



Memphis Blues Challenge Participant Information

The aim of the **ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge** is to provide the means for Actsto compete for the opportunity to represent ARBA, South Australia and Australia in Memphis Tennessee, at the annual **International Blues Challenge** (IBC) in January 2025 (exact dates to be advised).

ELIGIBILITY

The ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge is open to any Blues Act meeting the criteria below:



- All members of the Act must be 18 years old or over.
- All members of the Act must be a permanent resident of South Australia.
- An individual musician may not compete in more than one Act in any capacity.
- To remove doubt, an individual musician may not compete in both the band category and the solo/duo category.
- Acts who have previously won first prize at the IBC are ineligible.
- All entrants must be or become financial members of ARBA by the entry date on the entry form and must be financial up to and after the IBC date. Membership sign-up here: arba.net.au

The ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge has two categories: “Band” and “Solo/Duo”. The winners of each category will represent ARBA, South Australia and Australia at the 2025 International Blues Challenge in Memphis.

COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS

For the ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge:

- ARBA will not get involved with COVID-19 vaccination requirements. Acts agree that they will comply with all venue and government requirements related to COVID-19. Failure to do so may cause the Act to miss a heat or the final, which will cause the Act to forfeit the competition.

For the 2025 International Blues Challenge in Memphis:

- All members of the Act must have all vaccinations required by Australian and American authorities and International Blues Challenge organisers/venues to permit them travel internationally, to enter the USA, to perform, and for re-entry to Australia. ARBA reserves the right to sight evidence of necessary vaccination status prior to providing funds for tickets, accommodation and insurance.
- Acts must agree to conditions for travel insurance, particularly in relation to COVID-19 conditions and insurance clauses.
- ARBA will not be held responsible if international travel restrictions or COVID-19 related travel delays prevent Acts from reaching the International Blues Challenge.

ARBA 2024 MEMPHIS BLUES CHALLENGE SCHEDULE

HEATS:

Sat June 8 Norwood Live

Sat June 22 Norwood Live

FINAL:

Sat Aug 31 Norwood Live

FUNDRAISER

Sun November 10 Semaphore Workers Club

- The number of heats may be varied at the discretion of ARBA, depending upon the number of Acts that enter.
- The winning band and solo/duo Act from each heat will progress to the ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge Final.
- The band and solo/duo Acts that win the final will be expected to perform at the fundraiser to be held November 10 at the Semaphore Workers Club

BLUES FOUNDATION 2025 INTERNATIONAL BLUES CHALLENGE

The 2025 International Blues Challenge will be held in Memphis, probably in the 3rd week of January. Exact dates will be advised.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- If you enter this competition, it is essential that you ensure your Act is available to appear on all of the above dates. Acts will be advised of the date of their heat mid-April, 2024. **For logistical reasons, the heat date and time will not be changed for any Act.**
- A non-refundable entry fee of \$60 for each member of the Band or Solo/Duo Act applies. Payment must be made with entry application (see page 5).
- ARBA will assist one band and one solo/duo Act to compete at the IBC in Memphis in 2025.
- ARBA conducts the Memphis Blues Challenge in line with the rules of the IBC and is also able to impose additional eligibility restrictions. ARBA is responsible for undertaking the registration requirements of the Memphis Blues Challenge winners with the Blues Foundation for the IBC.
- All of the musicians who compete in an Act must be available to compete in Memphis. All members of the winning act must attend the IBC. Should unexpected circumstances arise (i.e, illness, family emergencies, etc.) no more than one member of any band may be replaced. The ARBA Committee will review a request for change to the Act going to Memphis. The ARBA decision on the matter will be final.
- The ARBA Committee has the right to disqualify Acts for not complying with the rules of the Memphis Blues Challenge and for inappropriate behavior before, during or after this contest. The ARBA Committee's decision will be final.
- Memphis Blues Challenge and International Blues Challenge Rules are subject to change in conjunction with the Blues Foundation. ARBA has the right to intervene or change any of the rules of the Memphis Blues Challenge.
- For the purposes of the ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge, a "Band" is any Act with three or more musicians. Vocalists are counted as musicians for the purpose of this competition. Both electric and acoustic instruments are allowed.
- For the purposes of the ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge, a "Solo/Duo" is any Act with one or two musicians. Vocalists are counted as musicians for the purpose of this competition. Both electric and acoustic instruments are allowed.
- ARBA reserves the right to use contestants' names, voices, pictures, visages and other likeness for the purpose of advertising, publishing, and promoting the Memphis Blues Challenge.

HEATS AND FINALS

- All competing Acts must be prepared to attend the ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge at their cost and remain at the venue for the duration of their heat and final (if applicable). All competing Acts must be available to perform on the dates of any of the heats, the final, the fundraiser and the 2025 International Blues Challenge in Memphis.

- Competing Acts must be available to take the stage when it is their turn to compete. Competing Acts are advised that the schedule for the heats or final may run early or late. The schedule may change if an Act is unable to perform. Any Act unable to perform at the required time will be subject to point deductions or disqualification, at the discretion of the time keeper, in consultation with ARBA office bearers who are present. It is therefore recommended that competing Acts arrive at the beginning of each heat or final in which they are competing.
- It is expected that members of competing Acts will remain at the venue after their performance in a heat or final, until the announcement of the winners has been made.
- The scheduled performance date and start time for each Act in the heats will be determined by a draw made by ARBA in mid-April 2024. The running order of the final will be determined by a draw to be conducted by ARBA.
- Set lengths will be 25 minutes (Heats) or 30 minutes (Final). Set lengths are subject to change depending upon the number of Acts competing. A changeover time of 15 minutes is allowed between Acts.
- A backline will be provided for the heats and for the final. Further information regarding this will be provided to the competing Acts prior to the Memphis Blues Challenge. Acts will be required to use the provided back line.
- If, after being announced as a winner but prior to tickets being purchased, a selected Act becomes unable to travel to Memphis or is disqualified, then ARBA reserves the right to offer the next highest scoring Act in the same category the opportunity to take the place of the withdrawn/disqualified Act.
- Substitution of musicians is not allowed. The musicians who play for an Act in the final must be the same musicians who played for that Act in their heat. The musicians who play for an Act in the heat and the final will be the musicians who go to Memphis. Immediate disqualification will apply if unapproved substitution takes place. Should unexpected circumstances arise (i.e, illness, family emergencies, etc.) no more than one member of any band may be replaced. The ARBA Committee will review any request for change to an Act. The ARBA decision on the matter will be final.
- Five independent judges will judge each heat and five independent judges will judge the final (a judge who has judged a heat will not judge the final). The Judge's scores will remain final. Acts will have their scoresheets emailed to them after the Memphis Blues Challenge, but will not be permitted access to the score sheets of any other Act.

SCORING

The judges will score in exactly the same way as scoring is done at the IBC in Memphis. Each judge will allocate a score out of 10 to each Act in the following categories:

1. **Blues Content: EXTREMELY IMPORTANT.** After all, this is a Blues contest. Acts should pick material carefully. Everyone has his or her own interpretation of what is and is not Blues, however, the sound and feel of the music should be true to any blues sub-categories: traditional blues, country blues, soul blues, rock blues and/or contemporary blues. Judges will be listening for inspired and original song selections or covers that involve new takes on non-original material. Creative reach is encouraged.
2. **Originality:** Original compositions are encouraged. Cover tunes are allowed but playing the original rendition lick by lick is discouraged, will not be looked upon favorably by the judges, and will be reflected in scoring.

Acts must indicate if their songs are their own original material (this can be done at the start of the set or before each song as appropriate) and/or identify the covers that they are playing and acknowledge the originator.

3. **Instrumental Talent:** Ability level on all instruments featured within the Act.
4. **Vocal Talent:** The Act's vocal skills to include concepts of tone, musicality, meaning, and expression.
5. **Stage Presence:** The ability to command the attention of the audience by the impressiveness of one's manner and appearance on stage. Judges will consider how an Act connects with and engages the audience in the music.

It is expected that Acts will dress professionally. Acts that dress like they could be members of the audience, for example, by wearing jeans and t-shirts, can expect to be marked down in this category.

Judges will score Acts in each category on a 10-point scale, with 10 points being the highest score received and 1 point being the lowest. To reflect the relative importance of each category in the success of an Act, an Act's raw score in each category is weighted as follows:

- Blues Content is multiplied by **four**
- Originality will be multiplied by **three**

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- Instrumental talent by **two**
- Vocal talent by **two**
- Stage Presence by **two**

TALLYING SCORES AND DETERMINING WINNING ACT

1. The Scorekeeper will multiply the Raw Score in each category by the established multiplier to get each judge's Individual Weighted Score in each category for each Act.
2. The Individual Weighted Scores for each category will be added together to determine each Act's Total Weighted Score for each judge.
3. Any penalty points assigned will then be deducted from each judge's Total Weighted Score to obtain the Act's Net Weighted Score for each judge.
4. After all Acts have been judged and each Act's Net Weighted Score per judge calculated, each Act will be ranked by judge based on that judge's order of scores, with the Act receiving the judge's highest Net Weighted Score being given a ranking of 1, and so on for that judge. This will reveal each Act's Final Ranking Number for each judge.
5. The Scorekeeper then will total the Final Ranking Number from all judges for each Act to determine the Gross Final Ranking. This figure is averaged (divided by the total number of judges) to Achieve the Aggregate Act Ranking.
6. The winning Act in a heat or final will be the Act with the best aggregate ranking.
7. In the case of a tie, the Scorekeeper shall calculate the sum of all Net Weighted Scores from all judges for the tied Acts. The Act with the higher sum of Net Weighted Scores wins.
8. If, after the process outlined in point 7, there is still a tie the following will apply:
 - (A) In a heat, all of the Acts tied for first place will advance to the final.
 - (B) In a final, the judges will cast a vote to decide which of the Acts that are still tied for first place will be the winner.

An Act will be **penalised one point** from its **Total Weighted Score** for each of the following:

- Failing to acknowledge that a song is a cover and/or not giving credit to its originator
- Each 10 seconds that it runs overtime during a competition performance
- Finishing 3 or more minutes before its allotted performance time expires
- Not being ready to perform at the required time (unless through reasons outside of the control of the act)

MEMPHIS BLUES CHALLENGE WINNER'S PRIZE

The major prize for the ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge winners is to represent ARBA, South Australia and Australia in the International Blues Challenge (IBC) held in Memphis Tennessee, USA, annually over 5 days in January/February. Trophies will also be presented to the winning Acts. The winning Acts are considered representatives of ARBA at the IBC and are obligated under their ARBA membership to behave in a responsible manner.

All funds raised by ARBA related to the Memphis Blues Challenge, including Act entry fees, door cover charges, raffles and sponsorship, etc. will be spent as follows:

1. To pay for airfares, travel insurance and accommodation costs of the musicians who will represent ARBA at the 2025 IBC. If there is a shortfall in the amount of funds raised for this purpose, the available funds will be evenly divided amongst the competing musicians. The competing musicians (assisted by ARBA where possible) will be responsible for covering any deficit.
2. If there are additional funds available once airfares, travel insurance and accommodation costs have been paid, they will be evenly distributed to each of the travelling musicians, up to a maximum total of \$200 per musician. Any funds remaining after this distribution will carry over into the fund for the following year's Memphis Blues Challenge.

Any funds provided by ARBA to the winning Acts are expressly for the use of paying for travel and accommodation costs related to the 2025 IBC and not for any other purpose. **Funds will be paid to winning Acts upon proof of purchase of travel, accommodation and insurance relating to the International Blues Challenge. Arrangements can also be made for ARBA to directly pay (out of the funds raised for this purpose) for travel, accommodation and insurance relating to the International Blues Challenge.**

CANCELLATION

If winners of the ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge are announced but the International Blues Challenge is cancelled or travel between Australia and the USA is not possible, then, subject to the rules of the International Blues Challenge, winning acts from the ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge will be nominated for the next planned International Blues Challenge if it is reasonably expected that the acts can attend.

If the ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge is cancelled, then any funds raised in support of the Memphis Blues Challenge may be retained at the discretion of the ARBA committee for use in a future Memphis Blues Challenge event. In this instance act entry payments will be refunded.

ENTRY APPLICATIONS AND ENTRY FEE PAYMENT

Applications and entry fee payment (\$60 for each member of the band or solo/duo Act) must be made via the Memphis Blues Challenge Registration page at:

Anyone wishing to enter and who is not able to complete the online application form and payment process should contact the ARBA MBC Coordinator, Peter Ferguson Ph 0450 637 866 or blueschallenge@arba.net.au

Closing date: 16th February 2024.

Once an Act has been registered and the entry fee paid you must submit the following by email to Peter Ferguson (blueschallenge@arba.net.au).

1. A **digital jpg** photo of the Act of at least 300dpi by email
2. A **brief bio (200 words maximum in Word format)**
3. Links to the Act's website, Instagram, Facebook page, etc

CONTACT

Further information can be obtained from the ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge coordinator Peter Ferguson. Phone: 0450 637 866. Email: blueschallenge@arba.net.au.

LINKS

ARBA website: <http://www.arba.net.au>

ARBA Memphis Blues Challenge:

<https://www.arba.net.au/memphis-blues-challenge.html> ARBA membership sign up: <http://www.arba.net.au/membership.html>

The Blues Foundation (Memphis): <http://www.blues.org/>

International Blues Challenge (IBC)

<http://www.blues.org/international-blues-challenge/>

IBC Official Rules: <https://blues.org/official-ibc-rules/>