



Bridget Sen, Colleen Kennedy, Trish Watts and Susie Nelson-Smith are in the Threshold Choir, of Balmain. Picture: PHIL BLATCH - PP455882

Tuned in to healing

MARK GERTSKIS

MEDICINE comes in many forms and, in Balmain, one of those forms is music.

A group of local women is using the healing powers of voice to ease the burden of pain and suffering for those who are terminally ill or dying. Formed two years ago by Susie Nelson-Smith and Colleen Kennedy, the Threshold Choir meets every Tuesday at Kennedy's Beyond the Ordinary tea house in Balmain.

SONGS OF COMFORT

- **Tenderly Rain:** "Tenderly rain, petals of kindness, over the aching land of my soul. Bathe me in streams of deep understanding. Merciful waters carry me home"
- **Fly Away:** "It hurts to know I'm losing you, don't want to make you stay. So I will hold you while you fly away"
- **From My Heart To Yours:** "From my heart to yours, a song without end. May it offer you comfort and healing, my friend"

It is the first such choir in Australia but is based on a concept that has been running in the United States for more than 20

years.

"It's an uncanny thing," Kennedy said. "It has a lot of potency. It's like medicine."

The group, which ranges from half-a-dozen to about 20 members, has access to a repertoire of more than 600 lullabies, hymns, ballads and chants.

They have sung in hospitals and hospices, and even on the phone to a patient in Adelaide.

"I had the privilege of singing at the bedside of my mum when she was in her last stages of life and the comfort it gave her, myself and those around was natural and profound," choir musical director Trish Watts said.