

ARTS ACCESS

news

spring 2000



The Last Hurrah Goodbye Jane Haley

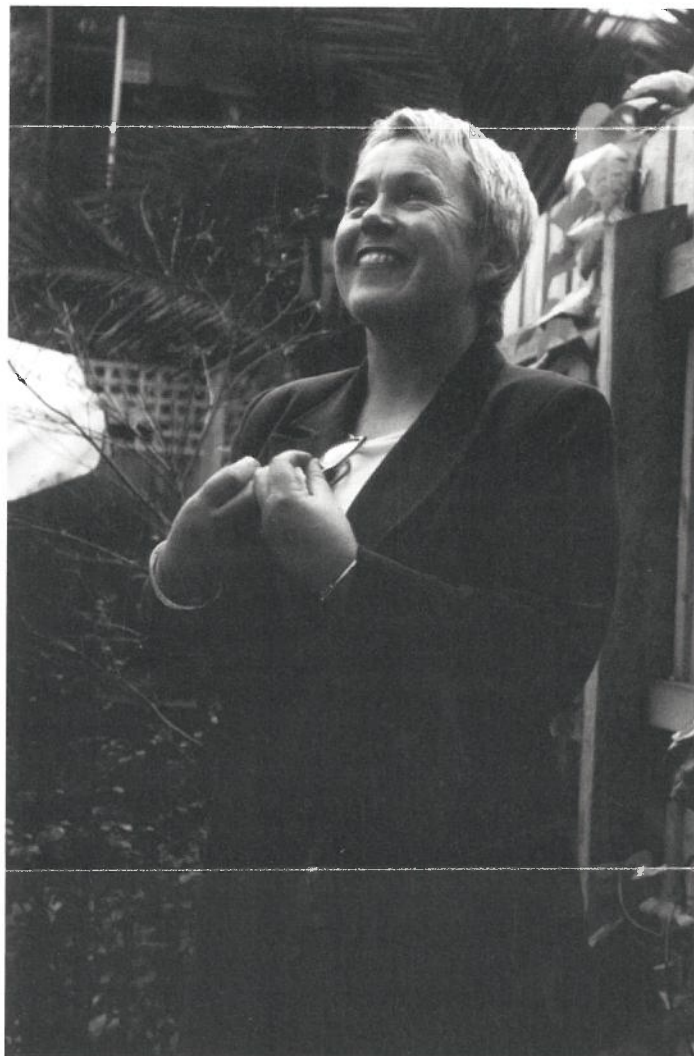
Friday the 15th of September saw Arts Access say goodbye to its Executive Director Jane Haley with a gathering at the South Melbourne office of colleagues and friends.

Jane is moving on to become Ministerial Adviser to the Minister for the Arts, the Honorable Mary Delahunty. When she came into the position of Executive Director at Arts Access, Jane saw the role as an opportunity to bring together her organisational, leadership and management skills as well as her commitment to working with the community. Certainly in the three years she has been with the organisation, these characteristics and knowledge have enhanced Arts Access and its standing within the arts and the wider community.

One of the biggest challenges she faced in her time with the organisation was the relocation process to a new building. "It was a huge learning curve, dealing with plans, architects and local government. We wanted them (the office spaces) to be accessible in every way. We had an opportunity then, to bring more people with a disability into the organisation and I personally feel good about this as it is not about Arts Access being an arts organisation but about the organisation being a model of good practice and advocating for all."

Although the building caused Jane many headaches and anxious moments she admits that she is going to miss coming to work in "a very contemporary and fabulous building."

However, there are many other elements Jane values about Arts Access. She clearly identifies and recognises the spirit that exists within the "creatively passionate people" who are the essence of Arts Access. She believes what makes the organisation stand out and special is that "Arts Access is really exciting with its skills, experience and expertise as a community organisation creating fantastic solutions with limited resources."



Pictured: Executive Director Jane Haley. Arts Access wishes you well for the future.

Friends and colleagues, gather to say goodbye to Jane Haley, and celebrate her achievements as Executive Director of Arts Access.



The Annual General Meeting of Arts Access.

The Annual General Meeting of Arts Access will be held on **Tuesday the 28th of November**. The meeting will begin at 6.30 pm and be held at the Arts Access Office, 24 Eastern Road South Melbourne.

AF
700.
9945
AC 2 AR

Contents

p 1
p 2
p 3
p 4-5
p 6
p 7

The Last Hurrah
From the desk of the Executive Director
In the Spotlight
BreastScreen Victoria, Koori Art Project
EASE
Arts Access

From the desk of the Executive Director

It's such a strange thing for me to be writing my last column for Arts Access News, probably because my decision to leave and leaving has come so quickly.

I am very proud of what we have achieved at Arts Access in the 3 years I have held the position of Executive Director. The profile of the organisation as a major professional arts company has been significantly increased and the respect of the various 'sectors' within which we work is demonstrably high.

This has resulted in some extremely exciting partnerships – with other major arts organisations such as Handspan Visual Theatre and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, with health promotion agencies such as VicHealth and BreastScreen Victoria, with government departments such as the Rural Health and Development Branch of the Department of Human Services. We have also had terrific working relationships that will grow into 'profitable' partnerships in future with organisations working in the disability support and advocacy arena such as DEAC.

The achievements of Arts Access and its partnerships have been recognised in many ways, most notably with the awarding of two Best Practice grants from the Department of Human Services in recognition of the leadership role that Arts Access plays. The national symposium on arts and disability, *Verve!*, which Arts Access hosted at Gasworks during the 1999 Melbourne Festival is yet another example of the position which Arts Access holds in the arts, disadvantage and disability fields.

I am also thrilled that we have resolved many of the internally frustrating and challenging issues within Arts Access. We have moved! We have an Enterprise Agreement in place that makes fair and clear the terms and conditions of employment. We have improved resources, such as the computer system, and in the very near future will have an outstanding new website which will properly promote Arts Access and allow much greater interaction with the wider world. We have, daily, improving administration systems and an exemplary financial management approach.

Best of all, we have achieved all of this without once compromising our reason for being. Arts Access remains successful, I believe, due to the integrity of its philosophy and practice, founded on a strong platform of respect for the rights of all people to have an opportunity to develop their own creative ability and to experience on an equal basis arts and cultural activity produced by the best in the nation.

I hope you have noticed that throughout this I have referred to 'we' ... I can not commend too highly the terrific dedication, commitment, passion, skill and sheer hard work of all the staff of Arts Access. I sound like a broken record when I go on about what an extraordinary team I have worked with, but it really is the reason the organisation thrives and prospers. I'd like to thank them again; I know that I shall miss them very much. I also thank the Board who have given me freedom to lead and support to manage. I thank the artists who inspire us and the funding partners who have been immensely encouraging and facilitating. And I thank all those who have continued to support Arts Access in so many ways ... may your faith be rewarded and may you continue to see the organisation as worthy of your efforts.

Jane Haley September 2000



In the Spotlight

Lyndsay Mason Visual Artist with Arts Day West

In this edition of the Arts Access News, we turn the spotlight on Lyndsay Mason, who has had a strong working relationship with the organisation since 1983.

She could be described as the longest serving member of the Arts Access team. However, artist Lyndsay Mason prefers to describe herself as a grassroots worker whose work ethic is based on inclusion. She freely admits, she finds it hard to work in isolation these days, due to the benefits of inclusion being engrained in her arts practise. "Work is for sharing", she says. "I think the power of art is in the possibility for an individual to actually discover their creative process within themselves. I believe that process has the potential to bring great joy and if you can share that process you get a double whammy."

Her "sharing" philosophy is something that Lyndsay has brought to Art Day West, where she collaborates with fellow artist Claire Teisen and 26 participants with intellectual disabilities. "I have such a lot of fun, we laugh for most of the day, we share great times and I find it a great source of inspiration and great joy".

Lyndsay has always been very motivated by issues of social justice and the role of the arts in that arena. It was when she worked with young people as part of her postgraduate studies in criminology, that she became exposed to art being used as a very powerful tool in community development. She admits now she had always possessed a hidden desire for the arts. "I didn't want to be in the law faculty writing essays, I wanted to be throwing a pot or making a textile."

After moving to Australia from Scotland, she undertook an advanced certificate in Art and Design. Joining the Arts Access team in the early 80's, she found it more program based, "putting artists into situations of some need". She now feels the organisation has a wider perspective and plays more of a lobbying role. Lyndsay has been witness to many changes and believes that Arts Access has become a stronger advocate and is taken more seriously. "Arts Access has developed in a way that ensures its survival."

When asked what she believed to be at the essence of Arts Access in all the years that she has been involved as an artist she said, "It offers the possibility of creative expression and discovery, in a respectful and supportive environment."



Lyndsay Mason (left) pictured here with Enza Pratico of Art Day West. "A lot of the time I feel I can help make a difference and that is so empowering, it is a great thing to feel in your life."

Mission

Arts Access provides access to arts and cultural activity for people who are disadvantaged, including people with a disability.

Values

Arts Access' programs and services are based on four fundamental community cultural development principles:

- that participation in the arts is essential to the wellbeing of the individual and the community
- that all people should have equal access, choice and opportunity to participate in the arts and attend arts, entertainment and cultural events
- that the arts provide an ideal mechanism for the development and expression of individual and community identity and diversity
- that actions to ensure the inclusion of people with a disability improve access for the whole community

An audio tape version of Arts Access News is available. Please call the office to arrange your copy.

Copy deadline for next issue
1st December 2000

Please direct enquiries about the Arts Access newsletter to:

Information and Publications Coordinator
Ashley Heenan
Arts Access
24 Eastern Road, South Melbourne
Victoria Australia 3205

03 / 9699 8299 Telephone 03 / 9699 8868 Facsimile
03 / 9699 7636 TTY

Email ashleyh@artsaccess.com.au
Website <http://www.artsaccess.com.au>

Healthy Women, Holistic Approach

BreastScreen Victoria / Arts Access Koori Art Project

"We practise a holistic approach to health, which identifies that each part of our body plays a part in our wellbeing," states Lyn Briggs, a worker with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service and a community elder. So when it came to a group of Koori and Torres Strait Island women to create a visual art piece as part of the project, it seemed to be a natural starting point to portray this philosophy within the work. The aim of the project is to explore health and wellbeing issues with women from diverse cultural backgrounds, using art, as a mechanism to raise awareness about health and the prevention of breast cancer.

The use of art to get across health messages is also something in which Lyn is well versed. In her role as a health worker, she coordinates and facilitates women's health camps and uses the time when the women are doing art and crafts to open up discussions. "We get a lot of our health messages across, while they are sitting around doing art. You find that they are more relaxed and interact better and start talking about different issues in their lives. If I was standing up, preaching, telling them "these are the health messages", it would go in one ear and out the other."

Lyn believes the process used in the BreastScreen Victoria/Arts Access Project, allowed the participants to feel real ownership and that it was a much more engaging way of receiving and sharing information. "It used to be that you would develop a pamphlet or a booklet for people to read".

The main message the women wanted to get across with this artwork was to relay the "emotional, spiritual wellbeing" of indigenous women. This was captured by the use of a mannequin as the centrepiece to the work, dressed in traditional costume. One breast was painted in an anatomical style and the other displayed an Aboriginal design which represented breast paintings used in traditional dance. At her feet a turtle shell was filled with painted emu eggs, showing what health and wellbeing means to each individual woman "It shows the real indigenous side of a woman. It expresses what being a woman is all about," said Julie Bamblett, one of the two professional artists employed to work with the participants.

For Lyn, the artists and all the participants, this has been an empowering process, bringing together women from different generations and from different areas of inner and outer Melbourne. It has created a grapevine for sharing information and raising awareness around health issues, as well as giving the women a chance to explore their creative potential. In summing up the positive outcomes of the project, Lyn said, "It has been like planting a seed".

Veronica (Lami) painting woman's shadow on backdrop in the artwork.



The work in progress: mannequin woman and backdrop.



Ella (foreground) and Winnie (background) painting their emu eggs.



Women making turtle-shell and paper maché rocks: Vera (foreground), Daria and Sue (background)



Acknowledgements

Photographer: Ponch Hawkes

Artists: Sharon Hodgson and Julie Bamblett

Victorian Aboriginal Health Service Workers: Sue Hedges (BreastScreen Worker) Vera Wigg (PapScreen Worker) and Lyn Briggs (Coordinator of the Women and Children's Unit).

And the Koori and Torres Strait Island women who participated in this project.

Painted emu eggs: showing what health and wellbeing means to each individual woman involved in the project.



EASE

ENTERTAINMENT ACCESS SERVICE

The New Melbourne Museum



The new Melbourne Museum, which will be launched in Carlton Gardens on 21 October, will provide visitors with a wonderful world of activity, wonder and learning. The museum aims to provide an exciting and educational experience that is available to all members of the community. Melbourne Museum combines living exhibits, interactive exhibitions, performance and the latest technology to create an unconventional museum focusing on Australian society, indigenous cultures, science, technology, the environment and the human mind and body.

Designed by Australian architects, Denton Corker Marshall, Melbourne Museum features spacious exhibition and public areas that have been built to comply with the Building Code of Australia and the Disability Discrimination Act. Morris Walker



Consultants have also reviewed all exhibition layouts and public spaces to ensure the building meets the Australian Standards Requirements.

Features include accessibility to all counters and desks, the theatrette and other spaces where public programs such as films, performances, and lectures are held. Visitors will also find clear signage and wide paths throughout the Museum, including ramps and handrails. The height of exhibition display cases and circulation space in front of displays also ensures accessibility to all.

Melbourne Museum views positive customer service as a major priority. Great care has been taken to provide an extensive training program for all customer service officers, including special training to gain an understanding and awareness of the needs of people with disabilities. Representatives from Access Victoria have inspected the building and have been invited to come and talk to staff and share their knowledge.

Taxi pick up and drop off points are located on either end of the Museum on Nicholson and Rathdowne streets. Bus parking is also available, and 36 of the 900 underground spaces are reserved for those who require specialised access to the building. Carers will gain entry to the Museum free of charge.

Although the Museum has endeavoured to cater for the needs of members of the community who have a disability, it is also recognised that further improvements can and need to be made. Future plans include the installation of additional elevators to enhance access to some sections of the Museum, and regular liaison to gain feedback from groups such as Arts Access.

Arts Access is interested to hear from anyone who visits the new Melbourne Museum and would like to provide some feedback on the site, in relation to access issues. Contact EASE by phone on 9699 8497, email ease@artsaccess.com.au or send your letters to 24 Eastern Road, South Melbourne.

And The Walls Came Tumbling Down



August saw the demolition of Arts Access' old building on Sturt Street. The site Arts Access called home for 13 years will now be redeveloped as the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), as part of Melbourne's contemporary arts precinct.



STAFF

Executive Director
Vacant

Artistic Program Manager
Ruth Whittingham

Projects Coordinator
Art Day / Breast Screen
Jo Cohen

Projects Coordinator
Saturday Morning Art Class (SMAC)
Anne Riggs

EASE (Entertainment Access Service) Manager
Fiona Hanrahan

EASE Ticket Officer (casual)
Penelope Stewart

Finance Manager
Simon Gould

Training Coordinator
Caroline Bowditch

Information and Publications Coordinator
Ashley Heenan

Office Manager
Ciena Gehrke

Administration Officers
Sue O'Neill
Jenny Penhall

BOARD

Chair
Alan Moor

Deputy Chair (Snr)
Robyn Charlwood

Deputy Chair (Jnr)
Colin Pidd

Treasurer
Cecily Tange

Mark Robinson
Andrew Sanderson
Sandra Taylor-Bowman
Jane Trengove

print design • www.slightly.net

email • info@artsaccess.com.au
web • <http://www.artsaccess.com.au>

Arts Access is supported by
the Australia Council, the Commonwealth's arts funding and advisory body
the Victorian Government, through Arts Victoria - Department of Premier and Cabinet
and the Department of Human Services



**ARTS
VICTORIA**

If undeliverable return to:

ARTS ACCESS

24 Eastern Road,
South Melbourne, VIC, 3205

Telephone (+61 3) 9699 8299 Facsimile (+61 3) 9699 8868
TTY (+61 3) 9699 7636 EASE Bookings (+61 3) 9699 8497

Arts Access Newsletter

Print Post Approved
PP325649/0005
ISS N 1329 0517

**SURFACE
MAIL**

**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**

Anne Sedgley
Serials Librarian
State Library Of Victoria
328 Swanston Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000