



# Media Release

19 June 2017

## **Be part of the solution to the modern-day epidemic loneliness, seed funding available to start *With One Voice* program.**

Loneliness is the modern-day epidemic that is slowly killing us. Research has found that **lacking social connections** is as damaging to our health as smoking **15 cigarettes a day** and people experiencing social isolation have an average of **29% increased mortality** (Holt-Lunstad, 2010 & 2015). Furthermore, **8 in 10 Australians** think our society is becoming **lonelier**, while **6 in 10** say they **often feel lonely** (Lifeline 2016).

“It’s not hard to be part of the solution to the loneliness epidemic,” says Creativity Australia Founder, Tania de Jong AM, “It’s just about finding ways to bring the community together to support one another.”

Creativity Australia’s *With One Voice* program does just that. It empowers individuals to strengthen their community by uniting everyone, of all ages, faiths and walks of life, through their common love of singing. The *With One Voice* program includes migrants, people with disabilities, job seekers, executives, seniors, students, refugees, asylum seekers and more. It is an opportunity to create **real connections between diverse people** in our community. It is about reaching out to those who are experiencing disadvantage and encouraging the socially advantaged in our community to engage with, learn from and help these people.

Round three of the *With One Voice* Start Up fund is now open to local community groups, not-for-profits and businesses to tackle loneliness and social isolation in their communities. Successful applicants join a 12-month intensive mentoring program to guide them through the process of building their own *With One Voice* choir and receive a \$10k seed grant.

Founder & CEO of Centre for Hope, Geraldine Moran, the first successful applicant from Round One, says “*With One Voice* perfectly encapsulates the unity we want to create for our community. Mentoring is such a powerful tool, and through the *With One Voice* mentoring program we are learning quickly, safely and in a supported manner.”

For more information and to apply for a place in the *With One Voice* Start Up project, visit [www.creativityaustralia.org.au/start](http://www.creativityaustralia.org.au/start).

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## About us

Loneliness, and the depression which accompanies it, is the global epidemic of our era. Creativity Australia ([www.creativityaustralia.org.au](http://www.creativityaustralia.org.au)) is building a happier, healthier, more inclusive nation. We bridge the gap between people experiencing loneliness and social isolation, and those more fortunate through the neuro-scientific benefits of community singing. We build supportive networks that help people connect to brighter futures. Together, we can change the world... one voice at a time. Creativity Australia is a charity founded by award-winning social entrepreneur and soprano Tania de Jong AM.



## Why we sing

**Neuroscience proves singing makes people happier, healthier, smarter and more creative.**

Through uniting more and more communities in song, Creativity Australia aims to create positive outcomes for people experiencing mental illness, disability, disadvantage, unemployment or homelessness.

## Our impact

Swinburne University evaluation showed 98% of *With One Voice* choir participants experienced less stress, 91% improved social bonds, 66% felt less depressed, 70% gained new skills for work life and 70% gained increased understanding & appreciation of diversity. [View evaluation](#). The program has also been named in Anthill's SMART 50 social innovations in 2017.

## For further information, contact:

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