

## **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BAND ASSOCIATION**

### **BAND PARTNERSHIPS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

#### **Preamble**

Various types of community bands have enjoyed a secure place within the fabric of community activities in South Australia. Bands have always been a part of the cultural traditions of this state, and have contributed much to suburban and regional communities.

Bands were once to be found in most towns, but many organisations have faced the usual problems of aging memberships, diminishing support, and smaller memberships. Others have faced the more pragmatic difficulties of a lack of musical resources, players, conductors, or other forms of crucial support.

This discussion paper attempts to offer suggestions for bands to develop links that result in pragmatic outcomes that may be mutually beneficial.

#### **Country vs. City Bands**

City-based bands have some distinct advantages over country bands, as follows:

- Larger council areas that are able to grant funds in support of banding
- Established infrastructure - such as rehearsal venues - that are sometimes available for the exclusive use of the band organisation
- Players and conductors are more easily attracted to the band
- A larger number of schools in a suburban area may assist in player recruitment
- Players sometimes have the capacity to play in more than one band, extending their experience

Country bands also have some distinct advantages:

- Country bands sometimes have a monopoly on music-making activities in their region of operation
- Players tend to be very committed, with a great sense of loyalty to the group
- Family connections are cross generational
- Country bands enjoy good profile and recognition within their communities
- The social networks within country bands are strong and inclusive
- Many country bands own substantial buildings and other resources, established over many years

All bands face challenges, including the following:

- Recruitment of players
- Teaching and retaining beginning players
- Developing the existing skills of players
- Management protocols and procedures
- Obtaining resources, and seeking help and advice as needed

- Extending the reputation of banding within the community
- Keeping existing players engaged and motivated within the organisation

### **Band Partnerships**

It is proposed that bands may gain many mutual benefits from developing links. However, a more structured approach is envisaged for this program. Under this program, bands may choose to become linked for only a negotiated period of time - a minimum of two years - but it is hoped that more enduring friendships will be nurtured over a longer period of time. Ultimately, the energy and enthusiasm of the bands involved will determine the extent of any benefits achieved.

Here is an example of a Partnership Program:

- Band A (a city-based band) and Band B (a country-based band) agree to a Partnership Program for a period of two years.
- During this time, Band A visits Band B for a workshop weekend and concert (a rationale for Band A to travel), hosted by Band B (Band B enjoys an enhanced profile, engages schools, builds audience, promotes sponsors, etc). The exchange is reciprocated during the following year.
- An exchange of conductors can take place, depending on rationale and circumstances
- Bands may agree to assist each other with key players for a specific event, or may combine bands
- Bands may assist each other to attend contests - with accommodation, rehearsal space, permit players, etc.
- Bands may be able to share instruments, music, and other resources during the course of the Partnership Program
- Band Management committee members share expertise and develop skills via mutual interaction

Another Example:

- Band C and Band D are two bands within the Adelaide metropolitan area. One is C Grade, and the other is A Grade.
- The bands agree to combine for a key event - such as a combined concert, or the ANZAC Day March
- The bands agree to have two combined rehearsals during the course of the agreement
- The bands agree to assist each other with manpower, equipment, and resources for a working bee for each band during the agreement
- The bands agree to focus on a combined approach to junior development, including sharing of instruments and music.

The extent and scope of Partnerships should be based on some common understandings and principles. These may include:

- Partnerships should be developed on equal terms
- Partnerships should assist participants in a range of areas, but both partners should derive benefits from the relationships, albeit different benefits.

- Partnerships should be established to advance the common interests of banding. In no way should partnerships be used to undermine organisations, player memberships, or the work of other bands.
- A report should be made to the SABA on the completion of agreements.

### **The Process of Partnerships**

The following process is envisaged:

- The Band Partnership Program is introduced at a SABA Delegates meeting, with written information provided
- SABA advertised the Band Partnerships Program on the SABA website, and calls for expressions of interest from member bands regarding involvement in the Partnerships Program. It is accepted that this program may not be attractive to all bands for a variety of reasons, hence the need for expressions of interest.
- Expressions of interest discussed at SABA Executive, SABA Delegates, or MAB. Bands should be invited to outline the areas of assistance needed, or the beneficial outcomes they would like to receive from the program.
- Proposed partnerships determined, based on expressions of interest. Bands advised of linkages by SABA, outlining common synergies that may achieve stated outcomes
- At this point, the bands should contact each other and agree on the extent of the partnership, outlining key outcomes and commitments.
- Bands should submit a common proposal to SABA. If approved, SABA will contribute an amount of \$500.00 towards costs associated with the partnership (\$250.00 to each band).
- At the end of the two year period, a report on the Partnership should be submitted to SABA. This report should address the outcomes achieved against the original plan, additional benefits, problems encountered, and future recommendations.

### **Conclusion**

Fraternity is one of the most important strengths of banding. The SABA already promotes a platform where member bands can come together and compete. The Band Partnerships Program aims to assist bands in providing proactive assistance to each other, gain mutual benefits, and promote friendship and understanding within the context of our movement.

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