

LD 1865  
RESOURCE CENTRE  
ARTS ACCESS SOCIETY  
109-111 Sturt Street,  
South Melbourne, Vic. 3205  
699 8299



**OPPORTUNITY  
AND  
AWARENESS**

*Gay McCormick-Saunders*

*Disability in the Arts,  
Disadvantage in the  
Arts (WA) Inc.*

*February 1995*

JANE

16/5/95

## CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Project Objectives.....	1
Methodology.....	2
Areas not covered by this project.....	3
2. OPPORTUNITIES: DISABILITY GROUPS WORKING WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY.....	3
Trainers willing to work with disability groups.....	4
Accessible courses/workshops/forums.....	4
Support Available.....	5
Disabled artists on database.....	6
Other accessible resources.....	6
Summary.....	7
Recommendations.....	7
3. OPPORTUNITIES: DISABILITY ORGANISATIONS DEVELOPING OWN PROGRAMMES.....	8
Facilities/Venues and Resources.....	9
Programmes/Artforms and Special Projects.....	9
Involvement in the Mainstream.....	9
Funding and Assistance Required.....	10
Summary.....	10
Recommendations.....	10
4. AWARENESS: MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EFFECTIVE DISSEMINATION OF ARTS INFORMATION.....	11
Summary.....	11
Recommendations.....	12
5. D.A.D.A.A.(W.A.)Inc. ARTIST DATABASE.....	12
LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS .....	13

RESOURCE CENTRE  
ARTS ACCESS SOCIETY  
109-111 Sturt Street,  
South Melbourne, Vic. 3205  
099 8299

## ATTACHMENTS

1. List of Arts Organisations Surveyed
2. Arts Organisation Questionnaire
3. List of Disability Organisations Surveyed
4. Disability Organisation Questionnaire
5. List of newsletters and publications
6. Copy of first published newsletter
7. Proposed Contents of Resource Manual
8. Disability Services Bill - Schedule 2
9. Disability Services Program - Bulletin No. 1.
10. National Recreation Network Policy on Recreation  
for People with a Disability - Policy Principles

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"OPPORTUNITY AND AWARENESS" is the second report to be commissioned and published by D.A.D.A.A.(W.A.) Inc. and the first in association with the Artists' Foundation of W.A.

This report signals an on going commitment to equity and access issues that began in 1993 when Recreation Network with the D.A.D.A.A.(W.A.) State Working Party commissioned the 'REPORT ON ARTS AND DISABILITY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA'.

'OPPORTUNITY AND AWARENESS' contains an overview of the issues in relation to the target groups and implementation of the recommendations made in the previous report. Formulation has been based on consultation with representatives of the target group, a review of existing literature, interviews, surveys and the enthusiastic response of all artists and art-workers who contributed.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In January 1994, D.A.D.A.A.(W.A.) and Recreation Network released a report entitled 'ARTS AND DISABILITY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA'. The project was undertaken in order to research arts opportunities for people with disabilities and develop an arts access plan.

The report researched and written by Maggie Baxter suggested clear recommendations resulting in the need to appoint a Research Marketing/Promotions Officer to position disabled and disadvantaged artists at the point where they have the same standing as non-disabled artists in all sectors of the arts industry: recreation, community, professional and industry.

In late August 1994, the Project Officer, Ms Gay McCormick Saunders was appointed on a part time basis to carry out the five month project with a completion date set in late 1994 and extended to February 1995.

#### PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- \* Identify possible opportunities for programme/workshop development within community arts organisations which specifically address skills development and participation for one or more disability groups working with the wider community.
- \* Assessing and developing means for the effective dissemination of arts information to disabled artists and disability groups and visa versa.



- Develop a register of artists - disabled and non-disabled - who would like to work with disability groups.
- Identify market opportunities, strategies and plans for raising public awareness and promoting the abilities of disabled artists
- Develop a series of training workshops for arts agencies and individual artists on the specific needs of individual disability groups which will encourage integration within the wider art community.
- Develop a series of professional development workshops for disabled professional artists to ensure they are familiar with all aspects of the "business" of art including funding sources.
- Identify and develop strategies for disability agencies, foundations and societies to develop their own programs. Included in this would be workshops on:
  - the development of artist-in-residence programs
  - the development of funding submissions.

## METHODOLOGY

A variety of methods were used in collecting data for this study.

### 1) DESK RESEARCH/SURVEY DATA:

A literature search was conducted with existing material and material gained from other sources; the Artists' Foundation of W.A. resources, Community Arts Network resource library and the Australia Council library. (See Bibliography)

As well as conducting a literature review, organisations have been contacted by mail, facsimile or telephone. These have included organisations in other states and territories of Australia.

### 2) CONSULTATION:

Consultations held with individuals and representatives of organisations were conducted face-to-face or on the telephone.

Those involved were;

- Arts and Disability organisations
- Funding organisations
- Arts training organisations/centres
- Individual artists and arts workers both disabled and non-disabled.

### 3) WORKSHOPS:

Attendance at a two day workshop *ResponseAbility* run by Disability Services Unit. This workshop was aimed at equipping TAFE staff in appropriate teaching strategies when dealing with students with a disability.

### AREAS NOT COVERED BY THIS PROJECT

While most of the project outcomes have been achieved, it has not been possible to completely address all of the issues due to the time frame and resource constraints of the project. It was decided by the D.A.D.A.A.(W.A) Inc. Committee that the priority in 1994 was detailed research and that it was more important to reschedule objectives 5, 6 and 7 for 1995. These objectives have been targeted as being educational and training priorities for the future.

## 2. **OPPORTUNITIES: DISABILITY GROUPS WORKING WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY.**

*" .....a more fundamental consideration for arts funding, education and training bodies is that they take action to ensure that people with a disability have equal access to existing programs as the non-disabled."*

( Arts and Disability Research Project Report 1994)

Representatives from community arts and training organisations which specifically address skills and professional development were interviewed and evaluated in relation to existing and possible future access for individual disabled artists and groups.

Questions asked of each organisation were based on a questionnaire. (See Attachment 2.)

Some central arts providers could not respond to the questionnaire as their current policies are directed to the general professional arts community and no provisions would be made at this stage of the study to cater to specific target groups. This was due to restraints with physical access at the venue, eg. PICA only has wheelchair access at ground level.

Some organisations failed to respond at all even after several further contacts were made.

Responses can be grouped together into five areas:

- Trainers willing to work with disability groups/individuals
- Accessible courses/workshops/forums etc
- Support available
- Disabled registers/database
- Other accessible resources.

a) TRAINERS WILLING TO WORK WITH DISABILITY GROUPS

Most centres were unable to give specific details of individual tutors/trainers but many on databases were sited as willing to work with individual disabled artists or disability groups if the opportunity were to arise.

Community Arts Network of W.A. provided a comprehensive list of trainers from their database while the Artists' Foundation of W.A.'s database of trainers willing to work with disabled artists/groups has been growing since the onset of the project.

The Multicultural Centre of W.A. is active in including disability groups in their programmes and all trainers at the centre are aware of their responsibilities to specific equity groups.

The Fremantle Arts Centre had no data as to trainers who are willing to work with disabled artists/groups. However, the course coordinator had attended a workshop based on disability in the arts. The literature officer who often coordinates seminars, is the Treasurer of the D.A.D.A.A.(W.A.) Inc. Committee.

Universities and TAFE centres had Equity or Disability Service Officers to liaise and provide support to staff and students. Some lecturers have had the opportunity to attend inservice courses to become more aware and skilled in alternative training methods/strategies for specific disability groups, eg. RESPONSEABILITY a workshop held by the Disability Services Unit.

These and other organisations assessed all stated that individual consultation with the disabled artist with the course coordinator or trainer prior to enrolment would ensure appropriate awareness and reasonable adjustments made to the course or programme could be arranged within the boundaries of each organisation.

b) ACCESSIBLE COURSES/WORKSHOPS /FORUMS

Some opportunities exist for participation by disabled artists in the various arts organisations or training centres.

The Artists' Foundation of W.A. provides lectures /workshops intermittently throughout the year based on areas of professional arts practice and arts law etc. These are open to the general public including individual disabled artists/groups. These programs are usually held at the



Artists' Foundation of W.A. premises which has limited access to anyone with a movement disability. However, arrangements can be made for lectures to be held at another nominated venue, depending on the size of the group. A.F.W.A. also provides Artist Forum presentations held at the Door Exhibition space which is accessible. The Customs House group of artists situated in Old Customs House managed by A.F.W.A. , occasionally run workshops from their studios upstairs or at a nominated venue.

Community Arts Network of W.A. produce a "SHORT COURSE TRAINING DIRECTORY" which details course cost, duration, content, provider and contact name/number, method of teaching, target group and location.

The directory is mainly aimed at community arts workers but some can be attended by the general public. Some of the courses have a special focus eg. on youth, health and welfare etc. The directory also provides the user with data on how to gain information on equity groups, including the disabled and disadvantaged.

C.A.N. also provide "ART ATTACK" artist forums held at Claisebrook Tavern which is completely accessible. C.A.N. maintain that disability in the arts is almost always considered when training is being arranged.

The Fremantle Arts Centre has some outside/courtyard and ground floor classes that would be accessible to people with a disability. These are all skills based in mainly the craft or literature areas. Prior notice is always required to ensure modifications to space/equipment etc can be arranged.

The "ARTS ACCESS" programme run by the Fremantle Arts Centre is for regional groups to apply for a 'specific art course/workshop to be run in the area/town. This can also apply to disability/disadvantaged groups in country areas.

Perth Institute of Contemporary Art occasionally hold performance workshops for youth which can be accessible to disabled youth at ground level. Resident, overseas or exhibiting artists forums are also held at PICA and are accessible depending on where they are held on the premises.

The Multicultural Arts Centre of W.A. holds art business management lectures, visiting artist talks/workshop, skills development and train-the-trainer courses all held on site or at a nominated venue.

The university and TAFE centres provide Artist Forums along side existing courses and these are generally held at an accessible site within each campus, eg. Claremont School of Art in association with the Visual Art Foundation holds forums in the campus gallery which is accessible with wheelchair access. Edith Cowan University and some TAFE centres also provide bridging courses for individuals who have been assessed as appropriate to enter their chosen course. This is a special programme of general skills and orientation of campus facilities, eg. library use.

#### c) SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Lack of support services seem to be one of the major barriers to full participation in the arts by people with disabilities. However, many centres are able to provide some form of support and are willing to provide more after consultation with the individual or group.



The Artists' Foundation of W.A. can occasionally give one-to-one appointments for members but time is a problem and the artist would need to provide their own support, eg. use of an interpreter.

Community Arts Network is able to provide as much consultation and support as is available at the time and will always endeavour to provide an interpreter on request.

The Fremantle Arts Centre does not provide any help through human resources. A map of the building layout and signage to show wheelchair access is in the process of being developed.

The Multicultural Arts Centre of W.A. only provide the service, while individuals and groups need to provide appropriate support to suit their specific needs.

The universities and TAFE centres provide support to students through the equity officers where available and depending on the disability.

d) DISABLED ARTISTS ON DATABASE

During the consultation process, the issue of equity categories on membership/application forms for each organisation was addressed. Many centres did not have a survey on their forms to determine which members were disabled/disadvantaged. This category has now been included on the forms of AFWA and MACWA. AFWA also included this category in the Moores Building exhibition survey. CAN includes a skills questionnaire on their membership form which includes equity categories. All other organisations surveyed could not identify if artists on their database were disadvantaged or had a disability.

e) OTHER ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES

Many organisations provided access to other resources that supplemented their training programmes. AFWA manages the Moores Building which is a space that is available for exhibitions, conferences and workshops where there is access to the large ground floor space. They also have an exhibition kit available.

CAN has a resource library with literature on the arts and a small section on disability in the arts.

MACWA holds a Multicultural festival once a year which includes involvement, access and support for disabled artists/groups. They also provide a show case of world cultures held one to two times a year.

## SUMMARY TO POINTS 2. a) - e)

Although there are some arts and arts training organisations committed to implementing as part of their policy provision for equity target groups now and in the future, there still remains barriers for people with a disability or who are disadvantaged to access mainstream programmes and services. This appears to be related to a number of factors which include more than just physical access but a whole array of other considerations. Besides the obvious attitudinal barriers, there appears to be a general lack of awareness about the needs of people with a disability from arts organisations. These organisations do not discriminate intentionally but are just uninformed.

More than half of the arts workers consulted had little or no instruction about special needs of people with disability and had received little or no instruction about the special needs of people with a disability.

*" ..... a well trained, positive staff with a welcoming attitude  
can enable people with a disability to be relatively philosophical  
about a venue's physical access limitations."*

(Arts and Disability Research Project 1994)

Attitudinal changes need to go beyond tokenism in that it is important that people with a disability/disadvantage who do move into integrated activities, be able to be recognised as individuals rather than a representative of a disability group.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- \* That D.A.D.A.A.(W.A.)Inc. consult with and invite disabled artists/arts workers to participate in the decision making process which involves planning, implementing, promoting and evaluating the needs of people with disabilities/disadvantages in the area of arts training, and serve as role models .
- \* That D.A.D.A.A.(W.A.)Inc. develop and provide training workshops/ resources for staff and arts workers from the various arts organisations and the general community on the special needs of disabled artists attending mainstream courses.