



With One Voice
Community Choir
How-to Guide

March 2019 Version 0.6

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1. Congratulations & welcome!

You are now a part of the **With One Voice** choir movement – congratulations and welcome!

You have joined a network of all-inclusive community choirs that bring together people from all faiths, cultures, ages, abilities, backgrounds and socio-economic situations, united over a love for singing and for real community connections.

The **With One Voice** movement was created in 2008 by acclaimed soprano and social entrepreneur, Tania de Jong AM, who is looking forward to meeting you and seeing your choir in action at some stage along the journey.

Our growing network of over 25 choirs now stretches across Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra and regional Victoria, with thousands of choir members ranging in age from nine to 90 years old, and growing monthly!

In the pages following, you will read everything you need to know about how to start your **With One Voice** choir. Our team is here to help you at each step along the way – don't hesitate to get in touch if there's anything you'd like to discuss or if you're just looking for some encouragement or to bounce an idea off someone.

We believe in your vision for your community choir, and we look forward to supporting you to achieve it. We are excited by the impact you are destined to have on your community through the vehicle of this choir. We have seen lives changed through **With One Voice** choirs, and we can't wait to see the positive ripples that your choir is set to create in your community.

Here's to the journey ahead! *The With One Voice Team at Creativity Australia.*



A word from our Founder and Chair

I would like to add my congratulations to you for joining the **With One Voice** choir network.

At Creativity Australia, our mission is to build a happier, healthier, more inclusive nation. We choose to do this through the power of bringing people and communities together to sing.

Through our **With One Voice** program we welcome people aged 9 to 90, from all cultures and backgrounds.

Through the Wish List, diverse people grant each other wishes like music lessons, language tuition and jobs.

Swinburne University research showed that 98% of **With One Voice** participants experienced less stress, 91% reported improved social bonds and 66% felt less depressed. This impact is incredible!

For some, the choir will be a way to de-stress after work. For others, it's a way to engage with their community after arriving in Australia as a migrant, asylum seeker or refugee. For others still, it's an opportunity to connect to networks, build skills and find pathways to employment.

I hope you enjoy your experience with your **With One Voice** choir. Together we can change the world, one voice at a time!

Tania de Jong AM
Founder and Chair, Creativity Australia



A word from our Lead Conductor

Neuroscience proves that 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 strengthen communities, improve wellbeing and change the world, one voice at a time!

We welcome all people, regardless of age, race, religion, ability or socioeconomic situation.

We hope that, by joining the **With One Voice** choir, you will be empowered to find your unique voice and to give back to others via the Wish List.

So huge congratulations to you on taking this step and joining this movement! We look forward to seeing the impact your choir will have on its members and community!

Kym Dillon
Lead Conductor, Creativity Australia



2. Overview of the *With One Voice* movement

The *With One Voice* movement is about strengthening communities and inspiring individuals to find their voice. We believe empowered individuals and supportive communities are better placed to solve society's big challenges, including cross-cultural integration, unemployment, mental illness, skills shortages, loneliness and isolation, family fragmentation, homelessness and more.

The *With One Voice* movement is more than just singing with your local community choir. It's an opportunity to create real connections between the diverse people in your community. It's about building bridges between those who are experiencing disadvantage and those who are more fortunate, and creating opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds and situations to learn from one another and help each other.

With One Voice choirs are led by professional conductors and meet weekly, followed by supper. In addition to singing and eating together, the choirs also include an innovative Wish List program whereby choir members request and grant wishes to one another. Wishes can be anything that a choir member needs or has to offer, such as a free music lesson, assistance with learning a new language, writing a CV, finding a job, help with moving house, or computer tuition. To-date, over 3000 wishes have been granted through our choirs.



3. The six elements of *With One Voice*

There are six key elements that make up a *With One Voice* choir. Fit these pieces together and you will build a caring community which meets every week to sing, learn, contribute, care and share.

The key elements of a *With One Voice* choir are:



In the pages following, we will explain each of these key elements.

a) Conductor

The Conductor is the heart of the choir. *With One Voice* Conductors are special because they possess the musical knowledge of mainstream conductors, combined with the capacity to lead diverse community groups with no musical training in a way that is fun and inclusive.

The Conductor must be found by the individual choir and, ideally, will be a local musician, music teacher or choir conductor. Creativity Australia can help facilitate introductions to and provide advice on suitable conductors if needed. The Conductors are encouraged to complete Creativity Australia's Conductor Development Training program.

With One Voice conductors are paid professionals, which is how the program ensures the quality of rehearsal experience.

Conductors should possess the following skills:

- Excellent vocal skills;
- Basic instrumental skills to provide accompaniment e.g. guitar or keyboard;
- Some technical ability to use backing tracks and useful technology; and
- Knowledge and experience in creating and staging performances.

The responsibilities of **With One Voice** Conductors include:

- Fostering inclusivity - ensuring everyone is welcome and facilitating a shared understanding of community;
- Encouraging participation and supporting all members to connect, regardless of background, age or socio-economic status;
- Leading the choir to perform in its local community at festivals and special events;
- Coaching and empowering participants, especially those who may lack self-confidence or who are fearful of not being accepted, to do an introduction to a song at a public performance;
- Leading participants who can't read music and don't have any singing experience, and selecting repertoire that is suitable for people who can't read music; and
- Teaching simple and fun exercises to help develop group members' singing and aural confidence.

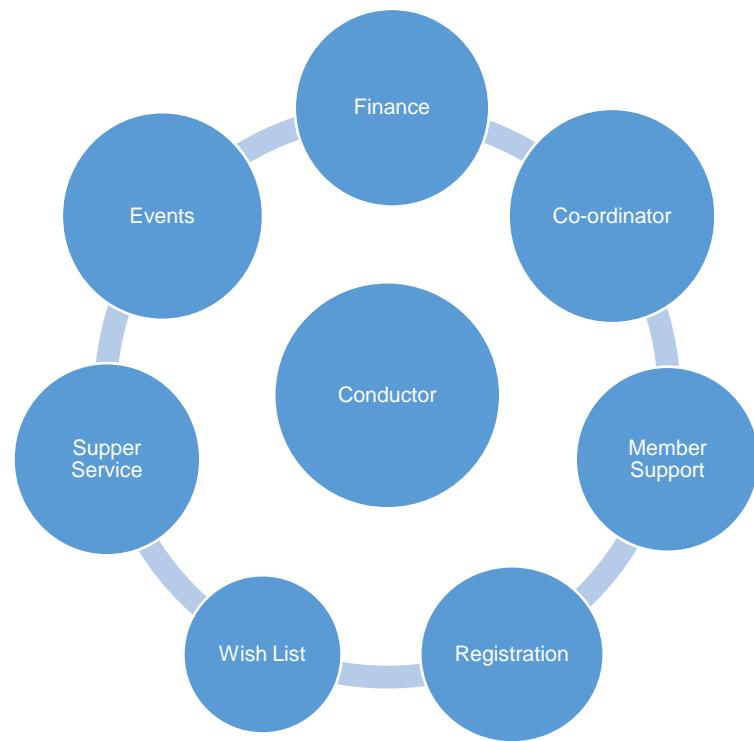
b) Organising Committee

Establishing a high-quality and sustainable **With One Voice** choir requires the involvement of a committed, engaged and motivated group of volunteers who form the choir's Organising Committee.

The Committee should consist of diverse leaders from different sectors within your community, such as representatives from local governments or councils, schools or universities, community centres, businesses, emergency services, social clubs, community foundations and health and well-being services.

The image below lists the different roles that make up the Organising Committee. All of these roles are voluntary, with the exception of the Conductor role – which is a modestly paid position. The goal is to have these roles filled within three months of the choir's first rehearsal.





The best **With One Voice** Organising Committees take joint responsibility for every role. Working in pairs or groups on most tasks makes your volunteer team stronger and prevents people “burning out” from holding sole responsibility for their function. If you are a small team of volunteers, then every team member will probably take joint responsibility for a number of roles. For example, a person who is a joint-registration volunteer may also be joint finance and joint member support with other members in the team.

The key Organising Committee roles are:

Coordinator:

- Liaison with the whole volunteer team, choir members, the conductor and Creativity Australia’s Program Manager;
- Recruitment of Organising Committee;
- Management of volunteer roster; and
- Joint responsibility with Conductor for complaints procedures.

Registration:

- Keeping member and guest attendance lists and entering that information into the online database every week;
- Preparation of name tags; and
- Preparation of song sheets.

Finance:

- Banking and cash-handling;
- Payment of invoices; and
- Providing regular financial reports to the organising committee and members.

Member Support:

- The meet and greet of new members;
- Checking in with members who may be experiencing health and wellbeing difficulties;
- Assisting members with the logistics of getting to and from choir rehearsals, for example, sourcing transport to rehearsals for members living with disabilities.

Wish List:

- Compiling the offers and asks of choir members and sharing these at each rehearsal; and
- Updating the Creativity Australia website with wishes granted and wishes outstanding.

Supper Service:

- Preparing and laying out supper prior to each rehearsal (may include collection of the supper from your provider, though delivery to the venue is preferred);
- Ensuring that kitchen areas are clean at the end of each rehearsal; and
- Mobilising and co-ordinating a team of members to assist both tasks listed above.

Events:

- Liaising with the local community to source performance and local funding opportunities.

Please read the Organising Committee Volunteer Position Descriptions attached to this info pack.

c) Choir members

With One Voice choirs welcome everyone and anyone who wants to sing and contribute to building the community. If you are starting your own choir then you have already raised some funds or secured a grant to get you started – congratulations again!

To survive past the first year, your choir will need to attract at least 20 full fee-paying members (calculated at \$500 per member per year) in order to cover the Conductor's fees. Additional costs may include the **With One Voice** network fee and venue hire or supper costs, if these have not been secured as in-kind donations.

If you do not have any start-up funding then you will need to secure at least 20 full fee-paying members *upfront*, before the choir rehearsals commence.

Choirs really start to gain momentum when numbers reach 35 plus singers at each rehearsal. 60 members is a good number to aim for and some of our most successful choirs have over 100 registered participants.



d) Rehearsal space

Part of creating a community is having a stable, accessible and welcoming place to meet. This can be tricky because the choir requires weekly use of a venue. However, churches and municipal centres are often receptive to the **With One Voice** model because it actively welcomes everyone in the community. Alternatively, try local groups with their own premises, such as the Scouts, the Salvation Army or the local fire brigade.

Most **With One Voice** choirs have a home base and then a back-up venue for those dates in the calendar when your home base is pre-booked or unavailable.

Creativity Australia recommends that each rehearsal space has the following facilities and/or attributes, in this priority order:

- Wheelchair accessibility;
- Public transport accessibility;
- PA/speakers;
- Parking;
- Security access;
- Piano;
- Chairs and a table;
- Water, heating and cooling; and
- A kitchen or a space for the supper to be prepared and served.

e) Supper

Every **With One Voice** rehearsal ends with a shared supper. Supper time is a chance for the good feeling generated in rehearsal to translate into meaningful relationships. Over food each week, choir members catch up with each other, grant one another's wishes and make new friends.

Supper suppliers can be sourced in a number of ways. Choir members may decide to approach local cafes and food producers, organising pick-ups of the day's leftovers, or broker a fully sponsored deal with a local food producer. In big cities food rescue and redistribution services may deliver direct to your venue.

Regardless of where the food comes from, a team of volunteers usually picks up, prepares and lays out supper in advance of rehearsal and leads the choir clean up every week.

f) Wish List

The Wish List is a very special part of the weekly program. It is the chance for members to help and care for one another and build a true community. During the weekly rehearsal

Wish List volunteers read out wishes or requests that have been submitted by members, and the choir community responds and grants the wishes wherever possible.

The wishes can be anything from needing assistance with writing a CV, to needing donated furniture or assistance with moving house, to learning a new language or learning how to use the internet. Those who need assistance are able to ask for it, and those in a position to assist are able to respond. Through the process, the community is strengthened, lives are changed and new friends are made.

4. Functioning of the Organising Committee

The Organising Committee of volunteers is probably the most crucial part of a well-functioning **With One Voice** choir. The responsibility of managing the Organising Committee sits jointly with the Conductor and the Coordinator, although all volunteers can give input and offer ideas to ensure the smooth running of the Committee.

The volunteers on the Organising Committee give freely of their time, and it's important that each choir does all it can to protect them from potential burn-out. They require flexible, supported working conditions and a positive and empowering work culture.

Below are some suggestions for managing your own **With One Voice** volunteer team and creating an environment which will be fun and engaging for all.

Time commitment

The majority of Organising Committee volunteer roles require a weekly time commitment at choir. However, by sharing roles, the same person need not be committed to tasks every week. This tag-team approach allows the workers a chance to relax and just be a member of the choir from time to time.

Regular meetings

The Organising Committee should meet on a monthly basis, straight after rehearsal finishes. Even if you don't have a specific agenda or current project to work on, it's important that the meetings take place so that the Organising Committee can check in on each other, continue to build positive relationships, have a chance to voice anything that's on their mind and identify any areas or tasks for which support is required. Often the meetings can be brief – 15-30 minutes if time is used efficiently.

Absence

Every rostered volunteer is responsible for finding their own replacement when they are unable to fulfil their role. Volunteers must also communicate any changes in roster arrangements to the coordinator and the volunteer team so that everyone knows who is doing what from week to week.

Group communication

The Organising Committee should have multiple ways of contacting each other and will usually have each other's emails and mobile phone numbers – provided via a contact list for those members who are comfortable with their contact details being shared.

Group communication is easy once you have your Organising Committee on a mobile group messaging platform. Creativity Australia recommends [WhatsApp](#) because it works across Apple, Android, and Windows phones and it allows multiple people to be administrators on the group. It also allows for voice notes to be sent by people struggling with written messages due to language barriers or poor eyesight. Voice notes can also be used to record and send bits of the songs that need to be rehearsed.

Role share and inclusion

Whichever role you take on, sharing that role with others is part of the social inclusion model which defines [With One Voice](#) choirs. Working together deepens friendships which transform weekly choir rehearsals into a meeting of old friends. Part of volunteering is the active encouragement of others to participate. Participating in the work of the choir gives new members the chance to become part of their [With One Voice](#) community and begin to produce that experience for others. Joint responsibility for each role also means that no one works in isolation and every person has at least one other person for back-up at any time.

Projects vs regular volunteering

Some people work better with deadlines than others. Harness the potential of those who prefer projects to give your six-monthly or annual events a kick-start. Possible projects which will benefit the choir immensely but don't require an ongoing commitment may include:

- Co-ordinating public performances;
- Co-ordinating fundraising events; and
- Compiling the choir's Sing For Good entry.

Recognition

Take time to recognise the work that volunteers do at choir. This can be combined with the Wish List moment during rehearsal as something to celebrate with the rest of the group. To recognise special or prolonged contribution, use the Certificate of Appreciation and present it at rehearsal (see the [With One Voice](#) Template document).

Recruit

Take pressure off your core volunteers by welcoming new volunteers regularly at rehearsal. Calls for assistance work best when they are detailed and finite, for example: "We need someone to arrive early next week/month to set up chairs." Chances are that people will stay on longer than the initial ask but defining the original commitment encourages people to volunteer the first time.



Associated to calling for volunteers is keeping a regularly updated roster so that the same people are not committed to the roles long term, unless they want to be.

Regular requests for assistance to complete tasks encourages increased ownership of choir tasks by all members. Working together builds bonds between members, which transform weekly choir rehearsal into a strong supportive community.

Disputes

If your team has developed the ways of working listed above, then communication should be regular enough to catch issues before they become a problem.

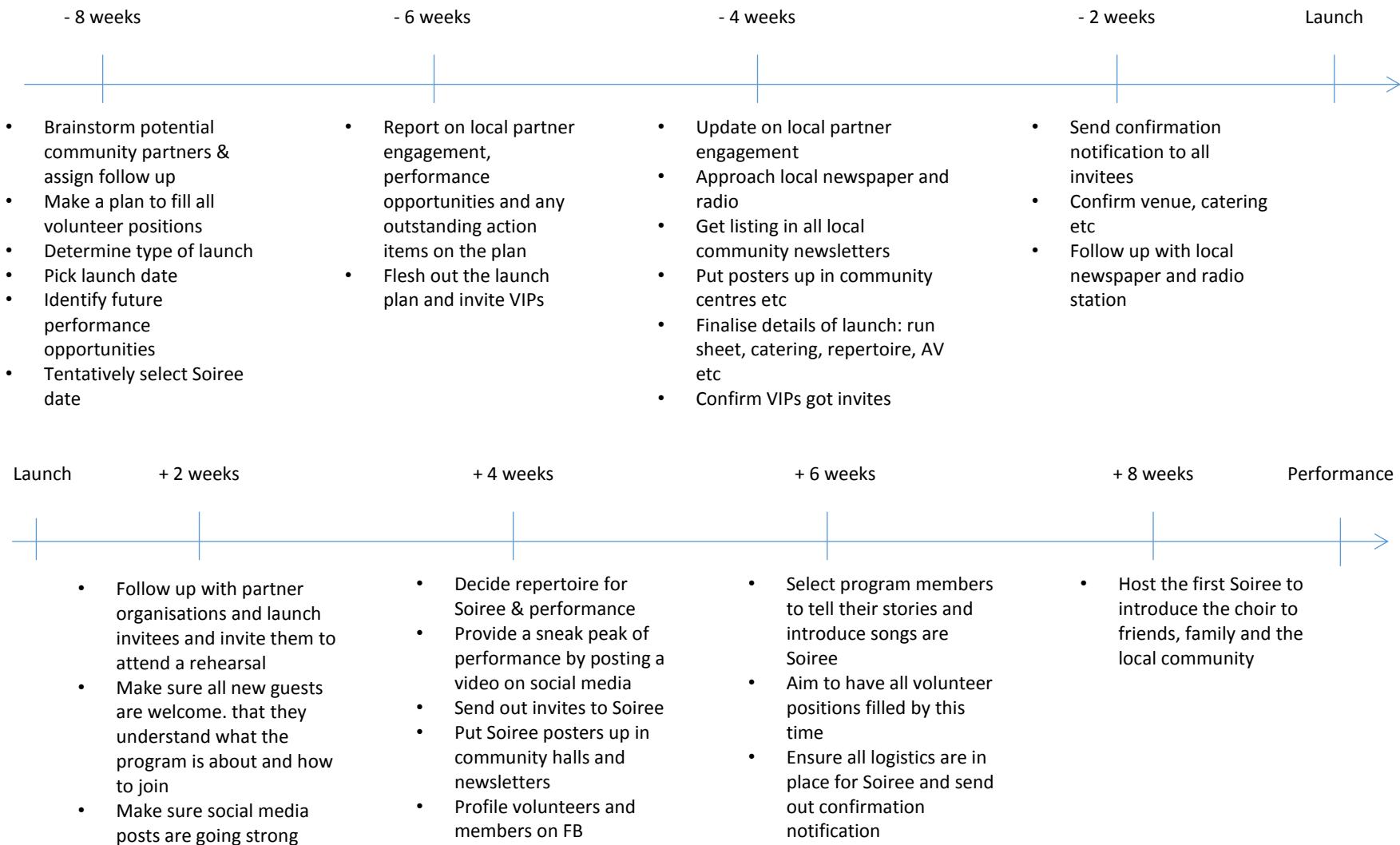
All volunteers are responsible for sorting out differences with each other in ways that are controlled, private if possible and respectful. While it may be appropriate to seek confidential advice from someone you trust, volunteers should never speak badly about team members or the Conductor to other choir members. This does not include constructive discussion at Organising Committee meetings regarding a difficult situation in the membership.

Encourage volunteers and members to sort out their differences one-on-one first before involving others. If one-on-one communication is inappropriate in the situation, then use the established complaints procedure (see the [**With One Voice**](#) Policies & Procedures document).

Creativity Australia retains the discretion to exclude members from [**With One Voice**](#) choir participation if need be.



5. Timeline for launching a new *With One Voice* choir



6. Promoting your choir

Membership is the lifeblood of all **With One Voice** choirs. Each choir needs to continually renew and build its membership to ensure a thriving choir of more than 100 people that celebrates your diverse community and changes lives over many years. Running a good program that people enjoy isn't usually enough to create real growth and ensure sustainability. Your committee and membership need to be pro-active in getting the **With One Voice** message out there to ensure we can deliver on our vision of changing the world, one voice at a time. Promoting the choir and continuously increasing membership is the responsibility of every choir member, not just the Organising Committee or conductor.

In this section, we will cover suggestions on how to promote your choir far and wide.

But first, a word of encouragement. Our original **With One Voice Melbourne** choir started with 30 members and, thanks to consistent promoting and spreading the word, became a choir of over 100 members. This then led to the commencement of more than 25 choirs who all sharing the joy of singing weekly around the nation. That very first choir utilised many of the suggestions listed here to get to where it is today.

Important elements of promotion:

List your favourite things about your choir

Before you start promoting your choir to potential members, you need to believe firmly in the choir yourself. It can help to make a list of all the things you love about your choir and what makes it special. Use this list as your selling points when you are recruiting new members and promoting the choir.

Promote the purpose

An often-overlooked way to recruit new members is to promote what your group stands for. Many organisations think their message is obvious, but an outsider looking in may have no idea why the group exists. Promote your purpose and share the **With One Voice** philosophy as widely as possible. What makes your choir special is the celebration of diversity, the coming together to eat a shared supper and The Wish List program. Highlighting these points of difference will help your program really stand out from others.

Give People a reason to join

Promote and advertise what you offer members that is unique and different. Share stories about the lives that are being saved and changed through the program. Celebrate community and friendship through inspiring songs and stories at performances. This will attract both people seeking support and those wanting to make a difference to others.

Ideas for promotion:

Word of Mouth:

The best method of advertising and recruitment is still word-of-mouth. Have members of your group each try to recruit new members including work colleagues, family and friends. Set up a special Soiree/Open Rehearsal and Supper Session or other social event where members

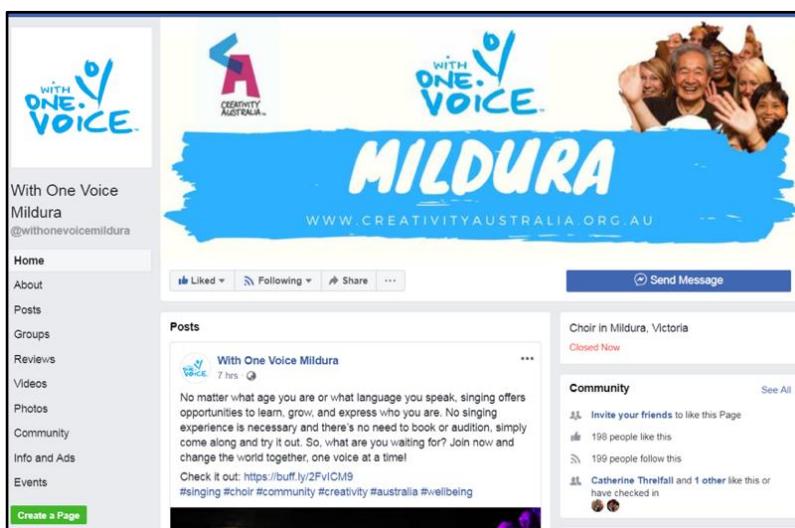
can bring these newcomers to see what the choir is all about. You will find they all start singing out for more!

Social media

It is highly recommended that each **With One Voice** choir establish its own social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc). By having a separate social media site, your choir can:

- Post pictures taken at rehearsals, events and soirees;
- Post clear calls to action for people to join the choir, including the date, time and location for rehearsals;
- Notify your community about upcoming events;
- Link with other **With One Voice** choir communities across Australia;
- Post on like-minded groups and community noticeboards;
- Collect and share testimonials, photos and stories of how the choir has changed your members' lives. Click [here](#) to see an example of how Creativity Australia does this;
- Share wishes granted through the With List and wishes that still need fulfilment;
- Share short videos and ask all your members and supporters (and their friends and families) to share them on their own social media channels. Who knows, your video may even go viral! and
- Link with Creativity Australia's social pages, which increases the visibility of your choir.

We have a wonderful team of staff at Creativity Australia who would love to work with you to ensure your online and digital communications are appropriate and effective.



Here is a screenshot of the **With One Voice** Mildura Facebook page. You can click [here](#) to view it online.

Creativity Australia recommends that the maintenance of your social media pages is a shared responsibility of the Organising Committee. It's important to ensure that the site is moderated for profanity, inappropriate comments or unauthorised photographs.

Signage at rehearsal venues

Rehearse in a very central venue and have your signage visible outside the building and wherever possible using sandwich boards and laminated signs with blue tack, and let everyone hear you raising the roof at your weekly sessions! Signage should include the name of the choir, details of when and where the choir rehearses, contact details and **With One Voice** logos.

Posters and flyers

Put postcards, posters and flyers up in shop windows at your local library, community centres, clubs, churches, post offices, community banks, shopping strips etc.

Referrals through networks

Reach out to the local council, young people, schools, local traders, chambers of commerce, service clubs (eg. Rotary, Lions Clubs), local banks, and aged care facilities, employment and disability agencies and ask them to refer their stakeholders and networks to join the choir.

Does your community have a high percentage of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) residents? Reach out to other community groups and ask members from different backgrounds to translate your posters and social media posts into different languages.

Take your show on the road

Here are some suggestions on how to really get word out about your choir by finding and creating opportunities for performances:

- Ensure that members of your committee and community invite the choir to perform at a huge range of local events including festivals, Carols by Candlelight, the launch of new buildings, Citizenship Ceremonies, awards nights, conferences, dinners and a host of special events.
- Once in a while, schedule your weekly choir session in a new location to gain greater community awareness of the choir's existence. Suggestions for once-off venues for choir rehearsals include at community events, public transport hubs such as a train station, community centres, libraries, retirement villages, book stores etc.
- Perform instant flash mobs on public transport, in city squares, shopping centres or even the local supermarket! Get the organisation and community to help promote your special appearance and invite guests. For inspiration, please watch our Founder Tania de Jong's group Pot-Pourri [performing this flashmob clip](#) where they surprise shoppers in a supermarket!
- Create your own concerts by busking in the local mall on special public holidays or weekends.
- Join with other local choirs at their performances to share the joy of song and messages of hope and inclusion, and then invite them to appear at your performances!

Use performances as an opportunity to recruit new members

Performances are a great way to create excitement about your choir and recruit new members.

At every performance opportunity, ensure you:

- Have plenty of posters and information about your choir available for members and others hand out;
- Have your MC, conductor and choir members encourage new membership in their introduction speeches and other dialogue during the performance; and
- Have mailing list forms on a clipboard ready to collect potential members' names, emails and phone details.

Utilise the media:

- Send out media releases on all your activities and get to know the editors and journalists of the local newspapers, online media and local radio stations. Don't be discouraged if it takes a while to be noticed. You need to be persistent and keep reaching out.
- Research the possibility of getting free editorials and adverts, and organise interviews and articles in community bulletins and newsletters of local businesses. Provide inserts to be used in employee packs, for display at front desks etc.
- Your conductor's talents and leadership will also be a key to gaining more members and media interest. Work out ways to share their story too.

Be personal and build your network:

- Keep a database of everyone who expresses interest in the choir, people who attend as guests, previous members and those who book/engage the choir for performance.
- Contact these people with an invite to follow your choir on your social media pages and/or to receive EDM updates from you.
- Send personal notes and invitations to members that you haven't seen for a while. Let them know that you've missed them, and are looking forward to their return.

Work with business:

Speak and/or have your choir perform for your City's Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Council and other meetings.

Be creative:

- Develop a custom made bumper sticker that has your choir's name, website and phone number, and put it on your car.
- Have choir business cards made with your meeting date, location, time, and a contact number. Pass them out everywhere.

Finally, if you have a great idea for promoting your choir and increasing membership that isn't listed here, please get in touch with the Creativity Australia team so that we can share it with the **With One Voice** family of choirs.

7. Building choir membership via partnerships

Underpinning each **With One Voice** program is a local community partnership model with three elements, as illustrated below:



By connecting to the existing networks the Organising Committee has, and by reaching out to local organisations, you will begin to build a strong program membership. Building the program membership is the responsibility of the entire Organising Committee. Each person on the committee will have their own networks that are a source of potential partnerships and new members.

How to build program membership

There are six key ways to build program membership. These are not just one-off activities, but rather on-going activities that you will use each year to continue to build and strengthen your membership. At the start of each year, the Organising Committee needs to set up a calendar of these activities and structure the choir rehearsals around these. To begin with, Creativity Australia will help you set up this calendar.

The key strategies for building choir membership are:

- Build partnerships with local groups and businesses who can refer people into the program;
- Promote your program by publishing an article or advert in the local community newsletters of:
 - Council
 - Neighbourhood Houses / Community Centres
 - Local schools (kindergarten, primary, secondary) and universities
- Ask the local paper to run a story on the choir;
- Hold performances/ Host a Soiree; and
- Set up social media channels, in particular a Meet Up group, and actively use these channels to promote weekly fun, upcoming performances, soirees and other events.

Referral partnerships

Referral partnerships are the life-blood of your program membership, and ensure that you are reaching into the community to connect with people experiencing disadvantage so they have the opportunity to hear about, and join, your choir.

Partnerships do not necessarily need to be formalised, and can be as simple as establishing a good rapport between the choir's Organising Committee and other not-for-profit or community organisations. The best way to start these relationships is a short phone conversation outlining the program and inviting them to visit a rehearsal and/or performance. Following this, it is best to organise an 'excursion' that brings a group of people from the referring organisation to the rehearsal. This group approach often works better than sending individuals on their own, as they may feel intimidated if coming on their own.

When starting to form referral partnerships, it is easiest to use existing networks. If you don't have anyone in your Organising Committee with such networks, consider approaching a local community organisation and asking them if they have anyone who would like to be on the Organising Committee.

8. How to manage program membership using the PaSME Extranet

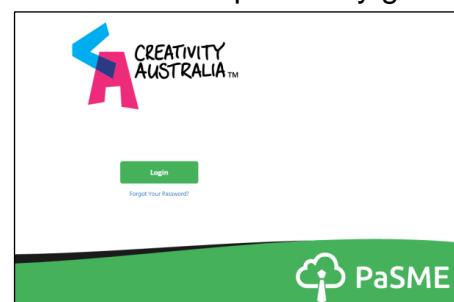
PaSME is an extranet platform that allows Creativity Australia and all **With One Voice** choirs to share information. PaSME houses all **With One Voice** membership information, and it is where you will record attendance at rehearsals and events.

Choir Registration volunteers have access to certain levels of information - specifically guest and member attendance lists and emergency contact information.

PaSME Portal: <https://ca.pasme.com.au>

PaSME Attendance web app: <https://app.pasme.com.au>

Note: PaSME provides extranet services for many different businesses. The 'ca' in the web address denotes Creativity Australia. If you miss that out of the address you may land on someone else's portal and be unable to log in.



Username: you will be given a generic username by Creativity Australia program staff.

Password: your password will be case sensitive.

All members of the registration team and several other Organising Committee members, particularly Member Support and the Coordinator, should download know how to access PaSME. This way, there are several options for people who can help out with registration if the designated volunteers are away.

9. How to organise rehearsals

This section includes a running sheet for a typical *With One Voice* choir rehearsal and details of how all the Organising Committee volunteer roles fit together.

Rehearsal running sheet

As a general rule, inner-city choirs start at 5.30pm so commuters can come straight from work. For choirs in suburban or rural areas, start time is usually around 6.30pm to allow everyone time to travel between their day time commitments and choir. The example below uses the inner-city choirs' start time of 5.30pm.

4.30 – Conductor, Supper, Registration, Member Support, Wish List and Set Up
 4.45pm volunteers arrive

4.45 – **Front Desk and Set Up**

5.00pm The Front Desk combines Registration for members and guests, Member Support for welcome and name tags and the Wish List so that on arrival members have the opportunity to add their offers and wishes to the list for that rehearsal's announcements. If you have a storage space at your venue then setting up the front desk will be a matter of setting up a table and unpacking your *With One Voice* suitcase containing forms and collateral to support these roles. Many choirs use venues which require the set up and pack-down of the room before and after use. Choir members often nominate to come early and set up chairs in formation for rehearsal.

Conductor Set Up

The Conductor will set up sound, projector, screen and their own instruments for accompaniment. Most Conductors will do this without assistance.

Supper

Supper Service volunteers may bring some food with them or retrieve food from venue fridges if food distribution companies deliver during the day. Supper preparation requires plating up and often bagging food stuffs so choir members can take food parcels home with them. The supper team will usually work right up till the 5.30pm rehearsal start time, leaving food plated and covered in services area until rehearsal finishes.

5.00 – **Members & Guests Arrive**

5.30pm On arrival, all members and guests must sign the attendance rolls. For choirs of 30 or more, registration will need two people working to process everyone in time. Guests will take more time to process as they fill in registration forms. Member Support volunteers welcome everyone and issue name tags.

Wish List volunteers encourage people to add their wishes and offers to the day's announcements.

5.30 – **Rehearsal**

6.20pm

All volunteers should watch the clock to make sure member registration and supper preparation is finished so that the Conductor can begin on time. Registration volunteers will often stay at the front desk for 10 minutes after rehearsal begins to process any late comers.

Everyone Sings

During rehearsal time, the Conductor leads the room. All guests and members listen and follow the Conductor's instructions to the best of their ability during rehearsal. In this way, everyone gets the most out of singing as a group. Feedback to the Conductor should occur over supper or by email outside choir time.

6.20 – **Wish List**

6.30pm

The Conductor will call for the Wish List at an appropriate moment during the rehearsal, usually just before the final song. Wish List volunteers will either make the announcements or invite givers and wishers up to announce for themselves. Those who can grant wishes or who accept offers may choose not to speak up during this session but will contact the Wish List volunteers directly over supper or outside rehearsal time.

Announcements

It may be that other volunteer team members need a moment to deliver an announcement or talk about the details of upcoming performance. This should be pre-arranged with the Conductor. Where an announcement requires some consultation and may take time, the Conductor may request that this occurs over the supper period.

6.30 – **Everyone Sings**

6.45pm

The Conductor resumes rehearsal. Some Conductors use a pack-up song which everyone sings as they return chairs and furniture to its normal state.

6.45 – **Supper**

7.10pm

Supper volunteers lay out the food with the help of all members. During supper, everyone has a chance to connect with friends, the Conductor and members of the volunteer team. Member Support volunteers will circulate around guests and especially seek out and welcome new members. The choir coordinators will be available to take feedback from the choir and will also actively welcome new people.

7.10 – Clean Up

7.30pm

Supper volunteers will lead the food clearing and service area clean up with the help of all members. You may have choir members who distribute left-overs to shelters or people experiencing homelessness in your local communities. All members should assist with the pack up of your venue with volunteer team members taking the lead to ask for help and assistance. Finance volunteers will collect and record any cash for banking from the Registration team. Registration, Member Support and Wish List volunteers will pack up the front desk.

7.30pm

Venue Close

In general, the Conductor will hold the premises keys and be the last to leave. Choir members will often help load the Conductor's equipment. **With One Voice** strongly endorses a buddy system for night-time lock up so that no one is left at the venue alone.

10. Fundraising activities

Fundraising for the choir is a great opportunity to raise money, promote the choir locally and for members to work together as a team and have fun! There are many different ways to fundraise and each choir will have its own creative ideas. Choose fundraising ideas that are fun, generate enthusiasm and allow members to participate. Some ideas to get you going include:

- Performances
- Trivia night
- Fancy dress rehearsal
- Sponsored walk/sing
- Sausage sizzle
- Chocolate drive
- Film viewings
- Record a single
- Garage sale
- Bake off
- Karaoke night
- Host a local market

Once you've chosen your fundraising activity/strategy, work through the following questions:

- **Purpose:** Decide what it is you're raising money for, such as 'to keep the program running' or 'to purchase new sound equipment.'
- **Fundraising target:** How much money are you aiming to raise once all expenses related to the fundraising activity have been covered?
- **Budget:** What expenses will you need to incur to make the fundraising activity happen? Consider the cost of invitations, space rental, catering, entertainment, and anything else that will be required to make the event a success.

- **Team management:** Work out who is organising which aspects of the fundraising activity and then make a shared document that outlines what needs to be done, by whom and by when. Then update it when tasks are completed.
- **Marketing:** Ensure you have at least one member of the Organising Committee focussing on marketing the fundraising activity. It's so important to let people know about your event or else all that hard work organising will be for nothing! Try and get free community call outs on local radio, newspapers and on social media. Posters are a great way to get your event out there. You could ask local businesses to display them in windows, at public transport hubs, schools, hospitals and other community organisations.
- **Celebrating:** People love to know whether fundraising targets have been reached, so be sure to let people know how far you got towards your goal – you never know, someone might chip in more if you need an extra push. Thank people for donating, thank your volunteers and fellow organisers.

10. Organising performances

This section provides an overview of how to run *With One Voice* events such as public performances and fundraisers.

People involved

Events volunteers supported by Organising Committee, Conductor and choir members

Finding a gig

While the role of the Events volunteers is to actively seek performance opportunities in the local community, in practice every member of your choir can help by using their personal networks and contacts to source gigs.

If you are starting completely from scratch then a good place to begin is the events page of your local Government website. You can also ask the local Government itself to engage your choir for some of its events. And why not get out and 'beat the streets' in your neighbourhood? Visit venues and local groups to find out what's going on.

Gigs are a great way to build momentum, teamwork and togetherness in the choir. Performing brings choir members closer together and motivates members to attend rehearsals regularly. Gigs recruit new members. There's nothing more attractive to would-be choir members than to see a group of people singing together and enjoying each other's company.



Performance leads

It is a general target to have four performances per choir each year in addition to the *With One Big Voice* concert which takes place in October or November and a few joint performances (for example Diwali Festival, Moomba, TEDx Melbourne, Light in Winter Festival, Harmony Day at Collins Place and the Mornington Interfaith Festival were opportunities for all choirs to become involved).

Performance leads come from a variety of sources:

- Repeat performances that may come directly to Creativity Australia;
- Conductors' contacts within the arts and community sectors; and
- Opportunities within the choir's local communities (and surrounds) from local Government, local charities, festivals, ceremonies, launches and other special events.

When a lead is generated, the following must occur:

Process for following up and booking a performance lead

Determine Conductor and choir availability:

- Find out the key event details (name of the event, date, location and event organiser's contact details);
- Ensure the event organiser knows the choir requires a performance donation fee (see recommended pricing below);
- Contact Creativity Australia to arrange issuing the organiser a tax-deductible donation invoice (which will be created one month before the event);
- Talk to the Conductor to ensure they are available and the event is feasible; and
- Find out how many choir participants can attend.

Process the booking:

- List the performance in the Google calendar for the specific choir;
- List the performance on the choir performance schedule on the Creativity Australia website;
- Get the event organiser to complete the Choir Performance Booking Form (see the WOV Resources Template document). Once completed, add the details into the Google calendar and invite the Conductor, principal volunteers and Creativity Australia staff to the event, so everyone knows what's going on;
- Attach any relevant information to the event (site maps, performance packs, etc) and keep adding updated information to the calendar entry to assure that it is the most updated source of information on the event;
- Ensure the Conductor and event organiser have discussed and agreed on technical requirements (such as amplification, instruments and equipment).

Leading up to the event:

- Provide the event organiser with any promotional material required, such as an introductory blurb, photographs or logo (Creativity Australia will provide volunteers with approved materials);
- Keep participants up-to-date with concise event details at rehearsals and via email (it's a great idea to create an information sheet with the performance details on it to distribute to the choir);
- Keep the Creativity Australia team and Board informed of more significant performance events that they could attend to watch the choir perform; and
- Ensure the choir has enough *With One Voice* postcards/posters, Sing for Good cards and posters and donation forms to distribute at the event (you can ask Creativity Australia for extra stock if needed, with good lead time).

On the Day of the event

On the day a running sheet is your best friend. Every choir member should have one.

Gig organisers will also need to bring a few things with you:

- With One Voice t-shirts and spares in case anyone forgets theirs;
- Camera and/or video camera and a family member or friend to take photos/videos;
- Mailing list sheet to collect names and contact details for potential new members or those who wish to be informed about future performances; and
- Choir flyers or any other promotional material for choir members to hand out after the performance.

Once the performance is over, share the photos and videos with Creativity Australia and on the choir's social media pages as soon as possible, tagging those involved in the event.

Ask the event organiser to write a testimonial about the performance and the audience's response and share this with Creativity Australia and the choir's social media pages.

Resources

Creativity Australia will provide you with the following templates help you get the job done:

- Booking form
- Donations invoice
- Gig flier
- Running sheet
- Mailing list sheet

Performance standards, repertoire and processes

With One Voice choirs will generally perform as a feature performance at key events and festivals (from one story and song up to a number of songs). They may occasionally perform as guests are entering a venue to create a vibe, though this should usually be followed with at least one feature song and spoken introduction or story.



All performances should include selected **With One Voice** members sharing stories about what the choir means to them, how their wishes have been granted and introducing key songs that tie in with those stories. Stories by choir members should also be rehearsed in front of the choir, Conductor and Organising Committee before any performances so that members gain confidence speaking in public. If the story is too long or loses focus, please assist in editing as appropriate. Stories should come from the heart and serve as an excellent introduction to the songs performed.

At all events, the Conductor or an event MC will read the Performance Script outlining the ideals of **With One Voice** and encourage new participation and support.

Repertoire for any performances should include some well-known standard songs with which audiences are familiar and can sing along to (especially older audiences as our choirs primarily perform to an older demographic). Repertoire should also be themed to suit the specific event, such as the occasion, location, event themes etc.

All songs performed in a public setting need to be well rehearsed so that the majority of participants at an event know the tune and harmonies by memory and can sing with complete confidence and passion. No lyric sheets are to be used except for Christmas carols events (though projection screens may be used to project lyrics at larger, longer concerts).

Conductor, volunteers and choir members should stay around after performances where possible to network with the audience, encourage new potential participants and share the **With Once Voice** story. When participants do stay at an event it is imperative that they are attentive and quiet until the formalities have been completed.

Raising funds

As well as performing, there is always an opportunity to raise both money and awareness. At all performances, there should be members who are engaging with the audience about the choir and joining/ supporting. These people should have lots of postcards to hand out and take names and contact details wherever possible.

Another opportunity is to raise some money through donations. Each performance should have a donation tin/box handy as members of the public often want to contribute after seeing us perform. It is also a good idea to have a way of making these people 'stand-out' from the crowd – we find a sparkly hat works well.

The donation forms should be displayed and referred to in conversation by choir members. A further way of maximising the opportunity is to speak about the Giving Circle during the performance and highlight the need for community support to allow people who are experiencing disadvantage to be a part of our wonderful program.

Pricing

Choir performances are a way to build membership and extend public awareness of the **With One Voice** movement. They also provide the choir with great goals to work towards, which builds confidence and satisfaction amongst choir members.

While you may decide to perform for free to get community exposure and attract new members, remember that performing will cost the choir. The best gigs will at least cover the Conductor's fee and add something to the choir's finances in the process.

The **With One Voice** performance fee structure is usually in the range of:

- \$350 community or not-for-profit performance fee
- \$500 - \$750 standard performance fee
- \$750 - \$1,500 corporate performance fee

In invoicing and recouping payment for a performance, the following process will occur:

- Finance volunteers will prepare a donation invoice for your client (see the WOV Resources Template document) and send a copy to finance@creativityaustralia.org.au;
- The client will deposit the payment into Creativity Australia's bank account; and
- The funds will then be added to your choir's funding pool.

On the rare occasion Creativity Australia agrees for a performance to be held for no charge, it is decided upon the following criteria:

- If it is a thank you to our sponsoring venue to do a performance at the venue itself (one per year) or for another significant partner/supporter/donor;
- If there is a good opportunity to market the choir to a large group of people that may bring new membership (we get a lot of requests to sing at aged care facilities and unless the above two criteria applies, we will probably not do them at our expense); or
- If a choir has not performed for a long while and really need the opportunity for some public profile or to build their morale (less common as each choir has performances throughout the year).

11. Hosting a soiree

People involved

Event volunteers, volunteer team, Conductor, members.

What is a soiree?

A soiree is a performance held in your choir's rehearsal space at the usual rehearsal time. In essence, it's like an open rehearsal that anyone is welcome to attend and participate in to get a feel of what the choir is all about. The Conductor will most likely include participatory songs that can be taught to the audience/attendees on the night. The soiree ends with a special supper. Each choir will host two soirees per year.



The benefits of a Soiree

The benefits of a soiree include the opportunities to:

- Promote the choir to family and friends;
- Increase choir membership;
- Engage with local stakeholders and provide them with a snapshot of the **With One Voice** choir program;
- Provide a focus for the choir Organising Committee to demonstrate their group leadership; and
- Build the confidence of choir participants through preparing for a performance.



How to organise a Soiree

Compared with a public performance, a soiree will be relatively simple to book and plan. Often the soiree is instigated by the Conductor, however here is a general to-do list if you are planning one as a group:

- Consult with your Conductor for possible dates;
- Consult with the choir at rehearsal for availability of members;
- Notify your venue and gain permission to host the Soiree;
- Create a Soiree flier and share it with choir members and Creativity Australia;
- Personally invite any choir sponsors or potential partners and organise certificates of thanks that can be awarded on the night;
- Create a simple running sheet (see the WOV Social Franchise Resources Template document) and distribute to choir members;
- Request volunteers to help with:
 - Meet and greet of guests
 - Special supper contributions
 - Gaining contact details of audience members so you can keep them informed of other events and engage them as participants
- Attend rehearsals and get ready to perform!

12. Conclusion

On behalf of the Creativity Australia team, GOOD LUCK with the launch of your choir! We look forward to working with you on the journey ahead as you use singing to unite your community and impact the diverse individuals in it, changing lives one voice at a time.

You can contact us for anything you may need – we are here to support and encourage you in this important work!