



# ORGAN

## FUNDRAISING PROPOSAL

This generation's legacy project is to restore the gloriously rich music of a quality pipe organ to worship at St John's, the "mother church" of the North Shore





January 2017

Dear Friends

### **Organ Replacement Project**

This document is being sent out to all parishioners to do two things. First, as an information document to bring everyone up to date with the organ, its need to be replaced, where we have come from, and why we are at this point in time now. Second, to demonstrate how we propose to replace the organ. This includes information on the proposed replacement organ and how we propose to finance it.

On Advent Sunday last year, we conducted an Extraordinary Vestry Meeting (EVM) to seek permission to access the funds in the Foundation Trust. The meeting turned into a debate on various issues with the replacement of the organ, and I thank everyone for their contribution to that debate. While the required 75% was not reached to allow access to the funds it is true that with 71% in favour the great majority of those gathered wanted to see those funds released so the project could proceed.

What many were concerned with, even, I suspect, those in favour of the project, was the issue: "Is this right for our parish?" It is a good question, and needs to be answered. I am unashamedly in favour of the project for I believe that it is in the long-term interest of the parish to replace the organ, which, whether we like it or not, is failing us and in the not too distant future will be unusable. This proposal will allow us to continue to worship God as we have done so, and even more flexibly in the future. While there are some arguments for a digital organ, I have made enquiries to other parishes who have either had digital organs, or used to have digital organs, and they are unequivocal in stating the pipe organ is superior. You will see some of the pros and cons in the document before you. You will also see the very real consideration that if the parish chooses not proceed with a pipe organ, installing a digital alternative is certainly not automatic and likely not strategic.

For those who raised question of cost and affordability, you should consider this over the fifteen years we plan to have all loans repaid. You should also be assured that the Diocese will assess the financial capacity of the Parish in its loan assessment process, as has the Trustee of the Foundation Trust. The planned loan repayments will be 13% of budgeted outflows and that percentage will likely fall in future years. Whilst not insignificant, this outlay needs to be put in the perspective of the total activities of the Parish. However, just as previous generations have made significant commitments to build and provide our beautiful church and the facilities we have, isn't this a legacy we can provide to future generations?

As you will note in the brochure, there are two conditions that need to be met for the project to proceed:

1. Sufficient parishioner pledges to service the loan from the diocese, and
2. Access to the Foundation Trust.

If either of these conditions is not met, the project will not proceed, and the Wardens, Parish Council and I will have to look at other options.

The brochure has been written with the issues raised from the EVM in mind and a Frequently Asked Questions page. I trust this will provide all the information you need to make your decision about supporting the project. Should you have other questions please do not hesitate to speak to or email any of the organ committee members named on page 7, or me. At the back of the brochure is a pledge form that you can fill in. If you could please fill this in and return it as soon as possible that would be very helpful. It is intended that we seek approval for the Foundation Trust Funds access at the next AVM on 26<sup>th</sup> March.

I commend the project to your consideration, urge you to read the document through carefully, pray about it, and pray about your response, ask your questions and fill in and return the pledge form as soon as possible.

With every blessing to you all

*Fr Keith*

Rector

*Here are the questions about the project most frequently asked of the Rector since the special vestry meeting and very brief answers to them. We provide much more detailed information on these and other aspects of the project in the following pages.*

***Why do we need to replace the Rendall Organ?***

From its installation in the late 1920s, there have been functional problems and large sums have been spent in several attempts to improve performance and rectify problems. Enlargement of the church building compounded the organ's inadequacies. Since the 1980s, our organists have reported progressive deterioration in performance despite regular maintenance and repairs. The maintenance organ builder has reported that further restoration would be money misspent and no reputable organ builder would accept the commission.

***Why this organ from New Zealand?***

South Island Organ Company, which was the successful tenderer for replacement of the Rendall has in stock a fine organ that meets St John's musical requirements and is contemporaneous in vintage and style with the church building itself. In our previous searches and enquiries, we had been unable to identify an organ that appeared suitable, even if, on top of the purchase price, more had to be spent on renovations or enhancements.

***Why do we need a loan?***

Although the parish has known for some years that eventual replacement of the Rendall was inevitable, no special purpose fund had been created until the Music Association appeal was launched in 2015. The response so far has fallen well short of the project cost, meaning that the difference must be borrowed.

***How will the loan be repaid?***

The parish is now budgeting \$50,000pa and we are confident that parishioners will respond by pledging at least \$35,000pa. The combination of these commitments would enable repayment of the loan over ten years.

***How long will all this take?***

Ten years, assuming the parish and parishioners meet the commitments mentioned above, as envisaged.

***Why take funds from the Foundation Trust?***

The Trust's objective is to ensure the continuation of the church and its facilities into the future. Other than the church itself, St John's has no more important worship-related asset than its pipe organ. Lending Trust funds towards replacement of this asset at the end of its life is demonstrably in the parish's best long-term interests and entirely appropriate use of those funds.

***When will the Foundation Trust be repaid?***

The proposal before the parish is that the Foundation Trust loan be repaid by the parish within fifteen years. This is considered reasonable by the Trustee. Once the diocesan loan is repaid, the priority will be to repay the Foundation Trust as soon as possible and within this timeframe. The Foundation Trust has been the recipient of donations and bequests and we encourage parishioners to continue to make long-term legacies to the parish through the Foundation Trust.

***How will funding the project affect the parish's current mission and ministry work?***

We have developed the funding plan for the organ with the express objective of avoiding any impact on the parish's current mission and ministry. The annual amount, which we believe the parish budget can bear towards the loan repayment, has been quantified and budgeted and we are appealing to parishioners to pledge the remainder.

***Is this new instrument going to last, especially as it is second-hand?***

The mechanism is new and the instrument is expected to last for at least a century and well beyond, perhaps with one renewal of the electrics in that period. Brett notes that around the world there are organs several centuries old still in regular use, so "second-hand" is not a relevant term!

***Why don't we get a digital (electronic) organ?***

***If we were to get a digital organ, what impact would that have on the music at St John's?***

For who we are and how we wish music to be integral to our worship, an authentic pipe organ is critical and strategic. Without a pipe organ, it is unlikely that St John's could sustain an organ-centred music and choral programme of the nature that has been established. We must face that reality. If the parish chose not to support a pipe organ, it would make little sense to invest in a digital replacement when it is likely the parish would be required henceforth to choose a different musical path and the organ would be less important.

Digital organs require significant and expensive amplification, digitals have relatively short lives and will require replacement numerous times compared to the long-term life of a pipe organ, and digitals don't provide a saving over the long term (potentially, indefinite) life of the pipe organ.

We need to be clear that this decision is about the future of organ music supporting the liturgy at St Johns. If we don't stay with a pipe organ, we are unlikely to replace it with a digital.

***What will happen if the pledges fail to materialise after the work has begun?***

As part of the loan process, the diocese will be conducting a thorough review of the capability of our parish to meet its financial obligations of this proposal. Yes, we will be contracted to meet our obligations. Nevertheless, just as previous generations have built our church and facilities, so we can expect this to continue. The pledges, though, are expected to be only 5% of budgeted expense annually, so the impact on the parish while retaining existing activities should be manageable with the support of the parish.



# BACKGROUND

Organ music is a key part of the fabric of worship and tradition at St John's, providing a lasting memory of worship.

Since its foundation in 1872, St John's has retained its status as the "mother church" of the North Shore, and is often used for congregational programs of musical worship and civic services, such as on ANZAC Day.

Currently, St John's is home to the four *St John's Choirs* (*Parish Choir, 8 am Singers, Evensong Choir and Voces Joannis*) and *The Cathedral Singers*, with regular liturgical performances from the *Jacobean Singers*, the *Brabyn Singers*, other visiting choral and instrumental groups, school choirs and vocal ensembles.

St John's has always sought to maintain a high liturgical and musical standard in the Anglican tradition, providing an outreach to the wider community and the uplifting addition of exceptional music and voices through the Eucharist, Evensong, Matins, seasonal carols services, musical weddings and solemn funeral services.

The music of the organ is essential to our liturgy and achievement of the high standards of musicality required to create an atmosphere of beauty to assist our worship and our faith. Besides its parish role, St John's organ is a resource for the wider community and is a church musical beacon in the Diocese, the City and perhaps beyond.

Over the years the Rendall organ, which was installed in the 1920s, has aged, been weather-affected, water damaged, patched up and attempted to be repaired and rebuilt on a number of occasions. It has now reached a point where it may fail at any time.

# THE PROBLEMS

In 1982 St John's long-serving and respected Organists, Graham and Enid Anderson, reported:

- The Rendall is too small for the building, does not carry well in the nave and further support at the west end of the nave is needed for congregational singing
- The accompaniment of choirs and the liturgy is important and should be led musically from the chancel.

Problems that have plagued the organ since its earliest days (1928-30) continue:

- Issues of reliability of action (mechanism)
- Insufficient variety of tone for liturgical or choral accompaniment

Additional difficulties with the instrument that have persisted since the middle of the twentieth century are:

- Irregular voicing and regulation; pipes overblown and off-speech; absence of beautiful soft sounds
- Shrill high-pitched stops and thin Trompette stop which don't sound well in St John's dry acoustic

- Pipework (original and later additions) neither blends well, nor presents a cohesive sound
- All but useless swell box action (regulates volume of about half the organ)
- The mechanism is slow, so does not repeat notes well

Issues facing players today are:

1. The key mechanism is so slow and sluggish that notes on the lower keyboard don't even play fast enough to play a trill. This means that no matter how good the organist, music requiring those techniques will never sound good. This also reduces any artistic and emotional content in such music.
2. There are so many notes that simply do not sound, that some stops have so few working notes left they cannot even play a melody.
3. Some stops are disconnected because they constantly played notes uncontrollably (ciphers).
4. Some stops have problems with wind supply and cannot be used with others because tuning is affected. Some of the 1950s pipework is so cheaply made that it will not stay in tune and is thus unusable with the rest of the organ, or even on its own. This vastly limits available stops and makes much repertoire or accompaniments impossible to play.

Assistant Director of Music Nicola Chau has commented that as so many stops no longer are usable, there is no choice available in the stops to use for various repertoire and accompaniment. This diminishes the musical possibilities and makes it uninspiring to play.

Major work on the Rendall would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, yet not be a complete solution. The professional organ builder who maintains it in as good condition as possible has advised that to do so would be "good money spent after bad" and that no reputable organ builder would do so. The instrument as it stands is of no heritage value and is not heritage registered.

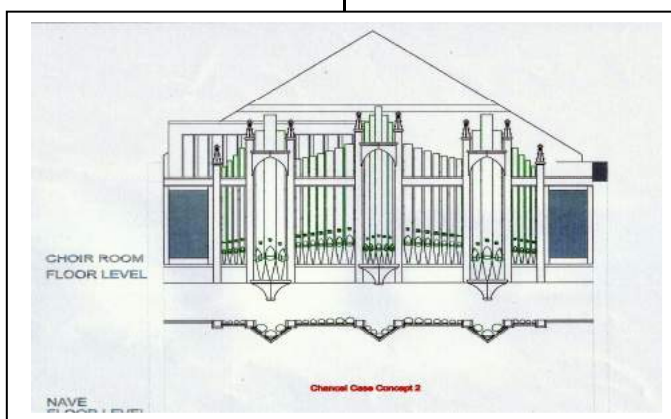
# SOLUTION AND RATIONALE

Four organ builders were invited to tender for the job of replacing the Rendall, two Australian (including the present maintenance company), a New Zealander and an American (on the maintenance company's advice). South Island Organ Company (SIOC) represented best value for money, offered a fixed price contract, had developed a creative and artistically interesting solution, has multiple jobs in Australia (including several cathedrals and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music), has built instruments in dry acoustics where multiple sections of the organ are placed in different parts of the building, and is reputable.

SIOC, like all organ builders consulted since 1986, recommended a section of the organ at the front and a section in the western gallery. They have built such instruments before. They advised that while the Rendall mechanisms are unreliable and defective, the original

1928 pipework is British and reusable if suitably revoiced. They proposed installing the Rendall as the gallery division after removal of the later added inferior pipework, size reduction and reconfiguration (“Stage 2”). Then it would contribute to our acoustic and musical requirements and retain its historical relationship with the parish.

Relocation of the Rendall meant that a new east end division would be needed. This is the current organ replacement project (“Stage 1”). SIOC has a suitable instrument, built by Hill, Norman and Beard (HNB), in stock – potentially cheaper than acquiring a comparable instrument elsewhere, or buying a new instrument. The HNB is contemporaneous in vintage and style with the Rendall and thus is a good match. It is also contemporaneous with the church building itself, so will improve aesthetics and integrity of St John’s fixtures. This organ will be the basis of the east division, with judicious additions using contemporaneous pipework to make it more complete and appropriate for our liturgy and accompanimental needs. The ability of SIOC’s Director and staff as pipework regulators is crucial to the musical success of the project.



The aim is to have an organ that will live for generations to come and be a fitting representation of our faith in and worship of our Lord. That is, an organ befitting the beauty and spirituality of our church and of which, in one hundred years’ time, worshippers will say, well done and thank you to the parish in 2016.

We stress several points:

1. This is not two organs. It is one organ in two parts of the building to solve issues that have plagued the organ for years. It will be played from a single console in the present position. While the whole design will not be completed until Stage 2 is installed in the western gallery, Stage 1 will provide a much better instrument than at present because it will be reliable, more tonally cohesive and complete, and not in constant danger of ceasing to function.

2. While this will not be a huge instrument, nor the largest on the North Shore, (31 sets of pipes in the east division, compared to 16 in the Rendall as is), it will be flexible with the stops available over four keyboards instead of two, will include the sounds missing in the Rendall since its inception, and will more adequately cover the liturgical and accompanimental roles required.

3. This organ has been designed for the St John’s building (unlike the Rendall) and for its liturgical functions. It will be an organ fit for worship accompaniment for the long term, as well as a worthy recital instrument.

4. The mechanism is new and the instrument is expected to last for at least a century and well beyond. The electrics may need renewing once in that period (as has been done on the Rendall), but that is a minor job as the instrument itself will not need rebuilding, redesign, or replacement. The pipework, by then 135 years old, will happily continue in constant use. The oldest organ in the world has pipework 580 years old and still in constant use. Brett has played organs with pipework made in the seventeenth century and they still sound fantastic. So “second hand” is not a relevant term here. Beautiful, previously owned instruments are gifts to be cherished. Every Stradivarius in the world is “second hand”!

### **Why not a digital (electronic) organ?**

**Firstly**, a digital organ for a building the size of St John’s requires particular and significant amplification beyond the instrument itself – and would cost of \$150-200,000.

Digital organs, like other electronic devices, must be replaced every few years. The total cost therefore over a long period would almost certainly exceed the cost of the pipe organ.

**Secondly**, even with the latest wave of digital technology (Hauptwerk sampling technology), the sound is still produced by speakers, not winded pipes. The inferior nature of this form of production is evidenced by the number of suppliers of electronic organs who add a small number of wind-blown real pipes to them. The digital organ in the quire at St Mary’s Cathedral Sydney is a good example of how “plastic” an electronic organ sounds in a large space. Countless churches and cathedrals have replaced their digital temporary measures with proper pipe organs when they had the opportunity, e.g., St Martin’s Killara, St Swithun’s Pymble, St Mark’s Darling Point, St John’s College (University of Sydney), St Luke’s Enmore, St Joseph’s College Hunters Hill, St Pius V Church Enmore, St Mark’s Granville, Mary Immaculate Church Manly.

**Thirdly**, from a detailed musical point of view, while some of the individual sounds of a digital organ may be relatively convincing, sound production via speakers fails when more stops are added. When leading hymns, in a pipe organ more unison-pitched stops are added for a build up of sound and added tonal warmth; an electronically produced sound is not capable of this. If louder stops are already playing, the sound won’t bloom or warm. This means that electronic organs in churches fall short because in leading hymns, one of their primary functions, they are unable to function as required.

**Fourthly**, the speaker-reproduced sound tends to change the upper partials and distort the sound. This makes electronic organs harder to sing with and harder for choristers to pitch their voices from.

**Consequences.** Should the parish opt for a digital organ, there will be repercussions to be considered.

- An electronic organ is more difficult to sing with, so would affect our choral programme and St John's tradition of good congregational singing.
- It would make it difficult to attract visiting musicians for services or concerts, an important outreach of the parish.
- Electronic organs are never attractive to professional musicians – it is like replacing a concert hall grand piano with an electric keyboard – and St John's relies on the leadership of professional musicians.
- The Guild of Church Musicians aims to increase standards of worship and liturgical music and may decide that a church with a substandard organ is not is no longer suitable as the Australian Guild Church.

**Conclusion.** The impact of moving away from a pipe organ would be so significant, in the medium and long term, on our music and its capacity to support the liturgy, that a digital organ is not a viable alternative and certainly not a strategic use of funds. A decision to move from a pipe organ would require the parish to fully consider its music direction, and may not include a digital organ as a replacement.

## FUNDING THE PROJECT

On December 2016 estimates the cost of Stage 1, including the HNB organ and associated building engineering works, is \$1,200,000 (including contingency of \$100,000).

The funding plan is for Stage 1 to be paid for over ten years, as follows:

\$110,000	Expend accumulated funds in the Music Association account
\$400,000	Subject to approval of the parish in Vestry meeting, borrow the accumulated capital and interest in the Foundation Trust, for later repayment
\$530,000	Borrow the balance from the Diocese by loan on mortgage repayable over ten years
\$160,000	Paid directly from Parish budget and pledges (as below) received during the construction time of two years

The Diocesan loan repayments would be met by a combination of –

- Contributions of \$50,000 pa (8% of budgeted expenditure)
- Pledged contributions (approximately \$35,000 pa and 5% of budgeted expenditure)

### *Is borrowing from the Foundation Trust justified?*

#### *What is the possibility that the funds will be needed elsewhere in the parish before they are repaid?*

The objective of the Trust was “to build up a capital base ... [to] ensure that the Church and its facilities ... will be continued and available to those who follow us”.

Fortunately, offertories and other parish income – fundraising activities and valuable support from the Op Shop, WEGs, other groups and individual donations – continue at a level at least sufficient to meet the essential running costs of the parish, so the Trust funds continue gradually to grow.

Now, faced with the financial challenge of replacing **the** major worship-related parish asset, apart from the church itself, to borrow from the Trust not only aligns with the Trust's aims, but also is both logical and financially sound, because it will reduce the amount the parish would have to borrow from the Diocese – and there is no certainty that the Diocese would authorise such greater loan (see the Note below).

The wardens do not envisage, for the foreseeable future, a change in the parish's financial circumstances so dramatically unfavourable that there would be the need to call on Trust funds to maintain the essential functions of the parish. Nevertheless, it is the wardens' firm intention to rebuild the Trust capital over time.

Note: The Diocese will require to be satisfied, before granting the loan, that there are reasonable prospects of the parish's ability to meet its financial commitments over the term. Further, because financing of the project will entail a personal financial liability for the Wardens, understandably they are not prepared to sign the contract until they are comfortable that, in the aggregate, amounts pledged by parishioners (b. above) will, together with the amount directly committed by the parish (a. above), meet the loan repayments.

***The two prerequisite conditions for the project to go ahead are:***  
***1. Parishioner pledges of \$350,000 over 10 years***  
***2. Parish approval to access the Foundation Trust***

Just as we benefit from the legacy of past generations of St John's parishioners who gave us the church itself, its fixtures, fabric and fittings, this is our opportunity to leave our legacy for future generations by securing St John's musical tradition for the long term.

We believe most present parishioners will wish to be part of this whole-of-parish project and that, as new parishioners join the parish they, too, will become enthusiastic participants.

We recognise that it will not be realistic for everyone to pledge for the full ten years and that one's personal financial circumstances may change over time. We have drawn up a model (below) which shows that with just sixty-six parishioners contributing from as little as \$1 per week, the target of \$350,000 in ten years can be met.

Amounts in the table below are for illustration only – pledges may be for any dollar amount.

<b>Number of parishioners</b>	<b>Pledged per week</b>	<b>Total pledged over ten years</b>
20 at	\$1	\$10,400
15 at	\$2	\$15,600
10 at	\$5	\$26,000
10 at	\$10	\$52,000
5 at	\$20	\$52,000
3 at	\$50	\$78,000
2 at	\$75	\$78,000
1 at	\$100	\$52,000
<b>Totals: 66 Parishioners Pledges \$364,000</b>		

We invite you to complete the enclosed form with the details of the amount you are willing to commit to the organ replacement funding appeal.

All donations are **tax deductible** and the form gives options for single (one-off) donations as well as annual pledges with a range of payment frequencies to suit your personal financial budgeting.

Organ committee members –

Bill Killinger

M: 0407 551 600 E: bkillinger@optusnet.com.au

Reece McCormack

M: 0407 431 799 E: mccormackint@bigpond.com

Dennis Wood

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Don Yorath

M: 0419 285 263 E: imaday@bigpond.net.au

will be pleased to answer your questions or discuss pledging arrangements with you in confidence.

Please return the completed form to the church office as soon as convenient.



**The Rector, Director of Music, Churchwardens,**

**Parish Council and Organ Committee**

**all believe that to go ahead with**

**the organ replacement project described above**

**is the best musical and financial decision**

**for the parish to take, now and for the long term.**







# ST JOHN'S GORDON ORGAN FUNDING APPEAL

I am pleased to contribute to St John's project to replace the Rendall organ, as follows:

**Donation:** A single donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be paid on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_.

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Frequency (circle one)</u>	<u>For (number of)</u>	<u>Commencing (date)</u>
\$ _____ .00	Weekly, or	_____ weeks or _____ years	____/____/20__
	Monthly, or	_____ months or _____ years	____/____/20__
	Quarterly, or	_____ quarters or _____ years	____/____/20__
	Half-yearly, or	_____ half-years or _____ years	____/____/20__
	Yearly	_____ years	____/____/20__

**Interest-free Loan:** Principal of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_ to be repaid by equal annual instalments, commencing on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_.  
*(A loan agreement with full terms and conditions will be executed as a prerequisite.)*

**Receipts:** Please issue receipts in the following name(s):  
*(Donations are tax deductible.)*

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_/20\_\_

**Payments may be made:**

1. Direct credit: **St John's Gordon Music Association:** BSB 032-089 Account No. 274652
2. By cheque drawn to: **St John's Gordon Music Association.** *(Post to PO Box 295, Gordon NSW 2072, or leave at the Church Office, or place in the offertory bag.)*
3. For regular pledge contributions in cash or by cheque a set of envelopes will be provided. *(Place envelopes in the offertory bag.)*