



INTERNATIONAL
BLUES
CHALLENGE

Melbourne Blues Appreciation Society Inc. ABN 81 845 023 595

2024 Winners Sponsors



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Annual MBAS BLUES CHALLENGE

2025 ENTRY RULES & CONDITIONS

OVERVIEW:

- The aim of the Melbourne Blues Appreciation Society's MBAS Blues Challenge is to find the best possible Blues BAND and Blues SOLO/DUO artists to represent the MBAS and Melbourne in Memphis TN, USA at the annual International Blues Challenge (IBC). The next IBC in Memphis will be held 13th – 17th JANUARY 2026.
- The IBC in Memphis has two Blues Challenge categories, and the MBAS sends a representative act to compete in each:
 - SOLO/DUO: 1 or 2 musicians including vocalists** — either electric or acoustic performance
 - BAND: 3 or more musicians including vocalists** — either electric or acoustic performance

The 2025 MBAS Blues Challenge Competition to find 2 local WINNERS to represent at the IBC in January 2026, will be held at the MBAS in Melbourne through JULY, AUGUST and SEPTEMBER 2025 as follows:

HEATS:

Depending upon the number of entrants, elimination HEATS* will be held as follows: * dates may vary depending on final number of entrants

- SOLO/DUO Heat dates: Tuesday 15th and Wednesday 16th JULY 2025**
- BAND Heat dates: Tuesday 12th and Wednesday 13th AUGUST 2025**

Time: 7.00pm - 11.00pm

Venue: Flemington Bowls Club, cnr. Smithfield and Racecourse Roads Flemington VIC

FINAL:

The 3 top-scoring BAND and SOLO/DUO acts from the Heats will progress to the FINAL: Subject to number of entries, there may be a deciding Semi-Final (TBA)

Date: Sunday 14th SEPTEMBER 2025

Time: 4.00pm - 9.00pm

Venue: Flemington Bowls Club, cnr. Smithfield and Racecourse Roads Flemington VIC

MBAS BLUES CHALLENGE ENTRY DEADLINE MIDNIGHT FRI 27TH JUNE 2025

IMPORTANT: If you are entering the MBAS Blues Challenge, make sure you have no other gigs during the listed performance times of the days of the Heats or Final. Regardless of what time you are performing, ALL act members must be present at the venue for a pre-start induction, the start time of Heat or Final, and stay until the judging is announced.

- The MBAS will only send one winning SOLO/DUO and one BAND to participate in the both categories at the IBC in Memphis USA, starting 13th to 17th January 2026. If you are entering the MBAS Blues Challenge and are the winner of the Final, you will need to make yourself available to travel to the USA to arrive at least a day ahead of the IBC start date.
- The MBAS has the right to determine how many airfares to the USA it will pay for the winning act. It will guarantee to pay for:
 - SOLO/DUO:** up to 2 musicians - airfares to Memphis, accommodation at the IBC and IBC entry fees.
 - BAND:** 3 x musicians - airfares to Memphis, accommodation at the IBC, IBC entry fees. (4th member funded at discretion of MBAS).

- The MBAS also assists the winning acts by hosting separate major fundraiser event to help cover extra travel costs.
- Winning acts are also supported by our Sponsors: **OAK TREE TAVERN (SOLO/DUO \$500 Cash Prize)** and **PBS FM (BAND \$1,500 Prize: On-air radio campaign package to promote a band show, album release etc).**

RULES:

- **The MBAS is an Affiliate of The Blues Foundation USA, and as such, conducts its Blues Challenge in line with the Official Rules of the International Blues Challenge (IBC).**
 - All entrants are encouraged to read the Scoring Criteria for the IBC available on The Blues Foundation (USA) website. The MBAS Blues Challenge judging criteria is exactly the same, and the means by which the judging panel will score your performance in the local and International Blues Challenge. All entrants will be sent a summary of rules and judging criteria. **See the IBC Official Rules listed here - <https://blues.org/official-ibc-rules/>**
 - The MBAS is responsible for undertaking the required entry registration and fee payment requirements of the MBAS Blues Challenge winners with the IBC.
 - The MBAS reserves the right to use any contestant's name, music, voice, image, visage and other likeness for the purpose of advertising, publishing and promoting the MBAS Blues Challenge and for use by the Blues Foundation USA for the IBC.
 - The MBAS Committee has the right to dismiss acts (including Finalists and Winners) for not complying with the rules of the Blues Challenge, and for bad behaviour that is hurtful and/or damaging to the reputation of the MBAS, its venue, sponsors, or other Blues Challenge artists before, during or even after the contest.

ELIGIBILITY:

- **MBAS Blues Challenge is open to any BLUES act meeting the criteria below:**
 - All members of the Blues act must be 18 years old or over and must be a permanent resident of Victoria.
 - All members of the Blues act must be or become financial members of the MBAS with the completion of the Entry Form.
 - If the Blues act wins the MBAS Blues Challenge, all the members of the act must all remain financial members up to and after the IBC date (January 2026).
 - A previous winning Blues act of the MBAS Blues Challenge is eligible to re-enter.

NOTE: Scored judging is based on the observing of criteria and rules and the Blues performance on the day – not on the longevity, previous success or existing reputation of an act. Regardless of experience or how well known (or unknown) they may be, all Blues acts are scored by the performance delivered in their set, on the day.

ENTRY:

- **MBAS Blues Challenge entries must be complete and received by due date. Late entries not accepted.**
 - Entry into the MBAS Blues Challenge (SOLO/DUO & BAND) is now open and submissions by eligible Blues acts is invited.
 - Entry into the MBAS Blues Challenge (SOLO/DUO & BAND) is by way of a completed Entry Form and payment from eligible Blues acts. The MBAS reserves the right to accept or refuse an entry.
 - Entry into the MBAS Blues Challenge (SOLO/DUO & BAND) closes at Midnight Friday 27th JUNE 2025.
See separate Entry Form download for submission checklist and delivery by email.
 - Once all entries are processed, Blues acts will be selected to perform in the Heats by blind draw and notified with full details including performance date/time. Number of Heats held will be determined by number of entries received.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- **MBAS Blues Challenge entries are by email only & must be accompanied by the following:**
 - Completed Entry Form. **Separate Entry Form download** to be filled.
 - Entry Fee of \$60 for each member of the act applies. **See Entry Form** for payment methods.
 - Act bio, current and edited to a maximum of 200 words. **See Entry Form** for details and supply methods.
 - Act image, high res 300dpi JPG. **See Entry Form** for details.
 - Act music (online reference link for sound play). **See Entry Form** for details.
 - Completed MBAS Membership Form (**See Entry Form** if applicable)

NOTE: Entries will not be accepted if any one of these items is not supplied with the email application.

IMPORTANT PLEASE NOTE - HEATS & FINAL:

- The Blues acts must be prepared to attend the MBAS Blues Challenge Heats they are appearing in at their own cost and remain at the venue for the duration of the contest. Entrants must be available on the days of the Heats and the Final.
- Act entrants must all be present at the commencement of the Heat/Final irrespective of what time they are performing, and must remain at the venue for the duration until the final Blues Act has performed and the Judges results have been announced.
- The MBAS Blues Challenge Heats – the top 3 scoring Blues acts from the Heats progressing to the Final will be announced after the judges scores are tallied. Subject to number of entries, there may be a deciding Semi-Final (TBA).
- The MBAS Blues Challenge Final – 2 x winners (SOLO/DUO & BAND) will be announced after the judges scores are tallied.
- Entrants must check in at the time notified to them by the MBAS Blues Challenge event organisers. Failure to do so will result in points being deducted.
- The performance date and appearance time for each Blues act in Heats and Finals will be determined by a blind draw made by the MBAS prior to each contest. No date or time shall be changed unless reviewed by the MBAS Committee.
- The Blues acts will have 20 minutes (Heats) or 25 minutes (Finals) playing time. This is subject to review by the MBAS depending on the number of Blues acts performing.
- Blues acts will lose points for playing over time, or finishing 3 or more minutes before allotted performance time expires. A changeover time of 15 minutes is allowed for between acts.
- Substitution of musicians is not allowed. The artists who perform on the night of the MBAS Blues Challenge Heats and then Finals contest, are the people who will go to Memphis to represent the MBAS and compete at the IBC. In extreme circumstances of sickness or duress, the MBAS Committee will review a request for change to the Blues act members going to Memphis. The MBAS decision on the matter will be final.
- In the unlikely event of an MBAS Blues Challenge Heat or Finals draw, a quick-fire playoff will occur on the night of the contest, where each act will play for a further 10 minutes.
- Independent judges who are credible, experienced and knowledgeable in the Blues genre, will judge all the Heats and Finals. A judge who has judged a Heat will not judge the Final. Scores on the night and the judges decision will remain final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- Acts will be penalized for failing to acknowledge if the song performed is a cover and/or not crediting songwriter.
- The judging method and criteria scores in 5 separate categories and MBAS follows the same IBC scoring method.
See the IBC Official Rules listed here – <https://blues.org/official-ibc-rules>

MBAS BLUES CHALLENGE (SOLO/DUO & BAND) WINNERS:

• The MBAS Blues Challenge winners must be available:

- To travel to Memphis USA in January 2026 (latest dep. Sun 11th) to represent the MBAS at the IBC (13 - 17th Jan).
- To play an MBAS-hosted fundraiser gig prior to travelling, for their benefit, to raise additional funds for the trip.
- If the MBAS Blues Challenge winners are unable for any reason to fulfill their prize obligations to travel to Memphis to perform at the IBC, the MBAS Blues Challenge 2nd highest scorer (runner-up) in each SOLO/DUO or BAND category will be selected as Winner to represent at the IBC in their place.

MBAS BLUES CHALLENGE (SOLO/DUO & BAND) WINNERS PRIZE:

- The prize for the two top-scoring MBAS Blues Challenge winners is to represent the MBAS and Melbourne at the IBC to be held in Memphis TN USA from 13th to 17th January 2026.
- First prizes for the top-scoring SOLO/DUO and BAND are valued at **\$5,000 PER MUSICIAN** to cover expenses as follows:
SOLO/DUO: up to 2 musicians - airfares to Memphis, accommodation at the IBC and IBC entry fees.
Total min prize: \$5,000 (SOLO act) or \$10,000 (DUO act).

BAND: 3 x musicians - airfares to Memphis, accommodation at the IBC, IBC entry fees. **Total min prize: \$15,000.**

NOTE: The MBAS only will fund travel and accom costs for more than 3 BAND musicians at its discretion.

Prize money provided by MBAS is awarded in cash to both the final category winners, towards the cost of return flights from Melb to Memphis, and up to 7 nights accom in Memphis.

- All other associated travel costs (including Passports, Visas, travel insurance and any extended travel arrangements) must be met by the Blues act. MBAS will host a travel fundraiser to assist meeting extra SOLO/DUO and BAND expenses.
- The MBAS Blues Challenge winning Blues acts shall be known as "The MBAS Blues Challenge Blues Performer of the Year representing MBAS at the IBC in Memphis" (both SOLO/DUO and BAND categories) and promoted accordingly.
- The winning Blues acts are considered representatives of MBAS at the IBC, will be issued with a Code of Conduct and obligated under their MBAS representation to act in a responsible, co-operative and respectful manner.
- International prizes for IBC winners in Memphis can be viewed on the The Blues Foundation's website: www.blues.org

ENQUIRIES: Further information contact MBAS President John Durr: 0425 776 613 or email: president@mbas.org.au

ENTRY DEADLINE: BY MIDNIGHT FRIDAY 27TH JUNE 2025 COMPLETED ENTRIES ACCEPTED BY EMAIL ONLY

NOTE: Entry forms for both SOLO/DUO and BAND applicants available via separate download from:
mbas.org.au/mbas-blues-challenge.htm

**Please ensure your Entry to the Blues Challenge is COMPLETE and received ON TIME.
Late entries will NOT be accepted.**

ANY QUERIES CONTACT: MBAS President, John Durr 0425 776 613 or email: president@mbas.org.au