



Welcome to the Fifth Edition of ANZJAT by Maureen Woodcock, ANZATA President

Welcome to the fifth edition of ANZJAT. Congratulations to our editor, Associate Professor Tarquam McKenna and his team who have compiled such an informative and visually stimulating edition.

This edition reflects the inclusiveness and diversity that the arts therapy profession has achieved in Australia and New Zealand and more recently in Singapore, in a relatively short time. This is due to the bravery and willingness of many professional members and training providers to step away from the reliance on the traditional models of art therapy. Historically this was narrowly defined as art psychotherapy vs studio art therapy. However, arts therapy as illustrated in this and the previous editions, now embraces not only broader theoretical perspectives but also welcomes and appreciates how other modalities can enhance and inform each of us in our own work.

Our identity as arts therapists, and our need to define our practice is reflective of our personal preferences, experiences and the situations in which we work. What we call ourselves be it art(s) psychotherapist, art(s) therapist or to be modality specific, such as art(s) therapist (drama), is testimony to this. There is often a struggle to define our profession so that it can encompass the wide variety of not only creative modalities but also the therapeutic

frameworks and paradigms currently being practiced. We often refer back to our academic level of training to demonstrate the expertise that registered professional arts therapists have achieved to differentiate from others that refer to themselves as arts therapists. This wish to protect and gain respect for our profession is the prime motivation to seek National Registration.

National Registration would require the governments of each country, to establish a registration board, which would have the power to register art(s) therapists who meet identified criteria, thereby acknowledging our professional standards and protecting our name. The ANZATA committee was directed to investigate this and there has been considerable work undertaken in this area over the last couple of years. Although there have been some changes to requirements regarding National Registration, a detailed submission for Australia is underway and we will monitor the progress and outcome of this before approaching other governments. It was hoped that this registration would open up additional funding sources and employment, however, under the current political climate with limited funding in both Australia and New Zealand, we are somewhat discouraged. The unofficial feedback indicates that it is unlikely that we will be successful to achieve this registration

due to our small number of members. Becoming part of a larger entity would help in this regard, however, there may perhaps be issues arising around maintaining our unique identity as arts therapists.

One of the requirements for this registration is that there is a need to regulate the profession to protect the public. As a result, we must demonstrate that the public can come to harm at the hands of an incompetent art therapist. A case was recently taken to court in the UK which did address the issue of protection of the public when engaging in arts-based therapeutic activity in a clinical environment. Jill Westwood's summary of the article that illustrates this can be accessed on the ANZATA website.

The act of negligence centered on the vulnerability of the client to discern the imaginary from the real and the responsibility of the practitioner and the organisation to competently assess the client's vulnerability and respond accordingly.

This ruling opens up an interesting discussion and reinforces the need for professionalism, belonging to a professional association that has a complaints procedure, supervision requirements and working within a code of ethics, all of which we have as professional members of ANZATA.

National Registration was recently granted to psychotherapists in New Zealand and this has left many professionals in this field discouraged and dissatisfied. They feel this registration board has resulted in a lack of autonomy, exorbitant fees and unnecessary restrictions. In addition, the code of ethics that has been adopted reflects a monocultural perspective that is contrary to the previous NZAP code. Do we really want an experience like this?

The practice of art therapy from the traditional psycho-analytic perspective still has its place, but graduates from ANZATA approved programmes are now better prepared to work in a variety of facilities with many different populations, as current practice decrees. There is an increasing sensitivity and awareness to the cultural needs of our clients. By incorporating this into our work practice, we are immediately developing a perspective unique to our part of the world. I feel confident that a holistic approach which embraces the individual in relation to their family, the environment and their spiritual perspective is accepted practice in New Zealand and increasingly embraced elsewhere in our region.

The variety of settings and populations in which arts therapists are now being employed has grown, and the demands of these individual organisations and their programmes are requiring the arts therapist to be adaptable and creative in designing arts therapy services. As a result, arts therapists working in multi-disciplinary teams with existing specific programmes can find themselves facilitating art and creative processes to reinforce learning, assist with self-expression, provide non-verbal communication as well as promoting insight. In previous ANZJAT issues we have read how an art psychotherapist facilitates DBT (Dialectical Behaviour Therapy) programmes for borderline personality disordered patients, how positive psychology interplays with art therapy and, in this edition, the research project undertaken by Jill Westwood, Catherine Keyzer and Jennifer Evans explores art-making and play. They acknowledge that the influence of attachment theory, neuroscience and neurobiology has generated a positive impetus to understand emotional trauma and that these perspectives are relevant to the work

of art therapy with this population. The variety and depth of research that is growing in the field is having a significant impact on raising the profile of arts therapy. The article, *Reflection on masculinities: Men in art therapy* by Tarquam McKenna provides us with thought provoking questions. It is the unanswered questions that have arisen from workshops such as these that is the impetus for future research. It is well acknowledged that our field is lacking in this area.

Open studios that provide access to the arts for extra-ordinary communities provide opportunities for arts therapists to work in non-directive supportive roles where the emphasis is on the creation of the artwork or performance. However, it is acknowledged that verbalisation and conscious insight may occur and become part of the process within this setting. *The creative expression centre for arts therapy* (Walsh, 2008) reminded us of the art as therapy model with a mental health population. This open studio approach was one of the first forms of art therapy practiced in UK asylums and hospitals, originally using artists in residence before art therapy became recognized as a profession. Open studios have been run in conjunction with the Arts Access organisation in New Zealand since the mid 1990s and have an established successful record, particularly in communities such as disabilities, corrections and mental health. They are a valued concept and positive environment for the practice of Art Therapy. The article, *Women doing it forever: The everyday creativity of women craftmakers* by Dr Enza Gandolfo and Associate Professor Marty Grace identified key themes which could apply to many group or studio art therapy situations. In particular, these themes of creative expression, well-being, social and community connections,

sense of self and identity, and the pleasure, joy and love of making (or doing) are common in all therapeutic modalities. More studies of 'everyday creativity' and the value of creative expression can reinforce our own knowing of the importance of this.

The topics and articles presented in this edition challenge the 'great debate' in art therapy, (art in therapy versus art as therapy,) as they not only represent the ends of the continuum in which we offer our services but demonstrate the range. Most professionals acknowledge that the needs of their clients often requires them to be flexible and approach treatment from different theoretical perspectives, depending on the circumstances. If we accept that this client-centered humanistic perspective is central to current practice, then this dichotomy does not need to be continually debated, generating ill feeling and splitting within the profession. It is time to celebrate the emergence of an integrated professional identity that has creativity as its source, with an openness to collaboration with a variety of modalities within culturally sensitive awareness.

As creativity is the underpinning of our profession, and as practitioners, I suggest we are at our most effective when each of us connects with our own creativity whilst being the art(s) therapist. The article, *I see what I am – I am what I see. Photography and the inner self: A discussion and reflection on a heuristic art therapy* by Elinor Assoulin, reminds us how each of us has undertaken journeys of self-awareness, and that because of the nature of our profession, we possibly have a greater understanding of the importance to continue these explorations over time in order to be more effective in our worlds. The practice of reflective creative responses within the supervision relationship is an opportunity to address strong feelings

aroused by clients and difficult situations. These spontaneous responses can provide insight and recognition of unconscious processes and allow us to access our own creativity to assist with being successful arts therapists.

This fine edition culminates with Toril Pursell's *Poetry and Images* that include a message of self-care. Working with more difficult populations can lead to burn out. Good coping strategies for vicarious trauma are activities that help us to escape, rest, and play. As artists we know all of these can be directly linked to engaging in the creative process.

Hogan's (1992) warning, that art therapy education and practice, if imported from another socio-political and socio-cultural context, runs the risk of turning art therapy into a form of academic imperialism. I believe that this caution has been heeded. We are now strong enough in our knowing, practice and ongoing development to be more aware of any aspect of colonisation. We also must continue to be mindful and not to get seduced into submitting to the requirements of other international associations. We are unique, diverse and above all, we value creativity which requires us to be both conscious and collaborative.

On behalf of the ANZATA committee, I wish to express our gratitude and congratulations to contributors, and all who assisted in the production of this impressive edition of ANZJAT.

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