



Secret Chorus Business

July 30th, 2025

RESPECT EXCELLENCE COMMITMENT EDUCATION FUN

This week's rehearsal will be in the **Pacifica Room** and our songs will be:

- ❖ Always On MY Mind
- ❖ I Just Found Out About Love

Please wear your name badge 😊

Friendly reminders about attending rehearsals:

1. *When you arrive, make sure you sign at reception.*
2. *Be ready on the risers at 7.30pm sharp.*
3. *We need to have vacated St Josephs by 11pm. Please leave quietly so that other guests are not disturbed.*
4. *Please think of your chorus sisters and keeping them safe from any illness. Please consider wearing a mask and/or sitting off the risers.*

WHAT'S NEW

12 WEEKS UNTIL WE ARE ON STAGE IN COLUMBUS!

Look at their eyes. If their eyes are shining, you know you're doing it.

Benjamin Zander

Let's make our audiences eyes shine!

Trivia Night

Congratulations and thank you to everyone who worked hard to organise and run the Trivia Night which was a great success and a lot of fun too - as Jen said - putting the fun back into fundraising! Special thanks to James Dwyer who was an outstanding quiz master, to Alison Anderson for venue support, to Alouette who seemed to be everywhere all night - marking, adjudicating, selling raffle tickets and singing

Integrity ☆ Commitment ☆ Fun ☆ Dare to be Different

so beautifully, to Courtney for managing the raffle sales with help from trusty Annabelle, and to Lynda for preparing the raffle prizes. And thank you to everyone who donated to the raffle and joined in and brought friends and family along. It was a team effort, everything ran smoothly and everyone enjoyed a fun night.

Nikki Blackmer

We are looking forward to our coaching sessions with Nikki Blackmer on Friday night and Saturday – Nikki is a star of the Sweet Adelines world, so please prioritise these coaching sessions and bring along your enthusiasm and willingness to learn. Sessions with coaches are a great resource and a significant time and financial investment, so please make the most of these sessions and be especially aware of our riser etiquette. If you need to sit down during any sessions please sit to the side and not on the risers (unless invited to do so).

Here is some information about Nikki and links to Frenzy and A Capella Joy performances.

Nikki Blackmer is a dynamic force in the world of a cappella music. A classically trained soprano with a master's degree in vocal performance from the University of Washington, she will also complete a Vocology certificate from NYU in early 2025. Nikki sings lead in Frenzy, an award-winning women's a cappella quartet that won the 2017 Sweet Adelines International Quartet Championship, earning the title of Queens of Harmony. Frenzy performs and teaches worldwide and has recorded a CD, Diva Las Vegas.

Nikki is also the director of A Cappella Joy (AJoy), a champion women's barbershop chorus with Sweet Adelines International. Under her leadership, AJoy has flourished, most recently earning the title of 2025 Harmony Classic AA Division Champions. Nikki has directed numerous other mixed and women's choirs in Seattle, making her an influential figure in the local vocal community.

Known internationally as a renowned a cappella ensemble coach, Nikki has taught groups across the United States, Canada, England, Germany, New Zealand, and Australia. Her expertise and enthusiasm have also made her a sought-after leader for youth a cappella events.



https://www.google.com/search?q=frenzy+quartet&oq=frenzy+quartet&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyCQgAEUYORiABDIHCAEQABjvBTIKCAIQABiiBBiJBTKCAMQABiABBiiBDIHCAQQABjvBdIBCjExMzMyajBqMTWoAgCwAgA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:cc24fe7b,vid:1z4uR9yVxQw,st:0

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFoj_4fEi3E&list=RDjFoj_4fEi3E&start_radio=1&ab_channel=SweetAdelinesInternational

New CKC Chorus Jackets

We are really excited to let you know that our amazing new jackets have now been ordered. The supplier has indicated that it will be about 3 weeks until our order is ready, so hold tight until then. They are going to look fantastic!

Thank you!
Kath Ware



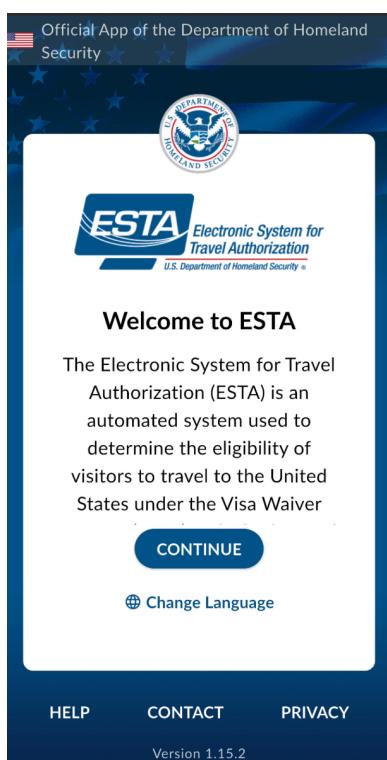
A huge thank you to everyone involved in the selection, design and fitting of the new jackets – they're going to look great!

Returning costumes for OOTERS

Almost all of our OOTERS have now been fitted out with a costume and will be given one of the new jackets to wear while we are in Ohio. All of these items will need to be returned after competition. Kath will be travelling for a few weeks and won't return until the end of November so she is looking for volunteers who are returning home immediately after convention and might have some room in their luggage to bring back costumes for one OOTER? This will save our dual members from having to put their costumes in the post. If you would be prepared to do this, please let Kath know before this weekend so she can link you up with a partner OOTER.

ESTA App

Jen Senior has had advice from her travel agent that the ESTA app is easy to use and wanted to share this information with us all – thanks Jen!



Keepin' Score Books and Official Columbus Ohio T-shirts

Keepin' Score is a Convention guidebook for delegates at International Convention and is available in digital (USD15) and hard copy (USD20) format and need to be pre-ordered. Keep this in mind and have a think about whether or not you would like one and if you would prefer a physical or digital copy. We are looking into ordering requirements for these.

Official Columbus Convention apparel will also be available to pre-order – these will have the Convention logo on the front and the option to have either the chorus' name and competing members' names listed, or a list of competing choruses on the back.

Stay tuned for more information on these items.

Sweet Adelines Australia Fees

The fees that you pay each month go to your Sweet Adelines International fees and towards the running costs of the chorus. Sweet Adelines Australia fees are not covered by the regular fees that members pay. CKC pays for its members' SAA fees and you will be invoiced for this amount, so keep an eye out for this invoice and pay this amount promptly. If you have any questions or will have difficulty paying at this time, please contact our Finance Manager Susan Kelly.

Personal Practice

Regular personal practice means that we come to rehearsals prepared and ready to give our best and to take the next steps in learning and developing our skills. Targeted personal practice means that we objectively assess our singing and performance and look for areas of improvement. Benjamin Zander said **"When you make a mistake, throw your hands in the air and say "How fascinating!"** Don't just say 'Oh I hate listening to my own voice', but instead develop a curiosity about what happens and take note of specific things that can be addressed: you might notice that your alignment is not correct, or that your 'ah' vowel isn't resonant, or that you threw a small word/quick note away – then you can begin to work on those things specifically.

Remember that every opportunity to sing is a performance opportunity: if Vicki is working with another part, this is a great time to practice your Visual Communication skills

By practicing and singing mindfully, we will build our skills and become the singers and performers we want to be – what joy and satisfaction that will bring.

On the Sweet Adelines Australia website there are plenty of educational webinars and other resources to support you in your learning.

As International Convention is getting closer, let's all commit to practicing regularly and mindfully, and let's aim to make our audiences eyes shine.

Scores in Recent Contests

You might be curious about our scores in the two singing competitions we entered recently:

- ❖ At the BHA Eastern region contest we received some great comments from the Judges during our evaluation, and we scored 79.4%, which is a great score especially as this was the first performance of these songs – well done everyone!
- ❖ For the Sydney Eisteddfod we used our BHA ER video recording as our entry: for this contest we came in second in our category and scored 95%: the judge's comments were high praise indeed: *'Thank you so much for presenting such a well-rehearsed and elegant performance for this Eisteddfod section. The emotional intensity of the first work was very well executed – diction and overall quality of sound was consistently warm – particularly in the lower voices. Nice clean strong ending with secure intonation – well done! Second work provided a wonderful contrast in the program – the ensemble clearly enjoyed this work and the engaging story was "sold" very*

well to the audience – we really enjoyed “living it up” with you in this performance. Clean simple choralography supported cleanly executed choral lines – beautifully balanced parts overall – slight adjustment needed in the final section to stop the chords straying towards the sharper end of acceptable! I really enjoyed this performance and its clear so did the audience Thank you again for submitting – I wish you and your ensemble all the very best – what a truly lovely group they look like they are making wonderful music and memories together – well done to you all!’

Michelle Leonard (adjudicator)

Well done everyone – let’s continue to sing and perform these songs so that they sparkle and shimmer!

International rehearsals in Columbus Ohio

We have two rehearsals scheduled while we are in Columbus:

- ❖ Sunday 19th October 2-4pm, Greater Columbus Convention Centre (GCCC) Rooms A220-A225
- ❖ Thursday 23rd October 9:30-11:30am, Union Station Ballroom C, Greater Columbus Convention Centre

These times and places are also in the diary section towards the end of the newsletter.

Thank you to Diane for organising the rehearsals.

UPDATED Hospitality Roster

- ❖ 30 July: Marea Witt & Sue Rosenblum (Birthday Supper - cake to be provided)

Thank you, Hospitality Team!

Songs for Our Family and Friends Concert on Oct 11

So that you have plenty of time to revise and refine the repertoire that we will be singing at our Oct 11 concert, here is a list of songs we will be performing:

- ❖ Almost There
- ❖ Rolling in the Deep
- ❖ Don’t Rain On My Parade
- ❖ Titanium
- ❖ I Will Survive
- ❖ True Colours

Friendly Reminders

RISER ETIQUETTE

Just a friendly reminder about riser etiquette: riser etiquette is an important part of showing respect to our fellow members and our Musical Director, Coach, Leaders, or any person who is addressing the chorus. It is always important, but is extra important when we have a coach

- ❖ Pay close attention to the person out the front
- ❖ Do not make comments or suggestions unless you are specifically asked to do so
- ❖ Raise your hand if you have a question
- ❖ Focus on learning
- ❖ Do not chat with other members when the Director or Coach is working with another section – it is distracting and can make it difficult to hear

Thank you for remembering our top value – **RESPECT** 🧐

RE-CAPS AND UPDATES

Thank You to our Anonymous Donors – continuing to thank you with all our hearts



Dates for International Saturday Rehearsals 2025

We have booked the following dates for our rehearsals this year. I have received confirmation from St Joseph's regarding the rehearsals on 1/8 and 28/9 – these dates are now confirmed. Please mark these in your diaries now to minimise any commitment conflicts – thank you.

NB: we realise that not all Ohio singers will be able to attend every Saturday rehearsal, but please attend as many as you can and notify me and Vicki if you can't attend. Please prioritise those dates with external coaches, and the last weekend in September.

There will also be a family and Friends Concert on Saturday 11th October. There are no rooms available at St Jospeh's, so we are sourcing an alternative venue.

Date	Time	St Joseph's Room	Coach
Friday 1/8/25	19:30-22:00	Pacifica Room	Nikki Blackmer
Saturday 2/8/25	9:00-17:00	Pacifica Room	Nikki Blackmer
Saturday 27/9/25	9:00-17:00	Pacifica Room	Bec Hewitt
Sunday 28/9/25	9:00-17:00	Pacifica Room	Bec Hewitt
Saturday 11/10/25 Family and Friends Concert	TBA	Richmond School of the Arts	Vicki Dwyer

Ohio Travellers: Things you can do and think about now

Some information regarding travel preparations from Diane – thanks Di ☺

Passport / Visa

- Make sure you have a current passport, and that it has 6 months before it expires. Make a couple of copies of your Passport, pack one in your luggage and leave one with a family member at home.
- Apply for the USA "Visa Waiver" prior to leaving. Visit the ESTA website (see link below). Applications may be submitted at any time prior to travel to the United States. The Department of Homeland Security recommends that travel authorization applications be submitted at least 72 hours prior to travel. Unless revoked, travel authorizations are valid for two years from the date of authorization, or until your passport expires, whichever comes first.

Go to the official website to apply or update if you have a current ESTA. Cost is \$21USD

<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta>

Mobile Phone

- To you use your mobile phone you will need 'International Roaming' switched on through your mobile phone provider before you leave home.
- Investigate what your mobile phone provider has on offer regarding International Roaming at least 1 to 2 months before you leave.
- Some people may choose to purchase a sim card in the US for their phones - you will need to let people know what your new number in the US is
- The Airolo app provides an e-sim which provides data to your phone. You purchase it before you leave and activate it once you arrive. It uses data, so you can make phone calls using WhatsApp or Messenger
- Others may like to purchase a burner phone in the USA to use while you are there

Airalo App

Emma let me know about the Airolo app for phone use when travelling. This is what she has to say about it:

I used it when I last went to the UK for data on my phone and it was cheaper than roaming, could be topped up easily. I couldn't make normal phone calls but could call using messenger or WhatsApp as they use data. Just thought it might be an option for some ladies. You can prepurchase before leaving Australia and activate it on arrival in USA.

I checked the App Store and it has a 4.5 star rating, so it looks great. Another option to consider for those travelling to the US in October. I'll include this information with other phone options in our Preparing for Ohio section of the SCB. You can find more information about Airalo here:

<https://www.airalo.com/about-us/about-airalo>

Ohio T-Shirts

Carol has kindly offered to print a t-shirt for any member who would like one. **We would like to encourage all members travelling to Ohio to purchase one of these shirts – we will be using them as rehearsal shirts during our Saturday International rehearsals, and also as a fun travel shirt in Ohio.**

To order a T-shirt you will need to:

- ❖ Provide Carol with a BLACK T-shirt of your choice (any fabric is fine): it will need to be pre-washed WITHOUT fabric softener – this helps the design to adhere to the fabric
- ❖ Transfer \$15 to the CKC account with your name and Ohio t-shirt in the reference
- ❖ This will cover Carol's costs and be a small fundraiser for the chorus
- ❖ Carol will return the completed t-shirt once she has been notified that the amount has been transferred into CKC's account
- ❖ Please place your t-shirt in a bag labelled with your name

THANKS CAROL 😊

If you notice any missing or incorrect information in the Secret Chorus Business, please let Rachael know – thank you 😊



CKC COMMITTEES AND TEAMS 2025-6

Thank you for the time and energy you spend supporting our chorus

Committee	Team Leader	Team Members
Hospitality	Kaye K	Jenny D, Marea W, Anne H, Deb W, Mon W, Cathy H
Fundraising		Crystal F, Sue R, Sue G, Deb W, Frances G, Linda VA
Rehearsal Equipment	Kaye K	Anne T, Spring Z, Cheryl W
Coach Coordination	Kath W	Pippa A, Vicki D
Marketing	Jen K	Jen S, Philippa T
Photobucket	Ursula H	Anne T
Website		Carol L (Webmaster), Kath W (Public Pages), Sue G
Costumes	Kath W	Jen K, Vicki D, Jessi F
Social Committee		Jessi F, Spring Z, Sue G
Makeup	Kaity D	Vicki D, Courtney CD,
Physical Warm-Ups	Courtney CD	Jess, Betty, Sue R

Management Team

- ❖ Musical Director: Vicki Dwyer
- ❖ Team Co-ordinator: Rachael Moessis
- ❖ Finance Manager: Susan Kelly
- ❖ Secretary: Anne Harris
- ❖ Public Relations Co-Ordinator: Jen Kumar
- ❖ Performance Co-Ordinator: Crystal Forbes
- ❖ Membership Chair: Frances Gurto
- ❖ Appointed Member: Diane Jenkins
- ❖ Appointed Member: Betty Fuller
- ❖ Appointed Member: Anne Thompson

Music Team

- ❖ Musical Director: Vicki Dwyer
- ❖ Assistant Musical Director: Diane Jenkins
- ❖ Bass Section Leaders: Jenny Do Rozario, Betty Fuller
- ❖ Baritone Section Leader: Kaity Dwyer
- ❖ Lead Section Leaders: Rachael Moessis, Susan Kelly
- ❖ Tenor Section Leader: Diane Jenkins
- ❖ Visual Team: Courtney Churchward (and Heather Baeza)

If there are teams or team members missing from the lists above, please let Rachael know

Integrity ☆ Commitment ☆ Fun ☆ Dare to be Different

Member Birthdays



❖ Ursula Huxtable	August 1
❖ Marea Witt	August 23
❖ Pippa Anderson	September 10

Member Leave

Are you planning on taking holidays or unable to attend rehearsal? If so, please email absence@circularkeys.org

Using this email address ensures the Musical Director, Team Coordinator, Membership and the Music Team are all notified at the same time.

- ❖ Heather Baeza – date of return unknown
- ❖ Emma Edwards – November return
- ❖ Ann Keating – 16th July-6th August 202
- ❖ Jen Senior – 1st August -13th August 2025



Remember that our rehearsals are streamed on our Circular Keys-On Key Facebook page and are saved there, so if you do need to miss a rehearsal, you can watch at home or catch up later – also a great way to review any content to consolidate your learning.

Diary Dates 2025

2025	
Fri 1 st August 7:30-10pm	International Competition Rehearsal – with Nikki Blackmer
Sat 2 nd Aug 9am-5pm	International Competition Rehearsal Pacifica Room – with Nikki Blackmer
Fri 15 th Aug 7:30pm	Management Team Meeting at Anne H's place

Sat 27 th Sept 9am-5pm	International Competition Rehearsal Pacifica Room – with Bec Hewitt
Sun 28 th Sept 9am-5pm	International Competition Rehearsal Pacifica Room – with Bec Hewitt
Sat 11 th Oct time TBA	Family and Friends Concert, Richmond School of Arts
Wed 15 th Oct 7:30pm	Last rehearsal before International Convention
Sun 19 th Oct 2pm-4pm	Greater Columbus Convention Centre (GCCC) Rooms A220-A225
October 20–25	Sweet Adelines International Convention & Competition, Columbus Ohio
Thurs Oct 23 9:30-11:30am	Rehearsal: Union Station Ballroom C, Greater Columbus Convention Centre
Thurs Oct 23 10am-9pm	Chorus Semi-Finals GCCC Exhibit Hall A-B (CKC is Contestant #22)

Chorus Fine Print

SUGGESTION BOX

Have a suggestion you want to raise? Send it to suggestionbox@circularkeys.org

This email has been set up so that it is sent to the Team Coordinator. All suggestions will be discussed by the Management Team.

Please remember to send your suggestions with kindness – it makes it easier for the Management Team to receive them with kindness.

ABOUT THE STAR OF THE WEEK

Any member of the chorus can nominate someone who has gone above and beyond, who has personally helped you, who has made a special difference or contribution to the Chorus or who has tried extra hard.

There are many other positive attributes that can be recognized with this award. To nominate a member, simply email Frances Gurto (fgurto@gmail.com) with the member's name and short description as to why you would like to nominate them. If no nominations are received, the star will not be awarded.

CKC FEE INFORMATION

Circular Keys Chorus charges an annual fee to cover the costs of venue hire for rehearsals and coaching sessions, Director's Honorarium, International and Regional fees, costumes, insurance and other costs related to running an organisation, music and learning tracks, promotional materials such as banners ... and more. As you can see, not all of these expenses are related to running rehearsals, which is why we pay every month including the weeks we do not rehearse (eg Christmas/January break).

The annual fee is broken up into 12 equal payments of \$60 per month. It can be paid annually (\$720), quarterly (\$180), or on another regular basis (always in multiples of \$60 please), but it needs to be paid in advance for a member to be in good standing. These fees are also payable even if you are not attending rehearsals, and if a member is taking leave, fees should still be paid in advance so that membership is maintained. This is because all our costs remain the same, whether or not individual members are attending.

If paying your fees slips your mind, add it to your diary, or set up direct debit so that the fees are paid when due. If you do forget your fees and the Finance Manager reminds you, please pay the outstanding amount promptly. Remember that the Finance Manager is a volunteer, and we need to be considerate of her time by paying our fees regularly and by responding to her requests promptly and with courtesy.

CHORUS PAYMENTS

Please be advised that EFT should be used for your payments to chorus. Please contact our Finance Manager if you need further details, or if you have an issue that prevents you from paying using EFT.

Make sure you include your relevant information in the reference field so the finance team knows who the payment is from and what it is for.

CKC Bank Account Details for online payments:

Westpac Bank: BSB: 032170

Account Number: 273702

Account Name: Circular Keys Chorus Incorporated

RISER ETIQUETTE

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- ❖ Pay close attention to the person out the front
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Thank you for remembering our top value – **RESPECT** 🙏

CKC STOREROOM

The CKC storeroom at St Joseph's is under the care of the Costume Coordinator (Kath W) and the Fundraising Coordinator (Crystal F). If you need to access the storeroom, please contact one of them first – they'll be able to help you with what you need. If you are planning to visit St Joseph's for any reason (eg to work in the storeroom or the kitchen) outside of rehearsal times for any length of time, please contact St Joseph's to make sure that it is convenient for them. Whenever you visit, please remember to check in with Reception staff on your arrival and sign the visitors book so that have a record of who is in the building. Thank you 😊

NEW MISSION STATEMENT

Our new Mission Statement is based on the work on values that Diane Jenkins did with the chorus during 2024-2025. The values that were prioritised by the chorus members were: Respect, Excellence, Commitment, Education and Fun. The Management Team believes that this new Mission Statement incorporates these values. Many thanks to Crystal who got the ball rolling on this project. The new mission statement is:

'We unite through music, creating a harmonious space where voices blend, friendships grow, and artistry thrives'

OUR VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Values: Respect – Excellence – Commitment – Education - Fun

Guiding Principles

Respect

We foster respect through kindness, inclusivity, and commitment. By listening, supporting, and valuing each other, we create a welcoming space where every voice

matters and we grow together.

Excellence

Excellence is commitment in action—showing up, pushing boundaries, and striving for growth. With focus, passion, and unity, we rehearse, perform, and lead with purpose, always raising the bar for ourselves and each other.

Commitment

Commitment is being present, prepared, and engaged. It's taking responsibility, supporting the team, and embracing every opportunity to grow, contribute, and create success together.

Education

Education is a lifelong journey. With curiosity, dedication, and an open mind, we embrace challenges, learn from experience, and grow together.

Fun

We unite through singing, performing, and laughter—celebrating friendship, music, and fun as we grow and create joy together

COPYRIGHT

Circular Keys Chorus pays for the copyright of our sheet music, and membership of CKC entitles us to access this sheet music. Visitors and prospective members are not entitled to receive copies. We do have Visitors books which have copies of our current repertoire for use during rehearsals – these folders remain the property of CKC and must not be taken home by non-members.

SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS

We celebrate our members' birthdays at the end of each month, and we want you to know how much we cherish each one of you by singing happy birthday and sharing a cake together. Thank you to the Hospitality Team and our amazing bakers who make this happen.

We won't celebrate special birthdays because we don't know when they are coming up and members can be hurt if their special day isn't remembered. We are sorry that some of our precious members have been upset by this, although intentions were well meaning.

At each birthday celebration, a special hat or a tiara will be available for anyone to wear if they have a special birthday that month, so that we can share the special occasion with you.

No other special celebrations will occur during chorus time.

RETURN AND EARN

A Return and Earn account has been set up for the chorus for fundraising, so remember to keep your plastic and glass bottles, aluminium cans and some tetra packs aside for our Return and Earn.

Compatible items have 10c marked on the packaging. Remember **not to crush** your eligible items. You can deposit them at a depot using the barcode below and at the end of the newsletter. You can take a screenshot of the barcode to use at the depot. If you prefer, you can print the barcode.

If you are not a big consumer of drinks yourself, why not ask your friends, family, colleagues, church group etc. to give you their empty bottles?

How to Return and Earn:

<https://youtu.be/OYDROMQIDbU>

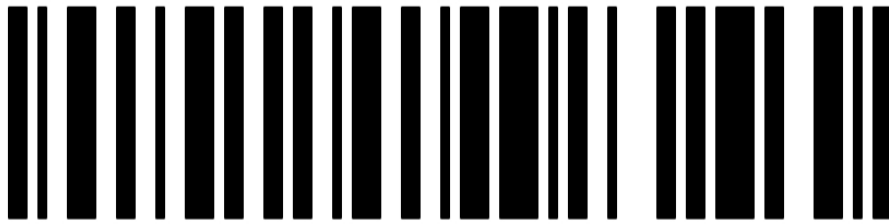
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=966272033522727>

Return and Earn Location Points:

<https://returnandearn.org.au/map/>

Hi Circular Keys Chorus!

Ready to recycle?



Scan your barcode at the machine