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MEDIA RELEASE

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Care Through Art: Meet the Artist Brightening Up Lockdown for Aged Care Residents

Brisbane artist and decorator Sharron Tancred is improving the lives of aged care residents in lockdown with colourful hand painted murals and personalised door wraps.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission has highlighted how aged care facilities have struggled to adequately support the wellbeing of their residents during lockdown due to COVID-19.

Through Tailored Artworks and The Mural Shop, Sharron is bringing smiles to the faces of our most vulnerable by converting sterile living spaces into city parks, scenic lookouts and cosy cottages. Bland corridors are transformed into vibrant vistas and residents' rooms are personalised with artistic door wraps.

“The thought of being locked in drives me to create positive and interactive spaces for this deserving section of the community. Residents in assisted living facilities can stress at exit doors, not understanding why they aren't allowed to leave. We have to think outside of the box to help soothe and support people who cannot remember, see clearly or understand what is happening.”

Since 2009, Sharron has studied colour psychology, environmental design and visuo-spatial awareness in dementia, as well as research donated by some of Australia's largest aged care providers. “Aged care environments can lack stimulation. My murals and door wraps are designed to encourage residents to recall memories, pastimes and locations to improve their overall function and happiness within a facility. This is an investment in care through art.”

Dr Christian Rowan MP agrees that environmental design plays a significant role in wellbeing. “As Shadow Minister for Communities, Arts, Disability Services and Seniors, and as a Specialist Physician, I have seen firsthand the importance of ensuring appropriate care and assistance is provided to residents in aged care facilities, particularly throughout the ongoing COVID-19 health and economic crisis. The concept of environmental design can elicit positive changes to the wellbeing of seniors in aged care facilities, especially when it comes to mental health.”

Sharron has worked with a number of aged care providers, including Wesley Mission, Blue Care and Regis Aged Care to solve issues related to spatial awareness, colour perception, wayfinding and atmosphere in their facilities. “When informed by art and science, environmental design has the ability to increase appetites in dining rooms, engage communication in sitting rooms and encourage relaxation in quiet places.”

A Diversional Therapist at Blue Care Kenmore noted the immediate positive impact of Sharron’s work. “We have had some lovely comments from residents, staff and visitors of how much it has changed the whole atmosphere and makes the place much cosier and homelike.”

While these artworks are easing the stress and anxiety of lockdown, Sharron is also focused on the long term benefit. “With a high percentage of us going into aged care in the future, we need more fun in these interiors.”