

# CEED

*Creative Expression, Communication and Dementia*

NEWSLETTER NO.1 OCTOBER 2007

## *Hello & Welcome!*

An introduction by **Hilary Lee**, Chair of The Society for the Arts in Dementia Australia.

**I'd like to extend a warm welcome to** readers of our first edition of the Society for the Arts in Dementia Care (Australia) Newsletter. This newsletter is emailed to members of the Society and to people who have expressed an interest in the Society.

The Australian chapter of the Society for the Arts in Dementia Care arrived on the scene in Australia this year to a warm reception. The purpose of the society is to provide an interdisciplinary forum for creative expression activities in dementia care and it encourages collaboration between academic research and practical knowledge. The last twelve months have seen the formation of an executive board, and the establishment of strong links with a variety of professional groups across the country.

There has been an explosion of interest in Australia in how the arts can be used to improve the lives of people with dementia with the introduction of the Society and because of an increasing awareness that the mind, body and spirit are connected and that the arts are a wonderful way to reach deep into the essence of the individual and to bring out the human potential. The Society has been welcomed by both Alzheimer's Australia and Dementia Care Australia, the two leading dementia care organisations in Australia.

Currently, the Society is registered only in Western Australia. However, it is expected that in the near future new branches will be registered across Australia. In the meantime the Society will continue to network with artists, health professionals, organisations and members of the community with an interest in improving the quality of life for people with dementia in all states of the country.

During 2007, the Society has been promoted at several national conferences. In May 2007 Hilary Lee, Chair of the Society, and Wendy Hudson, of Alzheimer's Western Australia gave a joint presentation at the National Alzheimer's conference in Perth on: "Creative Communities:



### *"Creative Communities: A way to recovery of personhood in dementia"*

A way to recovery of personhood in dementia". These presenters received an extremely positive response from the audience. Society board members Norma Hatchett and Wendy Hudson exhibited their arts project with Alzheimer's WA, the Windows of Opportunity tapestry, and Norma also gave a practical demonstration of Hooked on Hessian.

At the same conference, author Trisha Kotai-Ewers launched her new book: Listen to the talk of us. People with dementia speak out. The book's cover highlights the tapestry work conducted by Norma Hatchett and Hilary Lee with people living at a dementia specific facility in Perth. The theme of the tapestry fits appropriately with the personal and moving stories told by Trisha in her book. Some of the national and international visitors to this conference, were invited to John Bryant House, a dementia specific facility – to see the Cherished Memories, Childhood Dreams tapestry

as well as other artworks created by people with dementia. Leaflets promoting the Society were also distributed.

In July 2007 the Society was also represented by the chairperson at the Successful Ageing Conference, organized by the Hammond Care Group, at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney. This time the presentation was prepared with Dr Dalia Gottlieb-Tanaka, Chair and Founder of the Society. The talk introduced the Society and described how it had come to be adopted in Australia. It related how the arts can reduce depression and promote wellbeing, and concluded with a clip from Dalia's DVD of the story of Sylvia. The audience was fascinated and delighted as they watched this special story of an 80-year-old artist and teacher who was living with dementia. The chairperson also presented the "Connecting through creativity" project she had undertaken with Kerri Blades, an award-winning artist in Western Australia. This project involved working with people who had been identified as showing signs of depression. Through their connections in the art club, the residents formed new friendships and learned new ways to communicate and share deep thoughts and feelings. The outcomes of this project were extremely positive and demonstrated the power of creative expression as a healing tool to restore personhood and identity.

On July 6th 2007 the Society held its first symposium on Creative Expression in Dementia, in conjunction with the School of Occupational Therapy at Edith Cowan University, Joondalup, Western Australia. Experts on creative expression in dementia gave presentations covering a wide range of creative arts, including weaving, visual arts, storytelling, and ceramics, engaging people with dementia as a way of applying the arts to improving mental health.

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Presenters included Hilary Lee, Trisha Kotai-Ewers, Danita Walsh, Norma Hatchett and Kate Campbell-Pope. An exhibition of artwork by people with dementia was set up during the breaks. The exhibits included the Windows of Opportunity tapestry and Hooked on Hessian, where Norma Hatchett again gave delegates a hands-on demonstration of the success-oriented method of weaving. The Ceramic Stories project directed by Hilary Lee and Kerri Blades was also displayed and represented in the exhibition with ceramic artworks and some life story books. Over 100 people attended the symposium, and feedback was exceptionally positive. More details on the symposium and the presenters can be found on the website: [http://www.sebhs.ecu.edu.au/occ\\_therapy/news/](http://www.sebhs.ecu.edu.au/occ_therapy/news/)



*The Windows of Opportunity Tapestry*

The Society was further promoted at a one-day workshop for the Diversional Therapy Association of Western Australia on 18th August with Hilary Lee and Norma Hatchett. In September 2007 Hilary has been invited to be the keynote speaker at an arts forum in Adelaide sponsored by Lifecare Churches of Christ, and in September and October respectively she will help promote Alzheimer's Awareness for Alzheimer's Australia in Brisbane and Perth.

The Society extends an open invitation to all those with an interest or expertise in the arts and dementia to connect with us to share knowledge and encourage research into the potential benefits of the arts in dementia. The Society is currently seeking experts in the field to network and collaborate with. In addition, researchers and practitioners who are interested in participating in arts projects and programs are invited to contact the Society for information, support and advice, and to share their knowledge at seminars, workshops or through the Society newsletter.

*Hilary*

### **Dear Hilary and the Society for the Arts in Dementia Care in Australia ,**

*On behalf of the Society for the Arts in Dementia Care in Canada , I would like to welcome you and your newly formed organization in Perth Australia. Our Society is growing and gaining reputation in several countries. At this moment, we have another branch forming in Tel Aviv, Israel . We all recognize the need to get together to improve the quality of life of seniors with dementia while work with their remaining creative abilities. After spending time in Canada , USA , Israel and hear from your Chair, Hilary Lee, I realize how much we have in common and how much work and research there is still to do. I see the responsibility of our Society to educate and prepare the next generation of caregivers. We wish you all the best and success in promoting our goals. Please continue to log on to our Society's web site [www.cecd-society.org](http://www.cecd-society.org) for more information and we hope to see you at our next conference titled Mindscapes 2008 in Vancouver , in beautiful British Columbia , Canada .*



*All the best,*

**Dr Dalia Gottlieb-Tanaka, M.Arch., PhD**  
**The Society for the Arts in Dementia Care, Chair ( Canada )**

## *The Society for the Arts in Dementia Care: In the beginning ...*

**The idea for the Society for the Arts in Dementia Care originated in Canada in 2004. It grew out of the experience of Dalia Gottlieb-Tanaka, who had developed a program of Creative Expression Activities in her work with seniors with dementia. As a PhD student at the Interdisciplinary Program and the Institute of Health Promotion Research at the University of British Columbia, she was anxious to engage a wider audience of professionals and practitioners in exchanging ideas and strategies to address the problems of this population of seniors.**

Early on, she arranged a successful exhibition of artwork that had been produced by the seniors with dementia she worked with; it took place at the Ferry Building Gallery in West Vancouver, BC, in 2003. More than 4,000 people visited the gallery over three weeks. The exhibition included seminars and workshops free of charge and was attended by healthcare providers, caregivers, seniors with dementia and the community at large.

This event demonstrated the wide interest in these seniors, curiosity about what the seniors could do, and the general concern the public shared with supporting them. It served as a catalyst for conferences on creative expression, communication and dementia (CECD) that Dalia organized at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 2005 and 2006. About 155 participants attended each conference from across Canada, the US, the UK and Australia.

Reasons for establishing the Society: Facts in Canada

- The aging population in Canada will peak between 2025 to 2045 when the Baby Boom generation reaches 75+ years of age (Health Canada, March, 2001). Significant pressure will be brought to bear on the healthcare system and on support services for older people. Long-term care facilities are expected to experience higher demand for their services. According to Health Canada, one of every four people over the age of 80 will have some form of cognitive impairment. These pressures may threaten the quality of services to seniors with dementia in the future.
- Today, most services are geared to meeting basic needs, while existing quality of life programs, such as those based on creative self-expression, have never really reached their potential. The consensus among researchers is that creativity enhances the quality of life at every stage in human development from cradle to grave and that the idea of everyday creativity manifests itself in being curious, in an ongoing process of self-evaluation and personal growth. If we accept the premise that creativity improves psychological health (Robbins, 1994) and contributes to the empowerment process (Cox, 1993), the ultimate goal is to enable persons with dementia to maintain and enhance the quality of their lives and to use their remaining abilities to express themselves.
- Although the literature is rich in empirical and anecdotal studies on memory, cognition, perception, dementia and dementia care, there is still a wide gap in information in connecting

research to creativity, creative expression in people with dementia and the physical environment. Physiological and psychological knowledge in dementia research needs to cross boundaries into the everyday implementation of dementia care. Knowing the vulnerability of older people, we ask: How can we adjust creative expression activities to accommodate specific physical needs or abilities?

Practitioners, including caregivers in areas of art therapy, creative expression, music therapy, and occupational therapy, need to work closely with the scientific community. This alliance is crucial in achieving appropriate creative expression interventions. Artists who come from drama and dance understand intimately that the processes of creativity may apply in the practical world of care. Although creativity is in all of us, to understand it better we need opportunities to experience it and the opportunities to disseminate the knowledge to the community at large and research worlds alike. The field of creativity and dementia is so new that it does not yet have a rich history to support it.

In addition to the medical description of lost abilities there is a need for detailed practical examples that are appropriately designed and conducted with seniors with dementia. What is missing is taking the accumulated knowledge from research and practice into the community at large. We conduct workshops with administrators of facilities as well as with husbands, wives and children of people with dementia. Our Society and our associate organizations can do this through lectures, and hands-on demonstrations. We need funding to develop tools such as educational films and practical handbooks with examples of creative expression activities for distribution.

## The Society's Mission

The Society for the Arts in Dementia Care is built on the premise that people living with dementia have the right to dignity, to be heard and to be valued. The Society provides an interdisciplinary forum for creative expression in dementia care, bringing together academic research and practical knowledge through collaboration between the medical profession and the creative arts. The Society aims to disseminate knowledge and establish ties with dementia care organizations worldwide, improving the quality of life for people with dementia.

The topic of creative expression and dementia is gaining interest in conferences, workshops, art exhibits and in research in the academic world. Presently, there is no known cure for this condition and it is clear that the medical model of dementia care needs to be reinforced with approaches that promote social and creative well-being. The work of this Society is of interest to

researchers in gerontology and dementia, to the arts community, to creative expression facilitators, medical doctors, formal and informal caregivers. It also engages practitioners in the field of dementia care, administrators of care facilities, policy makers, families and the community at large.

## The Society's Role in Canada and in Australia

### The Society aims -

- To reach out to practitioners, academics and members of the community at large who provide creative expression programs to seniors with dementia
- To provide an interdisciplinary forum for where all can meet and share recent findings, practical experiences and collaborate on innovative approaches.
- To promote dementia care in the community through creative expression activities
- To advocate for and support people with dementia.

### Both Societies share these aims:

- better understand dementia and how to cope with this condition using creativity
- increase awareness among artists, caregivers and political leaders of the importance of creative expression activities in health care
- encourage artists to seek opportunities in therapeutic services and by doing so, enrich the pool of creative expression programs so badly needed in dementia care
- interact more with people with dementia to support their right to live in dignity like everybody else
- maintain people with dementia longer at home and within their communities before admitting them to care facilities
- increase advocacy for people with dementia and their caregivers

## Contact Information

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<http://www.dementia-activities.com>



**Viewpoint from Granville Island Pier towards Yaletown, Vancouver**  
*Setting for the Mindscapes conference 2008*

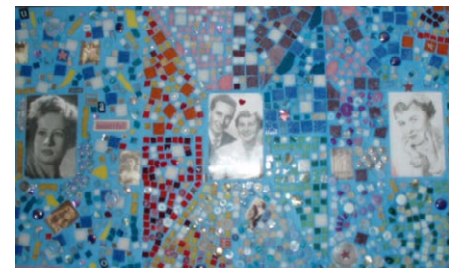
# Arts in Residential Care

## Ceramic Stories

by **Hilary Lee & Kerri Blades**

'Ceramic stories' was a unique creative arts project, undertaken at a dementia specific aged care facility in Perth, WA, designed to improve the wellbeing and support the identity of persons with dementia. The project enabled people with dementia who had been identified as showing some signs of depression, to share their feelings, stories and thoughts through the creative media of scrapbooking (life story books) and ceramic painting. A small group of residents met twice a week over 10 weeks for 2 hours to participate in ceramics and life story scrapbooking sessions. The project, funded by the Community Arts Network Western Australia Ltd, aimed to measurably reduce signs of depression, facilitate friendships, promote creative expression and communication, share stories, memories and feelings and restore the personal identity of people with dementia.

Individual reminiscence sessions were conducted with each participant to develop the visual images used in the project. The reminiscence enabled each participant to identify and share important and meaningful events in their lives. Artist Kerri Blades and occupational therapist Hilary Lee worked alongside volunteers to act as facilitators for the project. The Participants were encouraged to trial different media and their preferences were respected and supported.



The Ceramic Stories artwork, which is also featured on this Issue's cover

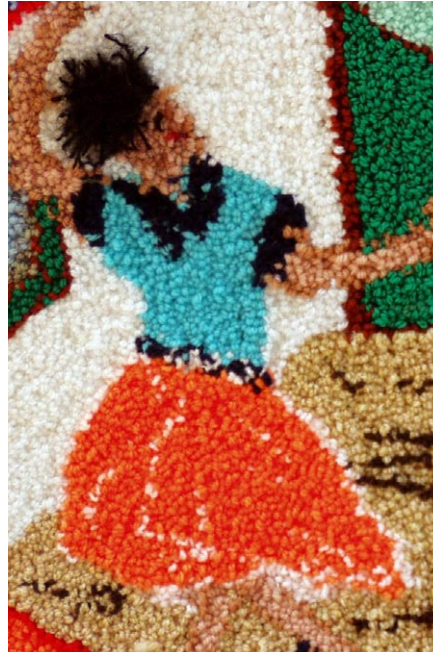
The project was evaluated using the Wellbeing Profiles, Geriatric Depression Scale Appendix A, and the Cornell Scale for Depression in Dementia, informal verbal feedback from residents and families, and a staff survey. The outcomes of the project were extremely positive with members of the art club forming friendships, having significantly improved signs of wellbeing and a reduction of signs of depression. Participants became more confident to make choices, and expressed themselves through colour, humour and creative use of words. They expressed a strong sense of pride in their work, that they were keen to show staff and family members.

## The Hooked on Hessian Experience

by **Norma Hatchett** (Executive Board Member)



Norma and her work (right) showing a section of *The Cherished Memories, Childhood Dreams* tapestry, depicting an Italian lady dancing on her wedding day.



## Hello everyone,

Those of us who are fortunate enough to be involved in services to participants with dementia will be excited about the steps we are taking to improve their creative opportunities.

This August/September I will commence on three new community projects involving seniors with dementia. I must confess it gets me excited. It's what gets me up in the morning and keeps me up working in the cold and in pre dawn light. There is definitely some kind of adrenalin rush going on here. I sat back recently to try and find out a bit more about this type of addiction. All I can share with you is that the drive comes from the joy experienced in nurturing a project and all the participants from a place of uncertainty to the exhilaration of a completed project. We all grow through sharing stories and life experiences and something magic happens.

It is my belief that community art can be a gateway to develop self esteem. As an art worker I see my role as making arts accessible to everyone and creating opportunities for self expression. There are so many ways we can achieve this.

Recently I had a conversation with a therapist who looked at my rug-making technique and said "my residents have all got dementia, they couldn't do

this." I go over the steps again and suggest that with the right supports in place it is very achievable. I gave the example of trying to remember someone's name, it's there, We know it's there but we just can't remember. We go away and do something else and when we're sitting waiting for the lights to change...the name comes to you. The arts I believe work like this, by freeing the mind and not trying to force answers or conversation, words escape and sometimes sentences and that's when the magic happens. Simply by just being there and doing something new and interesting and letting colours and textures into your senses, we become free. How do I know this? I know this because that's what happens to me.

In May I was fortunate to listen to many of the key note speakers at the Dementia Conference here in Perth. Then I co-presented with Hilary Lee at the Creative Expressions Symposium and in August we share our journey and rug making skills with the Diversional Therapists group. It is exciting, I feel as if I am part of this grass roots movement to make real and lasting improvements in peoples lives, who wouldn't want to go into the studio with gloves and mittens to bring it all together.

Regards,

Norma

## Intergenerational and Intercultural Art project

Life Care Aldinga Beach Court. **John Lawrence**, Life Care Service Development Projects

**At Churches of Christ Life Care aged care facilities in metropolitan Adelaide, South Australia, leisure and lifestyle program teams are using a diverse range of collaborative intergenerational art projects to improve the quality of life for people with dementia and to enrich the lives and awareness of younger participants.**

In Life Care's Aldinga Beach Court, on the far southern outskirts of Adelaide, we commenced our intergenerational projects some 6 years ago by inviting a local secondary college to conduct classes at the facility and to involve our residents in these classes on a diverse range of subjects.

In 2006, this led to the Living Art Project and the Art for Worx Project, both of which aimed to:

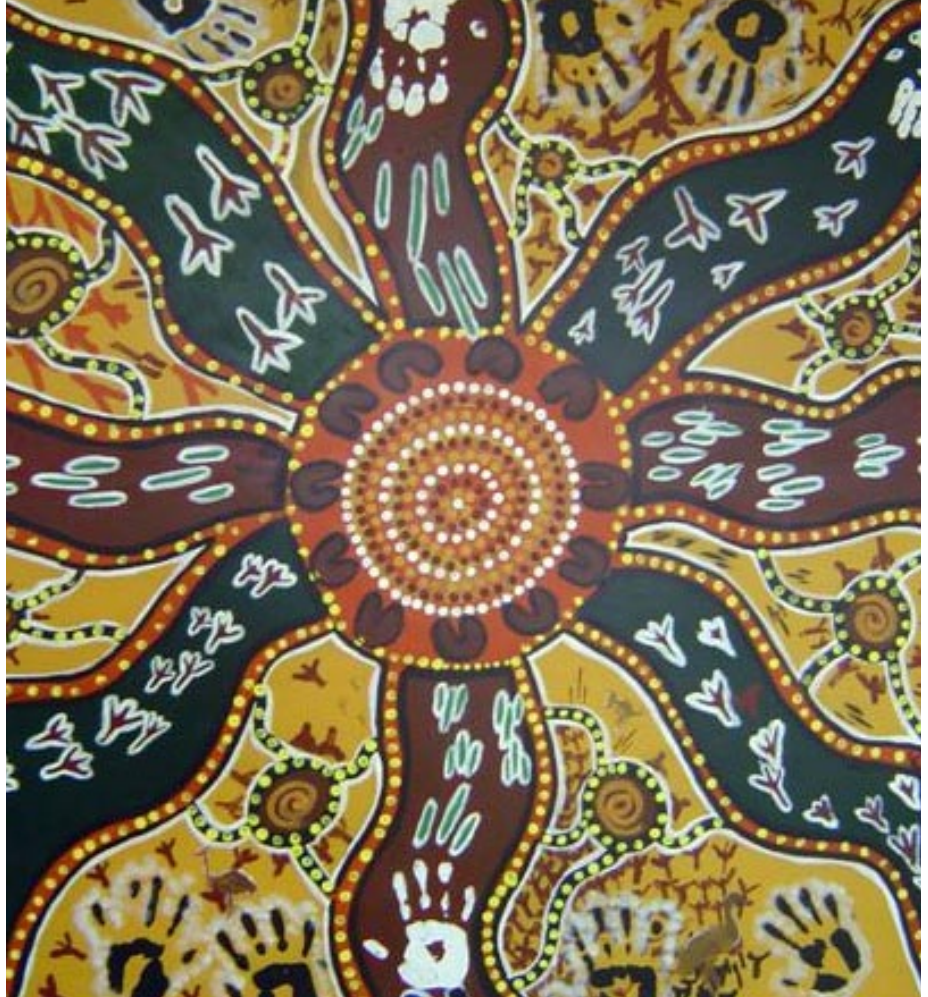
- To provide the opportunity for persons with dementia to maintain the highest physical, cognitive, and social levels through a creative experience;
- To provide the opportunity for cross-generational collaborations within an art activity group, creating a bond between older and younger generations.

The Living Art Project linked a group of residents with senior secondary students from the Tatachilla Lutheran College for 8 weeks. Together, they shared ideas on art, built strong friendships and produced a diverse range of colourful, engaging paintings.

The Art for Worx Project involved local 'at risk' young people aged 13 to 16 working with 5 residents over a period of 5 months under the supervision of an artist from the Neporendi Aboriginal Forum.

In this project young people, residents and the artist engaged in much discussion, sharing, fun and laughter while creating a large collaborative mural conveying participants' ideas and memories. The dual themes of this mural represented development of the local area and the coming together of old, young and indigenous people in a living expression of reconciliation.

These projects showed how using art as a medium enabled us to break down barriers between cultures and generations while creating positive outcomes for all participants including a profound joy for participants with dementia. They also demonstrated that an aged care facility can build wonderful associations with the wider community, including schools and organisations representing local young people.



*'Generation of Respect' facilitated by the artist Violet Buckskin. Liz Bridges was the Project Co-ordinator in partnership with Jolyn Phillipps from VOLT Youth Enterprise*

As one student commented:  
 "From my experience and friendship with Emily, I learnt many lessons such as understanding the effects of dementia and how frustrating it can be. Emily without knowing so, taught me great compassion, to be grateful for my youth and for the opportunities that I have before me and that memories are important, especially about loved ones. In general, she taught me a lot about life, how your past moulds you into who you are today and how it's whether or not you choose to learn from your mistakes or to repeat them."

In October 2006 the Art for Worx Project won a prestigious COTA (Council of the Ageing) Award in South Australia in recognition of its multiple achievements.

Life Care Aldinga Beach Court and other Life Care residential and community services across metropolitan Adelaide and in regional centres are now building upon our experience with these remarkable initiatives in an exciting series of further projects involving painting, photography, drumming, music and other media.

## Contact Information

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## Art and music at Aldersgate, Adelaide

by **Katherine Tumes**

**An exciting event took place in the home of our Aldersgate residents on 30th August 2007. We held an art exhibition and choir concert; sharing with the Honorable Chris Pine, Federal Minister for Ageing, the variety of talent Aldersgate residents have. The art exhibition displayed the diversity of fine art that Katherine's art class have learned over the past 4 months. The exhibits ranged from photography, pottery, tie dying, painting (water colour+oils+acrylics) and marbling.**

Each person works on a piece of art until they are satisfied with the end product. They choose the subject matter, colours and the story behind the painting. This involvement gives them a sense of worth in their ability and allows them to express their feelings and life through colour and style.

Participants look forward to each art class with anticipation and enthusiasm and I have even found residents working on their pieces in their own time eager to see another aspect of their painting unfold. As an art therapist it gives me great insight into how the residents are feeling and gives me satisfaction to see their lives blossoming in areas that it hasn't previously.

Another part of the day was having the Aldersgate choir perform. The choir is made up of 11 residents who are all interested in music and singing. On Thursday sang a variety of songs that are familiar to the residents like "waltzing matilda" and "pack up your troubles". Being a part of the choir makes each person feel included and being recognised for their talents is beneficial for their character. It has been wonderful working with the ladies on rhythms, tones, volume and remembering how wonderful music makes us feel.

*Katherine Tumes (Art Therapist), Lucy Pilmore (art class member from Aldersgate) and the Hon Christopher Pine, Federal Minister for Ageing. This art class is preparing work to exhibit at the Mindscapes Conference 2008, Vancouver.*



*This involvement gives them a sense of worth in their ability and allows them to express their feelings...'*

## Calendar

**10 Dec 2007 at 4.30pm**  
**The Occupational Therapy Aged Care Interest Group in Perth**  
*Atlantic Healthcare, 45 Coronation Street in North Perth .*  
 Hilary Lee is guest speaker

**Feb/March 2008**  
**First Annual General Meeting in Perth**  
*(date to be confirmed)*

**Wednesday 26 to Saturday 29 March 2008**  
**World Congress Of Health Professions THE FUTURE NOW: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN HEALTH**  
*Perth Convention Exhibition Centre, Western Australia*  
 Jane Verity and Hilary Lee presenting on Spark of Life approach

**May 30-31, 2008, Granville Island , Vancouver**  
**Creative Expression, Communication and Dementia: CECD AND MINDSCAPES CONFERENCE 2008**  
 This promises to be a most exciting event, see [www.cecd-society.org](http://www.cecd-society.org) and click on conference 2008 for details. You are advised to register early as places are limited.

## Final Note to Readers...

We are currently developing the website and would like to post examples of creative and innovative work being done around Australia . Please send articles or pictures you would like us to review to post on the website. If relevant, you can send us links to other websites that may be of use to others using the arts with people with dementia.

**Newsletter Committee:**  
 Hilary Lee, Dr Angelica Orb, Wendy Hudson

**Graphic Designer**  
 Sally Ann Pollard

**Special Thanks also to**  
 Dr Dalia Gottlieb-Tanaka