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Keep in touch

The RSC charism lives on

Mt Carmel College, Sandy Bay, Tasmania

In the week leading up to Mount Carmel Day, celebrated on 15th July, we were very pleased to host Sister Anne Taylor at the College on Monday, July 11th. Sister Anne began the day by addressing the students at the Grade 6-Grade 10 Assembly.

She spoke about Mary Aikenhead's desire to continue Jesus' mission of helping the poor and the coming of the Sisters to Australia, and subsequently to Hobart, to continue the work Mary Aikenhead had begun. Sister Anne also spoke of her journey to and with the Sisters of Charity, including five years at Mount Carmel, and how she sees the charism of Service of the Poor continuing today at the College.

Sister Anne visited several Year Seven classes, providing the opportunity for further questions and discussion on the work of the Sisters today, as an extension to the Integrated Unit 'Our Journey'. This Unit was completed by all our Year Seven students at the beginning of the year.



Srs Cathy Meese, Josephine Cannell and Anne Taylor attended the Mt Carmel Day celebrations.

Celebrations for the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel took place on Friday, 15th July

Father Tate, Parish Priest of Sandy Bay-Taroona, celebrated a wonderfully joyful Mass in the College Hall. Three Sisters of Charity were present: Sister Josephine Cannell, Sister Cathy Meese and Sister Anne Taylor. The students participated enthusiastically and the singing was beautiful. At this Mass we remembered Sister Eileen Keen who had died on Friday 8th July. Sister Eileen was Principal at Mount Carmel College from 1974 to 1982. She is very much a part of the history of our school and epitomised in so many ways the charism of the Sisters of Charity, which underpins our ethos and the way in which we relate to one another.

A delicious Morning Tea followed and we were able to acknowledge in advance the significant and joyful occasion of Sr Cathy Meese's golden jubilee as a Sister of Charity with a presentation and a multitude of good wishes. Sister Cathy, who has a long connection with Mount Carmel, is currently a member of the College Board.

Fun times

The day continued for the students with varied activities including primary and secondary 'Super Quizzes', novelty games and activities in class/year groups, a barbeque, and a staff versus Year 10 sporting contest. Mount Carmel Day provided lots of fun for our whole school community.



One of the Mt Carmel Day games in progress.

A tradition of giving

In the tradition of the Sisters of Charity, we give to people in need on Mount Carmel Day so students were encouraged to bring along gold coins. This year's donations will go towards assisting students in Zambia.

Our connection with the Sisters of Charity is very important to us and it was most serendipitous that the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel could be enhanced through the presence of Sisters Josephine, Cathy and Anne in our wonderful community.



Enthusiastic students prepare for the next activity.

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Sr M. Justine Doherty rsc

Obituary



ister M. Justine Doherty, aged 94 and a Sister of Charily for 71 years, died in Melbourne on 11th September 2011. Justine was born in Camperdown in rural Victoria where her father was a farmer. Besides her twin brother, Finbar, Justine had two sisters, Margaret and Frances and a brother, Leo. In Baptism, Justine was named Mary Catherine but took Justine as her religious name and continued to use that name throughout her life.

After primary school at St Patrick's Camperdown, Justine attended Sacred Heart College, Ballarat for her secondary schooling, studied commercial subjects and worked in secretarial positions for some years before June 1937, when she entered our Novitiate at 'Bethania,' Potts Point, Sydney.

After her novitiate training and Profession of Vows, Sister Justine trained as a General Nurse and began her nursing ministry. Two or three years later, while nursing at St Vincent's, Hospital, Launceston, Justine was diagnosed with TB and from then on her ministry was several times interrupted by sick leave. This did not, however, prevent Justine becoming a very fine nurse, offering her

skills of organisation and of efficient and gracious patient-care for twenty years, working in the Wards, Administration or Reception in our hospitals at Lismore, Auburn, and St Vincent's, Fitzroy where, at the Reception desk, Justine ministered for ten years prior to her retirement, first to our Sisters' Aged Care Hostel, Kew and then to Clayton.

As we have remembered Sister Justine during the weeks since her death most have spoken of how kind and courteous she was, how much she loved to talk with people, and what special love she had for her family and the Congregation. Sister Mary Gabrielle who cared for Justine during the years before her death, sent a copy of a reflection that Justine asked to have read at her eulogy and Mary Gabrielle feels it expresses well Justine's peacefulness and contentment during her last years.

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve.
I was made weak, that I might learn humility to obey.
I asked for health, that I might do great things.
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.
I asked for riches, that I might be happy.
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.
I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men.
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life.
I was given life, that I may enjoy all things.
Not given all that I asked for, but everything I hoped for —

I am among the most richly blessed.

One Sister of Charity

but all Sisters of Charity

by Denise Hannebery rsc

Leadership Council made a decision to support the newest parish in the Archdiocese of Melbourne – Caroline Springs – by supporting my Pastoral Ministry there.

Accepting the call from God to go to Caroline Springs meant living alone – alone – for the first time in my 50 years of Community Religious Life. However what I discovered was that I took with me the whole Community of the Sisters of Charity – their love, support and care but more especially their prayers, as the following story illustrates.

On Wednesday 19th October we enjoyed our first Prayer Reflection Day at Brimbank Park. God blessed us with a beautiful sunny day and overflowing blessings. However, when I arrived home late that afternoon, there was a message on my telephone answering service from Sister Marita – a wonderful 90+ year old Sister of Charity, living at Corpus Christi Clayton.

She said:

"Today, at Mass, after Holy Communion, your name kept coming to me so I prayed very specially for you. Is it a special day for you?"



Some of the participants at the Reflection Day.

It was indeed a special day! Sister Marita's prayer had contributed to all the great blessings of our first Prayer Reflection day. What a Sister of Charity gift! After Rosebank

by Margaret Nabbs rsc

In 1994 I was asked to set up a small Conference Centre in our property at Strathmore. The Congregation decided to make major renovations and I supervised them. After a lot of advertising groups began to use the Centre and I organised craft days, Retreat days, cooking etc. as well as celebrations e.g. St Patrick's Day, barbecues and Christmas in July celebrations. Our Craft Group also worked on a historical wall-hanging of the Sisters of Charity's involvement in Strathmore, which is now in the Archives. Numbers grew so that by 2002, when I resigned for health reasons, some of the groups continued to function.

We continued with book clubs, cards (Solo), craft and cooking after we relocated to the Strathmore Parish Centre with Father Di Giorgio's blessing. Members of the Rosebank Ladies offered to take responsibility for each group.

Presently we have two Book Clubs with 12 members in each group. Originally we chose a book and procured our own copies. However, after enquiries, we found our local Moonee Valley Library would supply 'Rosebank' and 'Crossways' (the names of our Book Clubs) with 10 books a year. Notes of context information regarding the author and discussion questions were provided for a fee of \$60. Christine Gregory and Sybil Carroll are the two people responsible. We have read a variety of books and surprisingly the ones we don't like, provide the most discussion!

To begin with, at Craft we all made the same article - bears, doorstops, etc., but during the last few years we have shared targets blankets, made with knitted squares, singlets and caps for premature babies. You can imagine the joy when a group of disadvantaged women from the high-rise flats in Footscray, painted silk scarves and wore them home! They could not believe they could keep them. The Christian Brothers at Glenburn (an ecological Retreat Centre) decided to sponsor a Brother from Africa to take part in their 10 week course, so one of the women made a Patchwork 'Collingwood Throw' to raffle and Pat Leigh worked a large tablecloth.



We have read a variety of books and surprisingly the ones we don't like, provide the most discussion!

Can you imagine the remarks about the 'Throw' in the Essendon area! The result of the raffle was \$480. We had previously raised money for a new copier. This craft group has become a real friendship gathering.

Each year about 20 people gather, in November, to make Christmas Puddings to take home, cook and hang until Christmas. Sally Desirto brings all the ingredients and we proudly take home a pudding in a cloth to enjoy with our families. Sally also has cooking days on a theme. She cooks and we share the results, taking home the recipes to try ourselves.

Some of you may know Cassie Tehan who taught at Glenroy for years. She offered to run the card group which meets for Solo on the last Monday of the month. We pay \$3 and bring along something for afternoon tea. What a feast as there are many good cooks! After seven years Margo Doherty and Val Milne have taken over the organisation of the venue.

Recently new members have joined all the groups. How long they will continue? That, we don't know. However the whole experience has brought new social life to Strathmore.

Thank you to all the women who have carried on so enthusiastically and carry on some of what was initiated at Rosebank.

The Annals of the Sisters of Charity in Australia

by M. John Baptist De Lacy

This is the sixth and final instalment of De Lacy's annals. Part five was published in KIT, September 2011.

Sr Mary Vincent Marum having entered the Convent in very delicate Health, suffered a long and lingering illness in meek resignation to the Divine Will, and died in the odour of Sanctity in Sydney, October 19th 1844 – aged 25 years. She was professed three hours before she breathed her pure soul into the hands of Her Redeemer & Spouse.

Miss O'Brien entered the Noviciate October 17th 1844. Miss Geraldine Gibbons entered November 30th 1844.

July 2nd The Feast of the Visitation of our B. Lady, Miss O'Brien & Miss Gibbons were clothed in the Holy Habit, 41 in the Church of Paramatta, on the same day Jane Swayne & Anne Shortal received the white veil, 42 from the hands of the Most Revd Dr Polding the latter was received as Domestic Sisters. A great number were present at the ceremony. With his wonted eloquence, and holy zeal, The Archbishop explained in an elegant discourse the Spirit of the Monastic State.

His Grace held a Visitation in the Convent of the St Mary's Paramatta on 22nd & 23rd August 1845.

October 1st 185643

Many years have elapsed since I stated any particulars regarding the Order of the Religious Sisters of Charity in this Colony and why? Because so many - so various and may I add - so strange have been the events which have occurred that my Heart sickened at the mere thought of recording what could not fail of exciting in the mind of the Reader feelings of amazement that such a useful body of Religious could sink into nonentity. After our arrival in the Colony Mrs O'Brien was elected Head Superior in October 1839 - she told me to write the Annals of the Congregation in this Colony. I did so, and for four years continued to note events and dates which regarded our Holy Institute, submitting occasionally for her approval what I had written.44



The Right Rev. Dr. Robert Willson, first Catholic Bishop of Hobart (1794-1866).

Samuel Calvert, 1865. La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

[The remainder of that page is blank. On the following page, the same handwriting continues.]

Copy of Correspondence.

To Mrs De Lacy Hobart Town 21st July 1857 –

Dear Revd Mother.

January 1850 – Your Sisters in religion, Mrs Cahill and Mrs O'Brien, had sent to them from an Attorney in Sydney, certain blank deeds for them to sign – namely for effecting a sale of property in Paramatta [sic] held by them in trust for the Sisters of Charity in N.S.Wales, absolutely to the Abp and Dr Gregory, their Heirs, or Assigns. –

No explanation was afforded by anyone – I as was natural, was consulted, and as Bishop Davis knew nothing of the proposed transaction, I was of the opinion these Ladies could not in justice to the trust confided to them attach their Signatures.

In 1854 – I was in Rome, and the question was referred to the Holy See.

In reply by Brief, with which I was honoured, I was instructed to inform these Religious that they were to transfer the property to two of the Sisters of your Convent, who had been chosen by the Community to hold it in trust.

I believe the substance of what I have written was communicated to you the early part of 1855.

I trouble you with this note to suggest a speedy compliance with the Instructions given by the Holy See, or rather to afford an opportunity to these Ladies to do so, much expense, trouble, &&& may be prevented by it.

There is a probability that I shall shortly proceed to Europe, and from my age and an Infirmity I have daily to contend with, it is not likely I should again return – and and [sic] therefore wish it to be clearly understood, that as far as the good Religious in Hobart are concerned, no delay has been, or is now, necessary. They are ready any day to comply with the instructions they have received.

It has ever been a subject of regret to me that these good, these holy women, who have laboured so assiduously for my Flock were separated from you as they were – I always ardently wished for a Filiation from your House, but not in the manner it occurred – but the Providence of God works in its own holy and ever wise ways.⁴⁵

With every best wish for your happiness, and success in your Holy Work, and begging your prayers for myself and mine I am dear Revd Mother

Your faithful Servant in our Blessed Lord

X R.D. Willson [sic]
Bishop of Hobartown

p.s. I have not informed the Nuns of my intentions of writing to you – their minds are I trust in peace – these affairs only trouble them.

Memorial Garden

at St Therese's, Essendon

by Sr Margaret Dwyer rsc

"It has ever been a subject of regret to me that these good, these holy women, who have laboured so assiduously for my Flock were separated from you as they were..."

This is the end of the formal section of the annals. There are pencil jottings on the back of an envelope, dates of entries and ceremonies:

Miss Connoly entered May 21st 1846

Sister Mary Teresa Walsh (Closed July 2nd 1844, professed July 2nd 1846)

Margaret Daly – as a Domestic Sister entered February 1st 1847

Miss Connolly received the white veil February 2nd 1847

Sister Mary Scholastica Gibbon Professed July 16th 1847

Margaret Daly Received the Holy Veil January 11th 1848

- 41 This was the term used to describe the change from wearing a simple dress for the first six months of training to adopting the habit of the Sisters, except that a white veil was worn instead of a black one in the house.
- Domestic Sisters always keep the white veil, even when professed, except when going out.
- ⁴³ The date actually looks more like 1866 but 1856 has been chosen because the third line following makes it appear that De Lacy was still in Sydney.
- What triggered De Lacy's return to recording events could have been the reclaiming of four cottages by their original owner, Mary Corcoran, in 1856. She had set them aside in 1845 to provide income for the Sisters of Charity at Parramatta but they were controlled by the clergy. Since De Lacy copied Bishop Willson's letter, it is also possible that general frustration over property alienated from Sisters of Charity control was the stimulus.
- ⁴⁵ In Polding's absence overseas in 1847, his vicar general, Dr Gregory, had arbitrarily insisted that two of the Sisters, M. John Cahill and S.M De Sales O'Brien, should leave Sydney. S.M. Xavier Williams asked to accompany them to Hobart.

Many people who taught at St Therese's, Essendon, attended the school, or had children there, will be interested in the new Memorial Garden that has been erected in the gardens of the Church. Fr Bill Attard, the Parish Priest, decided to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the parish, rather than wait for the centenary when some of the people who remembered the origins of the parish may no longer be able to be here.

So, as part of the 90th celebrations, it was decided to support the creation of a Memorial Garden, an area of our church grounds that would be set aside for remembering the pioneer parishioners, parish family and friends who have died. The Garden is a place of reflection and prayer, and ashes can be interred and/or a plaque placed on the wall.

There is a central fountain surrounded by plaques, and a water wall, as part of the circle of columbarium and seats. There is a quotation from St Therese on the water wall:

'I go to Him with confidence and love.'

These are the last words she wrote, and speak eloquently and succinctly of her desire of loving surrender to God. The plaques on the water wall commemorate our former Parish Priests and Sisters of Charity who served us faithfully over the years.

In our church's tradition, we, as a Catholic community, wish to honour and respect our members who have died, and care for the loved ones who have been left behind. St Therese's Memorial Garden is a place where we can remember the faith that sustains us in times of grief. It is a place where we can honour those who have contributed to the life of the parish. It is a place where people can stop awhile in their journey, no matter how far they have travelled, and reflect and pray in safe and gentle surroundings.

The 90th anniversary celebrations continue next year with the Biggest Tea Party before and after each of the weekend Masses on April 21st and 22nd, the photo exhibition and Book launch on July 27th, and finally, the Dinner Dance on August 11th. All former teachers, parents and students are welcome to all or any of these celebrations.



Memorial Garden at St Therese's, Essendon,

Briar Terrace

Our journey together - inner city wilderness

by Sr Margaret Laffan rsc

Many lovely, isolated men and women must pursue their lives in low income, densely populated, inner city precincts. Having lost their family roots, they are often forced into a constantly changing locale, due to grave situational or personal instability and trauma. They yearn for companionship and support that they can trust. Here at Briar Terrace, they can find safety, peace and be respected as equals.

Through many years, the Sisters of Charity had been involved in Fitzroy, St. Kilda, Darlinghurst and Kings Cross and felt strongly urged to respond, in the spirit of Mary Aikenhead, to provide a place such as Briar Terrace. So, in 1995, encouraged by our Congregational Leader, Sister Annette and Council, the researching and planning began over three years – visiting and consulting locals and professionals within the 'homeless' scene.

At last, a small, homely sized Terrace Cottage in Fitzroy was generously made available by St. Vincent's Hospital. It has a lovely courtyard garden which was destined to become a source of beauty, colour, friendship and delight – precious curios in the environment of high brick walls!

The soft light within the front door offers a warm invitation in the midst of hardship and ill health. There are only two conditions to be met: that one be 'dry' and that no violence of any kind is permitted. Thus the feeling of being secure prevails.

Laughter came gradually in this restful space of relief from aloneness – a feeling of belonging, germinating – and most of all, a sense of trust...

Official Opening and Blessing, February 26th 1998

Sr Annette Cunliffe rsc and Fr Pat Harvey PP officiated, while a large group of Sisters of Charity braved the elements of 42°C in support! The next day a vibrant group of eight committed women and men joined Margaret Laffan rsc and Mary Fankhauser rsc in welcoming our first friends. Eileen Terrill rsc also joined us until she became very ill. Bernadette Culhane rsc initiated the Volunteer Training and later joined in visiting many solitary people.

Welcoming into Briar Terrace

Word spread and guests came ringing the bell, being ushered in to enjoy the 'bottomless cuppa' and the touch of warmth, peace and friendship. Laughter came gradually in this restful space of relief from aloneness – a feeling of belonging, germinating – and most of all, a sense of trust slowly reviving once again. Problems that arose were dispelled by a trusted presence and a welcome advocate in many instances.

Times of celebration and being together.



Visiting

Central to our Mission was the realisation that many people would be unable to come to Briar Terrace, due to physical or emotional reasons. So the reverse happens – we visit those continuously. Amazing and different effects occur as some regain social skills in a safe relationship.

Example: A grieving man, Joe, refused to leave his tiny room after his partner died. He could not stop drinking, yet wanted company. Gradually his drinking problem decreased and he began coming to the Terrace, even playing cards, enjoying being the life of the party. Mutual caring and respect flourished.

Street Walking

This has played an essential role in breaking down barriers and initiating contact.

Ongoing contacts frequently lead the person to gain courage and to come on his/her own. Some may never come, others may return 2 to 4 times in the day – a thread growing stronger daily. Some are just glad to have a chat with us.

Journeying to the Last

A most precious cementing of the relationship, one that they know will not be broken by us. We have experienced scores of our friends reclaiming their courage, their sense of dignity and wellbeing, and a mutual sense of giving.

Example: A very ill man, Pat, had moved to a Nursing Home in Hastings. He was dying, but one day appeared at our door having travelled all that way. When he was finally asked why he made that long trip, he replied that he just had to re-visit Briar Terrace. Two days later, Pat died.

Hundreds of our friends have been accompanied to the end visited and cared for, not only by Volunteers but by each other.

Example: A man, normally abrupt and locked into his own world, sitting beside the hospital bed of a dying neighbour, stroking his hands for hours, was a gift to see!

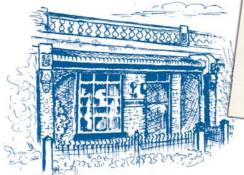
Example: Other poignant moments are being with families who only discover their long lost relative through seeing his/her Death Notice.

Life till now

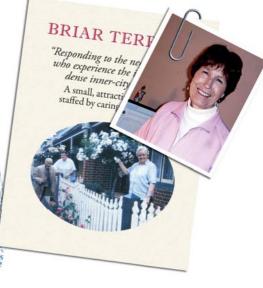
Over the past years since its inception, Briar Terrace has been a haven for many people – some permanent, others for varying lengths of time, some in times of crisis.

Volunteer numbers have increased – bringing vitality and talents in their compassion and care – generously assisting with BBQs, short holidays/outings and expansion of services.

In 2007, Margaret Laffan rsc retired and Bernadette Mundy became Manager. The Terrace has continued to maintain the hope of bringing healing solace and mutual companionship. May this special ministry continue to be blessed by God.



Sketch by Sr Helen Malone rsc.



The Briar Terrace brochure, which features Sr Mary greeting guests and Manager, Bernadette Mundy (top right).

An outstanding student

Jaqueline O'Neil, CLC Eltham, Vic

by Sr Judith Peart rsc

The Principal of Catholic Ladies College Eltham, Mrs Margaret McKenna, invited Sr Judith Peart rsc (who had been a member of Staff) and Sr Elizabeth Costigan rsc, a current Staff member, to present an Award at the VCE ceremony at the College. She did not say who the recipient would be.

In welcoming and introducing the sisters, Margaret said:

"I am delighted to welcome two Sisters of Charity who have a long and passionate connection to CLC as students, Sisters and Staff – Sr Judith Peart rsc and Sr Elizabeth Costigan rsc. Together, Sisters Judith and Elizabeth will be presenting the Caltex All Rounder Award."

The Caltex All-Rounder Award is given to a Year 12 student who has excelled in a number of areas during her years at CLC. Such areas may be academic, sporting, artistic, technology etc.

As the sisters were called forward to present the Award, Mrs McKenna extolled the qualities of the outstanding student before announcing that it was Jacqueline O'Neill. What a surprise! I have known Jacqui since she was born. Her mother, Debbie, is on the staff at CLC and I gave Debbie her first teaching position at East Keilor many years ago.

Jacqui's sister, Amy (Year 9) and her father, Wayne were at the assembly. It was so special because none of us knew before the award was announced and it was wonderful to hear the way Margaret McKenna described Jacqueline.

Jacqueline also received the *Margaret Cross Award*. Margaret Cross was a member of the PE staff for 23 years. During this time, generations of CLC students came to value and appreciate her encouragement and commitment to team sports.





Jacqueline and a very proud Sr Judith.

This award is given to a student who has shown dedication and participated in the life of the College through sport. Congratulations Jacqui!

What a proud day for all concerned and I wanted to share it with the Congregation and other friends!

Jacqueline with Chris Nolan (aunt), Wayne and Debbie (parents), Margaret McKenna (Principal), Srs Judith Peart and Elizabeth Costigan.

A fond farewell

at St. John's, Auburn our former convent

by Kerry Barrass rsc

n Saturday 5th November, Sisters of Charity, especially those with links to the former St. John's Convent, were invited by the Marist Brothers to afternoon tea and a tour of the building before they also vacate it.

We, the Sisters who lived at St. John's Convent, Auburn, were invited to share memories of when we were there. The Sisters of Charity lived there before the Marist Brothers took it over, because their monastery was now needed for the school. We arrived at 2pm and went for a tour of the house, remembering where and what we used each room for. Then we had a lovely afternoon high tea of scones, jam and cream, coffee and tea. It was a great afternoon!

The Brothers who are still there are Michael, Brian, Robert and Tony. Robert made the scones! Also, Robert was one of the Marist Brothers at Murgon, when Srs Josephine and Anne Louise were there.

The sisters present were Margaret Scully, Frances Xavier, Mary Frances, Monette, Edith, Ellen, Eileen and Kerry.

We all enjoyed many stories, many laughs and lots of memories. It was really a great day.



Left to right: Srs Eileen Browne, Edith, Mary Frances, Margaret Scully, Kerry, Monette, Ellen and Francis Xavier. Brs: Tony, Robert, Brian and Michael.

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Level 7, 35 Grafton Street, Bondi Junction, NSW 2022 Telephone 02 9367 1222 Fax 02 9367 1223 Email james.griffiths@rscoffice.com

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Crafty skill!

award winning card creation

by 'a friend'



Anna Parlevliet rsc belongs to a women's craft group who meet at the Kilbride Centre, Melbourne. It was here that Anna rekindled her interest in the craft of quilling, an art form that involves strips of paper rolled, shaped, and glued together to create decorative designs.

With guidance and encouragement provided by Geraldine csb, coupled with Anna's creative skill, her quilled greeting cards were entered in the Royal Melbourne Show 2011. Anna was delighted to win 1st prize for a set of four cards and 2nd prize for a single card. Each card featured quilled floral compositions with a bumble bee as the focal point.

Anna is now a Show judge, a skill gained through practice and patience, and judges craft entered by people with special needs, such as those with disabilities due to illness, accident and age.

When Anna lived in Queensland, she was a founding member of the Diversional Therapy Association. Her commitment to the Association continued when she moved to Victoria, where she joined a committee that successfully introduced the skill of Diversional Therapy into the University curriculum.

Anna now uses her skills to encourage all people to learn all forms of craft – and to enter the results of their creativity in various Shows around the city and country.

Keep going Anna! We need your 'crafty' skills to make us aware of the beauty of creation.