

# Questions and Answers

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## What is the Victorian State Schools Spectacular 2010?

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The Spectacular is one of the largest recurring performances in Australia. It is a professionally staged production performed at Melbourne Park to an audience of over 10,000 people. The Victorian State Schools Spectacular is a Victorian government initiative produced by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development through its performing arts program, JOINING the CHORUS (JtC).

The Spectacular includes a cast of some 2,500 government school students, representing direct participation from approximately 1 in 7 government schools, working towards a common goal in a collaborative, competition-free environment.

Its dual aim is to provide an invaluable performing arts opportunity to Victoria's government school students and to showcase the enormous talent that exists in our schools. This is manifested in a 2-hour scripted performance that celebrates a diversity of performance mediums, including music, choir, dance, vocal, drama and orchestra.

The 2010 Spectacular will be performed at Hisense Arena, Melbourne Park. There will be three performances: a matinee and an evening performance on **Saturday 18 September 2010** and a matinee performance on **Sunday 19 September 2010**. All cast members and performers will also be required for a full technical and dress rehearsal on the day of **Friday 17 September 2010**.

Schools and individuals wishing to be a part of the Victorian State School Spectacular 2010 should complete an expression of interest form. These forms can be downloaded at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/jtc>

## When is the closing date for Expressions of Interest?

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The closing date for all schools' expressions of interest forms for the 2010 Spectacular is **Friday 20 November 2009**.

Forms must be returned to JOINING the CHORUS by way of **registered post** or **express post**. (see "*How do Schools register for the Spectacular?*")

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The closing date for vocalists, specialty group and musical group **expressions of interest is Friday 20 November 09**.

The closing date for individual musicians **expressions of interest is Friday 26 February 2010**.

## How can students participate in the Spectacular?

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Participation in the State Schools Spectacular can occur in the following ways:

1. **School Participation:** (schools must register a School Expression of Interest)
  - i. Dance Ensemble **or** Choral Ensemble (not both)
  - ii. Specialist Performance Group
  - iii. Musical Group

As massed dance, choir and specialty / musical groups are school based, information is coordinated by and sent to the school and contact teacher.

2. **Student Participation:** (individual students must register an Expression of Interest)
  - i. Vocalist
  - ii. Musician
  - iii. Membership of the Victorian State Schools Performance Ensembles

As vocalist, musician and the Victorian State Schools Performance Ensembles are individual based, the information is sent directly to students and parents. School involvement is not necessary. Recognising those within the school with aptitude and referring them to the auditions and program is sufficient school involvement.

## School Participation - Massed Dancers or Massed Choir

School participation can be either as part of the massed dancers or massed choir (not both).

Each school dance or choir group is limited to 20 students per school. This is discussed further below.

It is up to each individual school to submit their expression of interest forms. The onus of selecting students and undertaking rehearsals, except for massed rehearsals, is on the school itself. No audition process is required by JtC.

Expressions of interest by the school must be endorsed by the school principal and must also nominate a dedicated contact teacher for all communications.

## School Participation – Specialty Performance Groups

In addition to dance and choral ensembles, schools are invited to submit an expression of interest form for any specialty performance group/s the school may have. A separate expression of interest form exists for specialty performance groups.

Specialty performance groups may include: acrobats, magicians, stilt walkers, puppeteers, fire-eaters, gymnasts, specialist dance groups (eg. break dancers, tap, ballet, rock-n-roll), specialist vocal groups (eg. all male acapella group, gospel choir, etc.), DJs, jugglers, etc.

In terms of performance numbers for such specialty performance groups, there may be as few as one, or as many as 50.

Selection of specialty performance groups is by CD, DVD or video tape audition at the discretion of the JtC creative team and will depend on such factors as the type and standard of performance and how it can be accommodated in the script.

One of our goals in 2010 is to incorporate and showcase a broader diversity of performance types and styles so we encourage your school to register any specialty performance groups you may have within your school.

## School Participation – Musical Performance Groups

Existing musical groups are also invited to submit an Expression of Interest for Musical Groups. These groups include but are not limited to rock bands, pop bands, "indi" bands, jazz and alternative bands.

Whilst the selected bands will not be performing their original music compositions, they will be performing numbers from the musical selection of the script, within the genre of their band, under the direction and guidance of one of Melbourne's finest session musicians and producers, James Kempster.

Selected bands will have an unforgettable opportunity to perform in one of Melbourne's leading venues, supported by Australia's leading sound company, in front of an audience of up to 10,000 people.

Selection of musical groups is by CD, DVD or video tape audition at the discretion of the JtC creative team and will depend on such factors as the type and standard of performance and how it can be accommodated in the music selection of the script.

## Student Participation – Vocalists and Musicians

Individual student participation in the Spectacular can be as either a **musician** in the orchestra or as a **vocalist**.

Students are selected by way of an audition process conducted by the JtC creative team. Similarly, rehearsals are coordinated through JtC, not through the schools and held at the JtC studios in Collingwood.

It is the responsibility of individual students, not the school, to submit an expression of interest form to audition as either a vocalist or musician.

The support of your school in promoting these opportunities to your students is appreciated.

## Student Participation – the Victorian State Schools Performance Ensembles

The VSS Dance Ensembles and Choir will perform a number of items in their own right as well as performing in numbers with the rest of the massed groups.

All ensemble members are selected through an audition process and rehearse weekly in their region during the school year. (See *"What Are The Victorian State Schools Performance Ensembles?"*)

## How do schools register for the Spectacular?

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To register your school's Expression of Interest to be part of the 2010 Spectacular, the School Expression of Interest form (and also the specialty / musical performance forms) must be completed and sent to JOINING the CHORUS before the closing date.

The closing date for expressions of interest forms for massed dance and choir is **Friday 20 November 2009**.  
The closing date for expressions of interest forms for specialty / musical groups is **Friday 20 November 2009**.

Each school will be allocated a priority order in the event that a school quota needs to be imposed.

The ranking of each school's priority will be based on the date that the expression of interest forms were **sent** by the school, not the date they are received by JtC. This approach aims to ensure fairness for mail that is delayed through no fault of the school.

To establish the postal date of the expression of interest form unequivocally, all school forms must therefore be mailed to JOINING the CHORUS by **registered post or express post**. Correspondence sent by registered post or express post is date stamped by Australia Post on the date that it is sent, which may be relevant in determining the priority of schools. Also, delivery of the forms can be tracked and guaranteed.

**Expressions of interest sent by standard mail or fax will not be accepted**

## How do individual students register for the Spectacular?

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Expression of interest forms for vocalist and musicians can be downloaded at:  
**<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/jtc>**

**Submissions of expression of interest forms by individual students need to be sent directly to JtC, not through the school.**

However, the promotion of these opportunities to your students is encouraged and appreciated.

### Musician Auditions

To be eligible for an audition, students must attend a government school in 2010 and have an equivalent standard to that of AMEB Grade 5 or higher in one of the following instruments:

flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, saxophone, French horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba,  
timpani, percussion, violin, viola, double bass, guitar, bass guitar and piano.

**To register for an audition, students must complete the Musician Expression of Interest form and return it to JOINING the CHORUS by the closing date.**

Submissions must be sent to: Musician Submissions  
JOINING the CHORUS  
102 Rupert St  
Collingwood VIC 3066.

The closing date for Expression of Interest submissions is **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

### Vocalist Auditions

To be eligible for an audition, students must attend a government school in 2010.

**To register an expression of interest, students must:**

1. Complete the Vocalist Expression of Interest form; and
2. Provide a resume of past performance experience.

**Auditions will be held for all solo vocalists on 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2009.**

Submissions must be sent to: Vocal Submissions  
JOINING the CHORUS  
102 Rupert St  
Collingwood VIC 3066.

The closing date for Vocalist Expression of Interest submissions is **Friday 20 November 2009**.

## Are there limits on student and school numbers?

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Due to the large demand by schools to be involved in the Victorian State Schools Spectacular and the physical limitations of the venue, limits need to be imposed on the number of students per school and possibly the number of schools.

Some 70 schools are represented in each of the Massed Dancers and Massed Choir, which amounts to a total of approximately 2,800 students (1,400 in each of the choir and dance ensembles)

### Student Numbers – 20 students per school

To ensure that the opportunities provided by the Spectacular are available to the widest range of Victorian Government schools it has been necessary to set a maximum quota of 20 students per dance or choral ensemble, with schools' involvement in **either** a massed dance **or** massed choir ensembles, not both.

### School Quota System

As always, in 2010 we expect that demand for participation will be great. If the circumstances arise that School Expressions of Interest exceed the number of places available, then JtC will introduce a regional quota system.

The aim of this approach is to ensure equity and a balance of participation between regional and metropolitan schools, as well as between primary and secondary schools.

The details of the proposed Regional Quota System for schools are as follows:

- The number of students per school dance or choral ensemble is limited to 20 students
- Schools can only register either a dance ensemble or a choral ensemble
- A quota is introduced for each region and between primary and secondary schools; (each region is allocated the same number of primary and secondary dance and choral ensembles)
- If demand for that region for each category of ensembles exceeds the quota, schools will be selected on a 'first-in' basis, as determined by the date stamp on the registered post or express post expression of interest submission
- Schools that miss out will be given first preference in the following Spectacular
- If the quota for a particular region is not filled, the positions will be offered to schools on a ballot basis.

For this reason, it will be necessary to submit your school's expression of interest form as soon as possible and obviously no later than the closing date on Friday 20 November 2009.

## How are students selected?

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### In the Massed Choir and Massed Dancers

Selection of students involved in the Massed Choir or the Massed Dancers is up to the **discretion of each participating school; it is not subject to an audition process by JtC**.

One of the aims of the Spectacular is to offer students performance opportunities, as well as showcase excellence. Rather, students should be selected by taking into account such matters as commitment, enthusiasm and benefit.

**Ultimately however, selection of students is at the discretion of each school.**

### In the Specialty Performance Groups

The selection of specialty performance groups will be by way of discretionary audition by the JtC creative team. Depending on the final script and the types of performance groups that are submitted, the JtC creative team will determine what types of groups can be included from those available.

If it is possible and suitable to include a particular specialty performance group in the 2010 Spectacular, JtC will contact your school to organise a mutually convenient audition time.

### As Musicians or Vocalists

The selection of musicians for the orchestra and the vocalists is by audition process, undertaken by JtC.

It is the responsibility of individual students to register their expression of interest as musicians or vocalists.

Rehearsals for musicians and vocalists will be undertaken by JtC through second and third term 2010.

Participation by students as musicians or vocalists is not a school responsibility. However, promotion of this opportunity to your students would be greatly appreciated.

## Who is responsible for students?

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Participation by schools in the massed dance or massed choir groups or a specialty / musical group constitutes a school event. As such, issues such as the school's duty of care, staff to student supervision ratio and student conduct remain the responsibility of the school at all times, including and not limited to regional rehearsals and rehearsals and performances at the venue.

## What are the costs of participation to schools?

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**There is no fee or specific cost for schools or students to be involved in the Victorian State Schools Spectacular.**

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, through JtC, covers the costs associated with the production of the Spectacular including:

- Hire of the Hisense Arena at Melbourne Park and all associated venue costs
- Hire of massed rehearsal venues
- Production and distribution of all rehearsal material, including music booklets, rehearsal CDs, instructional videos/booklets, etc
- Sourcing, designing and preparing all costumes.
- There are, however, a number of indirect costs that schools are responsible for. These may include:
  - CRTs
  - Transport to and from massed rehearsals and performances
  - Accommodation
  - Incidental expenses relating to costuming, such as minor haberdashery, (eg. buttons).

## How do I teach the performance material?

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JOINING the CHORUS provides all the rehearsal material necessary to prepare the students for their Spectacular performance. All teaching material is comprehensive and aimed at the teacher with little or no performing arts experience. All material will remain with the school following the Spectacular and can be utilised as a resource for each individual teacher.

### Dance

A typical school participating in the massed dance elements of the performance would generally be involved in 3 - 4 numbers and receive:

- Detailed instructional DVD
- Audio rehearsal CD of the massed dance items
- Dance notes (Lyrics of the show combined with direction and written dance sections)
- Floor plans (scale drawings of the venues, entrances and exits), stage entrances and exits document.

They would also attend two regional rehearsals with the Dance Director/ Choreographer with participating schools in your region and one massed dance rehearsal in the venue.

### Choir

The Massed Choir is expected to perform between 14 to 18 items in total.

Some of these items will feature the massed choir; other items will require the choir to provide backing for vocalists. Furthermore, some items will involve the entire choir, others may be split between primary and secondary schools, or feature some elements of the choir only.

Schools participating in the massed choir receive:

- Full musical score of the performance
- Sheet music in a simplified format for each vocal part
- Instructional CDs
- Performance and teaching manual

Massed Choir schools will also be required to attend two massed choir rehearsals in a Melbourne location.

For schools that feel they need additional assistance, a series of in-school teaching sessions will be available.

## What are the Victorian State Schools Performance Ensembles?

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Apart from the massed dance and choir, the Victorian State Schools Spectacular also features the performance of the Victorian State Schools (VSS) Performance Ensembles, once again showcasing the strength of the performing arts students in our Victorian Government School System.

The roles of the VSS ensembles are:

- To provide Victorian government school students with an opportunity to learn, train and perform in a variety of situations under the guidance of Victorian's leading performing arts teachers
- Showcase the wealth of performing arts talent in the Victorian Government school system
- To encourage and support dance, voice and musicianship in the performing arts within the Victorian Government school system.

For those students within the Victorian Government school system who have an aptitude for performance, the Victorian State School Performance Ensembles offer unsurpassed performance opportunities together with tuition from some of Melbourne's finest performing arts teachers.

All dancers and singers are selected through an audition process and rehearse weekly in their region during the school year.

The junior ensembles consist of students in year levels 4 to 8, while the senior ensembles cover year levels 9 to 12.

Any student attending a Victorian Government school in 2010 from grade 4 up is eligible to audition for the VSS ensembles.

The performance ensembles in 2010 will be:

**The VSS Dance Ensembles** (Geelong, Warragul and Melbourne based)

In the Spectacular, they will perform a number of items in their own right as well as partaking in numbers with the rest of the massed dancers.

**The VSS Stage Band** (Melbourne based)

In the Spectacular, they become the nucleus of the Spectacular orchestra.

**The VSS Choir** (Melbourne based)

In the Spectacular, they become the nucleus of the Massed Choir and will perform numbers in their own right.

In addition to their work in the Spectacular, the ensembles also perform at a number of major events on the Department of Education and Early Years Development's calendar.

In the past, the Victorian State Schools Performance Ensembles have performed at the Victorian Education Excellence Awards at the Palladium Ballroom, the Premier's VCE Awards at the Melbourne Convention Centre, the Melbourne Cup, the AFL Grand Final, the Victorian School Sports Awards at the MCG., Children's Week at the Melbourne Museum, the JOINING the CHORUS regional showcases at Ballarat, and Warrnambool amongst others.

**More information can be found at:**

**<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/events/jtc/ensembles.htm>**