



PRESS RELEASE

Creativity Australia Turns One! November, 2009

Since its launch 12 months ago, **Creativity Australia** has gone from strength to strength in its mission to bring creativity and creative programs to the people of Australia. By bringing creative thinking and leadership into their organisations, employers can increase wellbeing, productivity, employee cohesion and innovation, all of which are more important than ever in this troubled economic environment. Creativity Australia is also developing a number of innovative programs bridging social capital for disadvantaged people and communities, businesses and government.

Most notably, Creativity Australia has commenced its pilot program **WITH ONE VOICE** with the **Melbourne Sings** choir, a strategic partnership with Sofitel Melbourne On Collins, Allan's Music and various agencies. The *Melbourne Sings* choir brings together employees from Melbourne businesses and disadvantaged people and migrants from the Fitzroy and Collingwood housing estates for weekly rehearsals towards performances at various special and community events.

This is an opportunity to bridge social capital as well as provide employment pathways and mentoring for residents from the housing estates. For participants it is an opportunity to develop networks and unlock creative potential. Participants find their unique voice and learn how to lead and be part of a team. Melbourne Sings have already performed for key events including a Bushfire Benefit Arts Auction at Fitzroy Town Hall, the Diversity@work awards, the Launch of a new digital inclusion program for Infoxchange, Serious Women's Business Gala Conference Dinner and are being approached to create performances for a range of major special events and occasions celebrating cultural diversity including the Parliament of World Religions.

The Melbourne Sings choir is unique in that it brings people together from all walks of life and ages, cutting across socioeconomic, cultural and even linguistic barriers in the pursuit of making music together. Indeed, a significant proportion of the population of the housing estates are recent migrants to Australia, and the choir provides important opportunities for creating a sense of belonging to mainstream Australia and networking for employment. This has already led to some of the migrants gaining employment through improved self esteem and skills developed through their new networks.

Creativity Australia has been approached to set up other *With One Voice* choirs in Broadmeadows, Sunshine, Werribee, Dandenong and Whittlesea. Some of these currently require funding support. The Royal Children's Hospital Choir commenced in May and is designed to bring staff from different departments together on a regular basis to improve wellbeing, social cohesion and innovation across the hospital. Other choirs commencing soon include "Geelong Sings" and "Mind over Music" - A new program designed as a positive intervention to assist young people with emerging mental health issues at Orygen Youth Health. "Maribyrnong Sings" focusing on single migrant mums will commence in early 2010 supported by Fosters in the Community.

For more information about Creativity Australia, please contact **Founder Tania de Jong AM** on

03 9682 9686 or enquiries@creativityaustralia.org.au

Visit www.creativityaustralia.org.au



THE QUESTIONS THE ANSWERS

What is Creativity Australia (CA)?

CA was established in November 2008 as a not-for-profit organisation partnering with business, education, health, community and charity groups, government and philanthropists.

By encouraging greater creativity and innovation, CA will offer new and exciting paths to enable personal wellbeing, social acceptance and inclusion, and highly productive and happier members of our great Australian community.

Who is involved?

CA has engaged with a number of community leaders and businesses. Patrons and partners include Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC, Hugh Morgan AC, Allan Fels AO, Committee for Melbourne, Sofitel Melbourne On Collins and VECCI.

In addition, CA has a number of Ambassadors and “Thought Leaders”; leading members of the business and wider communities, to promote the organisation and to stimulate the discussion of the role creativity plays in improving people’s lives, organisations and society.

What is CA’s Vision and Mission?

Our Vision is to unlock the innate creativity present in all human beings, so as to improve mental health and wellbeing, social cohesion, innovation and productivity.

Our Mission is to develop sustainable and creative programs and advocate for creative thinking and leadership around the country in the workforce, and in partnership with the community.

CA sees a special role in reaching out to disadvantaged sections of the community to provide opportunities for people to tap their own creative potential.

What initiatives are already being developed by CA?

- **Mind over Music:** Music and other creative programmes for wellbeing/positive mental health in partnership with mental health institutes and researchers.
- **With One Voice** *Australia Sings* - Corporate Choirs
- **The Battle of the Choirs** – major live event
- **Melbourne Sings** – The Sofitel ‘*Melbourne Sings*’ Choir is an example of a business/community creative partnership between employees of various city businesses and immigrants from the Fitzroy/Collingwood Housing Estate with a goal of bridging social capital and creating employment opportunities. There are now a number of these projects in place and more on the waiting list.
- **Inspiring Minds** – programs for an out performance culture to improve leadership and skills in creativity, innovation and wellbeing.

What specific programs is CA offering to organisations?

CA is working with organisations to provide the following creative thinking and leadership programs tailored to individual workplaces and corporate cultures:

1. Keynote speeches, forums and debates on creative leadership and innovation.
2. The Inspiring Minds/Brainstorm Series: 'Creative booster' sessions for conferences, retreats, board meetings, break-out sessions – incl. Finding Your Voice, The Corporate Storyteller etc
3. Customised programs to engender a climate of innovation amongst leaders or special operating units.
4. Development opportunities through secondment of a talented employee to work with CA
5. With One Voice Corporate Choirs and Battle of the Choirs (more info below).
6. Limited places are available in mixed community/business choirs. The cost per employee includes a donation towards the cost of sponsoring the participation of one disadvantaged person.

How will the Corporate Choir series work?

The *With One Voice* and *Battle of the Corporate Choir* programs will encourage individual organisations or mixed community partnership groups to form and support staff choirs to learn how to sing and work as a special team together.

Through *With One Voice*, CA will help organisations establish and train their choirs weekly over 12 months, including arranging for outstanding choir leaders to work with them. CA will help find and organise opportunities for the choirs to perform and make links to disadvantaged members of the wider community including schools to work with them in the common endeavour of tapping individual creativity and imagination, and unlocking potential.

We envisage that the concept will appeal to companies and government agencies who not only want to foster their own teamwork, wellbeing and innovation, but see a social mission in encouraging their staff to engage with disadvantaged people in the wider community.

The *Battle of the Choirs* series will generate a competitive opportunity for national recognition and prizes, and provide opportunities for wider corporate and media exposure to the CA message and programs. The first is planned for 2010.

Will CA sponsor research into stimulating and nurturing personal and organizational creativity?

CA will initiate related research, including wellbeing surveys for choir members and longitudinal studies by leading research institutes and universities to assess the effects of CA-supported programs on personal wellbeing, employee retention and productivity, mental health status and engagement between individuals and their communities.

How is CA being funded?

CA is a not-for-profit organisation with a business and financial plan. It will derive income to support its initiatives and programs from:

- Philanthropic donations to The CA Fund to assist disadvantaged people and communities
- State and federal government assistance for which CA is eligible; and
- Fees from corporate advisory activities, entry fees for participating in the Corporate Choirs programs, and media rights for any events given radio or TV coverage.
- Fundraising events

For the WITH ONE VOICE choral programs, packages are developed for individual organizations and communities, with costs being determined on an individual basis.

For more information, please contact Founder Tania de Jong AM on (03) 9682 9686 or email Tania@creativityaustralia.org.au and visit www.creativityaustralia.org.au



THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE CREATIVITY

Patrons

Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC, DBE
Lady Marigold Southey AC
Professor Allan Fels AO
Hugh Morgan AC
Emeritus Professor John Hay AC
Eddie McGuire AM (With One Voice Patron)

Ambassadors

Professor Graham Burrows AO
John Calvert-Jones AM
Terry Campbell AO
Dr Alan Finkel AM
Professor Andrea Hull AO
Sam Lipski AM

Board

Sue Crook, Peter Kronborg, Sue Larkin, Kelly O'Dwyer, Tania de Jong AM (Founding Chair)

Thought Leaders (more to come)

Mary Barlow
Terry Barnes
Ravi Bhatia
Rufus Black
Graham Bradley
Julie Caldecott
Russell Caplan
Alan Castleman
Frank Cicutto
James Demetriou
John Denton
Wayne Dyson
Saul Eslake
Hugh Evans
Senator Mitch Fifield
Jo Fisher
Stephen Grant
Bruce Hartnett
Jane Harvey
Elaine Henry OAM
John Higgins
Assoc. Professor John Kelly AM
Leon Kempler OAM
Peter Kronborg
Dr Janine Kirk AM
Peter Lock
Dr Simon Longstaff
Professor Patrick McGorry
Jan Owen AM
Michael Rennie
Clive Scott
Carol Schwartz

Thought Leaders cont'd

Professor John Seybolt
Dr Peter Shergold
Steven Skala
The Honorable John So
Evan Thornley
Alison Watkins
Peter Williams
Professor Martin Westwell
Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann

Creativity Partners (more to come)

ACEL
Allans Music
AMES
Australia Israel Chamber of Commerce
Australian Secondary Principals Association
B Design
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Centre for Social Impact
Committee for Melbourne
Company Matters
Cornwell Design
De Bono Institute
Eastside Printing
Efront Web Design
Go Fundraise
Hawker Britton
Infoxchange
Kate Scott: Streamer Design & Communication
L'Oreal Melbourne Fashion Festival
Multicultural Arts Victoria
Music Theatre Australia
Page Up People
Primus Telecom
Principals Australia
Pro Bono Australia
Quantumlinx
Sofitel Melbourne On Collins
St James Ethics Centre
The Banner Lady
Travellers Aid
VECCI
Victorian Public Sector Continuous Improvement Network

Wellbeing Partners

Australian Centre on Quality of Life,
Deakin University
Orygen Youth Mental Health
Royal Children's Hospital

Foundation Partners

Angior Family Foundation
Edward Wilson Estate
Fosters in the Community
RE Ross Trust

TANIA DE JONG AM

BIOGRAPHY



Tania de Jong is the inspiration, co-founder and artistic director of Pot-Pourri and of Music Theatre Australia (MTA) one stop entertainment consultancy and event production company.

A graduate of the University of Melbourne (LL.B. Hons.), and the Victorian College of the Arts (Opera, Music Theatre and Voice), Tania is considered one of Australia's most talented sopranos. She has performed with the Victoria State Opera and as a soloist with a number of orchestras.

In 2006 Tania received the Ernst and Young Australian Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award for her work with The Song Room. The Song Room, a charity founded by Tania, has brought music and performing arts programs to over 200,000 disadvantaged children and communities throughout Australia. Tania's other awards include the "Outstanding Individual Contribution to Australian Culture", Churchill Fellowship and the Accessibility Award in The Melbourne Awards. She was recently named Brainlink Woman of Achievement 2009.

Tania is on the Board of Child Abuse Prevention and Research Australia. She was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in June 2008 for service to the arts as a performer and entrepreneur and through the establishment and development of music and arts enrichment programs for schools and communities. She has recently founded Creativity Australia to bring greater wellbeing, innovation and engagement into the workforce, and in partnership with disadvantaged communities, through creative thinking and leadership programs.
(Trivia: She attended college in the USA on a tennis scholarship.)

*"Our society is fragmented and our ability to communicate with other people and express ourselves is limited. This undermines our fundamental human values, sense of family and community. **Creativity Australia** is about inspiring more productive individuals, organisations and communities."*

Tania de Jong AM, Founding Chair