

Finally Friday

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Choir overcoming the odds

BY CHERIE DONNELLAN

COMMUNITY spirit has trumped limited vocal training and even English language skills to form Geelong Sings choir, according to conductor Kym Dillon.

He said the choir was a "unique group" representing the diversity of Geelong's community.

Dillon spoke to the *Independent* about the stories of choir members and how working with people from lower socio-economic groups was a joyful challenge.

"We've got a member named Felix who's from China - he learned English through singing in the choir," Dillon said.

"He's great at singing the notes but it took him a little while to get the words but he got there."

Dillion believed the choir's focus on fostering friendships rather than advancing vocal ability lifted members' spirits.

"People find they come into the group and they have a lot of support."

"They can have a go and sing their best and I can help them find their strengths."

Dillon said the choir's positive learning environment helped inspire excitement among members when they prepared for on-stage debuts.

He joyfully recalled watching his singers perform for the first time and recounted other gigs including singing at Geelong Hospital for Mental Health Week and at Ocean Grove Christmas Carols.

"Performing in front of a lot of people is quite a new experience for these people



SPIRITED: Geelong Sings members will join other choirs from around the state for a performance in Melbourne next month.

but it's great to see how much they get out of it and how not nervous they are."

Dillon said the choir was gearing up to perform at Creativity Australia's With One Big Voice concert at Melbourne

Town Hall next month.

The Geelong choir would join 13 other Victorian choirs to perform as groups and en masse.

"We (the choirs) don't normally have

too much to do with each other but the concert will bring us together," Dillon said.

"We'll sing together - a group of 400 voices - as a celebration of the year and

to hear about what other choirs have been doing."

Geelong Sings will perform in With One Big Voice at Melbourne Town Hall on December 2.

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