More than Desert Songs: The Choral Music of Australia

Graeme Morton

The vast Australian continent is 35 percent desert or semi-arid and is the second-driest continent after Antarctica. As a country where European settlement and culture are less than 250 years old, and are predominant, and where a unified Australian nation was only established in 1901, ideas of an *Australian* choral tradition are very recent indeed, perhaps as recent as the last forty years. In his 2014 book *From Deserts the Prophets Come,* author Geoffrey Serle explores the history of the creative arts in Australia and suggests that the previous lack of a dominant tradition has provided an environment in which creativity and experimentation can thrive.[1] This article serves as a stylistic and practical overview of Australian choral music. After a discussion of the history of this music and a brief exploration of repertoire, readers will find a table with selected Australian choral works for consideration on future programs.[2]

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The Australian Context

Australia was first settled as a penal colony in 1788. If members of the English civil service were prepared to voyage for nine months to a new place that had yet, in their minds, no established cultural activity, it can be assumed that a vibrant cultural life was of less significance for them. And as they established a new society struggling for its very survival, cultural (musical) activity could not be a priority. Nor were these settlers attuned to the rich and vibrant cultural life of the Indigenous peoples of Australia. When cultural activity did emerge, it was often characterized by a nostalgia for the traditions left behind. This is exemplified in many ways: singing "In the bleak midwinter" during a blazing hot Australian summer Christmas; Australians building the world's newest neo-gothic cathedral, which is a stunning space but an anachronism in a modern sub-tropical city; the prevalent attitude, current until the mid-twentieth century, that a "proper" garden in Australia was one planted with English flora and not native Australian species.

Cultural historians such as Jeffrey Richards (a leading British historian and educator) go so far as to see the last stage of English Imperialism to be the exporting of English musical culture to the colonies, exemplified in the installation of British-built organs in every capital city/town hall in the country, the appointment of British musicians as heads of Australian conservatoria, the attitude (still not insignificant) that Australian musicians must establish their credibility by studying overseas, the dominance of the eisteddfod tradition[3] in choral societies and community choirs, and the prevalence of European repertoire in established Australian ensembles.[4]

It is only in recent decades that the dominance of European influences has been impacted by a stronger sense of an Australian cultural identity, since of all the arts, music was the last to develop a uniquely Australian style. In the visual arts, the painters of the Heidelberg school had a unique view of Australia from as early as the 1890s, exemplified in their painting of Australian birds as larger than life, since many are disproportionately large compared to birds in "mother" England. Literature was soon to follow, particularly in the hands of Henry Lawson and A. B. Paterson also late in the nineteenth century (Paterson wrote the poem *Waltzing Matilda* in 1895). Theatre followed later, and the first classic Australian play dates from 1955 with Ray Lawler's *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll.* Music had to wait until the mid-1960s.

This leaves two broad traditions in the choral music of Australia: a European tradition and an Australian one. In Australian choral music, the focus on "English-ness" that had prevailed for the first two hundred years since colonization still does feature to a significant extent, resulting in the first of these two general approaches to choral music: music by Australian composers that complements or parallels the traditions of music from the Northern Hemisphere. This music is written by Australian composers, but stylistically its roots are elsewhere.

The second tradition seeks to express in music something that is uniquely Australian, exemplified in the contemporary music of Peter Sculthorpe and Ross Edwards, and in the choral music of Sarah Hopkins, Stephen Leek, Paul Stanhope, and Andrew Schultz, to name a few. This is more than texts that reflect geography or describe cultural heroes. It speaks to the musical language itself, and to approaches to music composition that are distinctive and new in this environment. It is often seen as innovative, with innovation being a necessary survival characteristic of early Australian settlement, established as it was, without any nearby support systems.

This distinctive musical language often uses specific musical devices and approaches. Peter Sculthorpe, who more than most was an advocate for an Australian musical accent, "remarked on a certain flatness in melodic contour in much Australian music, and particularly his own."[5] Drones and pedal points feature in Australian music, reflecting the above and perhaps hinting at the Indigenous didgeridoo.[6] This music may have a certain static quality, linking to the timeless land in which Australians live. Bird song and sounds from nature are often incorporated into Australian music.

One can also identify a third tradition in the choral music of Australia arising from Indigenous music. Contemporary thinking regarding the appropriation of aspects of Indigenous culture suggests that actual Indigenous musical material belongs to Indigenous people and is not a source of ideas to "prop up" music of those outside that culture. One concern is that

creators and performers may exploit aspects of Indigenous culture rather than honoring that culture. Indigenous Australian composers such as Deborah Cheetham Fraillon and Christopher Sainsbury have become significant spokespersons on issues of Indigenous support, respect, and performance. Readers are referred to the work of Frederick Mabalot, whose 2020 doctoral thesis is a comprehensive exploration of Indigenous Australian music and is an excellent starting point for understanding what *respect* means in this context.[7]

Indigenous choral activity flourishes within the increasing number of children's choirs that are created within specific communities, often with a focus of teaching the language and heritage of that cultural group to the young singers. Perhaps the most established of these is the internationally known Gondwana Indigenous Children's Choir based in Cairns near the northern tip of Australia. Their repertoire often arises from collaborations with non-Indigenous Australian composers such as Luke Byrne, Paul Stanhope, and Dan Walker with Indigenous artists, composers, performers, and cultural custodians, of which William Barton and Felix Riebl may be the best known.

Aside from such works, there is as yet a limited amount of Indigenous musical material that has been incorporated into mainstream Australian choral repertoire. One particularly beautiful example is Peter Sculthorpe's *Lullaby* (a movement from his *Requiem* but also published separately as an eight-minute composition for SATB).[8] Another example is *Juljul* by Christopher Sainsbury:

> [Written] for children's voices, guitar, and percussion with words in the Sydney Aboriginal language known as *Dharug* or *Eora*, the composer's own people. The piece reflects the structure of clan songs with its simple melodic structure, repetitive quality, and room for improvisation; perhaps one sung around a campfire solely for the purpose of enjoyment.[9]

Other composers take inspiration from music of Indigenous cultures without using specific musical elements. The chant section in Sarah Hopkins's *Past Life Melodies* is one such example, as is *Missa Alchera (Mass of the Dreaming)* from Ross Edwards. Figure 1 on the next page shows the use of the bass drone in the opening of the Kyrie and an example of the repetitive nature of the melodic and rhythmic material.[10]

Underpinning this discussion is the need to distinguish between works authored by an Indigenous person, genuine collaborations, and non-Indigenous compositions that engage with certain themes or materials. Again, a full discussion on this history is beyond the scope of this article; however, conductors are encouraged to approach such repertoire with awareness of authorship, consultation practices, and cultural sensitivities.

This article so far has focused on the creators of music, but a few words about the performers of Australian music is also appropriate. The attitudes hitherto expressed concerning a bias toward cultural traditions of Northern Hemisphere "mainstreams" has also influenced choirs, and for two centuries Australian composers were too often ignored by conductors in their home country. When St Peters Chorale released a CD of Australian composers in 1989, it was the first full recording entirely devoted to Australia's choral music. Thankfully, Australian music is now more accessible through new technologies, and there is an eagerness on the part of Australian conductors to perform this music.

Themes

Landscape figures prominently in both Australian instrumental and choral music. Stephen Leek is a significant figure who has used such musical approaches. His "Kondalilla," the third movement of *Great Southern Spirits,* references the Kondalilla Falls in southeast Queensland and is a highly performed Australian work. The composition is largely aleatoric and often performed with singers placed around (or within) the audience (Figure 2 on page 29).

Other works reflect qualities of the Australian experience rather than specific places. Clare Maclean's *We Welcome Summer* is one such example. The piece brings to mind Southern Hemisphere Epiphany music, where the January light of the Epiphany star in the darkness is replaced by the brilliance of the Australian sun bringing light. The composition is based on text from Australian poet, cartoonist, and philosopher Michael
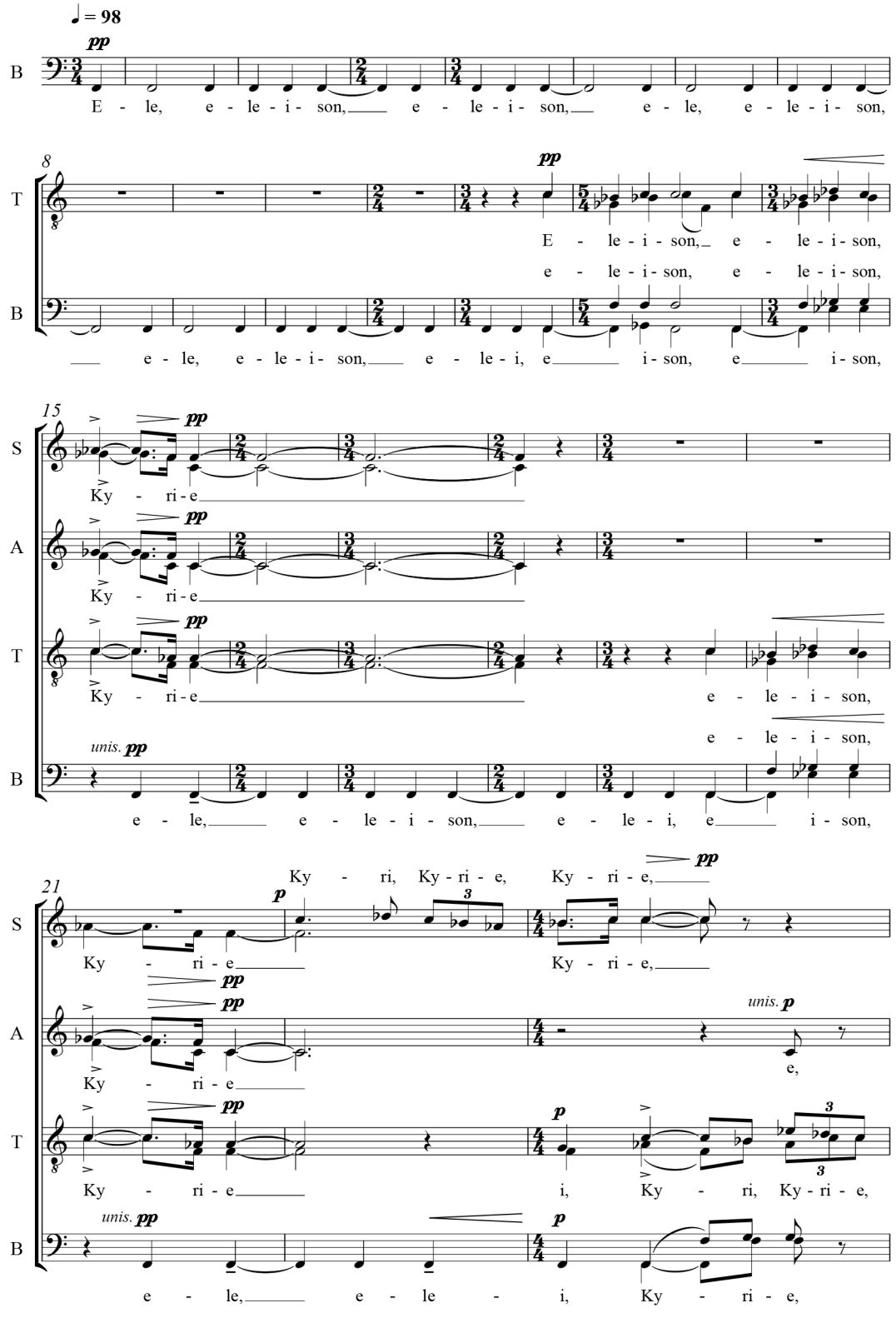


Figure 1. Ross Edwards, *Missa Alchera (Mass of the Dreaming)*, mm. 1–23.

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Leunig (1945–2024):

> *We welcome summer and the glorious blessing of light. We are rich with light, we are loved by the sun. Let us empty our hearts into the brilliance. Let us pour our darkness into the glorious forgiving light. For this loving abundance let us give thanks and offer our joy. Amen.*[11]

Another example is Stephen Leek's "Midsummer Noon" (the third song in *Voices of a Land*), describing the oppressive heat in the stillness of the Australian bush.

Australian compositions often replicate natural sounds. These might be specifically notated by the composer but more usually will be aleatoric or improvised. Bird song is common, often arising from a composer directive for singers to improvise bush sounds; the sound of rain (clicking fingers or vocally generated) or wind are also quite frequent. With such a distinctive physical environment in Australia, there is a ready source of material for musical ideas.

As far as sacred themes, although Australia lacks a strong church tradition and has no deep historical roots upon which to draw for choral texts, the best of Australian church music maintains high standards. Composers such as David Drury, Andrew Ford, Gordon Kerry, Clare Maclean, Matthew Orlovich, John Rotar, Andrew Schultz, Brooke Shelley, Paul Stanhope, and Joseph Twist have made significant and recent contributions. Much of this music suits concert performance as well as that which is liturgical.

Enigmatic Texts

The texts set by Australian composers often link to the themes articulated in this article. In addition, there seems to be a prevalence for enigmatic (ambiguous) texts. Peter Sculthorpe's *Morning Song for the Christ Child*, setting a text by Australian musicologist and author Roger Covell, illustrates this:

> *The quilted sea is gone like rain*
> *Gone and never found again*
>
> *A thin tree grows in starlit thirst*
> *Old and deep and past all hurt*
>
> *Green morning sleeps, the sky is sown*
> *Kind and calm and all alone*

Other texts are humorous or tongue-in-cheek. Noel Ancell's *Animals Noah Forgot* describes the animals that

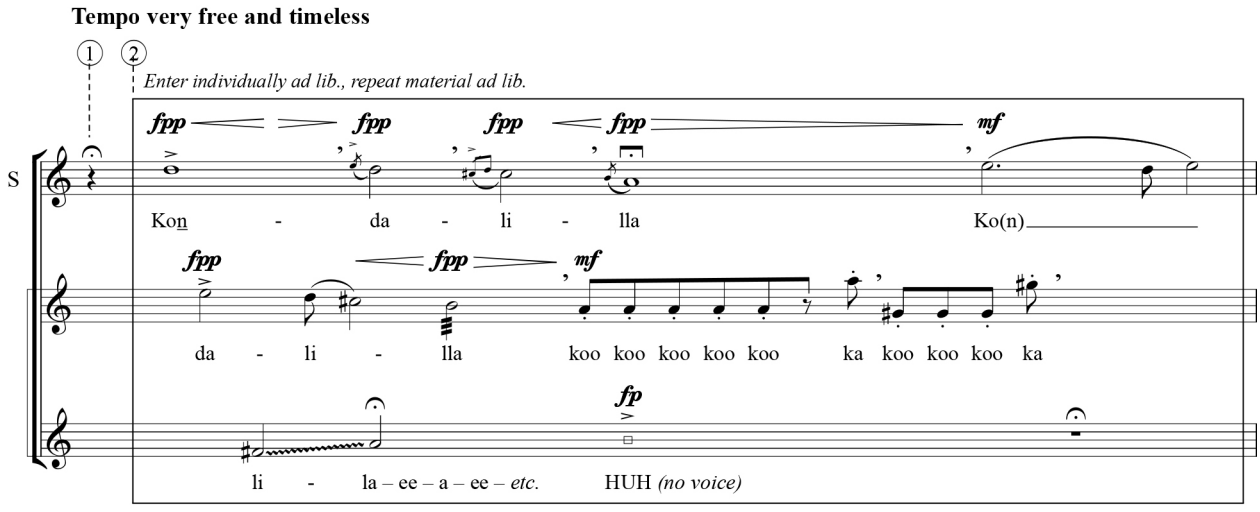


Figure 2. Stephen Leek, *Great Southern Spirits*, "Kondalilla"
Aleatoric Soprano Opening
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Noah supposedly did not take in the ark (all of which are native Australian animals). Paul Stanhope set Michael Leunig in his *Lost the Plot* (including the titles "La La Land," "Underpants anthem," and "Talking to my shoe"). Matthew Orlovich set Pat Edwards's poem *If Christ had been born in another place and time,* giving Christ's nativity an Australian context.

In contrast, and perhaps taking the lead from Australian-born composer and arranger Percy Grainger (1882–1961),[12] there are works that are wordless or that use new words devised by the composer. Such words are usually conceived for their colouristic qualities and the way those qualities can influence the music itself.

Choral Music as Social Response

Australians like to see themselves as socially responsible. They were the second country to give women the vote (after New Zealand). The music of Australian composer Robert Davidson often speaks to humanity in a contemporary way. His gentle and lyrical *The Earth's Prayer* is a plea for the environment. A technique Davidson uses frequently in his instrumental and choral music is to transcribe speeches to generate musical material. His *Not Now, Not Ever!* utilizes this technique in a multimedia choral work based on, and incorporating, the famous "Misogyny Speech" delivered in Australia's national parliament by the first female prime minister, Julia Gillard, in 2012.

Australian poets often reflect on aspects of Australia's history. *Waltzing Matilda* (1903), arranged by Marie Cowan with text by A. B. Paterson, has a melody of Scottish origins and a text by one of Australia's best-known poets.[13] Many Australian songs describe aspects of an interesting colonial past, and the struggle of convicts, or the heroes Australians made of "bushrangers" (highway thieves), of the life of the small holding farmers and their struggle to survive. For example, *Andy's gone with cattle*[14] refers to the difficulties of drought impacting small farmers, such that the husband leaves the farm with the cattle, possibly for some months, as the farm can no longer sustain them. It makes specific reference to the hardship of the wife living alone without her partner's support. This is social history in song.

People and Events

A popular view in Australia is that its European history is too new to have much historical detail recorded in choral music. A more nuanced view is that what is lacking is the Australian people's *sense* of their history. This history does not appear to be attached to the national pride many Australians feel. However, several composers write music that has an historical underpinning. Of these, songsmith Paul Jarman is one of the most prolific; his choral songs often recount events from Australia's historical past. Other composers include Stephen Cronin, Matthew Orlovich, and Andrew Schultz, while the Indigenous perspective of Australian history is represented with such composers as Deborah Cheetham Fraillon, most notably in her *Eumeralla, A War Requiem for Peace*, which highlights the Australian frontier wars.[15]

Choral Timbre

The "sound" of an Australian choral composition is likely an amalgam of any or all of the following:

1. Choral timbre is obviously related to speech, and Australians generally speak with a forward tone, lacking the rich sonority of language often found elsewhere—nor is Australian speech significantly modulated.

2. Australian cultural influences, as previously discussed, are highly English-centric, and choral tone is also subject to such influences.

3. Australian choirs in education contexts are usually cocurricular and do not have as strong a sense of embeddedness in their respective educational setting as is so often found in North America. Additionally, there are not as many opportunities in Australia for conductors to study choral pedagogy.

There is less of a *tradition* of an Australian sound and more the accidental consequence of young Australians liking to sing in a choir. In tertiary education institutions there is a focus on mixed-voice ensembles. Recordings of leading Australian choirs such as The Australian Voices provide examples of tone that may be helpful for international choirs.



Desert Songs Revised

Australia has significant landscape diversity. There are tropical rainforests of the north, snow-capped mountains in the south, grassy plains, wetlands, gorges, open bushland, temperate forests, and so much more. In the same way, Australian choral music is more than "desert songs." The voices of Australian composers from decades past and the newly emerging artists are exciting and engaging. After two centuries of composition that imitated the music of Northern Hemisphere traditions, the defining concern from the late twentieth-century Australian composition was the search for a distinctive national voice, often expressed through representations of landscape and environment. Currently, many twenty-first-century Australian composers are moving toward a more pluralistic conception of identity, one that privileges story, community, cultural diversity, Indigenous perspectives, and lived experience over a singular notion of what it means to be Australian.

Table 1 on pages 32–39 provides a selection of Australian choral works across a range of voicings ready for exploration and presentation in future concert programs. This table is organized into three traditions that mirror the themes presented in this article: 1. Inherited European tradition; 2. Distinctive Australian tradition; and 3. Emerging tradition of respectful Indigenous acknowledgment and collaboration. CJ

NOTES

[1] Geoffrey Serle, *From Deserts the Prophets Come: The Creative Spirit in Australia 1788-1972*. 2nd ed. (Monash University Publishing, 2014). The second edition includes an introduction by John Rickard, author on Australian cultural history and biography.

[2] This article is based on material from the author's interest session, "A Distant Music: Introducing Choral Music of Australia," presented at the 2024 Midwestern ACDA Region Conference, Omaha, Nebraska.

[3] An *eisteddfod* is a community music competition originating in Wales and usually held annually, with sections for instrumental and vocal solos typically within a specific age range, choral and instrumental ensembles, and poetry.

[4] Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music* (Manchester University Press, 2001).

[5] Jonathan Paget, "The Guitar Music of Peter Sculthorpe" (DMA diss., Eastman School of Music, 2003), 13.

[6] The didgeridoo is the world's oldest instrument and is "associated with the Aboriginal tribes of Arnhem Land in Northern Australia… The sounds of the instrument mimic sounds of the earth—of animals, humans and nature." Didgeridoo Down Under, accessed June 1, 2026, https://www.didgedownunder.com/culture-charity.

[7] Frederick Bayani Mabalot, "A Path to Song: The Incorporation of Aboriginal and Environmental Influences in 20th and 21st Century Australian Choral Music" (DMA diss., University of Washington, 2020), https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/items/b27d7edc-f7ee-4a86-920d-afe9762c8ae9. Specifically relating to cultural appropriation, see pp. 43–59.

[8] "Lullaby is based upon one of the number of Indigenous Australian melodies collected by Dr. H. C. Lethbridge during the 1930s and is a lullaby for children victimised by war," Faber Music, accessed August 25, 2026, https://www.fabermusic.com/shop/lullaby-p2715.

[9] Mabalot, "A Path to Song," 188.

[10] *Missa Alchera (Mass of the Dreaming)* was commissioned by St Stephen's Catholic Cathedral, Brisbane, and St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane, with funds provided by the Australia Council. Dedicated to Graeme Morton.

[11] Michael Leunig, *The Prayer Tree* (HarperCollins Publishers Australia, 1998).

[12] Percy Grainger moved to the United States in 1914 and became an American citizen in 1918. He returned several times to Australia during his life, and his remains were brought to Australia for burial. Percy Grainger Society, accessed June 1, 2026, https://www.percygrainger.org/Percy-Grainger.

[13] View lyrics and images from the original manuscript at Project Gutenberg Australia, accessed June 1, 2026, https://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks21/2100391h.html.

[14] Henry Lawson, *Andy's Gone with Cattle* in *In the Days When the World was Wide and Other Verses* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1896).

[15] "The Australian frontier wars refers to a lengthy period in Australian history, beginning in the 1780s and extending by many accounts into the 1940s, characterized by ongoing hostilities between British colonists and Aboriginal Australians." Mark Dziak, "Australian Frontier Wars," Research Starter, 2023, EBSCOhost, https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/australian-frontier-wars-0/.

Table 1. Selected Australian Choral Works

Category	Voicing	Title/Composer	Notes
Tradition 1: European Influence (Sacred)	SA and organ	*Ave Maria*/Robert Boughen	For the advanced choir of children's voices or adult ensemble. From one of Australia's legendary cathedral musicians.
	SA unaccompanied	*Three Carols*/Wendy Morrissey	Three medieval texts suitable for concert or church service.
	SATB unaccompanied	*And loud we sing and long*/ Jacqueline Atherton	This carol for Christmas mentions the traditional winter cold of Christmas and the summer heat that is part of the Australian Christmas experience. It also combines "scat" syllables in a classical style.
	SATB unaccompanied	*Arise my love my fair one*/ Keren Terpstra	A text of anticipation, celebration, and redemption. Appropriate in concert or church service.
	SATB unaccompanied	*Christ the King*/Clare Maclean	An Australian choral masterpiece. Suitable for concert or church service.
	SATB with organ	*Christ the Lord is Risen again*/ Graeme Morton	Hints of the original hymn melody pervade the accompaniment of this joyous liturgical celebration.
	SATB unaccompanied	*Crossing the Bar*/ Graeme Morton	A setting of the Alfred, Lord Tennyson, text and a popular alternative to more traditional settings. Suitable for concert or church service.
	SATB and keyboard	*Gloria in Excelsis*/Mark Puddy	An energetic rhythmic Gloria in more popular style, with alternative texts for Christmas and general use.

SATB unaccompanied	*Lo there is light*/ Matthew Orlovich	Commissioned by Harvard University Choir and combining the text of "Brightest and Best" with "Sunrise on the coast" by Australia's A. B. Paterson.
SATB unaccompanied	*In Paradisum*/Moya Henderson	Composed after the death of Henderson's twin brother, Peter, and first sung at his funeral.
SATB unaccompanied	*Missa Alchera: Mass of the Dreaming*/Ross Edwards	Latin text. An advanced work.
SATB unaccompanied	*Magnificat* Op 79/ Andrew Schultz	Latin text. For concert hall as well as more liturgically focused churches. Also a companion to Schultz's Latin *Nunc dimittis*.
SATB unaccompanied	*Morning Song for the Christ Child*/ Peter Sculthorpe	A short, beautiful, and understated work.
SSATBB unaccompanied	*Nativity*/Brooke Shelley	Usually sung at Christmas, this text by Australian Catholic poet James McAuley is not specific to Christ's nativity, and as such is applicable to all choirs who wish to express wonder at birth and rebirth.
SATB unaccompanied	*Requiem for a Tribe Brother*/ Malcolm Williamson	Williamson became the first non-British composer to become *Master of the Queen's Music*.
SATB & orchestra (or organ reduction)	*Requiem*/Peter Sculthorpe	"The Requiem…confirm[s] his status as arguably the finest composer Australia has ever produced" (*International Record Review*, 2007)

	SATB with organ	*The Winchester Service*/ Joseph Twist	*Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis* commissioned for the Evensong of Winchester Cathedral that celebrated the coronation of King Charles III.
Tradition 1: European Influence (Secular)	Unison & piano	*Animals Noah Forgot* (Vols 1 & 2)/ Noel Ancell	Humorous texts and simple songs for the youngest choristers.
	Unison & piano	*Where go the boats*/ Graeme Morton	For young singers. A graceful setting of Robert Louis Stevenson's famous poem.
	SA & piano or SSA & piano	*Lost the Plot/Losing the Plot*/ Paul Stanhope	Three humorous songs with texts by Australia's whimsical poet and cartoonist Michael Leunig.
	SSA & piano	*Butterflying*/Elena Kats-Chernin	Originally written for the 2003 Rugby World Cup opening ceremony in a version for full orchestra.
	SSA & piano OR SATB & piano	*She Walks in Beauty*/ Sally Whitwell	Setting a text of Lord Byron. This piece launched Whitwell's career as a composer.
	SSA & piano also SATB & piano	*We are the future*/Carl Crossin	Uplifting piece with solos throughout. Text written by year eight students sharing their hope for the future and their place in it.
	SATB & piano	*Difference*/Stephen Leek	A setting of the poem by Robert Frost. Full of vitality and energy, perhaps treating the poem more as narrative than reflection.
	SATB unaccompanied also treble voices unaccompanied	*Let Evening Come*/ Graeme Morton	Text from award-winning American poet Jane Kenyon, which contemplates the end of the day and parallels it to twilight of life.

SATB & piano	*Mind*/Andrew Schultz	Commissioned by St Peters Chorale, a high school ensemble. Effective for SATB ensembles of all ages.
SATB & string quartet (or piano)	*There is music- A Song Cycle of the Ages*/Stephen Leek	A text that reflects on the importance of memory in life's journey, triggered by beauty, images, sounds, colors, and of course, music.
SATB unaccompanied	*On the Night Train*/Joseph Twist	An evocative choral depiction of a train journey.
SATB unaccompanied	*Sing Out!*/Katy Abbott Kvasnica	Commissioned for the 2005 Australian Society of Music Education Conference. A short, fun, rhythmic piece celebrating singing and is to be sung "with joy."
SATB unaccompanied	*Something childish, but very natural*/Joshua Adams	Written in response to the COVID-19 lockdown. Simple yet lush setting of poetry by Samuel Taylor Coleridge that expresses a first glimpse of hope and return to normality.
SATB unaccompanied	*Tides of Ocean*/Matthew Orlovich	An exuberant piece whose high energy makes it an excellent opener to a concert or choral segment.
SATB unaccompanied	*Until I Saw*/Stephen Leek	A beautiful, imaginative piece that reflects on the ocean.
SATB unaccompanied	*Wake Up!*/Paul-Antoni Bonetti	A rhythmic and energetic piece that reimagines the choral ensemble as a band.
SATB unaccompanied	*We Welcome Summer*/ Clare Maclean	A wonderful piece to suit an advanced college or church choir.

Tradition 2: An Australian Idiom (Landscape, Places, and the Natural World)	Unison & piano	*Birdsongs*/Stephen Leek	Three imaginative songs for young singers with independent piano writing. Score has separate vocal parts.
	SA & piano	*Ancient Cries*/Stephen Leek	Three imaginative songs performable alone or as a set with texts that reflect on the Australian landscape.
	SATB unaccompanied	*Araluen*/Matthew Orlovich	A characteristic "Orlovich sound": fresh, buoyant, vital, and energized but without weight, drama, or sentimentality.
	SATB	*Butterflies Dance*/ Matthew Orlovich	Butterflies dance above the waves in a buoyant piece that captures their motion, lost in the movement of the water.
	SATB unaccompanied	*Breakers*/Stephen Leek	Highly energetic piece about dolphins at play.
	SATB unaccompanied	"Kondalilla" (from *Great Southern Spirits*)/Stephen Leek	A simple piece with aleatoric elements that will surround an audience with the sounds of the Australian rainforest.
Tradition 2: An Australian Idiom (Choral Music as Social Response)	SA or SATB & piano	*In Flanders Fields*/ Graeme Morton	A poignant setting of the poem by John McCrae.
	SATB unaccompanied	*Hush: On the death of a Bush Church*/Iain Grandage	A secular piece reflecting on the loss of cultural foundations.
	SATB choir unaccompanied (concise version)	*Not Now, Not Ever!*/ Robert Davidson	The full version intersperces choral writing with Julia Gillard's 2012 speech in the Australian House of Representatives. The concise version presents her speech within the choral parts only.

	SATB unaccompanied or version 2 SATB/SATB	*Route March*/Stephen Cronin	A poignant and tuneful work, opening with the (vocal) sound of drums as soldiers march to war, and later the silence of the return.
	SATB unaccompanied	*The Earth's Prayer*/ Robert Davidson	Taking its structure from The Lord's Prayer, this contemporary poem by Sally Clark is a lyric and poignant plea for us to love the earth. Suitable for SATB choirs.
Tradition 2: An Australian Idiom (Natural Sounds)	SA or SATB a cappella or accompanied	*Honour the Earth*/ Sarah Hopkins	With simple voice parts, this piece brings together many cultural influences as well as the music of nature herself. Sung a cappella or accompanied by small ensemble or concert band, orchestra, string orchestra, or cello ensemble.
	SSAA & piano	*Rain Dream*/Joseph Twist	A highly imaginative choral piece. In it a young child who lives in the dry central Australian outback and has never seen rain dreams of what it would be like to be in a thunderstorm.
	SATB unaccompanied	*Three Australian Bush Songs*/ Iain Grandage	Can be sung as a set or individually. All three pieces are evocatively set, and the middle piece fills the auditorium with the calls of the Australian bush.
Tradition 2: An Australian Idiom (Non-lexical Choral Compositions)	SATB unaccompanied	*An Australian Up Country Song*/ Percy Grainger	Percy wrote, "I had wished to voice an Australian Up-Country feeling as Stephen Foster had with American Countryside feelings in his songs."
	SSATB unaccompanied	*At Sunset*/Stephen Leek	Australian lyricism is at its best in this sweet partsong.

	SSAA or SATB usually unaccompanied	*Past Life Melodies*/ Sarah Hopkins	Featured on the Hollywood film *Boychoir.* Commissioned (in the SATB version) for St Peters Chorale. Accompaniment available for full orchestra or concert band, string orchestra, or cello ensemble.
Tradition 2: An Australian Idiom (Australian History and Events)	SA and piano	*Child of the Goldfields*/ Paul Jarman	A rollicking song of the Victorian goldfields in the lead-up to the Eureka Stockade. Part of the song cycle trilogy *Eureka*.
	Various voicings and piano	*Pemulwuy*/Paul Jarman	Pemulwuy means "man of the earth," and he is known as the Rainbow Warrior. From 1790 to his death in 1802, Pemulwuy led the Eora people in a major response to the British invasion of Australia.
	SATB, 2 percussion, didjeridu	*Larrakia Lament Op. 105*/ Andrew Schultz	Scored for didjeridu, choir, and taiko drummers. Takes a Lutheran chorale, "When in the hour of need," and mixes it with excerpts of diary accounts of the 1942 Bombing of Darwin.
	SATB unaccompanied	*On Sutherland's Grave*/ Matthew Orlovich	Sets Henry Kendall's "Sutherland's Grave," "Journey to Birdsville 1966" from *The Log and Field Book of Russell Drysdale*, and excerpts from "Missa pro defunctis."
	Double SATB and piano	*To your shore*/Sally Whitwell	Australia is a land of immigrants, and this work acts as a kind of twin soliloquies: the first from a person on a boat catching first sight of land, the second from another person standing on the shore ready to welcome the ship they spy on the horizon.
Tradition 3: Indigenous Composers and Respectful Collaborations	Unison (with descant) and piano	*Buruwan Elegy*/ Luke Byrne	Dharawal text by Jodi Edwards and English text by Luke Byrne.
	Treble (with some 2 part)	*Land Sleeps, Ocean Rests*/ Dan Walker	English text, some translated into Yarrahapinni Gumbaynggirr language.

SA and piano	*Woolah Waakle*/ Dan Walker	Text by Sandra Harben, students of All Saints College, and the composer.
SA and piano	*Birinyi*/Luke Byrne	Text by Luke Byrne with Gudju Gudju.
SATB and orchestra	*Adira Arenio and Agnus Dei*/ Alice Chance	A collaboration with Kaylynn and Noel Zaro, Torres Strait language and song custodians. A setting of the Agnus Dei preceded by an equivalent Indigenous text in Meriam Mir language.
Various choirs and orchestra	*Eumeralla, a war requiem for peace*/Deborah Cheetham Fraillon	This requiem acknowledges wars between the composer's people and the European settlers who invaded their land. Sung in the dialect of the Gunditjmara people it expands the structure of the traditional Requiem.
SATB unaccompanied	*Kalkadunga yurdu*/ William Barton	High-energy work from Australia's best-known didgeridoo musician.
Various voicings and piano and percussion (3 separate versions)	*This is my home*/Paul Stanhope	Final movement of the Dramatic Cantata "Jandamarra: Sing for the Country" about the Indigenous Resistance hero of the 1890s. Text is in Bunuba language and English.
SATB unaccompanied	*The Land is Healed*/ Paul Stanhope	Text in English with some Bunuba words. Also from "Jandamarra."
SA junior trebles, SSAA senior trebles, SATB choir (advanced), piano and 3 percussionists	*I am Martuwarra*/ Paul Stanhope	A multi-choir piece about the Fitzroy River (Martuwarra) in the Kimberley, with its peoples and cultures. Text by Steve Hawke. A good pairing with *Carmina Burana* in its piano/percussion version.