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28 March 2019

Dear Fellow Educators

The Festival of Music is a South Australian Heritage Icon, awarded by BankSA in association with the National Trust (SA), and is the only educational program to be awarded this honour.

A joint presentation of the South Australian Public Primary Schools' Music Society and the South Australian Department for Education, the annual concert series is the culmination of a choral music education program and a celebration of the excellence of education in public schools.

Over 600 staff and volunteers are involved in delivering the program which provides high quality learning for over 13,000 government school students performing to an annual audience of over 30,000. Students participating in the Festival are taught in schools by their teachers who are supported by the team from the Primary Schools' Music Festival Support Service.

The concert series provides many opportunities for our young public school students to experience a professional performance on a world-class stage.

In October 2012 some of our team visited Christchurch

Each year we premiere a commissioned work from an Australian composer – in 2019 the work is called *Dear Pen Pal*.

In *Dear Pen Pal*, the writer is composing a letter to pen pals who live in Adelaide's five Sister Cities:

-  Georgetown, Malaysia;
-  Austin, Texas, USA;
-  Qingdao, China;
-  Himeji, Japan; and
-  Christchurch, NZ

Our writer communicates with their pen pals in an effort to better understand their culture and develop mutual respect, that they may promote peace in our world, one letter, one line, one like at a time!

The final song of the Commissioned Work, *We are Christchurch*, tells us all about your beautiful city, known for its natural beauty and its unique innovation.

The song tells the story of the city and the terrible earthquake of February 2011; how the ground shook; how the spire on its beautiful Cathedral fell; how the people of Christchurch built a temporary

church out of cardboard, which remains standing to this day. It also tells that the people of Christchurch were not defeated; they joined together and bravely rebuilt their city and their lives to rise from the dust.

The Bridge to the song was inspired by the poem written by eleven-year-old Daisy Alexander, how she had to stay strong for her little sister who clung to her during the earthquake.

Around 8 years ago, we made contact with our equivalent Festival in our closest Sister City. In October 2012 some of our team visited Christchurch, to go behind the scenes, then sit in the audience of your Festival. In 2013 Patrick Shepherd and his wife Jeanette attended our Festival here in Adelaide.

We have suggested to all of our affiliated schools that they might like to contact schools in Christchurch to re-kindle the sisterhood by setting up a penfriend project. The recent tragic mosque attacks are likely to strengthen the bond even more.

Is it possible to circulate this letter to the Christchurch state primary schools (our primary schools go from Reception to Year 7, ages 5– 12)? I am happy to be the go-between and link them up with schools in Adelaide who would like to reach across the Tasman and make some lifelong friends.

I note from a quick scan online of your Christchurch state primary schools that we both have a Burnside, whilst you have a Redwood and we have a Redwood Park.

It would be wonderful to start up a rewarding, and hopefully long-lasting, relationship between our students and yours.

Please feel free to check out our website to find out more about our program, and contact me via email with any questions or requests regarding the project.

Yours sincerely



**Rachel Neale**  
**Administrator**

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