

ARTS ACCESS



# news

Spring 1999

## 25th Anniversary

### Arts Access presents *VERVE!*

#### Background

In September 1990, Arts Access presented the first Australian state conference on arts and disability - P-art-ICIPATE '90 - which involved more than 200 participants. Following the success of this initiative, Arts Access convened the first national meeting of organisations working in the arts and disability field which, amongst other outcomes, led to the formation of the Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts Australia (DADAA) national network.

In partnership with the Australia Council, Arts Access employed Jane Trengove as the first DADAA national coordinator and, with colleagues in Queensland, SA and NSW, has assisted the development of arts and disability organisations and programs in WA and Tasmania.

Over the past ten years, a number of state organisations have hosted conferences and festivals about arts and disability. The DADAA network has met annually. From these events have emerged great relations, terrific sharing of ideas and information and a sense of a 'common agenda'. It was agreed by the DADAA network members that a national conference would be timely.

The Board and staff of Arts Access determined that such a conference would be the most appropriate way in which to

celebrate the 25th anniversary of the organisation. This view was supported by Arts Victoria, the Australia Council and VicHealth - which have all provided financial assistance for the event.

Arts Access formed a reference committee of Victorian arts and disability practitioners to develop the content and format of the program. It was agreed that the examination and discussion of critical ideas and issues should be undertaken alongside the opportunity to see examples of professional and community arts practice.

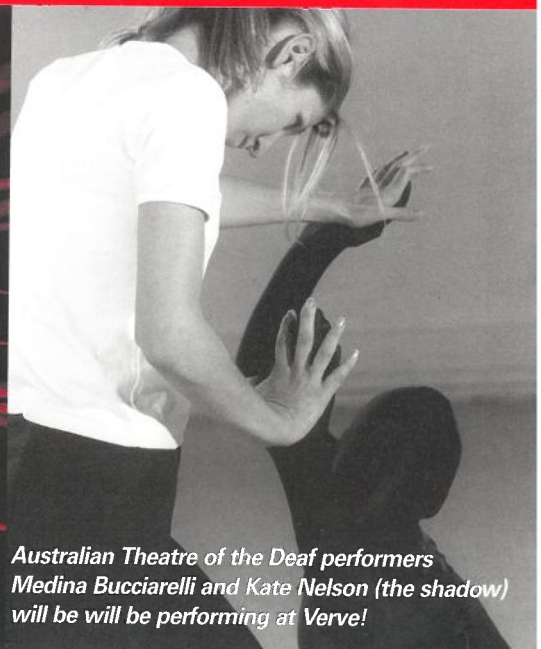
In late 1998 Arts Access published a call for expressions of interest in *Verve!* in *The Australian*. From the responses and on advice of the reference committee, Arts Access has created a program which represents Australia's 'best arts and disability practice'. The examples of art work will be supplemented by focused discussion of key issues - the challenges faced, strategies developed and successes achieved. These discussions will be led by some of the most experienced and expert workers in the field.

The target audience for *Verve!* comprises artists, arts organisations, community and disability service providers, funding bodies and people with a disability. Arts Access expects that the audience at *Verve!* will be challenged, informed, encouraged, supported and entertained and given the opportunity to make a valuable contribution through discussion of their own ideas and experiences.

# verve!

AF  
700.9945  
AC2AR

Arts Access presents *Verve!* during the  
Melbourne Festival on October 19-20 at Gasworks Arts Centre  
For further information, please call us on 03 9699 8299



Australian Theatre of the Deaf performers  
Medina Bucciarelli and Kate Nelson (the shadow)  
will be performing at *Verve!*



# contents

## EASE

EASE member up on stage with Edna  
EASE reopens  
EASE on display at expo

p 3

## Arts Access - 25 years of success

the beginning  
off the ground  
a home of our own  
Arts Access today

p 4-5

## Arts Focus

what's on  
professional development  
Arts Access in the digital age

p 6-7

## From the Executive Director

It's a real shame that the newsletter is not on multimedia format – this one really should be accompanied by bells, whistles and party hats, to say the least. Finally, we are in our new home and what a joy it is to have left behind the intrusive noise of constant traffic and the grime that comes from road construction and diesel exhaust. It was a delightful surprise when we had cause to complain of noisy birds!!! We are thrilled with the new building - and learning to work differently in an office which seems much larger (although it's just a different layout) and has improved technology and communication systems.

For the design and construction of the new office we congratulate and thank architect, Mark Healy and his colleagues from Six Degrees, and Grant McKenzie and his team from Old Classic Renovations. They have worked really hard and delivered truly beautiful, accessible and efficient premises. We are also grateful to the owners of the property, Chen Woo-Chin and Chris McEvoy for their support. The financial support and encouragement of Arts Victoria, especially David Hughes and Les Mengoni, and the Department of Human Services, in particular, Beth Roberts, is also acknowledged.

Of course, it is not without some sadness that we leave Sturt St where Arts Access has been a resident for more than 13 years. We have a great relationship with the staff of Playbox and the Malthouse and we shall miss them. Our thanks to Jill Smith and Sarah Masters for their support and friendship during the testing time of our relocation.

Despite the fact that it has often seemed that all of our attention was directed towards moving, there has been much else accomplished since our last newsletter. Planning is now completed for *Verve!* the national symposium on arts and disability which Arts Access shall present during the Melbourne Festival. For more detailed information, a conference program is available upon contacting Arts Access.

The launch of ArtScreen, the exhibition which resulted from the collaboration between Arts Access and BreastScreen, was a great success. Congratulations to Ruth, Jo and Jane Trengove for a really terrific job.

The relaunch of the EASE Ticket Service comes after much hard work by Fiona. It's proved quite a challenge which has not been made any easier by some of the inevitable hiccoughs caused by



Executive Director Jane Haley

relocation. We do hope that this unique Service, of which Arts Access has much to be proud, will provide even more valued support to subscribers.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to Arts Access' staff - as you might imagine, moving has been quite demanding and all have 'mucked in' with packing, lugging and generally making sure that all went smoothly under the alert 'supervision' of Rachel and Mario. Many thanks also to John Pidd - our esteemed volunteer who not only helped pack and carry but also contributed a great laughing energy to the process.

I do hope that you will take the opportunity if you are ever in the neighbourhood to come and visit the new office - we are so proud of it and we would love to share it with you.

Every best wish.

JANE HALEY

Executive Director

## Annual General Meetings

to be held at the Arts Access office  
24 Eastern Road South Melbourne

Arts Access

Tuesday 23 November 1999 at 7pm

DADAA National Network Ltd

Friday 22 October 1999 at 4pm

All are invited to attend

## Access features of Arts Access' new office

Arts Access' new building demonstrates exemplary standards of accessibility in office design, including the reception area, all workspaces and kitchen and toilet facilities. Entry to the building is via an automatic sliding door and low gradient ramp and the office features wide corridors and good lighting throughout.

There is metered parking on both Eastern Road and Dorcas Street and vacant spots are normally very readily available. There is an accessible parking spot on the corner of Dorcas and Tope Streets. The number 01 tram goes right past the building and stops just outside (stop no. 22).

EASE member Jan Doran on stage with Edna

# EASE

ENTERTAINMENT ACCESS SERVICE



## EASE member up on stage with Edna

EASE member Jan Doran reported on a fabulous night at the theatre seeing Edna Everage's *Remember, You're Out*. Jan, who is legally blind, normally books her tickets with EASE and requires a seat very near to the front of the audience whenever attending a performance. However, at Edna's shows – notorious for the singling out of audience members - being in the front meant that Jan was among five 'lucky' people in the audience called up on stage with Edna. Before she knew it, Jan had been dressed as Kylie Minogue in fluffy white feathers and a platinum blond wig. Darling!

## EASE reopens

EASE has reopened for business after a period of closure while the office was relocated and new systems implemented. The following are new features of the EASE Ticket Service, designed to make the service more accessible for our members. For further information about any of the new features, or about becoming a member, please contact EASE on tel 03 9699 8497, fax 03 9699 8868, TTY 9699 7636 or email [ease@artsaccess.com.au](mailto:ease@artsaccess.com.au)

## membership card

All current EASE members have been issued with a new membership card and membership number to be used when making a booking. It is hoped the card will open up many exciting new opportunities for EASE subscribers and can be used as identification when attending free or special events and to receive discounts where applicable.

## new payment options

Tickets can now be purchased by credit card, cheque / money order, cash / EFTPOS and mail order bookings. EASE would like to request that tickets be paid for in advance. If this is not possible, payment by invoice can be arranged upon request. Payment must be made within 14 days.

## ticket update

The EASE Ticket update is now available in braille, audio tape, large print, standard print and email. Please notify EASE of the format you would like to receive.

## increased hours

The hours of operation for the EASE office have been increased. The office is now open for bookings Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm

## email

Email is a quick and easy way for us to notify members of last minute ticket offers or free tickets. Please notify us if you have email access and would like to be added to our email list. You can contact us on [ease@artsaccess.com.au](mailto:ease@artsaccess.com.au)

## EASE on display at expo

The EASE Ticket Service will be on display at the Access Expo - Disability and Aged Care Solutions - to occur on October 21- 23 at the Royal Exhibition Building Melbourne. Find out the latest on offer from EASE while investigating the latest in disability and aged care solutions. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Arts Access staff learn Auslan

EASE Manager Fiona Hanrahan, and PR Manager Caroline Cowley, have been learning Auslan (Australian sign language) at the CAE. "It's a very worthwhile course," said Fiona. "In only eight weeks we have come surprisingly far and can now conduct a basic conversation. Already I've had the chance to 'chat' to an EASE member with a hearing impairment who came into the office. It also provides great insight into the world of people with a hearing disability, and non-verbal communication, relying much more on body language and facial expression."



Above: new EASE membership card

Right: Arts Access staff members Caroline Cowley (left) and Fiona Hanrahan practise Auslan





# 25 years of success

## the beginning

In the early '70's, Judy Morton, founder of Arts Access, was working in the welfare sector, concentrating on researching community service issues. In 1973, a visit from Betsy Hite - arts management consultant and founding member of Hospital Audiences Incorporated (HAI) in New York - provided Judy with the inspiration to shift the research into action.

Judy investigated the feasibility of creating a local arts body, like HAI, to organise visiting theatre performances in hospitals, prisons and disability institutions and to distribute low cost or free entertainment tickets. Hite's research identified fertile ground for such a project in Melbourne, with its established philanthropic sector, a vibrant arts industry and the emergence of a strong community arts movement.

In 1973, Judy successfully applied to the Australia Council with a submission for a six month pilot project. With additional support from the Myer Foundation and the RE Ross Trust, Arts Access began as a one-person community arts project on 1 April 1974, auspiced by and based at the Victorian Council of Social Service in Collingwood.

## off the ground

Judy continued as Executive Officer until 1977, by which time Arts Access was located at the Victorian Arts Council and had evolved a service philosophy, mode of artistic practice, and breadth of programs that distinguish Arts Access from other organisations of its kind both here and overseas.

Unfortunately, with no continuous source of administrative funding and despite a public appeal, the programs were suspended at the end of 1977. However, great ideas refuse to die and early in 1979 after much voluntary effort from an

enormous support network, Arts Access was formally constituted and programs resumed with a small grant from the Schools Commission.

1980 saw a number of breakthroughs. After some intense lobbying, Judy succeeded in winning a small grant for Arts Access, which was the starting point for organisational growth and the ongoing State Government support that Arts Access receives today. In that same year, Dinny Downie was appointed Executive Officer and under her direction, Arts Access progressively garnered new funds, enlisted a strong support network and initiated a broad program of activity.

A major period of financial and organisational growth into the mid 1980s brought a diversification of arts projects and the cultivation of major long term artistic programs. Advocacy, information and resource programs grew, and the promotion of the arts through training workshops began throughout regional Victoria.

1982 was a major year for Arts Access, in which the organisation received broad public attention through a project called Theorem. Chilean artist Aldo Gennarro was employed to run a series of workshops which covered a range of art forms for people with disabilities and culminated in two sell-out performances at the Melbourne Concert Hall.

## a home of our own

In 1985, Arts Access moved into an office in the emerging arts precinct at Southbank. A succession of innovative Executive Directors and program staff saw the development of the major streams of activity that now constitute the work of Arts Access.

Under Kate Brennan (1988 - 91) an enhanced ticket service was re-introduced in 1987 as EASE - the Entertainment Access Service, and in 1989 the Resource Unit, and the Arts Access Studio were established. With Judith Isherwood as director (1991 - 94) the Arts Access Trust was founded (1992) and major national promotional activities began, including the Healthy Arts Project, development of the national DADAA Network, and exploration of new opportunities in the Asia Pacific region through the China Cultural Exchange Program.

Under the leadership of Helen Bowman (1994 - 97), the effectiveness of the core activities was enhanced by new initiatives, including an expanded training program, a broader role for EASE within the arts industry, and applications of new information technologies to open expanded cultural opportunities for Arts Access.

## Arts Access today

Now, under the direction of Jane Haley (since July 1997), Arts Access is pursuing a new strategic direction which builds on the respected profile and demonstrable outcomes achieved in the past 25 years. With the support of a committed, expert Board and the dedicated, highly skilled team of staff, Arts Access is developing an enhanced national reputation for its innovations and achievements. All programs and operations have been reviewed and revised, with considerable change in some areas.

In 1998, Arts Access assumed responsibility for its own financial management and administration (previously provided by external consultants) and reinstated the position of Public Relations Manager. These actions resulted in significant improvements to the organisation's operations and external communications. The Arts Access Enterprise Agreement was negotiated between the Board and staff to ensure equity and

clarity in employment terms and conditions. New equipment and skills have been acquired to enable Arts Access not just to function at its best, but also to work towards leadership in the application of digital technologies.

Arts Access is being strongly repositioned within the arts industry and its profile as a productive, professional agency is acknowledged in a number of ways. This includes a partnership with OPENChannel for a unique multimedia project, collaborations with major companies (such as Handspan and the MSO) and commissions for major events (such as the 2000 Paralympic Arts Festival and Melbourne Festival 2001).

Our funding partners have demonstrated the value they accord to Arts Access through commissions to document 'best practice' and to provide training to the arts industry. Partnerships with a wide range of new professional and community based organisations have been established and these have resulted in opportunities for a more diverse range of participants and audience. Performance agreements with funding bodies have been restructured to ensure a close fit between Arts Access' core business and the expectations of these critical partners.

Most recently Arts Access has moved to purpose designed premises which are a model of accessibility and demonstrate the organisation's position as a professional arts organisation. In October, Arts Access will present *Verve!* a national symposium on arts and disability and, in December, to celebrate International Day of People with a Disability, Arts Access will coordinate an event to acknowledge individual and organisational contributions to the inclusion of people with a disability in arts and cultural activity in Victoria.

*Arts Access current and ex-staff members outside previous Sturt St office on the day of departure*

## MAJOR DATES

- 1973 • Ms Betsy Hite visits from New York
- 1974 • Funds approved by Australia Foundation, Myer Foundation and RE Ross Trust
- 1 April 1974 • Arts Access commenced as pilot project auspiced by and based at the Victorian Council of Social Service in Collingwood, Judy Morton as Executive Director
- 1977 • Programs discontinued due to lack of continuous funding
- 1979 • Arts Access formally constituted and programs resumed
- 1980 • First state government grant which has continued since as regular state funding
- Dinny Downie appointed as Executive Director
- 1982 • Landmark Theorem Project at Melbourne Concert Hall
- 1984 • Concentration on youth, in line with International Year of youth
- 150th festival of 'sharing'
- 1985 • Arts Access moves to 109 -11 Sturt St, Southbank offices

- 1986 • First artist-in-residence program at Larundel Psychiatric Hospital
- Two training seminars called CreateAbility for staff working with people with an intellectual disability
- 1987 • Ticket Service re-established as EASE
- 1988 • 200 children from all over Melbourne take part in Bicentennial 'art party'
- Sept 1990 • Kate Brennan appointed as Executive Director
- 1990 • P-art-ICIPATE '90 conference
- 1991 • Judith Isherwood appointed as Executive Director
- Formation of National body called Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts Australia (DADAA)
- 1992 • Arts Access Trust appeal established
- 1993 • Touring exhibition Stormy Weather
- 1994 • April Helen Bowman appointed as Executive Director
- Healthy Arts launched - a book which sparked considerable interest in the cross over between arts and health

- 1995 • 21st anniversary Arts Access
- EASE Venue Access program launched
- Industry Development Program - included Disability Awareness Training coinciding with the introduction of the Federal Disability Discrimination Act
- Arts Access Trust established
- 1996 • International Cultural Exchange Project with China
- Dream Journeys project - Art Day West
- 1997 • Jane Haley appointed Executive Director
- Launch of the Vic Venue Guide
- Body Suits national tour launched
- Judy Morton retires as president
- 1998 • Major program review and development
- 1999 • New Arts Access image introduced
- Arts Access moves into new purpose designed premises in South Melbourne
- Arts Access presents *Verve!* - a national symposium on arts and disability







left  
Art Day South participant Lisa Cook in front of the Kingston Infolink exhibition. Artworks (L-R) by Simon DeSouza, Lisa Cook and Heather White. Photo: Heather White

right:  
artists, participants and supporters gathered at the Queen Victoria Women's Centre at the launch of the ArtScreen exhibition

far right:  
Arts Access' web designer Ana Tuckerman



## Arts Focus

### Art Day Display

Art Day South presented displayed an exhibition of works on paper at the Kingston Infolink Centre, Dingley branch, from Wednesday 18th August to Friday 4th September. Entitled Windows 99, the exhibition was displayed on the inside of the Centre windows with the images facing out to passers by. As well as showcasing the artistic abilities of Art Day participants, this exhibition helped to raise the awareness of the Art Day program and Arts Access in the local community. Thank you to Art Day South participants and staff and to Kirsten Mitchell and City of Kingston for making this wonderful exhibition possible.

### Artscreen Exhibition

The flavour of excitement at the launch of the ArtScreen - the exhibition of works created through the Arts Access collaboration with BreastScreen - was that of a person looking for an island who discovers a mainland. It was not difficult to identify the project participants among the crowd, by the unmistakable chuffed glow on their faces. Some contained it quietly and secretly. Others laughed out loud, waved their hands in the air, hugged and giggled. Perhaps none of them had expected to become exhibiting artists when first embarking on the project.

The ArtScreen exhibition was launched by Robert Doyle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Aged Care, at the Queen Victoria Women's Centre on Thursday 2nd September to a crowd of over 100 people. Heart-felt speeches were made by Cath Butler, Bendigo information worker; visual artist Gali Weis; and Angela Fong from the Box Hill group. Both the Spanish and Chinese speaking women had their own interpreters translating the spoken part of the launch, which added an extra dimension for the whole crowd who could enjoy strong feelings of unity and inclusion.

ArtScreen began early this year as a 15 week artistic project involving four groups of women over 50 aimed at generating positive attitudes on women's health and raising awareness of the services of BreastScreen. Since its inception, the project has evolved to accommodate a large degree of interest and support from the community, largely due to the highly original artworks produced.

With each stage, future possibilities of the project expand. The next stage will most likely be the commissioning of new artworks by the professional artists who worked on the project.

## What's On

### Mental

Back to Back Theatre presents *Mental* - three new stories of contemporary citizens dealing with the emotional and social repercussions of a society surfing the tsunami of a technological revolution. *Mental* is an analysis of intelligence from a company driven by a permanent ensemble of actors who are recognized as having an intellectual disability. The project acknowledges the individuals in the ensemble as 'original thinkers' who function not in isolation but as unique and valuable contributors to the broader cultural and political debate. 2 - 12 December, Athaneum Theatre, bookings 5221 2029.

### Riddle - a contemplation upon self identity

DVA Theatre Company is a large group comprising performers and theatre makers both with and without disabilities. With a focus on dance, storytelling and shadow puppetry, this group will take audiences on a journey through the imagination addressing the riddle of life - *What am I?* Coming in early December. For more information, contact Katrine Gabb (Director) 9482 7252

### Tower of Light

In their most ambitious project to date, Melbourne Workers Theatre presents an electrifying mix of performers, community groups, live music, visual media and large scale design in *Tower of Light* - an exploration of the worldwide explosion of gambling culture. Featuring performances by Recharge Theatre, Action Youth Theatre, Big Issue Street vendors and the Vietnamese Youth Media. 17 - 21 and 25 - 29 October, Melbourne Showgrounds, 8pm. Bookings MWT 9326 6738 or Ticketmaster 136 166

## Professional Development

Arts Access recently conducted an analysis of the industry training and professional development needs of a large number of organisations and companies working in the industry sectors of arts and community services including the Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne Workers Theatre, Geelong Performing Arts Centre and VAPAC, Wimmera Community Care, East Gippsland Access Group, Broadmeadows ATSS and many more.

This process has been a wonderful opportunity to consult directly with these sectors and receive feedback, ideas, contributions and suggestions for future training programs. As a result, Arts Access has incorporated some new and exciting professional development initiatives and developed a flexible and responsive program that reflects the needs of our training clients.

This is the first time that Arts Access has conducted a formal training and professional development needs analysis and the response was excellent. Many thanks to those organisations and companies for their input. The success of this process will lead to further needs analysis being conducted in the future, and a training reference group comprising representatives from the two industry sectors established.

A calendar of Arts Access training and professional development programs for 2000 will be available from November. If you wish to be a part of a future training / professional development analysis or would like to acquire a calendar, please call Jedda Bellerjee, Training and Professional Development Manager on 03 9699 8299.

## Arts Access in the digital age

Arts Access has been featured in a new publication by Arts Victoria entitled Digital Imagination - a document focusing on the use of digital media within the Victorian arts sector. Lesley Alway, Director of Arts Victoria says on the introductory page, "The publication is one way in which we can learn from and gain insight into how a number of arts organisations and artists are leading by example in using digital technologies to present their art to the community." Arts Access appears along with Chunky Move, Melbourne Festival, Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres and Footscray Community Arts Centre.

The feature on Arts Access makes reference to the marked difference technologies make to the lives of people with disabilities and the greater level of independence achieved through use of online applications. Jane Haley, Executive Director, is confident that digital media has the capacity to greatly enhance the participation of people with disabilities in arts practice in a way that takes account of their needs and aspirations. "It offers the potential of equal access."

### Arts Access website

The Arts Access website is currently being redesigned and updated. Swinburne student Ana Tuckerman, who is studying an advanced diploma in electronic design and interactive media, is working on the site in consultation with Caroline Cowley, PR Manager. The website aims to be fully accessible, featuring a number of viewing options as well as audio capabilities and is designed to be a quick and easy way of acquiring information about and communicating with Arts Access. Look out for an official site launch sometime in November.

## Arts Access staff

<b>Jane Haley</b>	Executive Director
<b>Mario Agostinoni</b>	Administrator
<b>Jedda Bellerjee</b>	Training and Professional Development Manager
<b>Jo Cohen</b>	Art Day Coordinator
<b>Caroline Cowley</b>	PR Manager
<b>Sharyn Dawson</b>	Administrative Assistant
<b>Rachel Devine</b>	Office Manager
<b>Fiona Hanrahan</b>	EASE Manager
<b>Anne Riggs</b>	Saturday Morning Art Class Coordinator
<b>Ruth Whittingham</b>	Artistic Program Manager
<b>Casual</b>	
<b>Penelope Stewart</b>	EASE Ticket Service
<b>Regular Volunteer</b>	
<b>Ana Tuckerman</b>	Web Designer
<b>John Pidd</b>	EASE Ticket Service



A disability-charged CABARET CLUB

Sunday 10 October 1999 2.30 - 5.00pm  
North Melbourne Town Hall  
Cnr Eroll and Queensbury Streets  
\$5 / \$4 concession  
for further enquiries call 03 / 5222 6522





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

# Life was meant to be easy!

21 - 23 October 1999  
Royal Exhibition Building  
Melbourne Victoria



Find the support and information you need to make life easier. At Access Expo 99 you will find the expertise, the information and variety of equipment that can assist you in living independently with a disability.

Displays will be complemented by daily demonstrations of leisure activities and you can access a wealth of information through the informative seminar program.

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST NOW! Contact ParaQuad Victoria for more details.

ACCESS  
EXPO 99

Disability &  
Aged Care  
Solutions

## Professional Development Seminars

Sexuality: A Human Right for All Consenting Adults  
A Question of Access  
The Future of Community Care  
Community Access & Inclusion for Children of all Abilities

## Visitor Workshops & Lectures

Funding & Programs - Dept Human Services/Centrelink  
Funding & Programs - Dept of Veterans Affairs  
SexAbility  
Sport & Recreation for all Abilities

Access Expo 99 is a service of ParaQuad Victoria, PO Box 1189, Collingwood VIC 3066, Ph: (03) 9415 1200, Fax: (03) 9415 1222  
Email: [access.expo@paraquad.asn.au](mailto:access.expo@paraquad.asn.au), Home Page: [www.paraquad.asn.au/expo/expo.html](http://www.paraquad.asn.au/expo/expo.html)

ARTS ACCESS

24 Eastern Road South Melbourne Victoria Australia 3205  
Telephone 03 / 9699 8299 Facsimile 03 / 9699 8868  
TTY 03 / 9699 7636 Ease Bookings 03 / 9699 8497  
[info@artsaccess.com.au](mailto:info@artsaccess.com.au) <http://www.artsaccess.com.au>



**Arts Access Newsletter**  
Registered by Australia Post  
Print Post Publication No. PP 325649/0005  
ISS N 1329 0517