



## Media Release

Saturday 25 June 2011

### **Stroke-a-Chord: Hitting a high note post-stroke**

Stroke-a-Chord, a choir composed solely of stroke survivors, has proved that singing improves your quality of life.

Even though members of the group have little or no speech after having a stroke (aphasia) they can still sing, which research has now shown improves their social and emotional wellbeing.

Presenting these results at the Speech Pathology Australia's '*Diversity & DevelopmeNT*' National Conference in Darwin this week, Yooralla speech pathologist Bronwen Jones said that the positive impact on stroke survivors' psychological wellbeing affected almost every area of their lives.

"The mood and self-perception assessments we carried out before the program started measuring choir members' social interaction and communication were very negative – much higher than the general population – meaning they were at far greater risk of depression and social isolation.

"After the 20 week program practising for a performance for family and friends, the same assessments were carried out again and the change was significant.

"Choir members were much more positive and their participation in social communication increased, as did their overall quality of life," Ms Jones said.

"There was even anecdotal evidence of improvement in their speech and language abilities."

Choir members themselves reported their participation in Stroke-a-Chord has helped them re-connect with their family and community, as well as improve their self-confidence and social skills, leading to increased independence.

Stroke-a-Chord is among one of the very few music therapy programs in the world for people living with aphasia – an opportunity Bronwen Jones believes there should be more of these programs available to those who have had a stroke.

"The joy of being able to vocalise for someone who cannot speak is magical. No one should miss out on that," she said.

For more information on Speech Pathology Australia's national conference, visit [www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au).

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## Media contact

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### About Speech Pathology Australia

Speech Pathology Australia is the national peak body for more than 4,500 members. The Association supports and regulates the ethical, clinical and professional standards of its members. The Association also lobbies and advocates for people with communication and swallowing difficulties.

### Speech Pathology Australia's 2011 Conference

Local and international industry experts will examine topical issues at this year's conference.

The Conference theme is *Diversity & Development* and will showcase the innovative contributions of speech pathologists in advancing choices, knowledge and access. Held at the Darwin Convention Centre, the conference will run from 26-29 June 2011.

