



Topical issues in music therapy

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AJMT Volume 28 marks the first 12 months of AJMT online, and is a tribute to the legacy set up by our previous Editor, Dr Helen Shoemark. Both analytic data and anecdotal feedback suggest that AJMT is widely read and enjoyed throughout the world, and that readers value the new, freely online format. This year's edition promises more informative and inspiring reading with 5 articles covering diverse and topical issues within contemporary music therapy practice.

The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Australia has had challenging ramifications for music therapists. Helen Cameron, an experienced clinician, reflects on the limitations of this funding scheme for people with intellectual disabilities. Drawing on case studies, Cameron argues that the current NDIS model, recommending initial short-term therapy with

follow up care from assistants, does not support people with profound and multiple disabilities who benefit from expert long-term music therapy.

Felicity Baker also adds to the topical discussion by offering a theoretical framework and group songwriting protocol for caregivers of people living with dementia. With rising numbers of community-dwelling people living with dementia, it is important to identify mechanisms that support informal family carers. Baker illustrates her protocol with a case study to explain how the songwriting process supports the realization of coping strategies. This article builds on Baker's pivotal publication, *Therapeutic Songwriting: Developments in Theory, methods and Practice* (Baker, 2015).

Two recent music therapy graduates, Alice Cotton and Brooke Medcalf, present their

Masters research projects. Using a phenomenological approach, Medcalf examines the use of mindfulness informed techniques by music therapists. Cotton uses thematic analysis to explore arts workers' experiences of working in partnership with music therapists. Finally, Winifred Beaver and Meg Morris report their analyses of tango music used to support dance classes for people living with Parkinson's disease.

This year was my first as AJMT Editor, and I am fortunate to be surrounded by an efficient and enthusiastic team. Thank you to Kate Williams -AJMT Associate Editor, Liz Mclean - our inaugural Copy Editor, and the 2017 reviewers. We hope our readers enjoy Volume 28.

Imogen Clark

Reference

Baker, F. A. (2015). *Therapeutic songwriting: Developments in theory, methods and practice*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
