

Corporate choirs and brainstorming “creativity booster” sessions for businesses are two of a number of programs offered by Creativity Australia. The organisation was launched last year. BCI invited Creativity Australia founder TANIA DE JONG AM to explain the thinking behind it.

BOOSTING CREATIVITY

Helping people reach their full creative potential



Sofitel Melbourne staff members in the Melbourne SINGS Choir with Creativity Australia founder and soprano Tania de Jong AM.

IT IS critical to find creative and innovative ways to bring people together to build resilience and social capital during these highly uncertain times. Doing so can help people develop stronger communication and problem solving skills, and thereby foster sustainable levels of motivation

and wellbeing at a personal and organisational level. This will in turn lead to greater levels of engagement and innovation in organisations, and an enhanced ability to make a contribution to our society rather than just focussing on profits. One of the challenges businesses face today is overcoming the barriers to

stimulating creativity and innovation. We need to create opportunities for individuals and communities to connect with one another in new and meaningful ways. The barriers are ever present. We live in a world where computers, the internet, image and celebrities take us further away from connecting with



Tania de Jong AM founded Creativity Australia to bring wellbeing and greater engagement and innovation into the workforce, and to extend creative thinking and leadership programs to disadvantaged communities. She has a Bachelor of Laws with Honours from the University of Melbourne and studied Opera, Musical Theatre and Voice at the Victorian College of the Arts. In 2006 Tania received the Ernst and Young Australian Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award for her work with The Song Room, an initiative that introduces the arts and music to disadvantaged children. She was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in June 2008.

Creativity Australia's

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

Creativity Australia's

Mission: 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.

one another meaningfully. We interact with boxes and screens instead of with one another. We are in danger of becoming a society where alienation, disengagement and self-centeredness are entrenched in a world where human beings fail to capitalise on building relationships that are generative and creative.

One way of improving our world is to help people learn how to think and act differently. Perhaps in our corporate social responsibility programs we need to find new ways of giving employees a greater sense of themselves and their potential. It is only when we feel good about ourselves that we can really help others.

At Creativity Australia we believe creativity offers the answers to many of the big issues we face in these unprecedented times, because it can help unlock our full human potential. If you enter a kindergarten you will encounter some of the best creative thinking anywhere: finger paintings with pink and green people and blue dogs and polka-dot skies, imaginative stories of fairies and magical, far-away places. Young children are naturally creative. They must create ways to learn and construct a world view from a collection of initially disconnected events, colours, movement and sound. So what happens between the open, effortless experimentation of our childhood and the blocks in creative thinking experienced by many adults? In many organisations there is no clear pathway for developing personal creativity and nurturing, developing and celebrating ideas. In fact, often those with the ideas are ignored or stifled, so that eventually their voices and ideas fall silent and they disengage themselves from the organisation, if not physically, then certainly emotionally. Engaging in creative leadership programs that take people outside their traditional comfort zones whilst still maintaining a safe environment to play and be one's real creative self is becoming more and more critical. These programs can lead to improved employee wellbeing, engagement and self awareness, to increased leadership and productivity, and to a greater ability to innovate and make a difference. In the face of competitive and economic pressures, many organisations are convinced that

creativity and innovation are the keys to success. There is significant international research about the enormous benefits of creative participation for wellbeing, self esteem, connection to others, increased brain function, strengthening the immune system and much more.

Creativity Australia is hoping to unlock the creative potential lying dormant within all of us. To do so we will create customised creative programs engaging with the right side of the brain.

These programs will not only help people's sense of self esteem, connection and wellbeing but will lead to outcomes including meaningful and creative leadership, greater innovation, a sense of connection and increased productivity.

People are no longer willing to separate their values from their work. There is a yearning to align life purpose with work to make it meaningful.

Work is meaningful when all of our self is being engaged and challenged, and we add to the quality of life of those around us.

For further information go

www.creativityaustralia.org.au. **BCI**

Creativity Australia - Brand Essence & Values Model

