

# BEDS ARE BURNING - Notes from the Arrangers

Written by Hirst/Moginie/Garrett © Sprint Music

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Arranged for SATB Choir by Catherine Mundy & Jay Turner

for Reconciliation Australia, exclusively for Voices for Reconciliation 2026

**Reconciliation Australia thanks Midnight Oil and Sony Music Publishing for their support of Voices for Reconciliation 2026. We sing in honour of the memory of Rob Hirst.**

What an honour it is to create the choral arrangements for Voices for Reconciliation 2026's chosen song, BEDS ARE BURNING. In the process, we've fallen in love with the song.

Penned by Midnight Oil's Rob Hirst, Jim Moginie and Peter Garrett, it hit the international charts in 1987. As with previous Voices for Reconciliation choices, Goanna's *Solid Rock and Warumpi Band's Blackfella/Whitefella*, BEDS ARE BURNING seems decades ahead of its time and more relevant now than ever.

## **THE ARRANGEMENT: SATB - Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Baritone**

The song is scored as a SATB choral arrangement. For ease of learning, we have deliberately scored **plenty of unison** between all the voice groups.

Occasional use of brassy four-part harmony heightens the phrases "The time has come!" and "Give it back!". The Soprano part adds complexity, but still gets to sing Melody with the Altos at certain times.

The Body Percussion is optional.

**"I DON'T HAVE AN SATB CHOIR!"** If you have a different style of choir (SA, SAT or SAB), we've designed the arrangement so it can be used in any configuration of voices - as long as the ALTO (MELODY) part is always represented, of course.

If you have a singalong group, rather than a choir, simply sing the ALTO score in unison. This also applies if you don't have the capacity or time for rehearsing multiple harmonies.

## **PRINT MATERIALS AVAILABLE:**

- CHORAL SCORE SATB (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Baritone) - 13 page PDF
- CHOIR + PIANO SCORE - 14 page PDF
- SOPRANO SCORE - 3 page PDF
- ALTO SCORE - 3 page PDF
- TENOR SCORE - 3 page PDF
- BARITONE SCORE - 3 page PDF
- PIANO SCORE for rehearsal accompanist - 5 page PDF
- LYRICS with Arranger's Notes (2 page PDF)

There is an ALL-PARTS voice demo, as well as an MP3 of each individual Voice Part, to support learning.

For accompaniment, there is a Full Band backing track MP3. You are, of course, welcome to use this, or your own accompanist if preferred. There is a basic Piano Score supplied for rehearsal purposes, which pianists are welcome to embellish if they wish.

AUDIO DEMO MP3s SUPPLIED:

- ALL-PARTS (SATB)
- ALTO (MELODY)
- BARITONE
- TENOR
- SOPRANO 1
- SOPRANO 2 (optional)
- FULL BAND BACKING TRACK

## VOICE ROLES

- \* ALTO: sings melody throughout. This is the easiest option for most singers. Generally suitable for middle-range female-identifying voices.
- \* BARITONE: Generally suitable for middle-range male-identifying voices. Melody throughout except for a couple of simple variations, used at rare moments.
- \* TENOR: best for low female-identifying voices and for high male-identifying voices, as modelled on the demo MP3. The Tenors generally sing the MELODY with the ALTOS, but notably bring an important harmony to the Pre-Chorus sections, Intro, Coda and in some parts of the Chorus.
- \* SOPRANO: suitable for higher, usually female-identifying, voices. This part has the most challenge, weaving in atmospheric counter-melodies and ethereal harmonies. There is an OPTIONAL Soprano 2 part towards the end.

## ROCK ENERGY

Sing it like a rock-star - go for energy & emotional intensity rather than sounding “perfect”! Tell the STORY, paint the picture, take your listeners on a journey.

We have deliberately not given specific directions for dynamics (*louds/softs, etc*) on the Scores, to allow each group to make their own artistic choices in expression.

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*Thank you for joining Voices for Reconciliation! We hope you enjoy singing it as much as we did arranging and recording it.*

***In solidarity with all First Nations people in Australia and beyond,  
Songfully, Cath Mundy OAM & Jay Turner OAM***