

Edited details, of the initial proposal for Perth Male Voice Choir and Spirit of the Street Choir, combined concert.

Choir History

The **Spirit of the Streets Choir** was originally the Big Issue Choir however the name was changed to make it more inclusive for other people who were homeless, long term unemployed, socially excluded, suffering from substance abuse or with a history of mental illness.

The choir is essentially for the people who do not get a seat at the table of conventional society, the people who are excluded and vulnerable and who require the non judgmental social interaction which is embodied in the choir.

The October 14th, concert performance should reflect this spirit of inclusion, acceptance and joy. It should convey the lifestyle situation of many of the people who sell The Big Issue magazine.

Many are homeless with tragic life stories of abuse, and self inflicted addiction. Others have suffered mental illness and social non acceptance resulting in isolation and low self esteem.

The choir has brought a ray of light into their lives, a way to communicate and a forum for socializing which had never been possible before.



Later the Perth Male Voice Choir took up the role of supporting the Spirit of the Street's Choir.

This is an initiative of the Perth Male Voice Choir, now in its eighty second year.

The objective of this project is for Perth Male Voice Choir, to provide support for and to assist with the development of the "Spirit of the Streets Choir."

It is planned that this will be achieved by working the two choirs together progressively to develop a program through joint rehearsals. The culmination of the enterprise would be to appear on stage together in front of a large audience at a major venue.

It is envisaged that each choir would perform separate brackets and then come together in combination.

It is the WA equivalent of the Eastern States based "Choir of Hard Knocks" and draws its membership from the disadvantaged sectors of our community taking in the homeless and persons suffering either a physical or mental disability.

The ABC TV series, Choir of Hard Knocks, demonstrated what can be achieved.

The WA "Spirit of the Streets" choir group presents exactly the same difficulties and therefore the very same opportunity to improve their situation by helping to improve the health of the participants, reduce the stigma and isolation their condition creates, increasing their self esteem and providing an opportunity to be a part of a group enjoying the benefits, fellowship and shared values that choir participation can bring.

The "Spirit of the Streets" choir draws its membership from the grossly disadvantaged members of our community in general, the homeless, persons with mental health issues and co morbidity or other significant disabilities.

There is no discrimination by way of race, sex, culture or creed or the ability to read music or perform to a set standard.

The "Spirit of the Street Choir" is administered by the Ruah community welfare organization.

The "Spirit of the Streets Choir's " musical director is Bernard Carney.

Bernard and his wife, Eleanor are the Musical Directors of the support choir.

"Working Voices Choir"

The organisers are already well advanced with the fund raising and planning phase of this joint choir activity and the first successful, joint rehearsal was held in March, 2008.

A booking has been made at the Perth Concert Hall for October 14, 2008, which will coincide with the International Mental Health week and National Carers week.

The experience of those participants in the "Choir of Hard Knocks", clearly demonstrates what can be achieved through this process and it is intended to emulate and build on the "Choir of Hard Knocks", success.