



MEDIA RELEASE

Attention news/entertainment editors/Chiefs of staff

For immediate release

February 18 2026

Cobargo's inaugural busking champs - Entries extended till Monday!

Aspiring and established buskers are being encouraged to be part of the inaugural Cobargo Fringe Australian National Busking Championships (ANBC) regional heat to be held ahead of the annual Cobargo Folk Festival on Thursday February 26.

Buskers of all ages, levels and genres will compete for cash and a spot in the national grand final in Cooma in November - playing three 30 min sets at designated busking spots in Cobargo village from 10am-4pm, with winners announced at the Cobargo Hotel that night at 5pm.

ANBC Cobargo Fringe is an exciting new partnership between the Yuin Folk Club and the Australian National Busking Championships. It has been supported by the Cobargo Hotel, Bendigo Bank, Bermagui Country Club, Cobargo Show Society, Bega Cheese Ltd and the Yuin Folk Club.

ANBC Cobargo Fringe is seeking entries in the primary, secondary, open, masters, duo, and band categories and there is also a People's choice award where supporters vote for their favourite buskers using tokens purchased to raise money for a local charity.

Entries are now open till Monday.

The event is the eighth regional heat of the Australian National busking Championships for 2026 with heats being held around Australia.

Judges will include ANBC president Alan Spencer, ANBC ambassador and past prizewinner Gabi Forman and ANBC past winner and now Golden Guitar nominee, Toyota Starmaker finalist and local Felicity Dowd.

ANBC president Allan Spencer said he was delighted to welcome Cobargo to the ANBC family. Mr Spencer founded the ANBC 14 years ago and it has grown to become a prestigious and highly respected event.

"We had been keen to extend it to the south coast for some time and are very honoured that Cobargo Folk festival was so willing to develop this new partnership are quite short notice," he said.



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"I encourage musicians and performance of all ages to enter this first Cobargo heat and enjoy all the benefits that come with it.

" The Australian National Busking championships is for everybody whether you just want to have a go at busking or if you want to use it to start your career as a performer and it has seen the likes of one of our judges Felicity Dowd and ambassador Gabi Forman along with many other well-known performers start their journeys at the grassroots on the streets as buskers at our various heats around Australia."

Cobargo Folk festival Director Zena Armstrong said she was excited to see Cobargo Village alive with the sound of buskers during the two-day fringe festival leading up to the annual Cobargo Folk festival and encouraged people to enter as soon as possible to secure a spot.

"Buskers and their families and friends will be able to enjoy not only the day of busking but also, we are pleased to introduce the Australian National Busking Championships to Cobargo alongside the free fringe festival It Takes a Village which features many art exhibitions, book signings and concerts. Come for the busking and stay for the festival!"

"They can then choose to stay around for the folk festival over the weekend which is bursting at the seams with amazing acts and workshops and "If you are having a weekend on the coast and want to add some music, we even have courtesy buses running from caravan parks nearby for people who don't plan to camp at the actual festival site. "

ANBC Ambassador and award-winning singer/songwriter/multi-instrumentalist Gabi Forman encouraged all musicians and performers to enter the event.

"I started busking in Cooma with the ANBC when I was 12 years old and it has been integral to the development of my musical career which is taking me to play at major festivals including Tamworth and Gympie and mini folk festivals including Cobargo," she said.

"Busking is not only a lot of fun, but it also gives you skills that you can take to the stage later on if that's what you want to do. You learn so much about how to read audiences and what works and what doesn't and it's just so much fun with the great atmosphere if I was not judging it, I would love to enter it myself. "



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The prizes are:

- Primary School - 1st place \$300
- Secondary School - 1st place \$500 (sponsored by Bendigo Bank)
- Open - 1st place \$1500 (sponsored by Cobargo Hotel Motel)
 - 2nd place \$500
 - 3rd place \$300
- Masters - 1st place \$500 (sponsored by Bermagui Country Club)
- People's Choice - 1st place \$500 (sponsored by Bendigo Bank)
- Judge's Encouragement Awards - 3 x \$100

Entry Fees: \$25 for Solo, \$50 for Duo, \$60 for Groups of 3 or more.

Find out more and enter online at

<https://airtable.com/appvUVq7PYPH9uF4E/pagI9KB8wD2i4dztP/form>

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