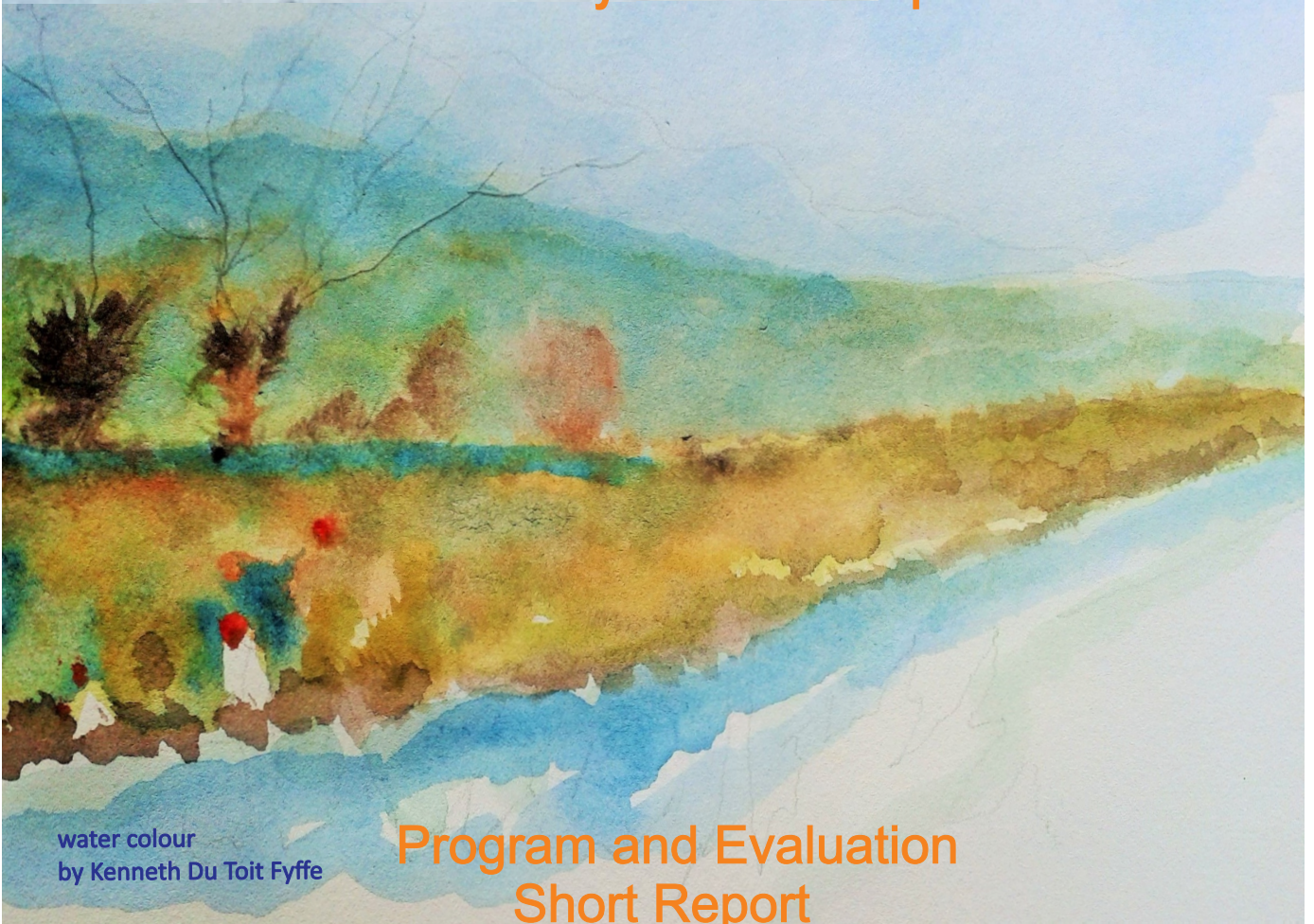


Art Music Story

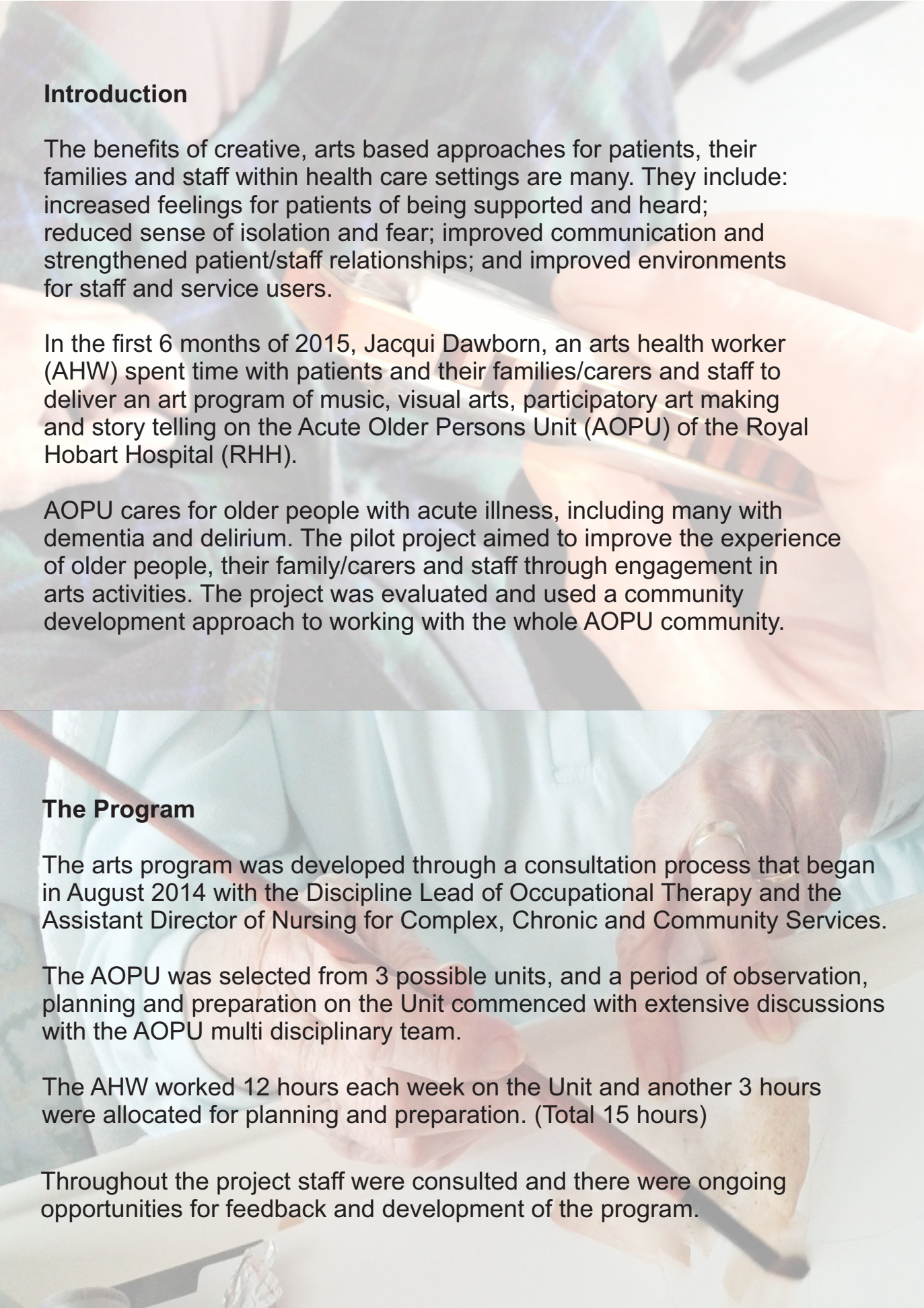
An integrated approach to acute care of older people
at the Royal Hobart Hospital



water colour
by Kenneth Du Toit Fyffe

Program and Evaluation Short Report

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Introduction

The benefits of creative, arts based approaches for patients, their families and staff within health care settings are many. They include: increased feelings for patients of being supported and heard; reduced sense of isolation and fear; improved communication and strengthened patient/staff relationships; and improved environments for staff and service users.

In the first 6 months of 2015, Jacqui Dawborn, an arts health worker (AHW) spent time with patients and their families/carers and staff to deliver an art program of music, visual arts, participatory art making and story telling on the Acute Older Persons Unit (AOPU) of the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH).

AOPU cares for older people with acute illness, including many with dementia and delirium. The pilot project aimed to improve the experience of older people, their family/carers and staff through engagement in arts activities. The project was evaluated and used a community development approach to working with the whole AOPU community.

The Program

The arts program was developed through a consultation process that began in August 2014 with the Discipline Lead of Occupational Therapy and the Assistant Director of Nursing for Complex, Chronic and Community Services.

The AOPU was selected from 3 possible units, and a period of observation, planning and preparation on the Unit commenced with extensive discussions with the AOPU multi disciplinary team.

The AHW worked 12 hours each week on the Unit and another 3 hours were allocated for planning and preparation. (Total 15 hours)

Throughout the project staff were consulted and there were ongoing opportunities for feedback and development of the program.

The Art Program Components

Music

- *Individualised and groups singing and hearing music (ukulele, harmonica, percussion, xylophone)
- *Song
- *Dance to music
- *Weekly piano/wash board/concertina rag time - 1 hr sessions with visiting musicians
- *Individualised music with headphones/CD player

Story

- *Participants telling stories
- *Some patients had a moment from their life story depicted as an illustration by the AHW. The resulting art works were called 'Snapshots' and were displayed by their bed side.

Art making

- *Collage
- *Painting
- *Ink or paint marbling
- *Plastecine modelling
- *Drawing
- *Fabric painting
- *Applique/sewing

The physical environment

- *Art work by patients displayed in the unit
- *Art work by staff displayed on the staff gallery wall of the unit
- *Refurbishment of a 4 bed room to become a focus for activities and socialising and to reduce the clinical feel
- *Artwork done by the artist displayed in the foyer of the unit

The Evaluation

We evaluated whether participation in creative arts activities improved the experience of the hospital stay for patients by positively impacting on mood, sense of control and level of wellbeing. The perspectives of staff and family members and the effects of a changed environment were also considered.

We used focus groups, individual interviews and observations to explore experiences of patients, carers and staff. The AHW maintained a diary.

Patients rated their mood before and after engaging in an arts activity.

Findings

Study findings show the art program had a positive impact for all three groups:

Patients

A positive impact was especially evident for patients with significant cognitive impairment or behavioural issues. The art program provided an important outlet or focus for patients that was not about being ill but was about them as a person. It provided opportunities for people to reconnect with skills they had from the past or to discover new ones.

Their engagement and enjoyment was an important part of recovery and being able to 'do' while in hospital was also described as very important.

"The lady is singing to me...it's beautiful"- patient

Families

Families reported that it was very comforting for them to know that their relative was involved in the art program. Family members also enjoyed participating in the activities as well as seeing the resulting art work, and how it positively changed the environment and the atmosphere of the unit.

"I know (mum) just loved the times they had music. They sang songs that she knew and she just loved that...she certainly enjoyed it because she looked forward to it, she got quite social with it in the end"- daughter

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Staff

The staff noticed that the art program had a positive effect on the patients that was calming, especially for those experiencing agitation or cognitive impairment. The arts could be used as a distraction from negative behaviours or as a positive focus for people. The patient's participation and the artworks reminded staff about the whole person beyond their current medical situation.

"I have seen patients with fear and anxiety. I have seen the AHW with them...(being) calm and gentle..it seems to have definitely had a positive impact"- staff member

*"She (AHW) is painting an image from *John's life. John tells me... fondly remembers the time as a young 17 year old...They talk about the song that he has requested that she (AHW) has researched and found so that she can play it"- observational field notes*

The role and skill of the arts health worker to customise activities to individual's capabilities and preferences was integral to the success of the program.

"Later in the afternoon we had a visit from a young man who was the great grandson of a woman in the music group....I offered him to use my ukulele.. he played it beautifully"- diary entry AHW

Mood

66 patients completed a mood self rating scale before and after participating in the arts intervention. The results showed that in 95% of the cases the person's rating scores increased to indicate their mood improved.

What next?

- Continue to develop aspects of the AOPU Art Program that were most successful.
- A more detailed report of research findings will be prepared for publication.
- Build on and establish a successful model for arts and health practice for RHH based on these findings (Inscape Tas/RHH/University of Tasmania partnerships)



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