

## MEDIA RELEASE

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# Pilot art and dementia program for Forbes

Aged care residents at Jemalong Residential Village (JRV) are looking at, talking about and making art in a new art and dementia program.

The weekly workshops lead residents in discussion about art works followed by practical art experiences linked to those works. A selection of the art produced by residents will then be framed and exhibited at JRV.

The program aims to provide social inclusion and intellectual stimulation which in turn acts to promote wellbeing. Residents with and without dementia are taking part.

“Looking at and talking about works of art enables people living with dementia to connect with the world in enriching and life-enhancing ways,” Arts OutWest arts and health coordinator Christine McMillan said.

A series of art works have been loaned to JRV from the collection of Bathurst Regional Art Gallery (BRAG) for the program. The Sensory Room at JRV will be set up as a small art gallery where the works from BRAG will be available for residents to visit accompanied by staff.

“We’re privileged to have these high quality art works on loan to us from BRAG,” Ms McMillan said. “These works don’t usually leave the gallery.”

The artworks have been especially chosen to facilitate discussion between care givers and people with dementia. In gentle conversations they will compare and contrast visual features in the artworks and create links with the everyday through images that evoke storytelling.

Additional professional development for artists and volunteers will be run by regional arts development organisation Arts OutWest. These professional development sessions will build on the training that was presented by the National Gallery of Australia at JRV in April.

“After the workshop with the National Gallery, staff at JRV are very excited, they feel that residents will benefit immensely from the arts in dementia program. The aim of the program is to support creativity, in a safe and welcoming environment. We hope the program will also foster relationships between residents and provide them with a meaningful occupation, regardless of past experiences with art,” said Krystyna Anderson, Occupational Therapist from JRV.

The pilot program is a partnership between Jemalong Residential Village, Arts OutWest and the Bathurst Regional Art Gallery.

BRAG and Arts OutWest conducted a similar pilot program, working out of Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, in 2012. That project won a Museums & Galleries NSW IMAGiNE Award and the Arts and Health Australia International Award for ‘Arts and Health in Regional and Rural Australia’.

This exciting new project began in September and will run through to late November. It’s hoped that the program might become a regular, ongoing activity at JRV and other aged care facilities in the region.

This program is based on one developed by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York in 2006. This MoMA program was later taken up by the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) in 2007 through its Art and Alzheimers Program.

