



PRESS RELEASE

Creativity Australia inspires people to find their voice – November 2011

Since launching 3 years ago, **Creativity Australia** has gone from strength to strength in its vision to deliver inclusive, creative programs for individuals, communities and organisations that result in positive social and economic outcomes.

Creativity Australia inspires people to find their voice by bringing creative programs to workplaces and communities to enhance wellbeing, social inclusion, innovation, engagement, employability and productivity in an increasingly complex and uncertain global environment.

Creativity Australia has achieved wonderful success with its **WITH ONE VOICE** pilot program - **Melbourne Sings** choir. This strategic partnership with Sofitel Melbourne On Collins and various government agencies was awarded the ABAF Toyota Community Award in 2010. The *Melbourne Sings* choir brings together employees from Melbourne businesses, the unemployed, those with disabilities and migrants from the Fitzroy and Collingwood housing estates. Members range in age from 12 to 85 years and span 15 nations.

Due to the success of the pilot program, Creativity Australia has commenced a number of other programs including **The Royal Children's Sings** which is designed to bring staff from different departments together on a regular basis to improve wellbeing, social cohesion and innovation across the hospital, **Geelong Sings** and **Mind over Music** - a program designed as a positive intervention to assist young people with emerging mental health issues at Orygen Youth Health. Other programs now live in action include **Greater Dandenong Sings, Sunshine Sings, Footscray Sings, Heidelberg Sings, Hume Sings, St Kilda Sings, Frankston Sings** and **Our Community Sings at Ashburton / Ashwood / Chadstone**. Sydney Sings will commence in 2012 and there are enquiries to start new programs from all over Australia.

The programs have transformed the lives of hundreds of people across Victoria. Participants have shared their stories, and moved thousands of people with their heartfelt performances.

The choir programs are unique in that they deliberately build and bridge social capital. They bring together people of all ages and from all walks of life, cutting across socioeconomic, cultural, generational and even linguistic barriers in the pursuit of harmony. Indeed, a significant proportion of our participants are recent migrants to Australia, and the choirs provide important opportunities to develop networks for friendship, belonging and employment. This has already led to some of the migrants gaining employment through improved self esteem and skills developed through our programs. (Please see Nathalie's inspiring story.)

When many diverse voices come together as "one voice", the outcomes are transformational.

With the urban population explosion imminent and a massive skills shortage, it will be more important than ever before to build social capital, new creative skills and strong communities, not just bricks and mortar.

For more information, please contact **Founder and Chair Tania de Jong AM** or **Ewan McEoin** on 03 8679 6088 or tania@creativityaustralia.org.au www.creativityaustralia.org.au



THE QUESTIONS THE ANSWERS

What is Creativity Australia's Vision and Mission?

Mission

Creativity Australia inspires people to find their voice

Vision

Deliver inclusive, creative programs for individuals, communities and organisations that result in positive social and economic outcomes.

Creativity Australia was established in November 2008 by social entrepreneur Tania de Jong AM as a not-for-profit organisation partnering with business, education, health, community and charity groups, government and philanthropists.

Creativity Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that develops creative programs to enhance wellbeing, social inclusion, innovation and productivity for individuals, organisations and communities. We create sustainable social and economic outcomes through recognising and unlocking creative potential.

Creativity Australia sees a special role in reaching out to disadvantaged sections of the community to provide access for all people to tap their own creative potential.

Creativity Australia believes that self-esteem and wellbeing are achieved when people find their voice. In our diverse communities, Creativity Australia believes that people fulfill their potential when they feel creative, connected, supported and included. When many diverse voices come together the outcomes are transformational!

By encouraging greater creativity and innovation, Creativity Australia is offering new and exciting pathways to enable personal wellbeing, social acceptance and inclusion, and highly productive and happier members of our great Australian community.

Who is involved?

Creativity Australia has engaged with a number of community leaders, different levels of government and businesses. Patrons and partners include Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC, Hugh Morgan AC, Allan Fels AO, AMES, BSL, DPCD, Sofitel Melbourne On Collins and VECCL.

In addition, CA has a number of Ambassadors and "Thought Leaders"; leading members of the business and wider communities, to promote the organisation and to stimulate the discussion of the role creativity plays in improving people's lives, organisations and society.

What initiatives are already being developed by Creativity Australia?

- **Mind over Music:** Music and other creative programs for wellbeing/positive mental health in partnership with mental health institutes and researchers.
- **With One Voice** – an enormous range of community and corporate choir programs
- **With One BIG Voice** – major live concert event bringing together all the programs
- **Inspiring Minds** – workplace and conference programs for an outperformance culture to improve leadership and skills in creativity, innovation and wellbeing.

- **Migrant and Employment Mentors** – casual and more formal programs to assist migrants and jobseekers to gain self esteem, training and skills leading to employment.

What specific programs is Creativity Australia offering to organisations?

Creativity Australia provides the following creative thinking and leadership programs tailored to individual workplaces and corporate cultures:

1. Keynote speeches, forums and debates on creative leadership and innovation.
2. The Inspiring Minds/Brainstorm Series: 'Creative booster' sessions for conferences, retreats, board meetings, break-out sessions – incl. Finding Your Voice, The Corporate Storyteller etc
3. Customised programs to engender a climate of innovation amongst leaders or special operating units.
4. Professional development opportunities through secondments with CA
5. With One Voice Corporate Choirs and With One BIG Voice (more info below).
6. Limited places are available in mixed community/business choirs. The cost per employee includes a donation towards the cost of sponsoring the participation of one disadvantaged person.

How do the WITH ONE VOICE programs work?

The *With One Voice* and *With One BIG Voice* programs encourage individual organisations or mixed community partnership groups to form and support staff choirs to learn how to sing and work as a special team together.

Through *With One Voice*, Creativity Australia helps organisations establish and train their choirs weekly over a minimum of 12 months, including arranging for outstanding choir leaders to work with them. Creativity Australia finds and organises opportunities at special events, conferences and festivals for the choirs to perform and make links to disadvantaged groups to enhance the programs' social purpose and contribution.

The concept appeals to companies and government agencies that not only want to foster their own culture, teamwork, wellbeing and innovation, but see a social mission in encouraging their staff to engage with disadvantaged people in the wider community.

The *With One BIG Voice* massed choirs performances provide opportunities for wider community, corporate and media exposure to the Creativity Australia message and programs. The 2010 event took place at Melbourne Recital Centre and 2011 will take place at Melbourne Town Hall featuring 13 *With One Voice* choirs.

Will Creativity Australia sponsor research into stimulating and nurturing personal and organisational creativity?

CA will initiate related research, including wellbeing surveys for choir members and longitudinal studies by leading research institutes and universities to assess the effects of CA-supported programs on personal wellbeing, employee retention and productivity, mental health status and engagement between individuals and their communities.

How is Creativity Australia funded?

Creativity Australia is a not-for-profit organisation with a business and financial plan. It derives income to support its initiatives and programs from:

- Philanthropic donations to The CA Fund to assist disadvantaged people and communities
- State and federal government assistance for which CA is eligible; and
- Fees from corporate advisory activities, entry fees from employed people participating in the Choirs programs, and media rights for any events given radio or TV coverage.
- Fundraising events and corporate sponsorship

For the *With One Voice* programs, packages are developed for individual organisations and communities, with costs being determined on an individual basis.



THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE CREATIVITY

Patrons

Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC, DBE
Lady Marigold Southey AC
Professor Allan Fels AO
Hugh Morgan AC
Emeritus Professor John Hay AC

Ambassadors

Professor Graham Burrows AO
John Calvert-Jones AM
Terry Campbell AO
Dr Alan Finkel AM
Dr Peter Hollingworth AC, OBE
Professor Andrea Hull AO
Gordon Moffat AM

Board

Peter Kronborg, Sue Larkin, Tim Smith, Andrew Miller, Tania de Jong AM (Founding Chair)

Thought Leaders

Mary Barlow
Terry Barnes
Mark Bergin
Rufus Black
Graham Bradley AM
Julie Caldecott
Frank Cicutto
James Demetriou
John Denton
Wayne Dyson
Saul Eslake
Hugh Evans
Senator Mitch Fifield
Jo Fisher
Stephen Grant
Elaine Henry OAM
John Higgins
Brad Howarth
Assoc. Professor John Kelly AM
Leon Kempler OAM
Peter Kronborg
Dr Janine Kirk AM
Dr Simon Longstaff
Professor Patrick McGorry
Jan Owen AM
Michael Rennie
Carol Schwartz AM
Clive Scott
Professor John Seybolt
Dr Peter Shergold AC
Steven Skala AO
The Honorable John So
Evan Thornley
Alison Watkins
Peter Williams
Professor Martin Westwell
Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann

Government Partners

Brimbank City Council
Department of Immigration and Citizenship
Department of Planning and Community Development
City of Greater Dandenong
City of Maribyrnong
City of Monash
Victorian Multicultural Commission

Creativity Partners

Allabout Tours and Travel
Allans Music
Australia Israel Chamber of Commerce
Barwon Health
Barwon Water
BDO Corporate Finance
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Centre for Social Impact
Citywide
Committee for Melbourne
Deakin University
De Bono Institute
Diversitat
Eastside Printing
Efront Web Design
Encompass
Go Fundraise
Hawker Britton
Hilton Manufacturing
Infoxchange
Macpherson & Kelley Lawyers
Multicultural Arts Victoria
Music Theatre Australia
Neighbourhood Renewal
PageUp People
Pro Bono Australia
Sofitel Melbourne On Collins
St James Ethics Centre
TAC
The Banner Lady
Thinking.com.au
Travellers Aid
VECCI
Waterfront Christian Church

Wellbeing Partners

Orygen Youth Mental Health
Royal Children's Hospital

Foundation Partners

Angior Family Foundation
Edward Wilson Estate
Estate of the Late Patrick Brennan
Estate of the late GWA Griffiths
Fosters in the Community
Ian Potter Foundation
National Australia Trustees Ltd
Norman H Johns Trust
Pierce Armstrong Foundation
RE Ross Trust
Scanlon Foundation



TANIA DE JONG AM

BIOGRAPHY

Tania de Jong AM is a leading Australian soprano and social entrepreneur. She founded Creativity Australia and Creative Universe to improve wellbeing, engagement and innovation in organisations and communities. She has a Bachelor of Law (Honours) from the University of Melbourne and is a graduate of Victorian College of the Arts. Her numerous awards include Ernst and Young Australian Social Entrepreneur of the Year as Founder of The Song Room.

She was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 2008 for service to the arts as a performer and entrepreneur and through the establishment and development of music and arts enrichment programs for schools and communities and named Brainlink Woman of Achievement in 2009. Tania consults to multinational organizations on creative leadership and innovation, works with a range of migrants and disadvantaged communities to build social capital, wellbeing and employment and performs nationally and internationally with her group Pot-Pourri and event production company Music Theatre Australia.

She presents keynote speeches in Australia and internationally for a diverse range of conferences and events. She is Founder and Executive Producer of Creative Innovation 2010 and 2011.

*“Our society is fragmented and our ability to communicate with other people and express ourselves is limited. This undermines our fundamental human values, sense of family and community. **Creativity Australia** is about inspiring more productive individuals, organisations and communities.”*

Tania de Jong AM, Founding Chair

For more information, please contact Founder and Chair Tania de Jong AM or Ewan McEoin on (03) 8679 6088 or email tania@creativityaustralia.org.au and visit www.creativityaustralia.org.au

Nathalie Mbala's story



Nathalie (pictured left speaking at a Melbourne Sings performance), a migrant from Cameroon in Africa, who left to escape the dictatorial regime and make a better life for her family, is just one of the people we have assisted so far through our programs.

Through the Brotherhood of St Laurence's 'Giving a Chance' program, she heard about With One Voice's 'Melbourne Sings' choir, which brings together disadvantaged migrants and employees and executives, assisting in making friends and connecting to their new community – perhaps even finding employment. Three members of her class joined the choir including Nathalie.

A few weeks after joining, Nathalie was crying at choir. The group asked her what was wrong, and she said she had a job interview. They had thought this was great news, but Nathalie was afraid. She said: "No, I do not think I can get the job."

Some of the executives and coaches in the choir mentored Nathalie for her job interview. Two weeks later she came to choir beaming. She had been offered the job at ANZ on the spot. Her self-esteem improved and now she has become a spokesperson of the choir. She has spoken in front of hundreds of people introducing the choir and her story including at the Diversity@Work Awards Dinner, Parliament of World Religions, Moomba and the Global Foundation Australia Unlimited Conference. Her confidence and communication skills have continued to develop and through the support of the choir she is finally in a role at ANZ which gives her the chance to utilise her accounting skills. She says:

"The choir is an escape for me. To open my heart, to be relaxed, happy and forget about all the problems. It's an open door that you can only see flowers in front and be happy. Enjoy the perfume of the song. The choir really had an important role in my confidence. The diversity in the choir is really huge. Tania, Peter, Shaun... all of them were there for me. And when I got my job interview to prepare they gave me a hand to improve my confidence and to take that step... it was really hard for me. I was so nervous, so emotional. I couldn't believe I would have a job. Then I have the job. I say thanks to BSL, thanks to ANZ who recruited me and most importantly thanks to Tania [de Jong] for her support and all of the members of the choir. Now I feel as if I belong."

Please see video clips of our programs here and Melbourne Sings. The choir has a beautiful spirit! Watch here, especially the interviews (including ones with Nathalie)!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7avA8nrzrYA>
<http://creativityaustralia.org.au/index.php>
www.creativityaustralia.org.au

P.S. Nathalie introduced the choir with her story at the SWB Conference. After telling the audience how she was having trouble getting to choir since her hours at work had changed, the Head of the ANZ Private Bank was so moved by her story and the choir that she made it her personal quest to ensure that Nathalie worked from 9 to 5! Now Nathalie can attend choir each Tuesday at Sofitel and cook her children's dinner.