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# The joy of song...

an introduction to the *With One Voice* choir program

Singing is the language of the heart. For centuries, song has played a key role in community, culture and story-telling worldwide. Yet how many people dare to sing freely these days... apart from in the shower?

Community singing empowers voices that have been silenced, unleashes creative potential... and that's just the start.

## WHAT WE DO

Every week, Creativity Australia's 13 *With One Voice* choirs inspire people from more than 40 nationalities, aged 9 to 90, to sing side-by-side. Age, race, language, religion, disability and disadvantage fade away. Everyone is welcome.

## WHY WE DO IT

For some, choir is a way to de-stress after work. For others, it's a first glimpse into Australian life after arriving here as a migrant, asylum seeker or refugee. For others, it's an opportunity to connect to networks, skills and employment. It's all about joy, freedom and inspiration.

When diverse voices sing together, people can more easily connect to whatever they need in life... friends, mentors, wellbeing, new skills, self-esteem, employment and more.

Creativity Australia believes unleashing a community's collective creative potential can achieve incredible social and economic outcomes.

Empowered individuals and supportive communities are better placed to solve society's big challenges, such as cross-cultural integration, unemployment, mental illness, low economic productivity, skills shortages, loneliness and isolation, family fragmentation, homelessness and more.

Neuroscience proves singing connects the neural pathways in the brain differently and releases endorphins, making people healthier, happier, smarter and more creative. From this position, people are more capable of asking for, receiving and giving help.

This is why we're the passionate leaders of a singing movement... to build communities and change the world!

## CONNECT WITH US

For choir news, videos, research on the science of singing and more visit [www.creativityaustralia.org.au](http://www.creativityaustralia.org.au) or connect with us on social media.

Better still, join a *With One Voice* choir or enquire about setting one up at your workplace.

(03) 8679 6088 / [enquiries@cal.org.au](mailto:enquiries@cal.org.au)

[www.creativityaustralia.org.au](http://www.creativityaustralia.org.au)

*Creativity Australia inspires people to find their voice.*

“Suddenly backgrounds, occupation, race, religion and disability disappears and instead there are only voices, song, smiles and happiness...” Liz, Melbourne Sings

## Frequently asked questions...

- **Where are the choirs?**

Communities have embraced the *With One Voice* choir program since its launch in 2008. We now have 13 choirs: Ashburton, Footscray, Frankston, Geelong, Heidelberg, Melbourne (CBD), Noble Park, St Kilda and Sydney (CBD); and corporate choirs at ANZ (Melbourne), the Royal Children's Hospital, Orygen Youth Health and Deakin University.

- **Who benefits from the program?**

Executives, families, migrants, job seekers, professionals, asylum seekers, people with disabilities or depression, youth, older adults, people experiencing economic or social disadvantage, regional and isolated individuals, organisations helping people in need, people wanting to make a difference, people wishing to find their voice... All people seeking hope, harmony, health and happiness!

- **Why singing?**

Neuroscience demonstrates singing connects the neural pathways in the brain differently and releases endorphins, making people healthier, happier, smarter and more creative. From this position, people are more capable of asking for, receiving and giving help.

- **But I can't sing!**

Everyone can sing! There are no auditions, no singing experience is necessary and you don't have to read music. Singing puts you in a can-do headspace where anything is possible!

- **How is this different from other choirs?**

*With One Voice* choirs deliberately bring together people from all walks of life. During supper, participants share and network. This creates real opportunities for people to access whatever they need in life including friends, mentors, wellbeing, self-esteem, new skills and employment.

- **What is the impact of the program?**

Our 2012 survey revealed 90% of participants experienced improved wellbeing on a weekly basis, 80% experienced improved self-esteem, reduced anxiety and made new friends, and 70% increased their understanding of diverse cultures and gained new skills.

The networks and friendships developed at choir have led to more than 80 employment opportunities and 200 skills-development, work experience or mentoring opportunities. The program has also assisted more than 150 members with access to services, especially in relation to physical and mental health. Check out the [testimonials](#) on our website.

**“There should be more opportunities for people in the community to come together and celebrate the wonderful act of singing together.”  
Gotye, in support of the *With One Voice* program**

- **What is the future for the charity?**

We are currently in discussion with government, employment agencies and other social inclusion organisations to deliver more choirs across Australia. This will be done via a scalable cluster model where we embed experts into the choirs to help participants connect to the services they need to get a hand up. [Contact us](#) to get involved.

- **What is the “Wish List”?**

Through the Wish List, individuals are encouraged to express what they are thankful for, ask for what they need in life and grant wishes for others. Wishes granted include employment, help with CV-writing and interview practice, music lessons and setting up a blog to share the stories of homeless people in the Sydney CBD.

- **Why is the program a social innovation?**

*With One Voice* choirs unite diverse local communities, inspiring participants to support one another and unleash their creative potential. By comparison, dedicated programs for disadvantaged and disempowered individuals can reinforce segregation, entrench negative “labels” and create a dependency mentality.

The *With One Voice* program was recognised as one of Australia's top social innovations in Anthill's 2013 Smart 100.

- **How is the organisation funded?**

Creativity Australia is funded through a mixture of philanthropic, government and in-kind supporters. Participants are encouraged to make a tax-deductible donation towards their involvement and/or to sponsor others who are less fortunate to attend.

With this support, we provide professional conductors, suppers, resources, performances and more.

Our Workplace Giving program allows organisations to nominate Creativity Australia as their charity of choice. [Contact us](#) to find out more.

- **Can I book a choir to perform at my event?**

*With One Voice* choirs regularly share inspirational songs and stories at community, corporate, multicultural and interfaith events including Moomba, the Mornington Peninsula Interfaith Festival, Federation Square's Light In Winter Festival and Creativity Australia's annual *With One BIG Voice* concert. [Contact us](#) to book a choir.