



By Iwi Jakeman  
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What do you get when you combine art with breast Cancer? A bright message of hope, actually.

The TAFE Nepean Art & Design Centre (NADC) has joined forces with the NSW Breast Cancer Institute (BCI) to bring a vibrant message of hope for breast cancer patients and to raise awareness amongst the wider community.

Breast cancer survivor and graphic designer Margaret Mapperson said she came up with the idea of a joint venture because of her involvement with both organisations.

*"The NADC has some amazing people who can communicate good messages and since I was involved with both (the BCI and NADC) I thought, wouldn't it be good if they could work together?"*

In 1993 Mrs Mapperson was diagnosed with breast cancer at the young age of 31 and was treated at Westmead Hospital under the care of Radiation Oncologist John Boyages (now the director of the BCI). During her intense treatment, which involved surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, she met a volunteer worker who gave her hope.

*"When I first found out I thought, that's it for me, the end of it. But then I talked to a volunteer (who was a breast cancer survivor) and realised there is hope. Things can be done. It doesn't mean that's it. That word hope goes a long way."*

Mrs Mapperson has worked as a graphic designer for many years and undertook further studies in 2004, enrolling in the Diploma of Graphic Design course at NADC. She graduated as top student in 2006 and approached NADC staff and NSW BCI Executive Director Professor Boyages about organising a breast cancer poster exhibition. "They liked the idea. I'd never done anything like this before so it was a learning curve."

A curriculum was devised to promote a message of hope while showcasing the talent of NADC graphic design diploma and advanced diploma students. The first Hope Posters exhibition was unveiled at the annual Best Breast Breakfast in October 2006.

The students had designed a range of posters, displaying flair, sensitivity and technical skill in many different styles that would reach a diverse mix of people. The posters incorporated photographs of BCI staff, patients, the BCI logo and the BCI's iconic sunflower. Professor Boyages said the sunflower symbolised "a ray of hope". Mrs Mapperson said her own poster design had a photo of herself reaching for a sunflower – reaching out for hope.

*"The sunflower starts to flower and wrap around my arm like a tattoo; it starts to grow. It's a bit psychedelic. The crawling vines spread around and take over me. In the background is the logo and big lettering – HOPE."*

The Hope Posters were extremely well received and plans for further exhibits and other ideas such as Hope Postcards were possibilities, Mrs Mapperson said. "We need to talk about (breast cancer) more – whichever way we can (raise) awareness and fundraising".

Mrs Mapperson is excited that the Hope Posters have become part of that awareness. "It's very young... I haven't done anything like this before. I just get a bit embarrassed. I think it's just a good idea. I just brought them together, I can't believe it – it keeps growing and blossoming" – just like the sunflower of hope in her inspired poster.

For more information about the Hope Posters Exhibition please call the NSW BCI on (02) 9845 8468.