

# VOX POPULI (VOICE OF THE PEOPLE)

July - October 2008

## Project Description

The overall aim of this project was to develop a community choir and to facilitate a sense of community for those experiencing mental health issues through the medium of music. A music director and other specialist tutors worked with the choir with the aim of performing at a significant event to celebrate Mental Health Week in October 2008.

## Host Organisation

North West Mental Health Week (NWMHWC) committee.

## Funding sources

Corporate sponsorship was received from the following companies: Dale Elphinstone, Skilled, Royce Fairbrother & funding from the Regional Arts Fund

## Outcomes

The NWMHW steering committee has already begun planning for Mental Health Week 2009. The choir is now continuing due to demand from members. Several choir members have also joined other choir groups.

## Highlights

*'Seeing and hearing the entire audience and participants singing together at the end of our concert; in particular the strength of the combined 2 choirs (Vox Populi and the World's Worst Choir) helping each other maintain the last song and finally realising that they were the stars!' - Teresa Beck-Swindale*

## Project workers

Teresa Beck-Swindale (Music Director)  
Katy Pakinga (Specialist Tutor)  
Kay Lincoln (Specialist Tutor)  
Denise Sam (Specialist Tutor)  
Clare Thompson (Project Co-ord)

## Keywords

Music/Choir, Burnie, Mental Health

## Project Contact

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Mental Health Week (MHW) is a national event held during the second week of October every year. The aim of MHW is to raise community awareness about the importance of maintaining positive mental health and to reduce the stigma which persists around mental health issues.



Throughout the life of the choir project, approximately 30 people met every Wednesday evening at the Burnie Coastal Art Gallery to rehearse for a public performance scheduled for Wednesday October 8th. On the night of the performance 35 people performed to an audience of approximately 250 people.

In addition to overseeing the development of Vox Populi, the North West Mental Health Week (NWMHWC) committee also worked together with a number of non-mental health focused community organisations to conduct a one-day expo that aimed to cater to the broader community need of maintaining positive mental health.

Agencies involved with organising the event: Salvation Army, Aspire, Richmond Fellowship Tasmania, Richmond Fellowship Supported Packages of Care, Community Connections Inc, Parkside Community Mental Health Team, Devonport Adult Community Mental Health Team, Spencer Clinic, TAFE Tasmania – Burnie campus, Australian Red Cross MATES program, Anglicare & North West Mental Health Services.

*"no matter how bad I felt before I came, after singing, everything feels better!"*

- Choir member



## Also in Burnie... Serpentine Art Studio

Serpentine Studio enables people with disabilities to participate in arts and crafts, concentrating on exploration of various techniques and encouraging free expression. Located in Burnie, the studio's aim is to achieve reverse integration by encouraging a variety of artists to exhibit their work along side the work of people with disabilities. For more information: [www.multicap.com.au/serpentine.html](http://www.multicap.com.au/serpentine.html) or T:03 64313211

## Image

Vox Populi at the Mental Health Expo 2008  
Photo courtesy of NWMHW Committee.