



Central Coast
Conservatorium
Of Music

Annual Report 2025

Central Coast Conservatorium of Music Ltd

45 Mann St Gosford NSW 2256



Registered Charity
Australian Charities and Not-
for-profits Commission



NSW Government's
Regional Conservatorium
Grants Program



Member of NSW Regional
Conservatoriums

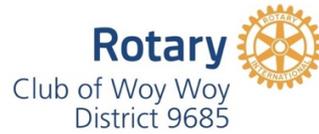
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Who We Are

The Central Coast Conservatorium of Music Ltd (Conservatorium) is a leader in music education and performance and the principal provider of music education on the NSW Central Coast. We are a community-based organisation and a member of the [Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums](#).

Our vision is to aspire to positively change lives and strengthen communities through excellent music education. We do this by seeking to secure a sustainable future for the delivery of quality music teaching, facilities and performance opportunities on the Central Coast.

The Conservatorium occupies a [historic heritage listed building](#) in Gosford CBD.

Highlights of 2025

The Conservatorium continued to strengthen its role as a regional centre for music education and performance, offering opportunities ranging from early participation to advanced performance experiences.

Participants performed regularly in public concerts and collaborative events across the region, including community performances, festival appearances and joint productions with partner arts organisations. These events provided practical performance experience while increasing community access to live music.

We delivered yet another exceptional Opera in the Arboretum in partnership with the Rotary Club of Woy Woy. Our flagship Central Coast Youth Orchestra accompanied Teddy Tahu Rhodes, Sally-Anne Russell, Andrew Goodwin, and Clarissa Spata with violin soloist Madeleine Easton while the downpour did not keep away the audience.

A significant achievement of the year was participation by Central Coast Conservatorium musicians in the NSW Regional Youth Orchestra European tour, bringing together more than 50 young musicians from across regional New South Wales and offering high-level ensemble experience and cultural exchange opportunities.

The Conservatorium maintained its commitment to supporting emerging musicians through scholarships and awards, including the Allen Family Scholarships program, the Pearl Beach Music Scholarships and junior concerts, recognising excellence and supporting ongoing musical development.

Professional learning and musical enrichment were also supported through specialist presentations and workshops, including a public lecture by Dr Phillip Rutherford exploring historical performance practice and musical interpretation.

Community engagement remained central to the Conservatorium's activities, with well-attended public events and volunteer initiatives supporting both cultural participation and improvements to the Conservatorium environment.

Across the year, these activities reinforced the Conservatorium's pathway from participation to achievement — enabling progression from learning to performance, recognition and wider musical engagement.

In an increasingly challenging economic environment, the Conservatorium posted a net loss of \$236k for the year (net loss of \$288k in 2024), while also dealing with significant leadership changes at both the governance and operational management levels.

Programs and Participation

The Conservatorium delivers a range of individual, group and outreach programs to the changing demographic on the Central Coast. Our talented and diligent teachers support participation from early childhood to adult learners.

Programs delivered included individual instrumental and vocal tuition, strings and ensemble pathways, keyboard club, masterclasses and workshops, the Children's Music Program, music therapy, musicianship. We also offer scholarships and bursary support to deserving students.

Individual Tuition

Individual instrumental and vocal tuition remained the Conservatorium's core activity, enrolling students of beginner, school-aged, adult and tertiary levels.

The Conservatorium delivers music tuition across our CBD campus and in 16 schools across the Central Coast. At the end of 2025, there were 351 enrolments across our various music programs

Group Class Programs and Ensembles

The Conservatorium's ensemble pathway provides sequential training from beginner participation through to advanced performance opportunities. Students progress from early childhood programs into choirs and instrumental ensembles, with advanced players moving into flagship ensembles and, in some cases, state-level programs such as the NSW Regional Youth Orchestra. Adult musicians are supported through dedicated community ensembles and collaborative projects.

The Conservatorium supports over 18 ensembles and group classes with over 500 students.

Adult ensembles

- Conspirito Community Flute Ensemble
- Recorder Ensemble
- Steve Smillie Guitar Ensemble
- Adult Beginner String ensemble

Choirs

- CC Mini Voices
- CC Children's Choir
- CC Youth Choir

Jazz ensembles

- Intro to Improv
- Jazz Ensemble

Large ensembles

- Primary Wind Ensemble
- Junior Wind Ensemble
- Senior Wind Ensemble
- Central Coast Youth Orchestra

Strings program classes and ensembles

- Chamber Ensemble
- Mini Strings
- Junior Strings Ensemble
- Senior Strings Ensemble
- Strings Technique Class

Group Classes

Group classes support the development of musical literacy, listening and technical skills alongside instrumental study.

Keyboard Club

Small-group classes led by specialist teachers develop foundational musicianship and technique transferable across instruments. Participation supports coordination, memory and broader learning skills. 8 Classes operate across multiple age groups delivered to 83 students.

Musicianship & HSC support

Weekly level-based classes strengthen reading, listening and analytical skills and support instrumental progress. Developed by Dr Phillip Rutherford (PhD, Sydney Conservatorium), the curriculum builds musical literacy and stylistic understanding across six grade levels with additional extension for HSC Music Students. In 2025, 8 classes were delivered to 65 students

Extension Conducting Course

Provided 11 advanced students with introductory conducting and ensemble leadership experience, culminating in student-led performances.

Early Learners / Youth Programs

The Children's Music Program provided early childhood music education through age-appropriate participation pathways:

- Baby Beats (6 months–2 years)
- Mini Music Makers (2–3 years)
- Mini Maestros (4–5 years)

In 2025, CMP level 1, 2 & 3 programs were delivered through 11 classes to 96 students.

School and Outreach Programs

In 2025 the Schools Program operated in 16 partner schools, delivering curriculum-aligned music education through ensembles, small group and individual tuition (9 Government primary schools, 5 non-government primary schools and 2 non-government high schools).

Community Programs

The Conservatorium's Robert Knox Hall continues to provide an intimate setting for inhouse performances and visiting guest artists. Our musicians and teachers support touring performers at local events.

The Conservatorium partners with and supports other local community organisations like [Central Coast Philharmonia](#), [Central Coast Concert Band](#), and [Symphony Central Coast](#). Our collaboration provide yet another avenue for our students to perform as guest artists at these community events.

Student and Participant Achievement

Examinations and External Assessment

The Conservatorium's students undertook external examinations and performance assessments across a range of instruments and voice, from preliminary to advanced levels. Participation across multiple stages of study reflects sustained engagement and progression through the Conservatorium's training pathways.

Assessment learning was applied in public performance contexts including concerts, competitions and auditioned ensembles, supporting performance confidence and preparation for advanced study.

Scholarships and Awards

The Conservatorium continued to recognise achievement and commitment through internal and community-partnered scholarships.

Major awards in 2025 included:

- Pearl Beach Music Scholarships (20-year anniversary year)
- Allen Family Scholarships Program
- Irvine Family Scholarships
- Central Coast Philharmonia Vocal Scholarships
- Music Centre Guitar Scholarships
- Bendigo Bank Schools Scholarships
- Richard Newton Central Coast Philharmonic Choir
- Music Centre Gosford Guitar Scholarships

Scholarship concerts and adjudicated performances provided performance experience while supporting continued study and advancement.

Special Recognitions

Our Artistic Directors leads the NSW Regional Youth Orchestra over its various programs. In 2025, 6 current Conservatorium musicians, 3 Conservatorium graduates and 2 conservatorium staff participated in the NSW Regional Youth Orchestra European Tour along with 40 students from across NSW, performing internationally alongside regional peers in a high-level ensemble program.

Conservatorium participants were recognised through featured concerts, showcase performances, concerto opportunities and selection into advanced ensembles throughout the year.

Together these outcomes demonstrate progression from learning to public performance and external recognition, supporting both individual development and the Conservatorium's contribution to regional cultural life.

Partnerships and Community Presence

We had another incredible year of events delivered for our community. Some of the events we hosted

| <i>Month</i> | <i>Partnership Event</i> |
|--------------|--|
| Feb 2025 | Classical Elegance, Symphony Central Coast |
| Mar 2025 | Rotary Club of Woy Woy Opera in the Arboretum |
| Mar 2025 | Phoenix Collective |
| Apr 2025 | Tales from Vienna Woods, Symphony Central Coast |
| Apr 2025 | Coastal Soundwaves Music Camp |
| May 2025 | Central Coast Concert Band Dance Party |
| May 2025 | Dr. Philip Rutherford Was Beethoven Romantic? |
| May 2025 | Pearl Beach Showcase and Scholarship Concert |
| May 2025 | Delay 45 & CCCon Tutor Band with Gerard Masters & Guy Strazz |
| Jun 2025 | Central Coast School Band Day Out 2025 |
| Jul 2025 | Regional Youth Orchestra European Tour |
| Aug 2025 | Requiem for the Living, Central Coast Philharmonia |
| Sep 2025 | NSSWE Spring Music Festival |
| Sep 2025 | Prodigies Concerto Competition, Symphony Central Coast |
| Oct 2025 | A Fiddlers Feast, Patron Event |
| Oct 2025 | Children's School Holiday Music Program |
| Oct 2025 | Gossy Weekender 2025 |
| Nov 2025 | Symphonic Resonance Central Coast Concert Band |
| Nov 2025 | A Grand Day Out Symphony Central Coast |
| Nov 2025 | Vivaldi Gloria Central Coast Philharmonia |
| Dec 2025 | Sydney Symphony Orchestra with Regional Youth Orchestra |

Our People

Teachers and Staff

During 2025, the Conservatorium employed 49 Teaching and 9 Admin Staff to deliver on our core purpose. We acknowledge the enormous efforts that our teachers put into delivering the best outcome for their students, and the support that our admin staff provide in enabling this. We support our staff with professional development days, training and performance opportunities.

Patron, Donors, Volunteers, and Supporters

We are fortunate to have [Charmaine Gadd](#), OAM as our Conservatorium's Patron.

We are grateful to Ray & Helen Allen & family, Dr. John & Jean Irvine & family, Hillary Day, Ruth D'Arth, Lyn Lilloco and members of the Pearl Beach Progress Association, for their continued support.

We are also grateful to our [local community branch of Bendigo Bank](#) who sponsor the Schools Scholarship Program, [Rotary Club of Woy Woy](#), [Central Coast Council](#) and [Central Coast Leagues Club](#) for their support of our various programs.

We are indebted to our committed volunteers help with the gardening, building maintenance, events, and dozens of other jobs. We are also thankful to our supporters in the local media and other business.

Funding and Sponsorship

The Conservatorium is primarily funded by tuition fees, instrument hire, and grants and donations from our generous local community. The NSW Dept of Education provides funding for the Conservatorium through its [Regional Conservatorium Grants Program](#). In 2025, we received \$570K through this grant program. We are deeply grateful for this program, and specifically to the RCGP team at the Dept of Education for their ongoing support.

Financial Performance

The Conservatorium posted a net loss of \$236k in 2025 (\$288k in 2024). Audited financial statements for 2025 are included in this document. We thank our auditors Bishop Collins Audit for their support of the Conservatorium.

Governance

The Board

A volunteer [Board of Directors](#) provides governance oversight for the Conservatorium. 2025 saw a renewal in the composition of our Board. The Board of Directors at the date of this report are:

- Neil Sequeira, Chair, appointed 31 August 2025
- Janaki Selvarajan, appointed 31 August 2025
- Laura Denham, appointed 31 August 2025
- David Booth OAM, appointed 23 January 2026

We thank Ms. Lyndelle Taylor, our past Company Secretary, for her help to streamline the Conservatorium's governance processes.

CEO & Leadership Team

The leadership team of the Conservatorium also went through a substantial transformation in 2025. Dr. Lisa Barnes resigned as CEO in May 2025. Mr. Tristan Sharp served as Interim CEO from June 2026 to October 2025. Mr. Patrick Brennan, Artistic Director, took on additional role as CEO in October 2025.

Looking Ahead

2026 will be the most important in the Conservatorium's history, not because of what we plan to add, but because of the work we are doing to ensure we are here for the long term.

With a new Board and leadership team now in place, we enter 2026 with clear eyes and genuine momentum. The past year has involved a significant and necessary turning inward: renewal of our core purpose, overhauling governance, strengthening financial controls, improving internal processes, and sharpening our focus on cost management. This work is not glamorous, but it is essential, and it is bearing fruit.

At the same time, we have not lost sight of why the Conservatorium exists. Old partnerships that had lapsed are being resuscitated; new ones are being formed with organisations that share our values and our belief in the power of music and the arts. The culture is changing, and that change is already visible in the way we work and the way we show up for our students and our community.

We are under no illusions about the challenges that remain. But there is something energising about this moment, and we face it with confidence - not because the path is easy, but because the work has already begun.

Neil Sequeira

Chair

26 February 2026

Patrick Brennan

Artistic Director & CEO