

Profiling Our Volunteers

By Glenda Hipwell, Project Officer DMCC Part Macquarie.

The Dementia Memory & Community Centre Staff at Port Macquarie would like to highlight the services of volunteers Maureen Cooke & Marina Dick.

Marina and Maureen volunteer their services as art tutors each fortnight to conduct an art program for people with memory loss and their carers.

The art is displayed in an exhibition during Dementia Awareness Week each year to create a positive awareness of what people living with dementia and their carers are able to achieve.

As secretary for the Port Macquarie Art Society since 1987 Maureen was only too happy when approached by DMCC staff regarding the program. She not only offered her services but also offered the use of the historic Art Society building to accommodate the program.

Maureen's role with the Art society is not just as secretary, she also handles public relations and media events, coordinates a Sunday Market and is host and convenor of the Port Macquarie Easter Art Exhibition. In her spare time Maureen visits nursing homes and is a civil celebrant. Maureen was also instrumental in beginning an art program in a Port Macquarie aged care facility dementia specific unit.

Maureen's partner at each art program is Marina Dick a prolific local artist and also a member of the art society. Marina who has lived in Port Macquarie all her life is committed to art and helping



Port Macquarie volunteers Maureen Cooke and Marina Dick

people develop their artistic talents. Marina conducts art classes at the Manor House (The old 1900's Art Society building) regularly. Maureen said Marina has worked tirelessly over the past ten years supporting her and the art society in many areas including volunteering at art exhibitions and the hanging of art works for exhibitions. Marina's love of art has now extended to her daughter and even her grandchildren who have now followed her into the world of art.

At the fortnightly art programs Maureen and Marina provide inspiration for the participants, they listen to stories, provide support and encouragement, a welcoming smile on arrival and a hug goodbye on departure. The participants, some of whom are long time residents of Port Macquarie as well, have many reminiscence sessions about the old Port Macquarie with both Marina and Maureen. The old Manor House that hosts the group sessions offers a comfortable, nurturing environment which appeals

to the group and helps keep participants at ease.

Maureen Cooke and Marina Dick we salute you! Thank you for the wonderful job that you do with the Creative Connections Art Group and assisting people with memory loss and their carers to participate in an activity that promotes a sense of being connected, builds self esteem and fosters a positive image of living with dementia.