



# Media Release

3 October 2016

## **Creativity Australia invites local communities to apply for seed funding to start their own *With One Voice* choir**

We now welcome all communities from across Australia to apply for seed funding to create a *With One Voice* community choir, to tackle loneliness, isolation and disadvantage in their community.

- **8 in 10 Australians** think our society is becoming **lonelier**, while **6 in 10** say they **often feel lonely** (Lifeline 2016).
- **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).
- **Mental health** impacts **~27% of Australians**.
- **Real unemployment and underemployment** continues to increase (~26% over the past 11 years) and approximately **1.1 million Australian households** (nearly 3 million people) experience financial stress.
- Approximately **640,000 Australians** (~5%) experience **multiple and complex disadvantage** leading to increasing levels of social exclusion.

### **The *With One Voice* program**

The *With One Voice* program is about **strengthening communities** and inspiring individuals to find their voice. A *With One Voice* inclusive community choir unites people aged 9 to 90, from all faiths and all walks of life: migrants, people with disabilities, job seekers, executives, seniors, students, refugees, asylum seekers and more. However, the *With One Voice* program is more than just singing in a local community choir. 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. View [member stories](#).

### **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. Please be inspired by [Creativity Australia's Founder Tania de Jong's TEDTalk](#) on 'how singing together changes the brain'.

## Our impact

Swinburne University research 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 research.](#) The program has also been named in Anthill's SMART 100 social innovations in 2016, 2015, 2014 and 2013.

## 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 disadvantage 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.

## Sing for Good

Our online video community singing project Sing for Good helps us raise funds to change the tune for people in need through the *With One Voice* program. This joyful project has so far inspired more than 170 video entries from around the globe, generating around \$100,000 in donations. [View gallery](#) and [highlights](#) video here. Groups of 2 or more from families, workplaces, schools, choirs, sports teams... everyone's welcome to Sing for Good, whether you're a shower singer or an opera diva! A nursery rhyme, campfire sing along, club song or power ballad – the sky's the limit.

There are heaps of categories, plus cash prizes for schools. Winners are announced at the **With One BIG Voice Concert** 7pm, Tuesday 29th November, Scots Church Assembly Hall, Melbourne.

Entries are now open and close on 31 October 2016, register now at [www.singforgood.org](http://www.singforgood.org)

## Resources now available

Creativity Australia is pleased to announce that a range of **How To Guides, videos and resources** are now available to assist any local community establish a *With One Voice* choir, enabling you to change lives and build healthier, happier, more inclusive and stronger communities. For more information [click here.](#)

## *With One Voice* seed funding applications

Creativity Australia is offering a limited number of communities seed funding to start their own *With One Voice* program. Applications are now open and close at 5pm (Victorian time) on 23 November 2016. To apply for seed funding to establish your community based choir [click here.](#)

## For further information, contact:

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