

House Gang

ACCESIBLE ARTS, METRO TELEVISION LTD and ALFRED ROAD FILMS are currently involved in a joint venture in an exciting and innovative project to produce a series of ten 21-minute dramas for television. The series - **HOUSE GANG** - will break new ground on many fronts. It will provide an innovative strategy in addressing the present disadvantage people with disabilities face in the film and television industry and will provide a medium for integration through its capacity to speak directly to people and to form a bond of common interest. It is hoped that some notions about intellectual disability and about 'art' will, at the least, be challenged.

This series, as well as being entertaining, will provide a valuable community service. For the first time the 'disabled' sub-culture will be demystified and celebrated in their own television drama. It is important to note that the actors with disabilities function as unique and individual characters. Their role is not, as is so often the case, just to be disabled.

All cast members with a disability are experienced performers, several with television credentials. Saxon Graham, the actor playing the role of Nick, has appeared in the play *My Bruvar is so God*, episodes of *GP* and *A Country Practice*.

Situation

A group house set up by a local council. The inhabitants of the house have intellectual disabilities, except Polly, the zany, unorthodox, live-in carer. All are in their late teens or early twenties. This is their first experience of living away from home. The series will explore this group of young people discovering their independence and self-expression within the situation of group living.

Cameo appearances by characters with and without disabilities will be a regular feature of the series.

Characters

The talented young cast include Saxon Graham, Ruth Cromer, Chris Greenwood, Marnie Hodge, Dean Elliot and Ben Katz. These actors will be joined by Hugo Weaving and Di Emry.

Crew

The behind the scenes talent includes Di Drew - director (*Seven Deadly Sins*, *A Country Practice*, *GP*); Craig Pearce - writer (co-writer of *Strictly Ballroom*); Gaby Mason - producer (associate producer *Broken Highway*); Richard Mason - consultant producer (over 30 years experience in the industry as a writer, director and producer; some of his feature films include *Winter of Our Dreams*, *Far East*, *Broken Highway*); Di Emry - research and casting (extensive acting experience as well as 3 years experience running drama workshops for young people with intellectual disabilities at the Holdsworth Street Community Centre).

Training & work experience

There will be 3 trainee positions on the crew for people with physical disabilities - assistant editor, production assistant, production secretary. For details see page 7.



HOUSE GANG cast with director during training workshop

The project has received much support from the film and television industry, by such well-knowns as Jane Campion, Baz Luhrmann, Garry McDonald; from major disability organisations such as Disabled People International (Aust) and People With Disabilities (NSW); and financial and in-kind support from the Australian Film Commission, Australian Film, Television and Radio School, Department of Social Security and Department of Employment Education and Training and Commonwealth Employment Service through their Disability Reform Package.

