



## PRESS RELEASE

### Creativity Australia is building social capital – September 2010

Since its launch 20 months ago, **Creativity Australia** has gone from strength to strength in its mission to bring creativity and creative programs to the people of Australia. By bringing creative thinking and leadership into their organisations, employers can increase wellbeing, productivity, employee cohesion and innovation, all of which are more important than ever in this troubled economic environment. Creativity Australia is also developing a number of innovative programs bridging social capital for disadvantaged people and communities, businesses and government.

Most notably, Creativity Australia has achieved wonderful success with its **WITH ONE VOICE** pilot program - **Melbourne Sings** choir. This is a strategic partnership with Sofitel Melbourne On Collins, Allan's Music and various government agencies. The **Melbourne Sings** choir brings together employees from Melbourne businesses and disadvantaged people and migrants from the Fitzroy and Collingwood housing estates.

Since Creativity Australia's launch in November 2008, 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, it will be more important than ever before to build social capital and strong communities, not just bricks and mortar.

Creativity Australia has commenced a number of other programs including **The Royal Children's Hospital Choir** 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 new program designed as a positive intervention to assist young people with emerging mental health issues at Orygen Youth Health. Other *With One Voice* choirs that have commenced in 2010 include **Greater Dandenong Sings** and **Maribyrnong Sings** focusing on single migrant mums supported by Fosters in the Community. Other programs commencing shortly include **Sunshine, Heidelberg, Broadmeadows, St Kilda** and **Ashburton**.

For more information about Creativity Australia, please contact **Founder Tania de Jong AM** on 03 8679 6088 or [enquiries@creativityaustralia.org.au](mailto:enquiries@creativityaustralia.org.au) Visit [www.creativityaustralia.org.au](http://www.creativityaustralia.org.au)



# THE QUESTIONS

# THE ANSWERS

## What is Creativity Australia (CA)?

CA was established in November 2008 as a not-for-profit organisation partnering with business, education, health, community and charity groups, government and philanthropists.

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

## Who is involved?

CA has engaged with a number of community leaders and businesses. Patrons and partners include Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC, Hugh Morgan AC, Allan Fels AO, Committee for Melbourne, Sofitel Melbourne On Collins and VECCI.

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 is CA’s Vision and Mission?

We are Creativity Australia, a not-for-profit organisation that utilises 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.

To achieve our vision and purpose, we:

- Develop innovative programs that inspire passion and optimism
- Advocate for creative thinking and leadership
- Integrate all sectors of our community through creative activities
- Work with high calibre and inspirational creative leaders
- Enhance individual and collective leadership and responsibility
- Build meaningful relationships with employees, participants, partners, donors, sponsors, corporations, government and the community.
- Seek to operate with professional standards of governance, processes and procedures

CA 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.

## What initiatives are already being developed by CA?

- **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 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 Mentors** – casual and more formal programs to assist migrants and other marginalized people to gain self esteem, training and skills leading to employment.

### **What specific programs is CA offering to organisations?**

CA 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*, CA helps organisations establish and train their choirs weekly over a minimum of 12 months, including arranging for outstanding choir leaders to work with them. CA finds and organises opportunities for the choirs to perform and make links to disadvantaged group 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 performance will provide opportunities for wider community, corporate and media exposure to the CA message and programs. The first performance will take place on 8<sup>th</sup> September at Melbourne Recital Centre.

### **Will CA sponsor research into stimulating and nurturing personal and organizational 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 CA being funded?**

CA 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 organizations and communities, with costs being determined on an individual basis.

**For more information, please contact Founder Tania de Jong AM on (03) 9682 9686 or email [Tania@creativityaustralia.org.au](mailto:Tania@creativityaustralia.org.au) and visit [www.creativityaustralia.org.au](http://www.creativityaustralia.org.au)**



# 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

Sue Crook, Peter Kronborg, Sue Larkin, Kelly O'Dwyer,  
Tania de Jong AM (Founding Chair)

## Thought Leaders (more to come)

Mary Barlow  
Terry Barnes  
Mark Bergin  
Rufus Black  
Graham Bradley AM  
Julie Caldecott  
Alan Castleman  
Frank Cicutto  
James Demetriou  
John Denton  
Wayne Dyson  
Saul Eslake  
Hugh Evans  
Senator Mitch Fifield  
Jo Fisher  
Stephen Grant  
Jane Harvey  
Elaine Henry OAM  
John Higgins  
Assoc. Professor John Kelly AM  
Leon Kempler OAM  
Peter Kronborg  
Dr Janine Kirk AM  
Dr Simon Longstaff  
Professor Patrick McGorry  
Andrew Norton  
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

ACEL  
All About Travel  
Allans Music  
Australia Israel Chamber of Commerce  
Australian Secondary Principals Association  
Barwon Health  
Barwon Water  
BDO Corporate Finance  
Brotherhood of St Laurence  
CEDA  
Centre for Social Impact  
Centre for Sustainability Leadership  
Citywide  
Committee for Melbourne  
Company Matters  
Cornwell Design  
Deakin University  
De Bono Institute  
Diversitat  
Eastside Printing  
Efront Web Design  
Encompass  
Go Fundraise  
Hawker Britton  
Hilton Manufacturing  
Infoxchange  
InterRISK  
Kate Scott: Streamer Design & Communication  
Kwan  
L'Oreal Melbourne Fashion Festival  
Macpherson & Kelley Lawyers  
Multicultural Arts Victoria  
Music Theatre Australia  
Neighbourhood Renewal  
PageUp People  
Pro Bono Australia  
Quantumlinx  
Sofitel Melbourne On Collins  
St James Ethics Centre  
TAC  
The Banner Lady  
Thinking.com.au  
Travellers Aid  
VECCI  
Waterfront Christian Church

## Wellbeing Partners

Australian Centre on Quality of Life,  
Deakin University  
Net Balance Foundation  
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.

*“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**

## 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](http://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.