



Update to St James' Organ Appeal Donors COVID-19 Pandemic and the Organ Project

You will have received many messages from all kinds of organisations about the steps they have put in place to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, the Parish of St James' has issued such communications. It has had to make drastic changes to the way services are conducted and how the parish works given government requirements that are in force.

Like everything else we have taken for granted to date, even the St James' Organ Replacement and Restoration Appeal is affected by these challenging times.

Advice has been received from the builder of our new organ, Dobsons Pipe Organ Builders, Ltd., that they have made a decision to suspend operations due to the pandemic until it is safe for work to resume. Public health advice in the USA has urged the closure of non-essential businesses and local authorities have issued stay-at-home orders. As we all might appreciate, organ-building is a physically collaborative process during which it is difficult to impose social distancing protocols. This means that there is likely to be a delay to the construction of our organ. It is impossible to forecast at this stage when it will be safe for construction to commence. The Parish Working Group responsible for the supervision of the contract and the oversight of the building work is in close consultation with Dobsons to monitor the situation. We will keep you informed.

In the meantime, I can assure you that the donations received for the Appeal to date are secure. Even before we all had heard of coronavirus, the St James' Music Foundation, presciently, had placed the bulk of Appeal donations as cash in a US Dollar account in early 2019, when the rate was above 70 Australian cents to the US Dollar. This action was taken so that funds would not be subject to AUD-USD currency fluctuations and so that instalment payments could be made easily in US dollars to our American organ builders, Dobsons, as required by the organ building contract. This has meant that the most recent



slide of the Australian dollar against the value of the American dollar has not changed the overall value of the USD amount in the account. However, as you will understand, the rate of interest that the account is earning has been reduced as interest rates have been adjusted downwards. A small amount of Appeal funds are being kept in an Australian dollar account primarily to support fundraising expenses. No funds have been invested in shares.

Although we now face inevitable delays, the Appeal is still very much in place. And funds will be available when work on the project gets underway again.

If you have made a donation pledge this may be a good time to remind you that an instalment payment is due prior to the end of the financial year. We do understand, though, that this is a time of financial stress for many. If you find you need to adjust your level or rate of payment please contact Marilyn Smith, Treasurer, The St James' Music Foundation at stjamesfdnorganappeal@gmail.com

These are indeed trying times. I do hope that you and all your family and friends are safe and well. Now, more than ever, we will all look forward to eventually hearing our new organ once we have come through these dark times.

Kind regards



Robert Marriott

Chair

The St James' Organ Replacement and Restoration Appeal

April 2020

