

AGM Report from Rhonda Porter, President NCEATA 2025-2026
At The Grove, Adamstown 18 July 2026

The past 12 months have disappeared quickly.

The 2025 exhibition of Out of the Blue was well attended and set the scene for the 2026 exhibition of Layers. Both were held at Charlestown library. With Layers having the most pieces sold of any exhibition we have held. The quality of both exhibitions was of the highest standard. My thanks to the Exhibitions team and all entrants.

The committee started without a Craft Alife coordinator and without a Market Coordinator. Ann Harper stepped up to look after Craft Alive. Ann's work to set up a cohesive display bore fruit with a display of interpretations of the doily and hoop combination. It was stimulating and caught the eye of many walking past the stand.

The lack of a Markets coordinator prompted the committee to ask some hard questions about NCEATA at markets. After evaluating position, commitment and logistics the committee decided that it was an appropriate time to step back. We are currently trialling sale tables at events like Textile Tasters.

By the end of 2025 the new NCEATA website was very close to completion. New web master, Tracy MacNicol and Secretary, Kate Highland had been trained, and it was launched in January. A few teething problems but a very professional site. Each month Tracy has detailed some new update. We have interactive forms, what is happening each month, a blog and tons of photos. It is because of this that Embellish magazine will be publishing an article on the NCEATA exhibition, Layers. Thanks go to Merrie How for her time working with Jezweb to get the website ready to go.

We held stitch-ins at Charlestown library for each of the exhibitions. These were better attended when we advertised a specific aim or technique than just saying come and stitch. The supplying of a kit to visitors was a hit. Using leftovers and donations from members small colour coordinated packs with embellishments like buttons and lace were made. The curated kits were available at Craft Alive for a donation and at Textile Tasters. They were a good way to raise money to cover costs.

Textile Tasters continued in 2026 and as in previous years resulted in new members joining. Printing, crochet, making felt balls, tatting, felt bowl making, smocking, tassels, Sashiko, books, and blackwork were covered. The sale of members' work was held in conjunction with the event for the first time.

The Extended Workshops continued: Cathy Jack Copeland in October 2025 making an embellished felt flower; Robin Ihnen in February worked on Nuno felting a collar; Doris Gordon and Rhonda Porter introduced Blackwork.

Judi Nikoleski, life member, ex-newsletter editor, ex-exhibition co-ordinator and website master passed away after a long illness on 14 November 2025. Judi had given much to NCEATA over her membership. Her generosity was without bound.

Judi was a regular workshop leader and Textiles Taster demonstrator. Judi was the major mover behind trying to establish The Hunter Fibre Hub. A project dear to her heart even in the last weeks of her life. It was her donation of money to The Hub that was subsequently passed on to NCEATA early in 2026 in keeping with her wishes and the winding up of The Hub project. Judi bequeathed the proceeds of the sale of the contents of her studio to NCEATA. The sale was conducted at The Grove in April 2026. Voting has taken place amongst members as to how this money should be used. The results being announced here at the AGM.

Our membership had grown to more than 63 members at the end of June 2026. Financially NCEATA continues to maintain a healthy bank balance and subscriptions will not increase this year.

My thanks to all members for their commitment and participation this year. The committee members of 2025/2026 were Kate Highland, Merrie How, Wilma Simmons, Ann Harper, Ann Dean-Pijpers, Anne Dixon, Tracy MacNicol (replacing Judi Nikoleski) and me.

The 2027 exhibition has the theme of Connections. It is likely to be held at Charlestown library again in the early part of the year.

In my first newsletter president's report, I closed with the words. "I look forward to a year of fun, joy and learning." I can honestly say that I achieved all three of these.

So often our meetings are filled with laughter and the connection with like-minded people. Each meeting whether there is a dedicated workshop or a stitch'n'chat I know I will learn something: sometimes it was a new stitch, a new technique or a new thing about me.