



# SINGING THE SAME SONG

*Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand Trust together with  
New Zealand Secondary Students' Choir*

**CHOIRS AOTEAROA EXISTS TO ENSURE  
APPRECIATION, PARTICIPATION AND  
EXCELLENCE IN CHORAL SINGING...**

## **BACKGROUND**

Founded in 1979 (as the National Youth Choir) for teenage to 25-year-old singers, a growing desire to serve younger members saw the Secondary Students Choir established as an independent organisation. In recent years a growing dialogue has taken place leading to an openness to merge. Following a number of workshops, a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed, leading to an application to WTMF. A grant of \$30,000 was approved at the end of 2018.

The merge was driven by a wish to remove barriers for young people to access a wide range of opportunities and improve efficiencies. It was hoped merging would be a springboard for improving future development and, as Arne Herrmann, Chief Executive of Choirs Aotearoa put it, “achieve an output to the community we serve that is larger than the sum of our parts.”

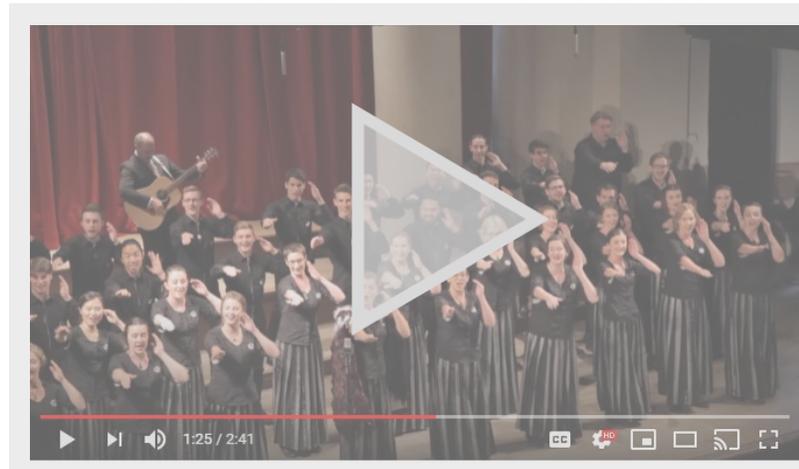
Singers would see a clearer pathway to achieve excellence. The new, single organisation would implement a “strategic approach to responding to the increasing diversity of New Zealand’s communities.”

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

The merger, completed in 2019, was successful. Increased opportunities for staff, resources and technology now exist. Consistencies achieved are leading to a better level of service and greater awareness of choral singing excellence is developing among audiences and key stakeholders. This has already led to increased funding support alongside cost savings, allowing for more resources for outreach and education activities.

Other advantages are already being seen. United staff and board members are bringing more diverse skills and ideas to the table, and motivation of artistic staff has increased. Consequently, thinking is “larger and more adventurous” and planning is now more holistic. The new sense of unity among singers is seeing the hoped-for clearer development pathway appearing, and an environment in which singers want to excel and achieve.

*View a short video about Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand*



## WHAT WAS LEARNT?

Arne said they learned that starting at a point of mutual respect, with all parties being treated as equals, was an important factor in their success. This was reflected in having “two open-minded boards in agreement a merger was in the best interests of the communities they serve.”

Despite the impact of COVID-19 resulting in cancellations of many activities, Arne notes “We came through the lockdown and alert levels really well.” He suspects this is because the merger has made them more robust and “possibly a more resilient organisation.” The new entity of Choirs Aotearoa NZ remains in a healthy position to take activities back to a normal level.

### *NZSSC now merged with Choirs Aotearoa NZ*



For further information contact **Arne Herrmann**  
Chief Executive, Choirs Aotearoa new Zealand  
*Email:* [ceo@choirsnz.co.nz](mailto:ceo@choirsnz.co.nz)

*the*  
**WORKING  
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