

National Conference research project

Research into the possibility of holding a national conference in the area of Arts and Disability has been commissioned by Arts Access.

Conducted by Lesley Muirden with funding from the Australia Council, the research has led to a report which looks at the needs and directions of the arts and disability area throughout Australia and focusses on the establishment of a network of organisations who can both share information and support each other in their work.

The report outlines the general feelings towards networking between various groups

and explores ideas leading to a proposed national conference to be held in Melbourne.

"I have had some very positive responses about the idea of a national conference and hold strong hopes for it in the future, but at the moment people working within various arts and disability networks feel that workshops and seminars for professionals who are active in the field would be more beneficial", said Lesley.

The research also indicated that the main problems administrators and artsworkers are confronted with are funding, isolation, lack of training and a strong lack of community

awareness.

"Already I have noticed a distinct lack of resource information in the area of arts and disability. There is a definite need for the development of some sort of arts and disability directory on a national basis. By developing a network of groups and organisations who can exchange information there is a possibility of breaking down some of the fundamental problems that occur," she said.

The project is planned to continue with development of state-based seminars, on-going networking and resource distribution.

Kate's Yankee Trip

Earlier this year, Kate Brennan Programme Director at Arts Access visited America on an exchange programme with Very Special Arts.

During her six weeks stay she visited projects in New York, Washington, Indianapolis and Hawaii, attended the Imagine Action Conference in San Fransisco and gained an insight into the direction of community arts and disability networks in America.

Very Special Arts is an umbrella organisation that aims to foster world wide development of programmes and increase general awareness of how all areas of the arts can lead to the integration of physically and mentally challenged people into society.

Founded in 1974 as an affiliate to the John F Kennedy Centre for Performing Arts, Very Special Arts supports programmes throughout America. They hold regular local and international festivals and have a list of world wide associates.

Very Special Arts involvement with Arts Access came out of visiting our programmes whilst on an Arts Dialogue tour in 1987. They in turn were keen to have someone from Arts Access see what they were doing in the States.

The programmes that Very Special Arts are involved with are many and varied. During the trip they were responsible for visits to Theatre Unlimited, a theatre specifically for intellectually disabled people,



Staff Inservice Day at Arts Access.

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Cedars Textile Workshops, a very exciting programme that incorporated vocational and creative components and Dancers of the Third Age where a group of older people do improvisational workshops with school children.

"Dancers of the Third Age were fantastic. It was great to see the way the children related to the older people...I think that there is something really special about the interaction of older people and younger people when they work together," said Kate.

Hospital Audiences Unlimited Incorporated in New York is a programme that Arts Access aligns itself directly with.

Independent of Very Special Arts, Hospital Audiences runs a large ticketing scheme as well as workshop programmes for disadvantaged and disabled people.

"Arts Access relates more closely to Hospital Audiences in the types of projects we do than with that of Very Special Arts and we can benefit from linking in with other networks. We are keen to learn, know and share with Very Special Arts but at this stage it would not be possible to be Very Special Arts Australia. The trip was a great experience and reaffirmed my confidence in the direction that Arts Access is heading," she said.

Office gossip

Since the publication of our last newsletter in December the Arts Access office has been a hive of activity. Plans are being discussed for the much awaited extension of the building and a Committee convened to discuss the future directions of our publicity material.

Our Executive Officer, Dinny Downie has spent a productive month in Sydney doing an executive training course and Carey Brickel has departed for three months overseas. Does this mean that Dinny's extra executive insight has equipped her with enough time to take on Carey's work as well? Enter Sally Marsden. Sally has joined the Arts Access office staff as programme officer in Carey's absence. She has been associated with Arts Access for some time and worked as an artist on the Melton Region Community Project. All at Arts Access hope she is enjoying her new challenge.

EASE (Entertainment Access Service) has now been in full swing for eight months and its growing success not only means greater ticket availability and new volunteers but also the employment of a part-time staff member. Barbara Milne has been working as a volunteer with EASE and now joins the staff at Arts Access three days a week. Welcome!

The 1986 Annual Report has been awarded a Bronze Medallion by the Australian Institute of Business Management for content, layout and design. Congratulations to all those involved in its preparation.

A new feature of Arts Access' operations is a fortnightly shared lunch. The lunch offers one of the few opportunities for an ever increasing staff to share stories and ideas. Most times we have some very important people who join us and we are always looking for new recruits. Martin Brennan is our next guest and anyone who feels very important is welcome to join us.

Arts Access Society Inc is a non-profit organisation committed to providing access to those who are disabled and disadvantaged.
Please contact us if you would like to become a member of the Society or know more about our activities.
Executive Officer: *Dinny Downie*
Programme Director: *Kate Brennan*
Office Administrator: *Leanne Sarah*
Ticketing Project Officer: *Chris Milton*
EASE Administrative Assistant: *Barbara Milne*
Office Assistant: *Susie Dickson*
Public Relations Officer: *Carmel Meiklejohn*
Volunteer Office Assistant: *Suzanne O'Dwyer*
Arts Access Society Inc., 109/111 Sturt Street, South Melbourne, 3205. Telephone: (03) 699 8299.
Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.

New committee members



New Management Committee members, Barb Champion and Mark Madden.

We welcome two new members to the Management Committee. Barb Champion and Mark Madden. Barb is a ministerial advisor in the Department of Education and has shown a strong interest in the work of Arts Access for some time. Mark is now Current Affairs Producer at Radio Australia. Previously employed as our Public Relations Officer he is renowned for being the first male member of staff and from time to time is still seen swanning around the office.

Management Committee Members - 1988

President	Jurly Morton
Senior Vice President	Alan Moor
Junior Vice President	Myra Hilgendorf
Treasurer	Isi Plack
Secretary	Betty McDowall
	Janet Lobban
	Iain Stewart
	Jon Hawkes
	Barb Champion
	Mark Madden

Presidents past...

The Annual General Meeting held on March 30th saw the 1987 Annual Report presented and marked several major changes to Arts Access.

After a ten year association with the Society, Chinka Steel chaired his last meeting as President and declined to stand for re-election effectively ending his term of office.

Chinka's guidance has been invaluable throughout the formative years of Arts Access and he has played a major role in the establishment of an organisation that has proved to be a leader in its field.

Although Chinka has formally resigned from his position as President he still has not managed to escape and continues to be associated with us in an advisory capacity - in fact as our Honorary Solicitor.

As the meeting closed he was noted as saying, "Now my wife will not have to answer those early morning calls from Dinny", to which Dinny replied, "Well not so many anyway!"

and present

Judy Morton is a name we are all no doubt familiar with. As the founding member of Arts Access she has watched the seeds she has sown grow, going from strength to strength.

She now joins us in 1988 as our new President and we welcome her continued involvement and support.

"What can I say. It's like turning a full circle. I feel as though I've been everything to Arts Access and now I am delighted to be President."

Photography by Susie Dickson

Thanks again to Graham Berry and Typographical Services

Craft Workshops for the Bicentennial.



Tori de Mestre and Anne-Maree de Jong involving children from disadvantaged communities in Art Party.

Art Party is a project funded by the Australian Bicentennial Authority involving groups of children aged under twelve in textile and mixed-media workshops.

The work done by children from special development schools, housing estates and primary schools is being co-ordinated by Tori de Mestre. Tori is an accomplished textile artist who has been exhibiting her work for the past ten years and also participated in the 1987 Lausanne Tapestry Biennial in Switzerland.

Her previous work with Arts Access includes involvement with the Ardvark

Programme, workshops at Park Towers Estates and the 150th Festival.

Plans are presently underway for the exhibition of the finished work done during Art Party to be held in November. "The exhibition is the final part of the project and will demonstrate the children's own view of their world and give people an insight into their Australia", said Tori.

Established through the Victorian Bicentennial Authority's Social Justice priorities, the exhibition is currently planned to coincide with the Bicentennial Travelling Exhibition.

Programming Update

MOUNT ROYAL HOSPITAL

A drama and puppetry programme involving residents and day patients at Mount Royal as well as young people from a local school. The resulting performance will tour schools.

BACCHUS MARSH MOVEMENT

A gentle exercise and movement programme with members of the Senior Citizens Club.

MELTON THREADS AND TEXTILES

A craft programme based on quilting and patchwork skills, exploring new techniques and working with older and younger women. Work led to an exhibition.

BAIRNSDALE SENIOR CITIZENS

Music, tapestry and writing based on local themes. The project employs local artists and links with various groups in Bairnsdale.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION HOUSES

Continued from 1987. Music, visual arts and storytelling at three SAH in the western suburbs.

FITZROY COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL UNIT

A music programme linking with the Carlton Community Club.

TURANA SCREEN PRINTING

'Behind Bars, Barbed Wire and Beyond.' The production of four posters. Exhibition to tour.

KEW COTTAGES

Drama sessions with a group that attend a leisure club. The programme will continue into sessions at Preston TAFE.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE -DANDENONG

A year long residency with two artists, one day per week at the hospital.

CLARENDON CLINIC

A mural project that will contribute to the re-development of the clinic's old premises.

CRAFT RESIDENCY STUDY BRIEF

A successful submission that resulted in a resident artist to work with people with disabilities. Aiming towards an exhibition.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Research project looking at the develop-

Trainee programme

A new trainee programme has been introduced at Arts Access. Initially established for twelve months the programme has been developed out of a need to provide opportunities for more community artists to learn the skills of working with people with special needs.

Employed as a trainee since March, Anne-Maree de Jong is a graduate of Chisholm Institute with a Bachelor of Arts in Ceramic Design. Her artforms also include glass, photography and some limited experience in theatre.

The programme is based at Larundel Psychiatric Hospital where Ann-Maree is working with Artists-in-Residence Richard Bengé and Libby O'Neill. "I have been integrated into the programme by meeting with staff and patients and by actively participating in workshops run by Richard and Libby", said Anne-Maree.

Apart from working on programmes Anne-Maree is often seen around the Arts Access office learning about the administrative side of an arts organisation. "By the time I have finished my traineeship I hope to have gained the necessary skills to be able to implement and run my own programme", she said.

It is hoped that this training model can be adapted for further use in community arts training. Arts Access has taken an initiative in this area by developing a formal training programme which will both act as a model for further training in this field and provide comprehensive skills to an individual artist. As a field placement the trainee is able to identify further formal training needs from direct practice.

ment of networks, identification of priorities and the gathering of resources leading to a conference.

LARUNDEL TRAINEES

A training programme for a community artsworker in the context of artist-in-residency.

MULTICULTURAL DISABLED YOUTH

A drama and puppetry programme with children from Muslim/Arabic backgrounds in Brunswick.

CHILDREN'S EXHIBITION

A year long programme involving disadvantaged children in visual arts and crafts activities leading to an exhibition.

MONT PARK /PLENTY HOSPITAL

Music, puppetry and drama with residents at the rehabilitation unit.

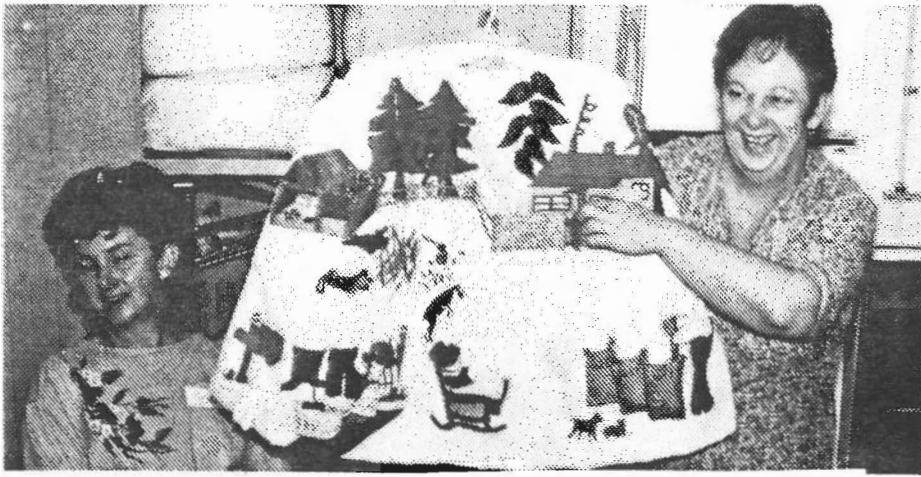
ASPENDALE SDS

Music with children at Yarrabat.

WAVELINK

Drama, music and dance with the Wavelink Support Centre for people with disabilities.

Melton's rewards - a community spirit



A wearable work of art. A cape designed and sewn by the ladies at Melton Threads and Textiles.

After having been tied to the office by meetings, proposals and submissions the best tonic is to visit one of our programmes.

At the launch of the Melton Threads and Textiles project in the shire library, I saw many of the reasons why we work as we do come together in a statement by Councillor Patterson.

Addressing a group of women who had created the eight pieces she directed her thoughts not only to the outstanding work

and the credit it had brought the individuals as artists, but also to the credit it had brought to the Shire of Melton in producing an exhibition that was exciting and innovative.

And there you have it. Through the project, individual creativity was recognised publicly and the life of the community enriched by such contributions. These are the rewards that make hours of writing proposals, submissions and attending those sometimes endless meetings more than worthwhile.

Management assets to Arts Access

In March of this year Dinny attended an Executive Development Program at the Institute of Administration, University of New South Wales.

For four intensive weeks, including Saturday mornings and Sunday nights 33 people from a diverse range of backgrounds thought about themselves, their organisations and the critical issues confronting both.

Now two months later what have the benefits been?

One of the obvious benefits lie in now knowing a network of people across Australia with a huge variety of skills from organisations, industries and disciplines all with different ideas and directions.

Practical skills such as learning about time management, financial management and organisational activity were highlights of the course. "There was a compulsory hour a day given to exercise and as a result I am still finding at least two hours a week to swim and feeling much better for it," said Dinny.

Dinny feels that the course has been instrumental in increasing her ability to recognise and cope with everyday organisational problems. "The benefits of such a course is not only the knowledge that you are good at what you do, but also knowing that the directions in which your organisation is heading are right."

Art for Staff

What do paints, T-shirts and the staff at Arts Access amount to - some would say a mess!

Under the patient guidance of Tori de Mestre the staff at Arts Access unleashed their creativity during an inservice workshop held on Thursday, April 21st.

The morning began with a lesson in silk screening and T-shirts complete with the Arts Access logo were used as a starting point for further artistic expression.

Let loose on the fabric paints each staff member attempted to create a unique garment and Susie Dickson's enthusiasm extended further than the task at hand. She was found re-decorating one of her favorite pink skirts. The results of the morning's work can be seen in various shapes and forms around the office, although there have been no reported sightings of the actual shirts.

"It's comforting to see that people who are not very artistic can still contribute so much to the field," said Dinny Downie.



*Dinny Downie -
Leading the way in staff participation.*

T-shirts complete with the Arts Access logo are available by placing an order with Susie Dickson. Various sizes are available at the bargain price of \$12.00.

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