

# Questions answered with EASE

As Co-ordinator of VIC. S.R.A.P.I.D. (Victorian Sport and Recreation Association of Persons with an Intellectual Disability Inc.) I have often been asked by members and friends: "What opportunities are there to access the venues and activities of the entertainment world, how can we afford to attend shows of our choice, and is it possible to attend these events as part of the community rather than as a subgroup?"

So, when invited to sit on the EASE Advisory Committee, I was happy to accept the challenge. The philosophy of the EASE Project marries well with the main aim of VIC. S.R.A.P.I.D., which is to encourage people with an intellectual disability to participate in activities of their choice, and encourage the organisers of events/activities to facilitate this involvement. I also hope to further my knowledge—which was fairly sketchy!—of happenings in the entertainment world.

I am pleased to say that the EASE Project is, after only a few months, already providing answers to these questions. EASE helps gain opportunities for individuals and groups with special needs to access a wide range of entertainment activities—anything from



EASE committee members John Hart (sitting in for Anne Fulcher) and Wendy Dumaresq

classical music concerts to sporting activities, rock concerts to plays to gala events—at very reasonable prices, and more importantly in an integrated setting.

Feedback from VIC. S.R.A.P.I.D. members who attended the recent display by the Soviet Gymnasts at the Entertainment Centre was most enthusiastic, and indicates that there is certainly a demand for this type of entertainment.

It is certainly going to be a busy year for those involved in the EASE Project, with tickets for so many activities and events already available for distribution. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Arts Access Committee and Staff for initiating this project, and Chris Milton and the EASE voluntary staff for their enthusiasm and hard work—not to forget the dedicated Advisory Committee!

**Wendy Dumaresq**  
VIC. S.R.A.P.I.D.

photo by Susie Dickson

## STEPS

I would like to thank Chris and EASE for providing the Blind with six tickets to the National Tennis Centre.

The group loved their day and found the Tennis Centre impressive.

The only minor complaint we had, was regarding the steps leading to the Tennis Expo and Court Hire area. The visually impaired people found the colour of the

steps glary. Also, the surface surrounding the steps is the same texture and colour as the actual steps, which makes it hard to judge where the steps start and finish, and the rise and fall (depth) of them.

Thanks again, Chris.

**Lyndell Montgomery**  
Community Recreation Officer  
Association for the Blind

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# Ease

Newsletter of Arts Access Society Inc. — EASE Supplement

Feb. 1988



ARTS  
Access

## The National Tennis Centre Made "EASEy"



photo by Susie Dickson

Joce Bignold and Julian Pooley before the steps of the National Tennis Centre.

### We have made it to a second edition!

This month's issue will focus on the National Tennis Centre. The response to our request for articles has been overwhelming. What appears here is only a taste of people's thoughts and experiences. Apart from the Tennis EASE, over the past two months, has distributed tickets to: Summer Music Concerts, My Fair Lady, The Moscow Circus, Cats and Melbourne Theatre Company productions.

The venues for each of these shows has come under praise AND criticism. The message coming through loud and clear however is that a show can be enjoyed despite architectural short-

comings. While the lobbying continues people are prepared to wander large distances and through the bowels of a building in order to see what they have come to see. Even the entrance may not be where you expect. Joce and Julian had to go beneath this building to find "reception."

Since inception EASE has handled more than 600 tickets at a mean price of \$7.29. Please keep up your support and place more demands on us. We want to know what you would like to see, what you have enjoyed, what difficulties you have had to tackle and how you overcame them—so we can pass on to others the benefit of your experience.

**Ring Chris, Barbara, Janice or Liz on 699 8497**

### TENNIS AND THE CENTRE

When I arrived at the Tennis Centre my first impression was of large numbers of milling parking attendants, ushers, and PR. people bending over backwards to be polite and helpful. I drove into the incomplete underground car park to find a driveway one car width wide for two-way traffic. Monolithic concrete columns blocked my path when I swerved aside to avoid an on-coming van. I was ushered to an unmarked "disabled" parking spot.

I met up with Chris, Susie and Barbara in the hyper-active reception area. There

were several others there, like me, in manual wheel chairs. Bedlam seemed to break loose around us as a very concerned staff member discussed the pros and cons of the Centre for disabled people, trolleys trundled by laden with a small jungle of plastic indoor plants and an over-stressed cleaner was instructed to go immediately and dust 15,000 seats in the main stadium, half an hour before the doors opened!

Access to the main concourse is via a lift that fits 2 wheelchairs and 5 or so people standing. All toilets and food bars

continued over page

### VENUE NOTES

#### NATIONAL TENNIS CENTRE

(Flinders Park)

##### Centre Court

Seating capacity: 15,000  
Wheelchair capacity: 30  
Wheelchairs together: 2 max.  
Transfer: very, very difficult  
Friend's seat: next but lower  
Signs and markings: incomplete

##### Match Court 1

Seating capacity: 6,000  
Wheelchair capacity: 16  
Wheelchairs together: 4 max.  
Transfer: difficult  
Friend's seat: beside  
Signs and markings: incomplete

##### Match Court 2

Seating capacity 3,000  
Details as for Match Court 1

##### "Disabled" Parking

Entrance: western gate,  
Batman Avenue

No. of places: 10

Requirements: sticker

Buses: possible but no guarantee  
Drop off: reception, underground car park

##### Other Parking

Entrance: off Swan Street

##### Wheelchair Access

Via reception, underground car park, then lift to concourse level. Access to both match courts from this level. Access to Centre Court by hoist (door 8).

##### Toilets

Concourse level, Centre Crt.  
Toilets for wheelchair users: close to door 8

##### Food

Snack bars, concourse level

##### Phones

Ask an usher!

##### Helpful Hints

Take a hat

We found the food expensive  
Wheelchair users: Ring Centre Management (655 1234) for any enquiries. Allow an hour for entering and leaving (you never know what might happen—read Janice's article). Allow approximately 20-30 minutes for a trip to the toilet.

## Tickets

AF  
790-19605  
Ea 7



EASE aims to assist people with special needs to attend Melbourne's entertainment events by providing information, social support and incentives.

EASE also aims to encourage promoters and venue management to ensure physical access is feasible at all events within the Melbourne metropolitan region.

**INFORMATION HOTLINE: 699 8497** advice about venue accessibility, what's on and booking procedures. 10.00am-4.00pm Monday to Friday. **BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER:** Information, articles, letters and announcements of tickets available through EASE.

**TICKET SCHEME:**

Low cost tickets to many entertainment events.

We would like to acknowledge the generosity over the past two months of the following: Melbourne Theatre Company, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Victorian State Opera, Victorian Arts Centre, Michael Edgely International, Garry Van Egmond Enterprises and CATS Productions.

**EASE STAFF:**

Chris Milton, Co-ordinator  
Barbara Goss  
Janice Jenkins  
Liz Smith

**EASE FUNDING:**

For the initial twelve month phase of its operation EASE has been funded by the Department of Sport and Recreation, the Myer Foundation, Lance Reichstien Foundation and Coles/Myer Ltd.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

Ring 699 8497, or write to:

EASE

C/—Arts Access, 109-111 Sturt Street, South Melbourne 3205

**VOLUNTEER WITH EASE**

We are looking for volunteers to assist with our HOTLINE. If you have a few hours per week and are interested in the issues of access and/or cinema, theatre, rock music, classical music, or sport give us a ring on 699 8497.

Arts Access Society Inc. is a non-profit organisation committed to providing access to the arts to those groups and individuals disadvantaged by physical, intellectual, emotional or financial conditions.

Please contact us if you would like to become a member of the Society or know more about our activities.

**Arts Access Society Inc.**

**109-111 Sturt Street**

**South Melbourne 3205**

**Telephone: (03) 699 8299**

Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.

## The National Tennis Centre Made “EASEy”

*a real this level. From the concourse flights of stairs lead to the tiers of seats around centre court. A hoist is provided for wheelchairs, entered via a small unnecessary corridor. It carries 2 wheelchairs. The control panel is in the middle of the hoist, proving difficult for people unable to operate the controls and whose attendant or friend would be stuck behind them near the entrance door. The exit door must be opened from inside. The door at grand stand level is kept locked and the keeper of the key must be found before it can be re-entered. The hoist doors are unmarked at both levels and we missed the top door on the way out. There is no alternative ramp provided.*

*Wheelchairs are placed in small bays at shoulder level to other spectators. This means that one sits above ones friends or family. It would be nice to be able to sit at the same level and not to feel so on display.*

*The view of the game was good, though I wondered whether it would*

*be practicable to have spaces for wheelchairs down near the front removing the necessity of relying on technology. When we attempted to leave the lift to the underground car park had broken down. Fortunately there was a staff lift on the far side of the stadium. At the bottom we found ourselves in a maze of corridors. We felt a little like Alice in Wonderland. However, instead of white rabbits, we pursued strapping tennis players who kept disappearing around corners. This turned out to be quite an adventure and we saw many back stage aspects of the place that we might never have seen.*

*All in all, the staff were helpful and a spirit of good will and good intention prevailed. Hopefully comments made by us and others will lead to modifications more closely related to the differing needs of people with varying degrees and kinds of disabilities. I wonder if any of us were consulted in the planning stages?*

**Janice Jenkins**

**EASE**

**This newsletter relies on your support. Write to us and let people know your thoughts on issues that matter. Others will benefit from your experience.**

We can use articles, photographs, Letters to the Editor and critiques of performances and venues.

**MY FAIR LADY—A PLEASANT OUTING**

**On January twenty-sixth my friend, her mother a volunteer friend and I caught the train at Darling Station to go to Flinders Street. On arrival there, we made our way to the Riverview Chinese Restaurant on the eastern bank of the Yarra River.**

*After an hour or so it was out into the heat of the day once again and across that well known Swanston Street bridge to the State Theatre to view the live musical—“My Fair Lady.”*

*Entering this magnificent building we were taken down two floor levels and through a network of walkways and corridors to a door which opened onto a box quite high up on the Western wall of the theatre.*

*This so-called “box” gave us a superb view of both the stage and orchestra. It had ample space for two wheelchairs and two comfortable seats for our assistants.*

*With such beautiful surroundings one couldn't help but enjoy the show.*

*Full marks to the State Theatre for having a perfectly accessible venue for wheelchairs. There should be more of it.*

*Full marks and thanks also to the organisation—Arts Access for providing tickets to the disabled so that we can participate in life's opportunities a little more.*

**Bob Armstrong**

**Rattray-Wood House**

## Write to Us

**AUSTRALIAN POPS ORCHESTRA**

**On Saturday the 16 January 1988, 8 of us from the centre—Colin, John, Freda, Christine, Peter and Ron—all went to the Concert Hall for the AUSTRALIAN POPS ORCHESTRA WITH KATE CEBERANO—a Hollywood-style concert.**

*The seats were excellent, the first part of the programme was of a classical nature and we were unfamiliar with the pieces. Kate Ceberano sang about five songs with an encore and we enjoyed listening to her musical talent. It was the first time she had sung with an orchestra. It appeared everyone was happy with the way she sang with the orchestra. Kate won the 1986 and 1987 Countdown Awards for the Best Female Vocalist.*

*The second half of the programme was more like Hollywood-style as the music was themes from movies such as ‘The Entertainer,’ ‘Star Trek,’ ‘Love Story,’ ‘Superman,’ etc.*

*We felt the evening was a good night out enjoyed, not just because of the concert, but because we could all get together for the outing other than just the centre times.*

*A few of us stayed a little longer in the city and relaxed over a cup of coffee.*

*We would like to encourage others to participate in these outings.*

**THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY, ESPECIALLY GETTING THE SEATS AT A CHEAPER PRICE!**  
**Christine Duncan**  
**Participant in the Glenhuntly Centre Programme**

## Tickets Ring 699 8497

photo by Susie Dickson



*Barbara may call with an offer of tickets.*

**REMEMBER**

EASE tickets come and go. Negotiations are underway all the time. Many events never make it onto these pages—for example: Moscow Circus, AC/DC and My Fair Lady. If you want to know what you are missing out on give us a call.

EASE will always negotiate a price lower than the standard pensioner rate. EASE has no firm financial base and so to help cover costs we place a fifty cent commission on all tickets—this has been included in the advertised price.

**MUSIC MAKERS SERIES**

**EARL WILD—Solo Piano**

Works by: Haydn, Ravel, Medtner, Schumann and Gounod-Liszt

**Monday 21st March**

Time: 8.00pm

Number of Tickets: 10

Ticket Price: \$5.90

Venue: Dallas Brooks Hall

**NEW WORLD SERIES**

Soloist: Dene Olding, Violin

Works by: Meale, Barber and Dvorak

**Saturday 26th March**

Time: 8.00pm

Number of Tickets: 10

Ticket Price: \$6.50

Venue: Melbourne Concert Hall

**RED SERIES**

Soloists with the Melbourne Chorale

Works by: Brahms, Wagner and Orff

**Friday 15th April**

Time: 8.00pm

Number of Tickets: 10

Ticket Price: \$7.10

Venue: Melbourne Concert Hall

**combination for this show.**

*We had one problem, and that was finding the quickest and best way to our seats. Different ushers had different directions, so we ended up seeing parts of the theatre not many other people see. We suggest that you ask at the information desk or ticket desk for specific directions. When we eventually got to our seats they were great.*

*Thanks EASE for a great night out we all went to sleep with smiles on our faces.*  
**Edith, Judy, Liz and Anne**  
**Royal Talbot Hospital**

**MEET THE MUSIC SERIES**

Soloists with the Melbourne Chorale  
Works by: Brahms, Wagner and Orff

**Monday 18th April**

Time: 8.00pm

Number of Tickets: 10

Ticket Price: \$7.10

Venue: Melbourne Concert Hall

**SATURDAY SYMPHONY SERIES**

Georg Pedersen, cello

With works by: Mozart, Brahms,

Carl Vine and R. Strauss

**Saturday 23rd April**

Time: 2.00pm

Number of Tickets: 10

Ticket Price: \$7.10

Venue: Melbourne Concert Hall

**RED SERIES**

Mark Peskanov, violin

Works by: Mendelssohn, Wieniawski

and Prokofiev

**Friday 6th May**

Time: 8.00pm

Number of Tickets: 10

Ticket Price: \$7.10

Venue: Melbourne Concert Hall

**NEW WORLD SERIES**

Yvonne Loriod, piano

Works by: Broadstock and Messiaen

**Saturday 21st May**

Time: 8.00pm

Number of Tickets: 10

Ticket Price: \$6.50

Venue: Melbourne Concert Hall

**RED SERIES**

Yvonne Loriod, piano

Works by: Dukas, Ravel, Messiaen and

Saint-Saens

**Friday 27th May**

Time: 8.00pm

Number of Tickets: 10

Ticket Price: \$7.10

Venue: Melbourne Concert Hall

**MEET THE MUSIC SERIES**

Soloist: Prudence Davis, flute

Works by: Dukas, Ravel, Ibert and

Saint-Saens

**Monday 30th May**

Time: 8.00pm

Number of Tickets: 10

Ticket Price: \$7.10

Venue: Melbourne Concert Hall

**BASKETBALL**

**The Melbourne Tigers**—Melbourne's

latest basketball team to turn

professional—has offered tickets to all its

home games. These will be contested

on Sundays at 12.00pm or 2.30pm at

the Sports and Entertainment Centre

(later the National Tennis Centre,

Match Court 1). Games scheduled

over the next few months:

**February: 28**

**March: 6, 13, 27**

**May: 1, 8, 15**

**Ring us for further details**