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| Disability Awards Find your voice all abilities choir - video transcript |
| Department of Health and Human Services |

What started off as this simple, organic, grassroots opportunity for communities to sing together really blossomed into something that is just growing exponentially.

In 2017, Tom Richardson and myself travelled around the community to enquire about who might want to be involved and we started off with half a dozen people in Portland and a dozen people in Warrnambool and a dozen people in Tarang. From this small little beginning, this growth in self-esteem, this growth in civic participation, this growth in friendship, in developing individual creative capacity, it’s just, it’s there!

The biggest challenges for the Find Your Voice Choir is logistical and getting 170 people on stage with potentially between 10 and 15 individuals that might use a wheelchair for mobility. That presents an accessibility issue

in its own right. Some of our choir members have vision impairments, other have behavioural issues that can be really challenging for them to perform particularly in stressful and anxious situations. But what we find is that everyone comes together and rises above the nerves.

It holds a mirror to people. It makes them look at their humanity and it shares humanity on stage. But it shares it not in a broken model, it shares it in an empowered model.

One Voice makes a sound on its own but collectively add 50, 60, 70, 170 voices on stage and the lights come on and the curtain comes up, it’s just – we are there to do what we do best.

It’s quite a unique experience to be in the heart of the Find Your Voice Choir.

The joy that coming together as community and singing together - there’s power in that.

And there’s a component to that that’s indescribable. So we just love blowing everyone out of the

water and giving them a show like they’ve never seen before.

To see families – fathers and daughters, mothers and sons, friends, community members - to be able to come together and enjoy something that they’re very very proud of, that it’s not just about rehearsing, that there’s

an outcome and that outcome is so spectacular and so special in what it gives in that experience.

If we get the chance, we’re going to blow the roof off of any arena, any stadium, anywhere in the world that we get the opportunity to sing.

[Text on screen]

Authorised by the Department of Health and Human Services

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