

Press Release
(For immediate release)
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\$308,000 brass band project hits the right note

A trombone, six cornets, a bass drum and swanky new uniforms will be added to the Ascot Park Hotel Brass Band of Invercargill as a \$308,000 project nears completion.

The Invercargill Garrison Band Society incorporates the city's two brass bands, the Ascot Park Hotel Brass Band and its junior equivalent, the Ascot Park Hotel Auxiliary Band, and recently embarked on stage two of its asset replacement project – an ambitious quest to replace instruments, uniforms and equipment.

Committee member Gill Ellison said the substantial venture, which began in 2008, was an exciting achievement for the society.

“It's been really great for the senior players to get their new instruments but the junior players are equally as excited to be handed their old ones,” she said.

“Ultimately, we have seen an increase in participation with more instruments being available to use and that's great for the future of the bands.”

Eleven large brass instruments, Timpani and percussion, music stands and sheet music were purchased in stage one last year.

“Some of those big instruments can cost \$15,000 each – they are really expensive,” Mrs Ellison said.

Uniforms worn by the band were purchased over 20 years ago and were in dire need of replacement.

“Every time we go marching more buttons pop off,” Mrs Ellison said.

The new wardrobe will feature marching and stage uniforms for the senior band, blazers for the auxiliary band and new marching hats and ties for both.

“Uniforms form the identity of a group when you're competing so it's important they are a positive reflection of the band and the city it represents,” she said.

“We've decided to retain the same style because people are familiar with it and it is our own identity.”

The ILT Foundation and the Invercargill Licensing Trust recently approved grants of \$50,000 and \$30,000 respectively for stage two of the project, which follows a total of \$80,000 contributed in stage one. The ILT Foundation has also funded \$50,000 and the ILT \$22,000 annually for the past four years to assist with the organisation's operating costs.

Both bands perform at an array of community events, including Anzac Day services. A concert with noted trombone player Brett Baker will be staged in Invercargill in November.

The band can be credited with producing some of New Zealand's finest brass musicians, with many having an impact on the global stage.

“There are quite a lot of band members who have gone on to forge successful careers and have landed quite prestigious roles,” Mrs Ellison said.

“We feel we are a strong training band in New Zealand ... a lot of our energy does go into training young people.”

ILT Foundation and Invercargill Licensing Trust chairman Alan Dennis said the asset replacement project

would enable the brass bands to continue to proudly represent the city.

“Watching the brass bands march and perform is undoubtedly stirring and adds to any community occasion,” he said.

At the National Brass Band Contest staged in Dunedin recently, the Ascot Park Hotel Brass Band placed second in the own selection and third in the sacred item sections to earn fourth overall. In the Band of the Year entertainment competition, it placed a credible second, with Mathew Dick awarded best soloist.

The Ascot Park Hotel Auxiliary Brass Band placed third overall in C-grade.

In solo and ensemble events, Claire Yorkstone secured her first New Zealand title on the tenor horn in the Other Instrument section of the under-15 division, while Quinton Blass placed third in Junior Cornets.

Bill Vail was second in Open Tenor Horn, Connor Ellison and Nina Gooding were second and third respectively in Junior Euphonium, Nathan Blomfield placed third in Junior Trombone and Bridget Snodgrass and Naomi Coatsworth were second in Junior Duets. Connor Ellison, Katie Taylor, Bridget Snodgrass Naomi Coatsworth were third in Junior Ensemble.

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