Editorial

Honouring the Enormous Contribution of Denise Grocke

Prof Denise Grocke is a central figure in music therapy, both in Australia and globally. As documented in Jennifer Bibb’s historical study in this edition, Denise’s contribution has been enormous and longstanding. Whilst Bibb outlines her local achievements, a recent forum at The University of Melbourne provided an opportunity to experience Denise’s international connections through a stream of presentations by international scholars who spoke to the topic of *Music Therapy Research and Mental Health: Harnessing Directions for the Future* (19-21st October, 2012). Professors Cheryl Dileo (USA), Gro Trondalen (Norway), Inge Nygaard Pederson (Denmark), Helen Odell-Miller (UK) and Cathy McKinney (USA) presented alongside our own remarkable women academics, A/Profs Felicity Baker, Clare O’Callaghan and myself, as well as Drs Helen Shoemark, Grace Thompson and Jeanette Tamplin. It was a remarkable event, fitting for such a leader in our field. This edition includes contributions from a number of these women, who have provided commentaries that not only respond to the articles that make up the edition, but also contextualize those articles in relation to Denise Grocke’s influence.

We have included a lift out page in this edition that will serve as a memory of the Symposium for the many who attended, as well as a taste of it for those who did not. The photograph was taken on the second day with the Professors proudly adorned in special hats, a part of the playful tribute that marked the celebration. These small gestures speak to the warmth and respect that surrounds Denise in international forums, where her intellect is admired and her capacity to draw people together has been significant. Her networks have been both formal and informal and have been the foundation of multi-site, international research studies that provide the evidence upon which the profession relies. In addition, her insightful explorations of the essence of music therapy have helped many of us to better understand how music therapy works, and particularly, the role of the music.
Denise Grocke continues her contribution to the field, as current president of the Music and Imagery Association of Australia (MIAA) and as Emeritus Professor at the University of Melbourne. She also maintains an active involvement in the lives of the hundreds of music therapists she has mentored, continuing to inspire and support us all. There is a general consensus that Denise has been a wise guide, and despite varying degrees of actual contact, her presence can be felt in our practice, our research, our writings and our discussions with participants and colleagues. It has been an honour to share so much of my professional journey with Denise and I am confident that others feel likewise.

In addition to focusing on Denise Grocke’s contribution, Volume 24 of the Australian Journal of Music Therapy also contains an exciting array of articles from registered music therapists and from colleagues. From within music therapy, Alison Creighton and colleagues share results from her research into the relationship between the singing of songs with babies and maternal attachment and Stephanie Thompson argues for the value of decision trees in shaping thinking and practice. Jim Oxtoby and his colleagues share data and results from a study of relaxing music and Sandra Garrido and Jane Davidson provide us with their perspective on the use of music for mood regulation since ancient times. This diverse array of contributions speaks to the breadth of professional practice and the importance of sharing knowledge. I hope that you find something in here to enjoy in a warm place as we pass through winter in Australia.

Katrina Skewes McFerran
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