



# Research Directions

Office of Research Services

## *Music to my ears*

**Dr Elaine Lally from the Centre for Cultural Research is collaborating with Campbelltown Arts Centre and Musica Viva Australia to explore the health and well-being benefits for participation in musical activities for older Australians.**



'As Australia ages and demand for health and aging services grows, it is vital that the cultural sector engages with older citizens and their concerns', says Dr Lally. 'The "Sweet Tonic: Music for Life" program of singing workshops, delivered by Musica Viva Australia in participation with Campbelltown Arts Centre and the Australia Council for the Arts, is one such program. It aims to show that participation in singing and music training has demonstrable health and well-being benefits. This research project will study the "Sweet Tonic" workshops and attempt to identify the positive physical, mental, social and cultural outcomes of the "Sweet Tonic" music-based community cultural development initiative.'

Working closely with Musica Viva and the Campbelltown Arts Centre, Dr Lally will hold focus groups and interviews with "Sweet Tonic" participants before and after the workshops in order to assess the impact of the program on physical, social and cultural wellbeing on them. The research will also examine how participation in the program's musical activities could lead to increased engagement in social and cultural networks outside the program. Interviews and discussion groups with other stakeholders such as the workshop leaders, Musica Viva organisers and musicians and Campbelltown Arts Centre staff will explore their experiences of the workshops, and their observations of the effects "Sweet Tonic" has had on older peoples interactions their organisations and on people who have participated in the workshops.

This project will provide arts and cultural organisations with evidence that engagement with communities plays a vital role in health and wellbeing of individuals, as well as having broader social and cultural benefits for the whole population. Findings from the project may also lead to an extension of the "Sweet Tonic" program to other areas of Australia, thus ensuring long-lasting impacts on the development and provision of cultural services and programs for older Australians.

**Project Title:** "Sweet Tonic" – Qualitative Research Proposal

**Funding has been set at:** \$12,000

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