, 10 day, or 14 day tour. This is a budget tour with costs shared by all participants. The tour is open to Sweet Adelines from around the world, and their partners and friends. See the New Orleans page on the chorus website
https://sites.google.com/a/ccchorus.co.nz/members/

New Orleans Planning Team

Coordinators Susan Noseworthy Jan Mathieson	**Registrations** Rebecca Gourlay Edna Byron Robyn Harvey	**Meals in New Orleans** Miriam Spragg Rebecca Gourlay	**Newsletters** Trish Morrison Marilyn Bishop
Accommodation Masayo Yoshida Jean Dobbs	**Travel Advice** Jan Mathieson	**Health Team Coordinator** Edna Byron	**New Orleans t-shirts** Amelia Davis
Chorus Handbook Amelia Davis	**Hair/Make-up Coordinator** Jan Mathieson Sandy Gunn	**Travelling Supporters Coordinator** Angela Blank	**Show with Rönninge Chorus** Virginia