

ARTISTIC STRATEGY 2027–2029

Organisation	<i>Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand</i>
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Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand

VISION

We elevate the nation's **cultural vitality** through our **cultural music leadership**.

PURPOSE

New Zealander's take pride in their national choirs and the **joy, learning, identity, community**, and the **careers** they provide.

MISSION

We develop exceptional choral craft and performances in our national choirs. Working in a holistic way, we **grow** and **invest** in **generations of excellent, confident, and aspirational** musicians.

Introduction

The world in which we operate and perform has changed. This Strategy seeks to respond to that, setting a foundation for new views and new approaches. This strategy also honours and builds on nearly 50 years of artistic vision within Choirs Aotearoa NZ. This strategy explores new pathways of artistic leadership that helps futureproof our national choirs.

Our three national choirs include the New Zealand Youth Choir for 18–25-year-old singers, and New Zealand Secondary Students Choir for 13-18 years of age. Both choirs deliver a programme for young singers to train, sing and perform at the highest level. Voices New Zealand is a professionally managed ensemble that is a platform for the professional aspirations of singers and conductors and is predominantly a public facing performance choir. Voices is the artistic pinnacle of CANZ's choral pathway and acknowledged as the leading vocal ensemble in Aotearoa.

The CANZ mahi also supports the choral pathway through other singer and professional development opportunities for conductors, composers, vocal coaches and collaborative pianists through its national outreach programme, and the Aotearoa Choral Academy.

Our principal job is creating connection through choral singing.

Artistic Pillars

#1 Choral Excellence – Performances of the highest calibre, blending tradition and innovation.	#2 Aotearoa Identity – Embedding Te Ao Māori, Pasifika, and New Zealand musicians and composers at the core of programming	#3 Innovation & Storytelling Taking creative risks with staging, interdisciplinary projects, and digital presentation
#4 Audience & Community Engagement – Broaden access and deepen impact through live, digital, and educational touchpoints.	#5 Sustainable Pathways – Invest in holistic development of singers and the wider choral sector.	

Strategic Artistic Goals & Actions

Goal 1

The impact and quality of our national choirs are celebrated in Aotearoa and acknowledged internationally

Celebrated in Aotearoa, Acclaimed Worldwide

Our national choirs are recognised for their artistic quality and transformative impact, at home and on the world stage. Through tours, recordings, and bold programming, we bring the voices of Aotearoa to global audiences.

Actions:

- Maintain world-class performance standards across NZSSC, NZYC, and Voices NZ.
- Attract and support the best conducting talent and vocal coaches in Aotearoa.
- Develop innovative programming that balances classical repertoire, new commissions, and interdisciplinary collaborations.
- Increase digital content to extend reach and legacy in Aotearoa and globally.
- Stage international tours regularly and secure high-profile partnerships with festivals, orchestras, and presenters.
- Position each choir with a distinct artistic identity while maintaining a unified pathway.
- Create attractive choir performances (live and digital) that generate growth in audience numbers.
- Advancing our artform with new technology becoming available.

KPIs:

- Annual critical acclaim in NZ and international reviews.
- Minimum 1 international tour per NZSSC and NZYC choir cycle.
- 2–3 new commissions and arrangements performed annually.
- Year-on-year increase in audience numbers (live and digital).

Responsibility: Chief Executive, Artistic Advisory Group, MAPO, Music Directors, Marketing Manager.

Timeline: Ongoing 2027–2029.

Goal 2

Te Ao Māori and the unique singing traditions of Aotearoa are integral to the flourishing of our national choirs

Rooted in Aotearoa Identity

Te Ao Māori and the unique singing traditions of Aotearoa shape who we are. From commissioning Māori and Pasifika composers to weaving te reo Māori into our performance practices, we share authentic stories of this land

Actions:

- Embed tikanga Māori into choir operations, rehearsals, and performance practice.
- Commission and perform at least one new Māori work annually across the choirs.
- Collaborate with Māori and Pasifika cultural leaders, kapa haka groups, and taonga pūoro artists.
- Provide mentoring pathways for Māori and Pasifika conductors, composers, and singers.
- Achieve strong representation of Māori and Pasifika singers in NZSSC and NZYC and equip them for Voices NZ level mahi

KPIs:

- NZSSC and NZYC attracted 10% of auditionees from Māori and Pasifika communities and a minimum of 10% in the actual choirs.
- Repertoire includes minimum 30% Aotearoa works (Māori, Pasifika, NZ composers).
- Annual Māori composer commission achieved.
- Partnerships with Māori and Pasifika artists each season.
- Positive feedback from cultural partners on authenticity and integrity.
- Deliver at least one Māori or Pasifika conducting internship per year.

Responsibility: Artistic Advisory Group, Music Directors, MAPO.

Timeline: Foundations by 2027, embedded practice by 2029.

Goal 3

We provide sustained inspirational leadership, professionalism, development and a lifelong contribution to education across Aotearoa's choral and related sectors

Inspiring Leadership for Generations

We train young singers, nurture future conductors, composers, and collaborative pianists and provide opportunities with impact that last a lifetime. From school workshops to the Aotearoa Choral Academy, our work strengthens the entire choral community

Actions:

- Provide clear leadership and mentoring pathways for NZSSC and NZYC singers.
- Offer assistant conductor and composer-in-residence positions.
- Support alumni networks for continued sector leadership.
- Enhance the Aotearoa Choral Academy as the training hub for singers, conductors, collaborative pianists and composers.
- Strengthen school and community outreach, including workshops, open rehearsals, and digital learning resources.
- Deliver and maintain a strong catalogue of recordings and digital projects

KPIs:

- Minimum 2 assistant conductor/composer residencies/internships per cycle.
- Annual school/community workshop programme delivered in at least 3 regions.
- 50% of NZSSC alumni audition for NZYC; 20% of NZYC engage with Voices NZ.
- Alumni network engaged annually through events, digital campaigns, or mentorships.
- Achieve at least 1 RNZ concert recording and broadcast per year
- Publish a minimum of 3 full-length video-recorded songs by NZSSC, NZYC and Voices on social media channels

Responsibility: Artistic Advisory Group, Music Directors, MAPO, Marketing Manager.

Timeline: 2027 launch, ongoing expansion to 2029.

Success Measures

- **Artistic Impact:** Consistent national & international recognition, reviews, and invitations.
- **National Engagement:** Growth in audiences, outreach participation, and alumni contribution.
- **Cultural Leadership:** Authentic partnerships and integration of Te Ao Māori and Pasifika traditions.
- **Sector Development:** New leaders emerging from CANZ training pathways.
- **Sustainability:** Clear succession planning for conductors and management, stable funding base.