



# AGEING, ART, & CREATIVITY

A one day symposium on the transformative power of the arts for older adults

University of Newcastle

Monday 30th September 9am-5pm

***We are meeting on the unceded land of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples***

Level 2, Q Building, 168 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle

Internet is available during the symposium  
via eduroam OR using the Conference Wi-Fi\_\_33  
network with the password uon45536

The symposium has been granted **United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)** - Centre International de Formation des Acteurs Locaux (CIFAL) status for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3 and 4, through a University of Newcastle (UON) award. This recognition signifies that attendees are receiving a "quality education contributing to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals." SDG 3 focuses on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being

You can download a full map [HERE](#) and find out more about Q building [HERE](#).

This conference has been organised by the AAG CREATIVITY, ART & DESIGN special interest group (CADSIG) of the Australian Association of Gerontology in collaboration with the University of Newcastle.



**AAG**  
Australian  
Association of  
Gerontology



# PROGRAM OF EVENTS

<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Notes</u>
8:30 AM	Event Registration	Level 2, Q Building, 168 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle
9:00 AM	<b>Adam Manning:</b> Acknowledgment of Country  <b>Prof Kate Nash:</b> University of Newcastle Welcome	
9:15 AM	<b>A/Prof Helen English, Prof Evonne Miller and Dr Tricia King:</b> Event Welcome	
<u>SESSION ONE: Music and Dementia</u>		
9:30 AM	<b>The Unforgettables</b>	Please join us to start our day with an unforgettable performance by inclusive dementia choir the Unforgettables.
9:45 AM	<b>KEYNOTE: Prof Bill Thompson, Bond University :</b> Music Enhanced Health Pathways	In this keynote, I'll present a novel theory of how well-established pathways to health and wellbeing, such as aerobic exercise and social interaction, can be augmented by accompanying music. Applied to individuals with age-related cognitive decline, the theory underscores how sustained involvement in music-supported activities can elevate cognitive functions, decelerate brain aging, and contribute to cognitive reserve.
10:30 AM	<b>Dr Justin Christensen, University of Sheffield :</b> Examining the use of music in dementia cafe settings when using technologies designed to support choice and creativity	Music is a valuable tool for enhancing the quality of life and communication for people living with dementia, their families, and care professionals. However, without musically-trained staff, many feel unequipped to facilitate these interactions effectively. Over the past three years, we have collaborated with community and residential care groups to co-develop new technologies that make engaging with a range of musical experiences more accessible, while considering different motivations, preferences, abilities and needs. Focussing on enriching music-enjoyment sessions at memory cafes and residential care home communal areas, we aimed to analyse: i) engagement with the musical devices, and ii) the social interactions these devices potentially promote.
10:50 AM	<b>PANEL DISCUSSION with speakers:</b> Outcomes and dissemination (including audience questions)	Chair: <b>Gina Hayward</b> (Dementia Australia) Panel: <b>Bill Thompson</b> and <b>Justin Christensen</b>

## 11:00AM MORNING TEA + "HOPE" THEME

### SESSION TWO: CREATIVE PRACTICES AND QUALITY OF LIFE AS WE AGE

- 11:30 AM **Dr Kim-Huong Nguyen, University of Queensland and Atlantic Fellow** : From forests to frescos: How to measure the wealth of creativity?
- This talk explores the Total Economic Value (TEV) framework—traditionally used to evaluate the full range of benefits provided by ecosystems—and its application to the creative arts and cultural heritage. By drawing parallels between environmental conservation and the preservation and promotion of the arts and culture, we highlight the profound, often intangible economic benefits that the arts and creative engagements provide. These range from fostering community cohesion, celebrating diversity, and improving brain health to generating employment and income. Through developing and applying a TEV framework for creative arts and cultural heritage, policymakers, funders, and society can better understand the full spectrum of value that creative arts bring.
- 11:45 AM **Dr Tricia King, University of Sunshine Coast** : Using visual media as a communication tool with older adults: how creative practices can support self-identity and wellbeing
- Engaging in creative pursuits confers a variety of benefits for health and wellbeing in older age; however, engaging older people in creative activities is often a challenge. For many older people, the idea of doing a creative activity is daunting and they are often concerned about their lack of artistic talent or the perceived needed technical skills they have not acquired. Similarly, they may lack the tools, space or instruction needed to participate in creative activities. Photography, being a highly accessible medium for creativity and communication, is an activity familiar to almost everyone. With a camera or a smartphone, anyone can create a photograph, including older adults of differing physical and cognitive abilities, and this can increase mindfulness, social connection, and wellbeing.
- 12:00 PM **Dr Heidi Gilchrist, University of Sydney** : Exercise in disguise: developing and maintaining engagement in dance classes for healthy ageing and fall prevention
- RIPE (Really Is Possible for Everyone) Dance is a community-based practice in Queensland offering tailored dance programs for older adults of all abilities, focusing on wellbeing and fall prevention. To understand engagement, we surveyed 77 participants, measuring attendance, class impressions, falls, balance, quality of life, and wellbeing. We also conducted interviews with 20 participants, analyzed using realist evaluation methods. Survey respondents (n=62) cited the physical benefits of exercise (28/62) as their initial reason for attending, while music (31/62) and the pleasure of moving to music (28/62) motivated their choice of dance. Initial barriers

included health issues (12/62) and lack of confidence (7/62), with only health issues persisting over time. Tailored dance programs like RIPE Dance can engage older people long-term and significantly enhance healthy, happy ageing.

12:15 PM

**Liss Finney** : Art gallery outreach for people with dementia and their carers

This presentation shares and reflects upon the ins and outs of the successful arts health program *Conversations* at Maitland Regional Art Gallery. *Conversations* has been designed for people living with dementia, and their carers, to engage with the arts, and includes social and creative workshops on site, facility outreach and online art activities. The program has been running since 2011, welcoming over 3000 socially isolated older people from the Lower Hunter. In *Conversations*, art becomes a medium to connect. Liss will provide insight into how programs for this demographic work, explore how regional galleries can enhance connection and build community, and share feedback from the community.

12:30 PM

**A/Pro Joyce Siette, Western Sydney University** : Artful Messaging: Using creative approaches for dementia awareness and prevention

This presentation explores innovative, arts-based approaches to improving dementia awareness and prevention. Despite increased understanding of modifiable dementia risk factors, dementia remains widely misunderstood and stigmatised. Current public health campaigns often fall short in addressing these complexities and engaging diverse populations. Drawing from four Australian case studies, we examine how arts-based methods can effectively shift perceptions, overcome barriers related to culture, language, and literacy, and build community awareness in dementia-related topics.

12:45 PM

Panel Discussion

Chair: **Prof Jane Davidson**

**1.00 PM : LUNCH (PROVIDED) + Sketch Activity  
+ "Legends" theme**

**1.45 PM : POSTER PRESENTATIONS**

## SESSION THREE: THE POWER OF CREATIVITY

2:15 PM

**A/Prof Claire Hooker, University of Sydney** : Connecting people and ideas in support of creative ageing: the role of the Arts Health Network NSW/ACT (AHNNA)

This presentation provides a brief overview of AHNNA's mission and discusses current activities. This is followed by a very brief history of the network's formation and what it has been able to contribute, with a focus on engagement with creative aging specifically. To conclude, I consider what sorts of things the 3 networks and the wider alliances could offer to the creative aging space.

2:30 PM

**Emeritus Prof Julie Byles, University of Newcastle**: The power of being creative in later life

The human experience is more than functional; it is creative. How we experience, express and use this creativity can change with age and life stage. We can use creativity to express our identity and tell our stories. As we adapt to changes in later life, we can gain, maintain, adapt, and evolve our creativity. Art and expression are more than a path to wellbeing. To Art is Human.

## WORKSHOPS

These are parallel hands-on workshops. Please choose one to attend.

2:40 PM

**Courtney Griffiths** : Art Workshop

Courtney Griffiths will conduct an abstract drawing and painting exercise for which you require no skills or previous experience. It is a workshop designed to work with participants at any level. It is both for those who want to engage in the moment and those who might take away some ideas and techniques and explore further.

2:40 PM

**Paul Wilson** : Laughter Care

Paul Wilson who is an experienced actor working with The Humour Foundation will share the work he and others do as Laughter Care Specialists. In this presentation, Paul will outline the aims of the Foundation and share some personal observations from years of experience.

He will also discuss the various techniques he uses and how they can be of use and show a short video of practitioners at work. It will be a fun and interactive session.

**3:30 PM : AFTERNOON TEA + "Taboos and Fears" theme**

## SESSION FOUR: FINAL PANEL

3:50 PM

Themes wrap up

In the final session we reflect on attendees' contributions to the themes of hope, legends, taboos and fears and then consider three questions: how to break down silos; how to position for the future; and how to make creative activities more accessible and sustainable.

Chair: **A/Prof Helen English**

Panel: **Prof Evonne Miller** (QUT)

**Prof Jane Davidson** (U Melbourne)

**Justin Christensen** (U Sheffield)

**Sally Patterson** (care partner)

## CONCLUSION

4.45

**A/Prof Helen English and Prof Evonne Miller:** Closing remarks

**THE EVENT WILL BE FOLLOWED BY NETWORKING DRINKS AT  
THE HONEYSUCKLE HOTEL (OWN COST)**

## CFP SPECIAL ISSUE – AUSTRALASIAN JOURNAL ON AGEING

This symposium will support a special issue of the Australasian Journal on Ageing "Creativity, the Arts and Ageing". Consideration for inclusion closes on 31 October 2024, please see the following link for more information:

[https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/pb-assets/assets/17416612/CFP-creativity the arts and ageing-1715243054757.pdf](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/pb-assets/assets/17416612/CFP-creativity%20the%20arts%20and%20ageing-1715243054757.pdf)

# GETTING HERE

*If you have any questions about the venue or getting here please email  
Helen English  
Helen.English@newcastle.edu.au*

The symposium will take place at Q Building in the University of Newcastle. This is located at 168 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle.

There is limited on street parking around the building. The nearest car park is in Wright Lane.

The nearest train station is the Newcastle Interchange, and the nearest light rail station is Honeysuckle.

The nearest bus stop is at the corner of King Street and Auckland Street, bus numbers are 11 and 13.

For more information on parking, please visit [City of Newcastle's parking information](#).

On arrival, please make your way to Level 2 via the lifts. Tea and Coffee will be available from 8:30am and the event will commence at 9:00am.

