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Editorial

By Stella Collier

Administrator, Accessible Arts

This is the last edition of ACE for 2003, but far from powering down, we're going full throttle to the end of the year. So, here's yet another packed issue of ACE to keep you going until 2004, with plenty of news from us here at Accessible Arts and of course lots of other news of arts and disability initiatives in NSW.

As you know, we're always asking to hear from Accessible Arts members and arts practitioners with and without disabilities and in this edition of ACE we're delighted to include contributions from Athena Pavlis-Goard, Paul Droudis, Louise Alston Dates and Glen Clifton Sheppard. I found their articles and the experiences they describe both fascinating and inspiring. I hope you will too.

On the Accessible Arts horizon in the next couple of months we have a range of arts projects; from music (Amp it UP) and sound beam workshops (Play+Space), to artists' skills training (Sensabilities) and the continuing work of the Accessible Theatre Ensemble. Our Program Manager, Rayce Coyte, gives you a full rundown on pages 6 through to 16.

December 3rd, International Day of People with a Disability, has come around again faster than ever, and once more we have a packed program of accessible events for you to choose from. This year's NSW arts celebration is in the capable hands of the Historic Houses Trust, and it will be happening on Sunday 30th November (daytime) at Government House, in Sydney. We hope to see you there. All of the events in the 'Accessing the Arts' project are listed on pages 53-57. If you'd like a copy of the official program, please contact Kiersten Fishburn.

As you'll know if you've come down to see us here at the Wharf, the Walsh Bay redevelopment is nearing completion. Finally we can hear ourselves think! But all of that building work hasn't just been those million dollar apartments; in January 2004 Sydney Theatre Company will be launching its new theatre on Hickson Road, and it's very accessible! They're kicking off with two new plays as part of Sydney Festival. If you go and see a show, be sure to give them your feedback. Check out pages 19-22 for details.

Rayce and India have asked me to remind you that if you have any inquiries (or you can provide us with any information) about current programs, projects or events, we've created a news sheet called 'ACCESS A GO GO', which we update daily, and which can be emailed or posted to you at any time. So, don't wait for the next ACE if you need information pronto. We are trying to make sure that 'ACCESS A GO GO' contains NSW regional and national and events, so your contributions will be gratefully received.

I'll leave you with a heartfelt appeal, from the Accessible Arts Administrator (me). As you know, Accessible Arts membership is annual. I realise that in the past we've not been very good at getting members to renew annually, but we're turning over a new leaf and we need your help. Please renew your membership for 2004. In this issue you'll find a blue membership form, just fill it out and send it to us, along with your cheque or money order. In case you need any more reasons to renew, we've given you a list of your membership entitlements on page 55. Some are new, some are not, all are brilliant incentives to continue to be an Accessible Arts member.

**Audience Development feedback:
Judy & Tim Sharp: "Laser Beak Man"**

Tim Sharp is a visual artist and member of Access Arts in Brisbane. Tim has Autism and is in a high needs group of a Special Education Unit that is part of a High School here in Brisbane. Earlier this year, via Access Arts, we received an e-mail from Kiersten from Accessible Arts about the "noise" festival 2003. Kiersten gave a very clear explanation of the festival and the work she had done in assisting the festival organisers to include and support artists with disabilities. Her professional and considerate approach encouraged me to submit my son Tim's work.

The people at "noise" have been fantastic, very supportive and thoughtful when considering Tim and his bio for the book. Inspired by the achievement of

making "noise" we applied for the VSAarts festival 2004 and Tim has been chosen as a selected artist in the drawing young adults section. Laser Beak Man is off to Washington and in the Smithsonian Institute and the John F. Kennedy Arts Centre. Tim is thrilled that Laser Beak Man has made it to Washington and seeing the smile on his face when I told him the news will be a memory that will last forever. I've decided we're going! Don't know how we're going to manage it financially, but we will as Tim deserves this, its a life highlight...This is just fantastic!

P.S. Tim has a range of Laser Beak Man Birthday cards that show his wild sense of fun. They can be purchased by contacting me on 0407 96 5350. The sale of these cards will help even more dreams come true.

Judy & Tim Sharp

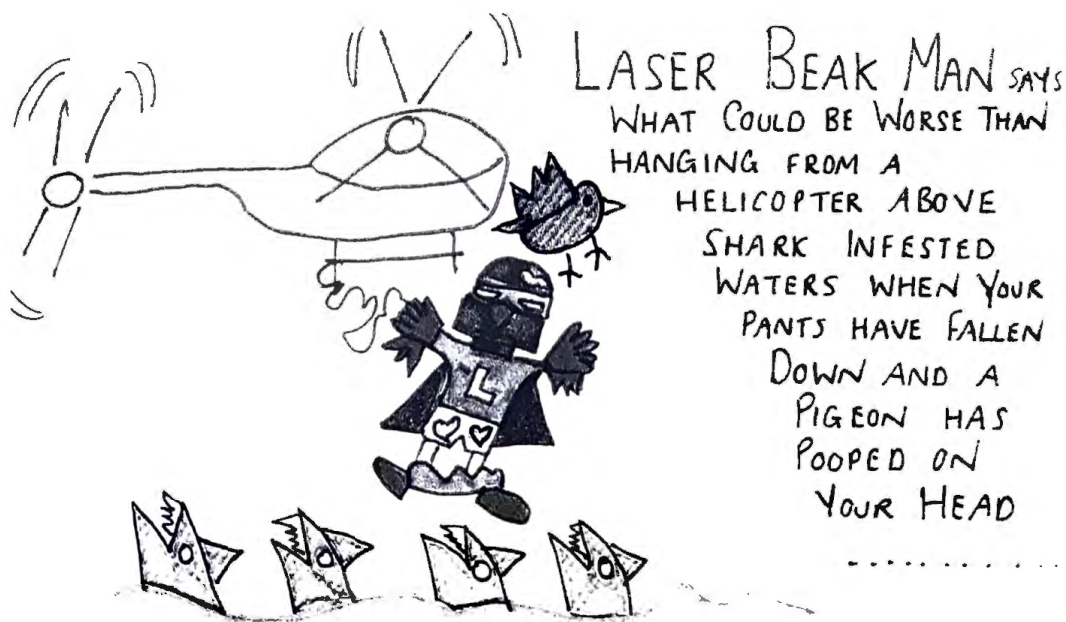


Image above: cartoon by Tim Sharp, on of a series of gift card images.

Program Manager's Report

Rayce Coyte
Program Manager, Accessible Arts

Hi Everyone from the Programs and Project Staff! The beginning of any new job is always marked by a period of transition and involves learning new information and processes. Not to mention meeting lots of new people, and remembering name and faces!

I am absolutely delighted at the sheer amount and different types of arts based activities that are currently running across both Regional NSW and Sydney. I would ask everyone to keep sending us info about your event /activity, so that we help advertise your event/activity for free in both ACE and ACCESS-A GO-GO, our new electronic 'whats on' newsletter.

The Accessible Theatre Ensemble

The Accessible Arts Drama training program, formally known as the Improvised Performance Program (IPP), has changed its name to the Accessible Theatre Ensemble (ATE).

The long-term strategy for this program has been to develop an Ensemble Theatre group, that provides training and performance opportunities for people with disabilities. When I joined Accessible Arts, I decided it was timely for this aim to be directly referenced in the group's name. Hopefully, the change in name will help people more in identifying and locating this unique drama development opportunity.

Readers will be interested to know that the founding members of ATE have already presented short solo pieces at the Australian and New

ACCESS-A-GO-GO!

Accessible Arts quick response e-mail bulletin service

**gives you fortnightly updates
for the latest news on: training,
workshops, grants, prizes,
recreational and more...**

Call or e-mail India Zegan at Accessible Arts to receive ACCESS-A-GO-GO, our fortnightly e-mail bulletin of professional development and recreational services for people with a disability.

Promote your accessible event, workshop, or activity with a short listing: When; where, what, accessibility and contact details.

E-mail: india@aarts.net.au

Tel.: 9251 6499

Zealand Association of Leisure Studies Conference and at a TAFE Institutes training day for disability support workers from the Sydney and Hunter Region. I know that the experience was really nerve-racking for the performers, as the spaces where they performed on both occasions were unfamiliar and totally challenging, both accoustically and spatially. Despite this, everyone presented their piece/s well. Consequently, the ATE group received lots of generous, positive feedback from both audiences.

Accessible Arts would now like to formally welcome and introduce Caroline Downs, the new ATE Tutor. Caroline brings a huge wealth of knowledge in building and presenting theatre with people with disabilities. As I write this, the Ensemble is very busy developing work to present for the end of year performance at Bangarra Theatre on Thursday 11th December.

The Ensemble will be presenting a series of short modified pieces. Audiences can look forward to a wide range of material, which will include material taken from Shakespeare, 20th Century writers, contemporary group pieces and original material written and devised by Ensemble members.

The Ensemble will also be appearing at Government House on Sunday, 30th of November, as part of the International Day of People with a Disability celebrations.

At this point in time Accessible Arts needs to thank and acknowledge Marc Carra and his work with the IPP/ATE group. Unfortunately for us, he has left to pursue a full time commitment with another disability arts project in Sydney. We thank Marc for his wisdom and guidance with ATE. We hope to lure him back to Accessible Arts in the future.

*If you are interested in developing your drama skills and would like to join or help out with props, costumes and backstage please contact either Rayce or India at Accessible Arts on 9251 6499.

Projects and Programs

We are currently working on three partnership projects in the Sydney Metro area:

Roomies

'Roomies' presents artwork made by people who attend the Boarding House Arts project and will be held at the Mori Gallery, Day Street, Darling Harbour from the 1st to the 7th of December (see ACE article). We encourage people to drop in and visit this exhibition which celebrates International Day for People with a Disability.

'SensAbilities' Project

"SensAbilities – building artist's skills and abilities in Western Sydney", aims to support the professional development of visual artists living with a disability in the Western Sydney Region. Our partners in this project are Parramatta City Council's Community Cultural Program and Heritage Centre Cultural project staff. (Refer to the 'SensAbilities' article in this issue for more information).

Amp it UP

Amp it Up – with Ashfield Council and Summer Hill Community Centre, is an eight week music program for young people with a disability in the Inner West region of Sydney (see ACE article). This program follows on from a one-day workshop held last year called "Play it Loud". We welcome Renewtree Music Inc. back to facilitate the workshops. For information and support about organising a workshop or program of a similar nature in your community give Rayce a ring at Accessible Arts on Tel. 9251 6499.

'Play + Space' Project

Accessible Arts is proud to support the 'Play + Space' workshops, as part of our project and programs. This is a new technology system based on sensors, using similar technology to sound beams.

This newly evolved prototype uses eight sensors to translate people's movements and activity within the space into digital data. The data then interfaces and responds to a variety of music and video programs written for the system, that users can hear and see as they move around the space.

Where: Free 'come and try' workshops will be held at the following venues;

- Granville Community and Youth Centre, Saturday 8th November
- Accessible Arts Training Room, Walsh Bay, Sunday the 9th November

When: both sessions will run workshops at 10.3:00 am, 12.30pm and 2.30pm

Sessions will last for about 40 to 60 minutes. If you would like to attend, contact Rayce at Accessible Arts.



Image above: an Amp it Up music workshop in progress

Disability Arts Workers Network

Finally, Accessible Arts is looking to establish a Disability Arts Workers Network in 2004. There is a demonstrated need to provide professional development opportunities as well as resources and peer support to artists, who work with people with disabilities throughout NSW.

We have repeatedly found that workers usually work in isolation. This then means that workers often initiate, develop, coordinate and deliver arts based projects /programs to diverse and disadvantage groups. These work experiences are often framed by limited support, a generally poor understanding of cross-disciplinary (ie. Arts- Disability) activities and a lack of easily identifiable and really well-known role models.

By forming a network, these work experiences can be both shared and discussed with other isolated workers. Strategies and resources will be developed to inspire, support and empower this sector that bridges and both the Arts and Disability worlds.

Initially, we will be forming a working party to assist in developing a networks form. In order to network effectively across New South Wales it is anticipated that information will be distributed by both email and snail mail.

We especially encourage Arts workers in regional NSW to forward their ideas and aspiration to us. Our aim is to put together a working group that is inclusive and equitable for arts workers across NSW.

Its possible that this network could be used to:

- develop professional training opportunities
- support and promote the development and recognition of arts practise and arts workers' skills, to both the Disability and Arts sectors.
- Communicate and share resources across the state of NSW.

Please contact Rayce Coyte, at Accessible Arts if you are able to volunteer some time to attend meetings to help form a working party for the Disability Arts Worker Network.

Contact: Rayce Coyte

Role: Program Manager,
Accessible Arts

Tel: 9251 6499

E-mail: rayce@aarts.net.au

SensAbilities

Building artist's skills and abilities in Western Sydney

SensAbilities is an artists professional development project presented by Accessible Arts in partnership with Parramatta Council's Community Cultural Development worker, Penny Stannard and Education and Program staff of the Parramatta Heritage Centre. Individual artists from the Western Sydney Region are also assisting by participating in the project development committee.

This project aims to assist artists with a disability in Western Sydney to develop the skills and knowledge to engage with galleries and develop their own exhibitions.

The project will:

- Provide artists with frameworks for developing their portfolio and CV.
- Inform artists about exhibition opportunities and how to engage and create these opportunities.
- Develop an understanding from exhibiting artist peers, about the pros and cons of promoting and exhibiting as a professional artist with a disability.

Seminar Day

The first phase of this project is a Seminar day to be held on Saturday the 22nd of November at the Parramatta Heritage Centre. If you would like to attend please phone Genelle Sharrock Parramatta Heritage Centre on 8839 3323. Or if you have further inquiries about the seminar phone Rayce on 9251 6499.

The seminar day will present outlines for an artist portfolio and CV, as well

as discuss the variety of exhibition opportunities that an artist can engage in and how to apply to exhibit in gallery exhibitions.

There will also be a panel of experienced artists with disabilities to discuss their experiences and the knowledge they have gained through their professional artistic development.

Workshop Day

A workshop day is planned for early 2004 with the aim of further developing participants' individual CV's and portfolios. It is anticipated that participants will have taken the time to begin the process of building their promotional material such as portfolio and CV, so that they can be further guided to a developed professional standard.

Exhibition

In the final phase of this project, participants will be invited to participate in an exhibition of their work to be held at the Parramatta Heritage Centre, October 2004. Artists will gain hands-on experience at working with an exhibition curator in a collaborative, supportive environment with other artists.

The guides and information that is being researched and developed in this project will be made available for artists who are not able to attend this seminar in Parramatta. The opportunity to run this seminar format in other regions will be available from January 2004. So if are looking to develop your skills and abilities to promote and exhibit your work, please contact Rayce Coyte.

Contact: Rayce Coyte

Role: Program Manager

Accessible Arts

Tel: 9251 6499.

E-mail: rayce@aarts.net.au

Accessible Theatre Ensemble

Report by Caroline Downs
Ensemble Program Tutor

My name is Caroline Downs and I am very excited to be joining the Accessible Arts team as the new tutor for this term's Accessible Theatre Ensemble. I have had a long, loose association with Accessible Arts and for some time wanted to be part of the Accessible Theatre Ensemble (formerly the IPP Program). Over the last ten years I have been conducting drama programs for people with disabilities, primarily in Northern Sydney and I have recently completed directing a comedy for a group of performers with disabilities, which was supported by the Helpstreet Foundation.

I began working with the Accessible Theatre Ensemble on 9th August (week 2 of the new spring term). I started the program with a series of exercises covering voice, movement and acting techniques, mainly to assist me in understanding the group's theatrical experiences and to involve the newcomers to the Ensemble with the more experienced participants. By week 4 the group began devising improvisations based on fairy tales, which was loads of fun and gave the newcomers opportunities to share ideas with the more experienced members of the Ensemble. In week 5 we continued focusing on group improvisations and also set up an artistic committee (Justin Leibmann, Janet Chiapparone and Ruth Cromer) to meet each week before the program to discuss the content of the performances the group will be doing



Image above: members of ATE (Accessible Theatre Ensemble) during one of their workshops.

later in the year. Out of those meetings the committee decided that the group needed to devise a movement piece that all participants can be involved in and something the Ensemble can perform in a variety of different performance spaces. The committee also decided that for the more experienced members they wanted to perform scenes from written texts.

So that is where we are. We are in the middle of devising a theatrical movement piece and are collating scenes from various written texts. The outcome will be a series of short integrated performance pieces, which we plan to perform on 30th November at Government House as part of the 'International Day of People With a Disability' and a second performance at the Bangarra Dance Theatre on 12th December.

So put those dates in your diary as we promise to accomplish something a little different, with maybe a few surprises as well.

Accessible Theatre Ensemble member profile: Paul Droudis

Paul Droudis is a new member to the Accessible Theatre Ensemble. The Ensemble are currently working towards the annual end of year performance at the Bangarra Studio on 11th December— pencil this date into your dairies now! Accessible Arts is proud to be able to reproduce this piece of writing by Paul.

Paul Droudis: My Life Experience...

"My name is Paul, I am 26 years old. I have a disability called cerebral palsy. I am proud of myself. People see me as slow. If I walk different, that doesn't mean I am slow. I see myself as different, we are all different. Why should I live life sad because I walk different? It doesn't bother me any more.

If people see me as slow, it is their problem, not mine. I have a right to live the best life as possible. I should educate people about my disability. When I was in high school, I was unhappy because they put me with kids more disabled than me, I was in the support unit. They didn't treat me equal, I was late to school every day, they didn't punish me like able bodied students. What's the point of integration if they don't treat me the same as able bodied students? I believe I went there to learn about my disability and while I was there, I found a great A.F.L club. I played A.F.L with the able bodied players. I played 100 games for the club. I played for Balmain A.F.L. I did that for one year. I can't play any more because I can't keep up. I am the best raffle ticket seller in the club's history.

When I left school I went to TAFE NSW to continue my English and maths. My reading is good and maths good, but my grammar is not good. That's why I went to North Sydney TAFE. My work is getting there, I need more time because I am a slow learner but that's not a bad thing.

It took me 96 lessons to get my P licence. I got there, now I am proud to drive. People said to me that I was wasting my time but I got there. When people put me down – I have much more drive."

'Roomies'

Art exhibition presented by the Newtown Boarding House Project with Morri Gallery & Accessible Arts

2nd to 7th December 2003

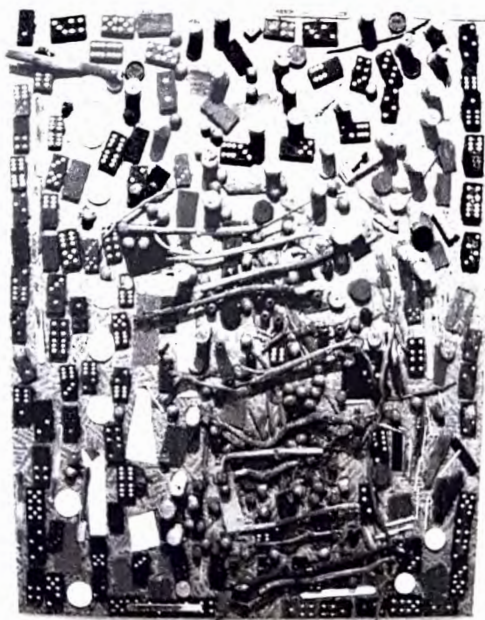
A discussion with Newtown Boarding House Project, with India Zegan (Accessible Arts) Anne Kwasner and Belinda Simpson (Newtown Neighbourhood Centre).

'Roomies' is an exhibition which will be held at Mori Gallery, Day Street, Sydney from December 2-7. The exhibition is presented by the Boarding House Project (a joint initiative between Newtown Neighbourhood Centre and Marrickville Council), Mori Gallery and Accessible Arts and celebrates International Day of People with a Disability.

'Roomies' will showcase paintings and mixed media by people who attend the Tom Foster Boarding House Art Project every Tuesday fortnight. The group is made up of fifteen people with mixed abilities, who all live in boarding houses in the Inner West.

The key workers involved in the project are Belinda Simpson and Anne Kwasner from the Boarding House Project. Recently, I had a chance to catch up with them and ask them a couple of questions about the exhibition.

India Zegan (I.Z): The range and volume of artwork that the group produces is quite amazing- I've seen a huge wealth of paintings, sculptures, mixed media pieces. The work that I have seen to date reflects consistent styles and re-occurring themes, such as



Images above: artworks by artists exhibiting in the 'Roomies' exhibition. Above left: collage by Billy Burnes. Above right: 'Green Man' sculpture by Val Doran.



outdoor spaces. What effect do you think the classes have on the participants?

Anne: The classes give participants access to creative arts that would otherwise not be available to them. They also get to develop their skills, existing or otherwise. When participants attend the art classes, they work individually on their own art projects. Boarding house life is designed around group logistics ie group meals group bedrooms and group outings. However, the downside of this is that many of the participants often cannot display their works in their boarding houses.

In contrast to this scenario, the experience of seeing their work handled and stored with care and consideration at Tom Foster is extremely empowering for them. The art classes allow people to work autonomously and independently.

This then creates a constructive outlet for self-expression, in a safe and accessible environment. For example, when participants come to the centre they are free to help themselves to tea and coffee- they don't have to ask permission first.

Belinda: I think you can notice all kinds of benefits- increased involvement in the community is the most immediate example. People enjoy being part of the wider community. The project allows people to socialise and meet other people. It increases their self-esteem, especially when artworks are sold!.

I.Z: Having seen some of the work, I strongly recommend that everyone gets to the exhibition early as last year sales were very strong on opening night. Do you know of any other projects like this in NSW, I've had a look on the net, but cannot find anything else like the Boarding House Arts Project?

Anne: No, not off hand. It looks like there is no other ongoing project for people in boarding houses.

I.Z: Who came up with the project idea?

Belinda: This project is a joint initiative between Marmickville Council and Newtown Neighbourhood Centre. We are especially lucky this year because Stephen Mori of Mori Galleries has come on board and has given us the use of his gallery space for 'Roomies'.

I.Z: Have you needed to develop it along the way to accommodate for changes in delivery and needs?

Belinda: When Anne and I became involved in the project it was pretty much established.

Anne: Well, it has changed slightly in that, when the funding for the arts worker ran out, Belinda and I took on the responsibility of running the art tuition. The project now tries to produce much more publicly accessible exhibitions ie 'Walking the Streets' and more exhibitions at the Tom Foster Centre.

I.Z: Thanks for your time you've both been really generous and I hope that all the exhibiting artists sell. In addition to this, I hope that the exhibition generates some discussion on 'Outsider Art'. Whether you agree or disagree with this labelling, at present there is little critical discussion of this genre, particularly in Sydney, by either emerging or established art writers.

Accessible Arts, The Boarding House Project - Newtown Neighbourhood Centre and sponsors would like to acknowledge Stephen Mori and his dedicated staff in helping present 'Roomies'.

When: 2nd to 7th December
Where: 108 Day Street, Sydney CBD

Access: Wheelchair accessible (with small step at entrance).
Directions: go down Bathurst St, left into Day Street- 20 metres down.
Closest train station: Town Hall
Parking: Darling Harbour, then walk across over footbridge.

Contact: Mori Gallery
Tel: 9283 2903
E-mail: morigallery@bigpond.com

Contact: Anne Kwasner & Belinda Simpson
Newtown Neighbourhood Centre
Tel: 9516 4755
E-mail: bhp@newtowncentre.org



Image on opposite page: 'Free as an Illustrated Bird' painting by John Goldsmith. Image above: map showing directions to Mori Gallery from Town Hall

Amp It Up

Ashfield Music Program

**Summer Hill Community Centre
October 15th – December 9th**

'Amp it Up', is a follow-on project in collaboration with Ashfield Council and Summer Hill Community Centre. In 2002 a one day music program was undertaken by Accessible Arts with the above partners, in which 15 young people (15 –25 years of age) with disabilities participated in the workshop run by Sarah Orgias of Renewtree Inc. (Music based arts development for people with disabilities).

The success of the workshop, and the participants' interest in further music workshops, has led to the development of an 8 week program in 2003.

The program is once again facilitated by Renewtree Inc. and supported administratively by Accessible Arts, in partnership with Ashfield Council and Summer Hill Community Centre.

Participants will work individually and as a group to develop valuable skills in communication, social interaction, choice making and physical awareness. They will learn music appreciation, develop skills in rhythm and melody and perform live as members of a percussion ensemble.

Young people living with a disability in the Inner West of Sydney will have the opportunity to develop skills in creative music in a relaxed social environment. The program will culminate in a show where they will all have the chance to perform.

Accessible Arts will use the program to assess the creative needs and ambitions of young people living with a disability in the Inner West region of Sydney. We will also research the potential for organisations in the area to run and sustain similar arts programs.

Where: Summer Hill Community Centre

When: from 15th of October to December the 9th, every Wednesday afternoon from 4pm to 6pm.

If you would like further information about this workshop or would like to run a similar workshop in your community contact Rayce Coyte.

Contact: Rayce Coyte

Role: Program Manager, Accessible Arts

Tel: 9251 6499

Fax: 9251 6422

E-mail: rayce@aarts.net.au

Web: www.aarts.net.au

Access Arts Project Officer for Holroyd Council

New arts program launched

Holroyd City Council was recently successful in gaining funds through the Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme for a two-year program of community cultural development projects that will enhance access for people with disabilities to a diverse range of art forms. The Holroyd City Access Arts Project will be open to adults with a physical, sensory or intellectual disability living in Holroyd or in the surrounding area, and is specifically targeted to people who may be ineligible for other funded recreation and respite services (such as people with multiple disabilities or people living in group homes).

The aims of the project are to build skills in the arts for self-empowerment and expression of participants, to raise community awareness and understanding of issues faced by people with a disability, and to give an often marginalised community an active voice. The project includes funding for a part-time Project Coordinator as well as for community artists, who will conduct ongoing workshops in art forms such as drama, dance, music, visual arts, digital arts, or writing. There are also program funds available for workshop materials, venue hire, and transport.

The need for access to art skills and programs for people with disabilities was originally identified in community consultations held regularly within the Holroyd local government area. Once this need was identified, Council's Community Projects Officer, Cultural Programs Officer, and Disability Services Team put together a project plan and formulated a grant application. Ongoing contact with local people with disabilities and group homes has informed the two year project plan,

and project participants will continue to shape the nature and goals of the project following the appointment of the Project Coordinator.

The second year of the project will incorporate innovative methods to enhance the sustainability of community workshops and build community capacity through the effort and interest of project participants, families and carers, and community volunteers. Arts Skills Attainment workshops will be offered to help hone and develop further skills in specific artforms for project participants and community members with an interest in the arts. Train-the-Trainer workshops will be offered so that project participants and community members may become familiar with the principles of community cultural development and will be able to run their workshops and tutor groups in the future.

The Access Arts Project Coordinator will commence work in late October, with workshops planned to begin in early 2004. Holroyd Local Government Area covers all or part of the suburbs of Merrylands, Greystanes, Guildford, Wentworthville, Smithfield, Woodpark, Yennora, Prospect, Pendle Hill, Gurrume, Toongabbie, Westmead, Mays Hill, Granville and Parramatta. This project would not be possible without the support of Planning NSW and Holroyd City Council.

Anyone interested in registering as a participant, expressing their interest in working or volunteering with a specific artform, or with general inquiries is encouraged to contact Holroyd's Disability Support Worker, Bart Penson.

Contact: Bart Penson

Role: Disability Support Worker
Holroyd City Council

Tel: 9840 9977

TTY: 9840 9988

E-mail: bart.penson@holroyd.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.holroyd.nsw.gov.au

Junction House Band tour to Wataboshi

**Junction House to show at Wataboshi
Festival, Brisbane Queensland**

**Report by Lindy Morrison, Musical
Director, Junction House Band**

Junction House is a non-residential community centre for adults with an intellectual disability. It is based in a terrace house at Waverley in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs and provides classes, courses, social activities and support aimed at helping people live in and be part of the community.

The Junction House Band was formed in 1987 from participants attending Junction House. The band writes and plays its own material. The band has performed all over Sydney alongside mainstream bands at venues such as the Powerhouse Museum, the Stanmore Carnival Street Festival, and the Young Musicians Festival at the Bondi Pavilion. Other events include Arts Extraordinaire, the NSW Interchange State Conference, the Australian Achievement Awards for People with Disabilities, the Ros Bower Award Presentation (1998) and the Down's Syndrome Week Celebration Dance (1999). They performed at the Paralympics torch ceremony in Bondi. They have performed live on television and radio.



Image above: Colin Delaney and Josie Hayes from The Junction House Band performing in 'The Battle for Something Special'.

'The Battle for Something Special'

In 2000, Junction House members were funded by The Australia Council to write and perform *The Battle for Something Special*, a musical performed in The Church in the Mall in Bondi Junction over 3 nights and involving 30 cast members. The members had devised the musical through workshops in drama, dance and craft and the JHBand wrote the songs. Rehearsals and writing ran for most of the year.

The musical tells the story of a band playing in a pub who are told by the owner that they have to quit because of the arrival of poker machines. To draw attention to their plight, the band and the community stage a musical in the pub about Captain Outback a past hero of the town, his girlfriend Theresa Townsville and the outlaw William Whipp.

Junction House recently took the show with a cast of 15 members to the Wataboshi Festival in Brisbane in November 2003. The Wataboshi Festival is an international Arts Festival for people with disabilities.

Rehearsals commenced in October 2003. The cast rehearsed for six weeks during either the two-hour weekly drama group or the two-hour music workshops. One other two-hour period of rehearsal was organised once a week for both groups to rehearse together. During these rehearsals the drama and songs were placed together.

The Wataboshi Festival offered 'The Battle' four performances over five days. Wataboshi also invited the band to perform on one evening. The Junction House performers are staying near the Powerhouse where the Festival is to be staged and the entire hotel will be filled with artists attending and performing at the Festival.

Contact: Lindy Morrison

Role: Musical Director

The Junction House Band

E-mail:

lindymorrison@optushome.com.au

Mobile: 0409 224 720



Image above: Josie Hayes from The Junction House Band performing in a scene from 'The Battle for Something Special'.

An "Extra" Experience

By Athena Pavlis-Goard
Accessible Arts Management
Committee Member

A couple of months after attending a talk by actor, Chris Haywood at Accessible Arts I received a phone call from Rayce, the new Program Manager and was asked if I wanted to take part in an 'extra' role in a short film that Chris was starring in. I was told that Chris Haywood himself was asking for me and a fellow drama student personally so I, of course, said yes. I mean who wouldn't!

I hung up the phone all excited about this fabulous opportunity and felt quite humbled. But very quickly my excitement turned into a panic of questions. Did he remember that I use a motorised wheelchair? Was the shoot venue wheelchair friendly? Did the Director know someone in a wheelchair was going to be part of the shoot for that day? I did not want to get there and find that because of my disability they could not accommodate for me. I needed to know that they knew.

When the agency rang me the day before, I was only given the venue and what time I had to be there in the following morning. If I had any questions I had to contact the Assistant Director. I rang the Assistant Director to find out other details about what to wear and so on...'and just one last question,' I asked. '...did you know that I am a wheelchair user?' The reply was a nervous no. He was not told about this 'minor' detail. 'But don't worry we'll get you into the pub somehow.' He reassured me. I was to play an extra at a wake situated within a pub.



I woke up at 5am the next morning and arrived at the Lord Wolseley Hotel in Ultimo; a 115 year old pub which held a lot of charm inside and out. As far as pubs go this one was quite beautiful. The Assistant Director approached me and apologised. Everyone else but him knew about me coming. A sigh of relief! From 8-12pm I watched Chris Haywood go over the same scene over and over again, which must have been at least twenty times! Each shot had to be taken through a rehearsal and then at different angles. It was fascinating to watch.

To get me into the pub heavy bean bags were placed onto the steps of the hotel and then a big wide plank of timber put on top to act as my ramp. With assistance I wheeled into the hotel and located the toilet before we began filming our scene. I was surprised to find that even though the pub itself was not wheelchair accessible, the toilet was???!! As Rove McManus would say, 'what the???'. After this I was escorted

to the back room of the pub where all the other extras were herded. This is where we were asked to sign contracts and payment forms and taken through simple directions.

Our scene was a wake in a pub. And we were the extras drinking and socialising. But this was not to be shot until after lunch, so back down my makeshift ramp and out into the sunshine where tables and chairs were set out for a bake dinner type lunch. What a banquet!

From 1-5pm we filmed the wake scene; over...and over...and over! I was exhausted, but it was my excitement that kept my adrenalin pumping. The scene at the wake with all the extras had to be shot at different angles, not to mention having to stop every time a plane flew over or if someone forgot their lines. To shoot at different angles the extras were strategically placed in certain positions and given instructions to mime talking as not to drown the main characters out. Some angles had to be filmed with all the extras outside. Because of my wheelchair, I offered to hide in a corner to save the rigmarole of getting in and out. I did not mind this as I got the opportunity to view of all the shooting. By the end of the day I was exhausted and nursing a headache, but obviously full of excitement.

Watching TV growing up, I was always struck by the portrayal of people with disabilities; always in a negative, passive role, always the victim, the patient and the deviant. And most roles played as a person with a disability were played by a non-disabled actor which I believe loses some sort of authenticity to the character being played. It has always been my passion and dream to see more people with disabilities on the big screen; portrayed in positive ways and playing significant and everyday roles. In this particular scene I was a woman in a wheelchair taking part in a wake; something that people with disabilities do in normal life too.

What also made this an enjoyable first time experience was the attitude of the cast and crew. They did everything they could to make it accessible, comfortable and inclusive for me in every way. So, although in the end it was only two seconds of fame, the experience I encountered was priceless and I was grateful to be part of the work of developing positive roles for people with disabilities in the media.

Arts on the Far South Coast

Report by Matthew Perry
Arts Coordinator, Tulgeen Training & Education Access Service

Bega is a rural community on the Far South Coast of NSW, famous for its cows, cheese and rolling green hills. The Tulgeen Group provides accommodation options, working environments and educational opportunities for people with disabilities.

Tulgeen's Training and Education/Access Service is a diverse educational program that teaches working skills, living skills and recreational pursuits to encourage maximum autonomy and integration into the workplace and community. Over the last 4 years a thriving music program has evolved into a performance troupe called "The Eden Street Players", who have been giving their colourful performances to audiences ranging from primary schools to elderly citizens in nursing homes. The performances are the culmination of the group's creation of combined story ideas, music, dance and props.

The group's passionate and inventive process of making artworks as props for the performances gave an exciting glimpse of the potential of a more expansive and individually expressive arts program.

The opportunity for expanding the art-making opportunities began with the conversion of an old garage into a studio. Money to fund the conversion was raised through the sale of raffle tickets and a garage sale. The conversion work was complete by volunteers, staff and clients and "The Art in the Garage Project" was born. Successful grant applications provided enough funding to equip the studio with basic tools and art materials. Over the next year the dynamic quality of the artworks that were created in the studio helped to impress various funding bodies to provide for salaries to employ local artists in one-on-one art making sessions.

Very positive community reaction to the unique artworks being created has led to our first major group exhibition to be held at the The Bega Regional Gallery opening on December 12th 2003 and closing on January 14th 2004. This will be the first exhibit of art work created by people with disabilities in the South East Region.

Artists with extensive experience in encouraging the creative process for people with disabilities were brought in from other regions to facilitate workshops in diverse art making mediums. This has led the evolution of a clay sculpture group and access to local printmaking facilities.

At present we are looking at the logistics of a performing arts festival for people with disabilities that would be held in Bega. Hopefully this could bring other performing artists, friends and inspiration to our region.

Contact: Matthew Perry
Role: Arts Coordinator, Tulgeen Training & Education Access Service
Tel: 6492 1642
E-mail: mat5perry@bigpond.com

Sydney Theatre Company New Accessible Venue

New theatre venue opened at Walsh Bay

When Sydney Theatre Company's new theatre at Walsh Bay opens (officially in January 2004) it will be the most significant addition to Sydney's performing arts venues since the Sydney Opera House opened 30 years ago.

Encompassing an 850-seat proscenium arch theatre, café style restaurant with al fresco dining, external balcony opening onto Hickson Road, dedicated function room, stylish bars and a specialist retail space, the theatre will provide audiences with an unparalleled theatre experience.



Image above: the street entrance to the new Sydney Theatre, on Hickson Road.
Photo by Stella Collier

Sydney Theatre Company's home will remain at The Wharf and they will continue as the resident theatre company at the Sydney Opera House Drama Theatre. However, with its impressive stage and technical facilities the new theatre will provide STC with a unique opportunity to expand the company's repertoire. In particular, by forging relationships with local and international companies it will allow the company to expand the work they do specifically for a children's audience.

Great accessibility!

Sydney Theatre will be the most accessible theatre in Australia. The architects, Peddle Thorpe Walker, consulted constantly with STC personnel during the design and construction period and ensured that physical access was as equal as possible for all patrons.

One particular triumph of the theatre is that the row for wheelchair patrons is Row H in the stalls, with additional spaces at the rear of the Circle. Normally, wheelchair patrons are relegated to the back of the theatre, with their companions nowhere in sight. At Sydney Theatre, these patrons will sit in the best position in the theatre, with their companions in adjacent seats.

STC also offers programmes developed particularly for the disability sector. Large print brochures are available on request, and they also present audio-described performances of specific productions throughout the year for the vision impaired. These performances include a workshop and tour of the set prior to the performance, to enable the vision impaired patrons to familiarise themselves with the physical aspects of the production – including the shape of

the cast!

In addition, three productions per year are professionally signed on stage for the hearing impaired. These services are offered with specially reduced ticket prices to encourage greater access.

Performing Companies... A Diverse Mix

Walsh Bay is already home to an eclectic mix of Australia's best performing arts companies: Sydney Dance Company, The Australian Ballet and, of course, Sydney Theatre Company. The theatre will mesh these "neighbour" companies together in one annual program, providing a diverse mix of quality performing arts to match that at other cultural icons such as the Sydney Opera House.



Image above: rehearsal space at the new Sydney Theatre

In addition, each year will begin in the new theatre with a major Sydney Festival work in January. And a mix of the best commercial producers and cultural presenters from Australia and around the world will fill the remainder of available weeks. These include the Philippe Genty Company (France), the Abbey Theatre (UK) and Cheek by Jowl (UK).

The Audience

The new theatre has the capacity to attract a broad performing arts audience of around 200,000 people annually.

New theatres of this stature open rarely, perhaps once or twice in a lifetime. There's no denying that it will be a massive financial undertaking for Sydney Theatre Company to bring this one to its official opening.

STC would like the new theatre to become Sydney's premier home for quality theatre and dance. They would like to offer unparalleled community access to this new cultural resource. This includes a broad spectrum of the Australian community, currently excluded through disability, geographical and socio-economic barriers, from enjoying the experience of theatre.

Special Access Elements - NRMA Insurance

NRMA Insurance has come on board as Access Partner for Sydney Theatre. This means that NRMA Insurance will specifically initiate a number of initiatives to encourage access to the theatre. These moves will provide access to productions at the new theatre for community groups that are generally outside Sydney Theatre Company's core audience; enhancing the performing arts experience at the new theatre for patrons with a disability.

Specific examples of activity providing greater access for community groups include:

- Providing access to an annual theatre experience for children at secondary schools in the greater metropolitan area. The new theatre will allocate a total of 180 tickets to NRMA Insurance for matinee performances over the year. The attendance by these groups would include transport and, for Sydney Theatre Company productions, a tailored pre-show briefing by the Stage Manager.
- An allocation of 180 tickets to be used across one matinee performance of every new theatre production by charitable organisations such as the Australia Speak Easy Association, the Deaf Education Network, the Inspire Foundation, Sydney YMCA Youth Services, The Access Foundation, The Asthma Foundation of NSW, The Ted Noffs Foundation, WordSkills Australia and Youth Off The Streets.
- Making a maximum of 90 tickets available at the concession price in the first year of the theatre's operation to the disability community to introduce those unaware of theatre to the artform and to demonstrate the ease of accessibility of the venue.

Access Provisions within the Sydney Theatre

Specific examples of activity providing an enhanced theatre experience for patrons with disability include:

- support of special needs performances for sight impaired patrons including provision of hearing loop headsets
- support of special needs performances for hearing impaired patrons
- support of the purchase of requirements for special access such as wheelchairs
- making 1,000 tickets each year available at the concession price for carers of patrons with disability

To find out more about disability services for the Sydney Theatre and other Sydney Theatre Company venues and events...

Contact: Box Office

Sydney Theatre Company

Tel: 9250 1777

E-mail: reception@sydneytheatre.com.au

Web: www.sydneytheatre.com.au

Read about events coming up at the Sydney Theatre and Sign Interpreted performances from the Sydney Theatre Company on page 50 in this issue of ACE.

Nambucca Phoenix brought 10 of their employees to Coffs for the day, and they were joined by many local people with varying disabilities.

In a letter of appreciation after the event Robynne McGinley, Service Development Officer for Phoenix wrote:

"As we are located in a small rural area, opportunities that were provided by this day do not occur often, particularly with the help of professional staff and the opportunity to have work shown in a public gallery. The cartoon workshop was a wonderful success, that all the employees enjoyed participating in."

Although there were only limited sales during the display, there were however, post-exhibition inquiries and orders because of their participation with us.

Coffs Harbour's Mayor, Jennifer Bonfield presented each participant with a Certificate of Achievement and spent considerable time with the young artists who were keen to explain their works to her.

From the gallery point of view – we were very grateful for the experience and the opportunity to work with such responsive and delightful young adults, so much so that plans are underway to repeat the exercise this year.

Working with people with disabilities is not new to our gallery. In the past 2 years we have had the pleasure of having



Image above: cartoonist Richard Jones, during last years cartooning workshop at the Bunker Cartoon Gallery

three very special people with varying disabilities working in reception at the gallery. The best part is that two of these people have secured part time paid employment in the community, thanks to the skills and confidence they gained as members of the gallery volunteer crew. The comments by many of our visitors regarding our special volunteers have been very complementary.

The Bunker Cartoon Gallery is Australia's first only dedicated Black and White gallery. It features cartoons chosen from the Coffs Cartoon Collection – a project of the City of Coffs Harbour Rotary Club and the third largest private collection of original cartoons in the country. Housed in a heritage listed 1943 WWII underground Bunker it is unique. The gallery was awarded the NSW Tourism Regional Award for 'Excellence in the

Heritage and Cultural Tourism' category for the past 2 years and is currently a contender for the State Tourism Award in this category.

The gallery has been inspected and approved by Accessible Arts as being a building catering for the needs of those with disabilities.

Contact: Margaret Bridgman
Bunker Cartoon Gallery
John Champion Way, City Hill
Coffs Harbour 2450
Tel: 6651 7343
E-mail: bunkergallery@bigpond.com

For information about Bunker House cartoon workshops, read their listing on page 52 of this issue.

Accessible Arts 2002 Annual Report

is now available

Please contact Stella Collier,
Administrator, Accessible Arts
to arrange for a copy of the
report to be delivered to you.

Tel 9251 6499 or
E-mail info@aarts.net.au



The Art of War for artists with a disability

Strategies for success

Article by Louise Alston, film & video producer, and person with an acquired brain injury

The Art of War is an ancient Chinese text by Sun Tzu about war strategy. It uses philosophical principles to find ways to have tactical advantage. For example, you can find strategies to help a small army to defeat a big army. An artist working with a disability can use these tactics to achieve goals.

I am a producer and that means it is my job to work out strategies and lead teams to put together shows. In 1999 I trained at film school. I have made two television shows for cable TV, produced on two short films and produced plays for theatre.

I also have ABI (Acquired Brain Injury). This means that I have trouble remembering things properly, I have trouble concentrating and I get very exhausted. This is because I was run over by a motor bike in January 2001.

I have managed to keep on working in the arts by using strategies like the ones in The Art of War. Since my accident, I have managed to produce a TV show for cable, raised money for charity and put on three successful plays.

1. Look big when you are small

This is all about the power of marketing. Make yourself look impressive and people will think you are.

Printing always makes you look good. Ask a graphic designer to design a business card for you. Learn how to print the addresses on envelopes using your printer and other impressive computer tricks.

Dress like a person senior to you would dress. Try wearing a jacket. Get great hair.

Do work experience for well known companies so that you can have some big names on your C.V.

2. Always sell yourself

Don't let anyone treat you like you are stupid or you are a kid... EVER...even if they are your mum and especially if they are a medical professional. Make firm rules. Practice telling people to treat you with respect. Using big words can help. 'Sorry, I hope you don't mind, but part of my biorhythm is to take naps in the afternoon, I am a little tired but I fully understand what you mean, you don't have to put it in infantile terms.'

3. Out of weakness comes strength

Find the strength that comes from your disability or obstacles. Use the knowledge you gain from difficulties to become strong. I feel that my disability means that I am better at empathizing with people. That makes me a better team leader.

Do you have time on your hands? Use it as a strength, for example, use your time to learn skills or expand your brain. I learned a lot by spending a year thinking about life and the things that matter.

Indian philosophy says that you can achieve spiritual enlightenment through pain and endurance. You can make a conscious decision to make your experiences change you for good or bad. We know in western society that strength is built from resistance and fitness is built from endurance. Eastern philosophy says that can be spiritual strength and fitness as well as physical. Sun Tzu says that it is an advantage if people underestimate you, it means they let their guard down.

You can't win unless you know your limits and strengths

Really concentrate on the way you operate. Do you know all of your strengths and weaknesses? Do you know yourself? Does your disability help you to know yourself better than non-disabled people?

If you know your weaknesses, you will know exactly what you need to do to compensate for them. When you can do that, it's as good as being perfect. For example, do you know that it takes all your energy to actually get to a meeting? Plan to get picked up and dropped off. Do you know that you can read for only fifteen minutes at a time? Schedule fifteen minutes of reading, three times a day for two weeks and finish a whole book.

4. Forgive yourself for mistakes

Don't take them on board, just pick yourself up and keep on heading in the right direction. Maximize your resources. Eat really well. Try cutting out any food that is processed for three days. Drink lots of water. Yoga is a lovely, gentle way to exercise - and to feel part of a community! No one has a physical advantage in yoga, there is no competition. The only competition is with your own body.

Make a list of things to do that you know will make you feel good. These can be for when you are down in the dumps or just when you are exhausted. For example; lie in the sun, make a smoothie, watch your favorite video of 'Friends', call someone on the phone, have a cup of tea in a coffee shop by yourself while you organize your diary, have a bath, wash your hair, stretch every muscle in your body, draw a picture, water the garden, visit your grandmother, make a cake. When things start to overwhelm me, I like to make a list to break the problem down into little parts.

Having said that though, it is ok to take time to be sad. Sometimes feeling bad is a way for your spirit to renew itself. If you understand your dark times as well as your happy times, they won't overwhelm you.

5. Know your enemy (Know how to achieve your goal)

Know what your goal is and all the steps you need to take to achieve it. Break it down into tasks and schedule them in your diary. When I wanted to find a job working as a casual teacher's aide at a school. I scheduled 1) wrote a list of local schools I could easily get to. 2) phoned all of them to find out whether they needed teacher's aides and who to address the letters to. 3) fixed up my resume and wrote a cover letter to each school. 4) sent the letters 5) followed up by phoning the people I had written letters to. It didn't seem to have worked at first, but I got a phone call two months later and now I work as a casual boarding school supervisor two nights a week.

Read about your goal. Learn as much as you can about it. Cultivate friendships with people who share your goal and have conversations about it all the time. Take a class. Do a work attachment...

work experience isn't just for kids these days. They call it volunteering. In this way you will learn ways to achieve your goal and be ready to take advantage of opportunities that come up.

Another saying that inspires me is 'success is achieved when preparation meets opportunity.' In other words, be ready for when an opportunity presents itself.

6. Make strategic attacks

Find your enemy's weakest point. That is, work out the easiest way to your goal. Does that mean getting a qualification, achieving a project or being a member of a committee? Or a combination of all three? Find the path of least resistance. Remember that most people don't get to the top by doing the same thing over and over again for twenty years. They are always moving forward, learning and taking on new challenges.

Think about what it is that you want from your goal. Perhaps you want to be filthy rich... well what do you want that for? So you can lie on the beach? – Find a way to live and work by the beach! Pare your goal down to its essence, then do what needs to be done to achieve it. I wanted to be a high powered TV producer, now I put on plays and it gives me the same thrill of putting on a successful show, without the hassle of being a high powered TV producer!

Computers are your friend. They are a key strategy to achieving goals, at least they are for me! If you can use them well, they make you powerful because they are something you can use in your own time, sitting down in your own house. Not many people know how to use them well so you will stand out. Computer skills are always in demand and people who don't know them are really impressed by people who do.

7. Attack from the highest point on the battlefield

That is, find ways of approaching your goal that will mean that you are not at a practical disadvantage.

Make sure there are stools, ramps, access etc.. On my wedding day, I made a 'chill out' area where I could go and lie down when I got tired. All the other guests could use it too if they wanted. If you can afford it - get a courier account. It can cut out transport hassles when you need to get things picked up and dropped off. Usually getting something brought to my house costs about \$10 to \$15.

Use local small businesses. They are close and more likely to do you favours like home delivery. I like that I don't have to write down my address for my local IGA supermarket, because they know me well.

Find ways of cutting your 'time overheads'. Your 'time overheads' are the times you have to spend doing things like cooking dinner, shopping for food and travel. Find ways of cutting down the amount of time you spend on these things, then you will have more time to spend on your goal. Time management books have lots of tips for this. Find them in your library.

Find out about time management and organisation. I recommend a book called *Organising for the Creative Person* - by Dorothy Lehmkuhl and Dolores Cotter Lamping. If you are more organized than any one else, you are at an advantage. This doesn't have to be strict. You can find artistic ways to run your household and your working day.

8. Make strategic alliances

Use collaboration and partnerships to make up for weaknesses and maximize strengths but don't lose your sense of independence or your own vision. Have a contingency plan if the partnership doesn't work.

Do you know something that other people want to learn? Do you work in an industry that lots of people want to get into? Perhaps you can start to work with a junior person to teach them in return for letting them work with you. Remember to always make it worth their while.

Put together a strong, supportive team around you who know and support your goals and strategies.

Be a part of your community. This includes using local businesses and joining in community activities. On a Saturday morning, I go to yoga and then I help in the community garden next door. By Saturday afternoon, I have had about twenty different conversations with different people.

Network- make sure people know you- and owe you a favour. (Tip - I subscribe to email newsletters and job websites - I forward items to people all the time. It is a low energy way of keeping in touch, staying informed and doing favours).

Approach your heroes and people who are senior in your field and ask them to mentor you. Often they will be flattered. When you approach them be specific with how much time you are asking for. You can ask them for a one-off coffee, or three meetings, or ask if they could be available for advice and encouragement on the phone while you are completing a particular project. It is good to have strong people interested in your success.

9. Victory before the battle

This means, have such a good strategy that you have already won before you start. Make your plan for achieving your goal completely foolproof.

Make lists ALL THE TIME. Find ways to not lose things and to keep track. I am a right brained creative type who has learned how to make friendly rosters and timetables for myself.

Be very clear on your goals. Make the most of your optimum time by doing the **most important things first**. Keep reminding yourself of this. Artistic people instinctively keep having new ideas and following them! Write down your idea or schedule time in the future to deal with it. Focus on the goal you are working on right now. That doesn't mean you aren't working on a couple of goals throughout your day.

Good Luck. Many of the worlds greatest artists have lived with a disability: Frida Kahlo; Vincent Van Gough; Christy Brown; Homer; Collette; Beethoven etc.. You can be world class too.

Contact: Louise Alston

Bunker Productions

E-mail: louisealston@bigpond.com

K'crasher!

Northern Tablelands singer songwriter & guitarist

"K'crasher's crystal clear voice, excellent pitch, and ability to hold a note make her a singer of rare power. Add her sense of humour, warmth and conviction to complete the picture of her as an entertainer who can immediately establish a relationship with her audience, and move them to tears one minute and laughter the next."

– David Tonkin, 'One Of The Folk' radio show 2MCE Bathurst.

K'crasher (pronounced as 'crasher' and previously known as Nicki Fenton) is a singer songwriter and guitarist based in Uralla in NSW Northern Tablelands, who has been performing around NSW for the past few years.

Maintaining a balance in performance between the serious and the light hearted, K'crasher's sources are wide and eclectic. Her sense of timing, expressive voice and her skills with tricky lyrics help her to tackle a wide range of material. At home with the blues or soul music, she can also sing traditional folk standards and comic parodies. She sings songs such as Cheryl Wheeler's 'Act of Nature' and George & Ira Gershwin's classic 'Summertime'.

Her sensitive and versatile accompaniments on guitar or piano support and enhance the mood of her lyrics. She balances songs such as Alastair Hewlett's 'Suicide Town' with Tom Lehrer's 'Masochism Tango'. Satirical songs by Bernard Bolon, Eric Bogle, Tom Lehrer and Dorie Previn are all part of her repertoire, as are modern folk classics by Joni Mitchell, Loreena McKennett and Cat Stevens. Her rapid-fire versions of 'We Sell Everything' and 'The Pheasant Pluckers Song' never fails to provoke laughter.



Two fine examples of K'crasher's outstanding vocal and instrumental talents can be heard as MP3 files that can be down loaded from her website: <http://Web: www.geocities.com/bristleheadmusic/ttl.html>

"There are moments when this album by Nikki Fenton (aka K'crasher) is very good. And it's a comment on her talent that although it includes tracks by Tim Buckley and Michelle Shocked, the most beautiful, Towards the Light and You Don't Dream About It, were written by Fenton. A glorious warm voice, great songs and fine muted productions."

The Sydney Morning Herald 31.5.2002

Lately K'crasher's performances of her own compositions have received enthusiastic acclaim. Powerful lyrics drawn from her own experiences connect with people at a profound level. K'crasher is capable of being both bitingly insightful and compassionate at the same time, and occasionally "stark raving mad". K'crasher says of her self "I'm a singer but only recently songwriter. In the past, whenever I thought about writing a song, I coincidentally found someone else's on the same subject and got distracted learning it. I enjoy presenting other peoples songs, giving them new emphasis and conviction, but there is something special about singing one's own songs. I only sing songs that I believe in—I can't sing what I don't feel. I like to make a real connection with the audience."

As an artist with sight disability K'crasher is cautious when it comes to labels and being labelled as an "artist with a disability". Disability is not something that K'crasher actively promotes as part of her identity as an artist, preferring instead to concentrate on more common themes of the human condition that transcend labels of gender, ability, race and sexuality etc..

"I accept the practical consequences and necessities of having a sight disability, but I don't feel it really defines the character of my work or my self concept as a person and artist."

Her music has taken her to all the usual hang-outs including bars, clubs, functions and concerts. She has added a touch of music and humour at many a wedding and performed at political and environmental protest rallies across Australia. K'crasher has played at many festivals including the Canberra National Folk Festival where she played to full houses of enthusiastic audiences. K'crasher prefers to perform in a

theatre type concert setting, and tries to avoid noisy, smoke filled pub-club type environments. She finds theatre style concert events provide the ideal setting for her performances, enabling her to create a sense of rapport with her audiences, and a space for them to focus on the many details of her performance and storytelling.

K'crasher also performs as a session musician, performing on piano, guitar and vocals, mostly around NSW and ACT, and has now set up her own business: BristleHead Music to promote her performances and recordings.

K'crasher's latest CD 'Towards the Light' can be ordered at most local music stores through Shoe String Records or directly from K'crasher at BristleHead Music by sending a cheque or money order for \$25. It can also be purchased on-line through the Stop and Rock on-line record store at Web: www.stopnrock.com.au.

Keep an ear out for K'crasher gigs coming up around NSW over the next few months:

- Sydney, November 2003
- Alice Springs, December 2003
- Tamworth, January 2004
- Blue Mountains & ACT (at Merry Muse folk club) March 2004

Contact: K'crasher

Mobile: 0409 121 118

E-mail:

bristleheadmusic@yahoo.com.au

Web: www.geocities.com/bristleheadmusic

bristleheadmusic

Glen Clifton Sheppard

Poet and writer

Glen Sheppard is a young poet, writing under extraordinary circumstances. He lives with the dual disabilities of Down Syndrome and Autism and had no way of communicating before he was sixteen, when he was introduced to facilitated communication. His work has been presented at numerous festival events including High Beam, The Woodford Folk Festival and the forthcoming Asia Pacific Wataboshi International Music Festival being held in Brisbane this November.

Glen has published two books, 'My Book of Life as Told in Poetry' (2000) and 'Elvis Has Left the Building—Memoirs and Poetry' (2002) using Facilitated Communication on a computer or communication board. These are no ordinary books, as Glen cannot speak, they are his way of communicating to the world. Writing poetry is Glen's love, and his books are a must-read for school students and anyone interested in learning more about disabilities, providing an unique insight into what can be achieved through support and determination.

Wally Finch, president of the Australian Bush Poet's Assoc. wrote: "One has only to communicate with Glen to learn he has an amazing retentive mind and a beautiful one. Glen is a fine example that heroes don't always need extraordinary physical abilities and living proof the impossible can happen for those with a will".

Glen writes...

"I was born in Melbourne in 1979, and was diagnosed with Down syndrome and autism. I lived there for my first 7 years and in those years I had a full program of exercise and intense schooling. This program may have been the background for my current success in being able to write stories and poetry. I am still unable to speak or write with a pen."

"The last 17 years I have been living in Nambour, Qld., going to Special School until 1997. It was in this time when I was 16 years old, a speech therapist discovered I could use an alphabet board, called Facilitated Communication. This has allowed me to bring awareness to the disability field of 'please do not judge me by how I look but by the words I write'. It allows me to communicate my opinions and feelings to my family and support workers and to the community out there."

"While doing Art, numeracy and Literacy for 3 years at TAFE, I wrote my first book titled 'My Book of Life' as told in poetry. In 2001, I did Year 10 at TAFE in a regular class and I will go to University in a few years. I began writing poetry in 1999 and have had wonderful praises from other poets and lovers of poetry for my work, especially the inspiration and hope I give others. I enjoy learning about new things and love people, swimming, music and going to live concerts. My latest venture is writing songs."

"My dreams are to travel, keep writing poetry and songs and go to University. I have just completed my second book, titled "Elvis Has Left the Building"-Memoirs and Poetry by Glen Clifton Sheppard."

Accessible Arts: What key events marked your transition towards a more serious involvement with writing?

Glen: Writing poetry at TAFE in 1999 for the first time and having it recited at the PAKTI Conference in 1999 and producing my first booklet in 2000 titled "My Book of Life" as told in poetry by Glen Clifton Sheppard".

Accessible Arts: How have you negotiated the positive and negative influences of disability and health care institutions and carers in your journey as artist?

Glen: There have been many positive and negative experiences. Most people around me have been very positive, my support workers are very important but sometimes, something happens in their life and they have too much going on in their head and I can not work then, so sadly I ask them to take a break for awhile. The in-house politics of the first service provider I was with after Special School was not to my liking so I had to change to Integrated Family Youth Service (I.F.Y.S).



Publications:

'My Book of Life as Told in Poetry', Queensland Printing Service, Nambour, Qld. 2000.
'Elvis Has Left the Building' Memoirs and Poetry. Qld. Printing, Nambour. 2002.
Cost: \$13.00 each including GST.
Postage: 1 to 3 books \$2.00, 4 to 6 books \$4.00, 7 to 9 books \$6.00
Large print and email can be arranged.
To order books, please send money order to:

Contact: Glen Sheppard,
PO. Box 4883 SCMC,
Nambour, QLD, 4560, Australia
Tel: 07 5441 2975.
Mobile: 0410573975
E-mail: pamsheppard@hotmail.com

Elvis Has Left The Building

a poem by Glen Clifton Sheppard

Autism creeps over me like a thick brown mist,
taking away clear thoughts,
leaving confusion and vacant places in my mind.
I hear people's voices; they sound so far away.
I feel as if I am in some other place.

I fight being trapped in cracks in footpaths,
swirls in carpets, patterns in tiles.
My perception of depth, width and height
is quite distorted.
A break in the footpath appears as an abyss,
so deep I must look like I'm drunk stepping so wide.

When I feel autistic my mind becomes pebbles of rice,
swirling around so fast,
it appears as a fog and then with effort, sorts itself out.
Autism is a strange disability: sometimes in a crowded room
I listen to conversations, having a great time,
then out of the blue autism comes
and blanks out my mind.

That brown mist is back, I lose my direction,
thoughts become erratic, sounds loud and confusing.
My senses scream as if being physically attacked.
I never know when the dreaded mist will strike.

When Elvis has finished his concert,
his fans are screaming for more
but they are told "Elvis has left the building".
When autism takes over my body
it is like Elvis has left the building.
Thoughts leave my mind,
my body stands on stage,
unable to have a say.

Elvis has left us forever,
but I am still here, sorting out my mind.
From a vacant space on stage to a brown mist of confusion,
I struggle to clear my thoughts,
I could go crazy here in the haze of my distorted mind.

High Beam 2004, Invitation to Artists

**'Evolve', a new direction for
High Beam Festival,
May 3rd – 9th, 2004**

Opportunities: All artforms
Closing date for applications:
ASAP, by Nov 30th 2003

HIGH BEAM will be held in Adelaide,
Australia's most feted festival city
from Monday May 3 to Sunday May 9
2004. There is no registration fee for
participation.

Evolve, High Beam 2004 is currently
being curated by Artistic Director, Susan
Maley, who is looking for artists and
performances to become involved.
Susan comes to Australia from work in
Hawaii and Oregon and was appointed
in February this year.

Evolve, High Beam 2004 will be a unique
7 day cultural experience for

- people with a disability
- their carers, families, friends.
- artists with a disability
- professionals working in the disability
sector
- artists and others interested in how
the experience of disability can
influence one's world view and the
art that artists make.



High Beam began as a groundbreaking
festival, the first of its type in the
Southern hemisphere. Since its inception
in 1998 it has offered a spectacular
program of music, comedy, theatre,
dance, art, debate, workshops and
community events. The rich and
diverse program gives opportunities
for everyone to participate. National
and international artists gather at High
Beam to celebrate the many creative
expressions of disability culture. It has
been the inspiration for the creation
of other festivals focussing on art and
disability and is a leader in showcasing
contemporary works influenced and
inspired by experience of disabilities. The
festival will be launched in Adelaide on
Dec 3, 2004, the International Day of
People With a Disability.

Image above: a participant in Bob Daly's
'Silk Stories' community event, one of the
highlights of last year's High Beam festival.

**The theme of the 2004 festival is
EVOLVE:**

"Evolve, High Beam 2004 will be a focussed and dedicated environment in which to evolve through presenting, viewing, debating, listening, teaching, learning, observing and participating. It will feature dance, theatre, music, visual art, comedy and workshops".

"It has a special interest in discourse about disability culture. IDEAS AND INNOVATIONS, a two day watershed conference, will give added focus to the evolution."

"Evolve is about opportunity and achievement. It is a unique chance for professional development, exchange of ideas and critical debate. It is a tight package of activity structured around pathways to understanding that will reward you with a richer and deeper appreciation of the meaning of creative achievement. It will leave you inspired and stimulated by a different kind of arts experience"

**Susan Maley, Artistic Director
High Beam 2004**

Through the arts and discourse opportunities offered at High Beam 2004 you can evolve your creativity, your ideas, your skills, your networks or your audiences...

Focus on a particular artist or artsworker. Hear them speak about their work, philosophy and methodology in conference. View a performance that is the culmination of that work. Attend a workshop to learn more about the practical reality of how their work is produced. Meet them and talk to them about their experiences.

Become involved in one of the community cultural development projects just getting underway. Pat Rix from the Tutti Ensemble is the lead artist in a community cultural development project that will see the formation of a regional choir based in the Clare Valley in South Australia. It will use the reverse integration model that typifies the work of Restless Dance Company and the Tutti Ensemble, both based in Adelaide. The choir will be performing along with the Tutti Ensemble during the festival.

Another community cultural development project is the creation of an aerial sculpture base on the theme of flight that will be installed in the Old Queens Theatre in Adelaide during the festival. The theatre itself is an amazing building with an unforgettable atmosphere. It is the shell of mainland Australia's oldest theatre. It will be the site of workshops 'High Dreams At The Queens' during the festival, as well as being the exhibition venue for the aerial sculpture to be developed under the guidance of visual artist Evette Sunsett. Explore the variety of performance and visual arts experiences in a compact, accessible area. Adelaide is synonymous with fabulous festivals – due in no small part to its accessibility. The City's compact size means it's easy to get from one top quality venue to another, and the flat terrain makes walking or cycling a pleasure. Attending a festival in Adelaide means comfortable, well priced accommodation, delightful park lands, excellent food and wines and some of South Australia's most beautiful regional attractions only a day trip away. High Beam combines all of this with a specialist network of disability-friendly travel and accommodation providers to make attending High Beam a wonderful experience.

'Ideas & Innovations' Conference

High Beam 2004, will have a strong discourse component including the watershed 'Ideas And Innovations' Conference. This is a key part of Susan Maley's vision for the festival. Susan has extensive experience in disability research including managing the first US research centre on disability and health. Their agenda included activities related to arts and disability. She has created accessible adapted workshops on "The Business of Being an Artist" for artists with disabilities and organised a national conference workshop program on arts and disabilities in the US. She also has exhibition experience herself as a member of a paper arts group in Hawaii. Her time on the Board of Hawaii's leading community arts organisation, Volcano Arts Center has given her an enthusiasm for the possibilities inherent in community cultural development.

Ideas and Innovations is a two day interactive program during High Beam. It examines some of the best Australian and International models for working in the arts to explore disability culture and its social and cultural impact including

- national and international projects and practices
- evaluation approaches
- research findings
- new directions of inquiry about disability culture expressed through the arts.

It promotes new cross-sector partnerships among participants.

The conference is structured to provide students, academics, disability/health practitioners and artists with an arena for exchange, critical debate and skills development.



Positioning the Ideas and Innovation Conference within the lively context of the High Beam Festival offers the opportunity to experience a range of cutting edge artistic expression of disability culture.

The program includes presentations from keynote speakers who are achieving outstanding work in this area. It includes strands on new media, technology and artists with disabilities, income generation, the development of marketing skills for independent artists, accessible art education curriculum for primary and secondary students and skills development sessions for artists working with people with disabilities.

Image above: Matt Fraser performing in "Sealboy: Freak" one of the highlights of last year's High Beam 2002.

Plenary speakers and the conference program will be posted on the Arts In Action website by November 2003. Negotiations are underway with some high profile speakers from overseas as well as around Australia.

Break-out sessions will be selected to maximise the potential for conference participants to see some of the best art work representing disability culture, then attend workshops or master class sessions with some of these practitioners and their company members. Well known South Australian companies and artists will be presenting work, along with other nationally and internationally renowned performers. This provides a context for the conference where participants can listen, learn about and participate in a range of approaches to arts practice informed by experience of disability. This will be augmented by the presentation of some of the most interesting evidence based research models examining the social and cultural impact of the practice.

Evolve, High Beam 2004 will assist organisations and performers to find venues and accommodation. It will provide access to its comprehensive marketing program, which will include media coverage and support any applications for funding to perform at the festival. For overseas participants we can assist with visa applications and travel arrangements. Unfortunately the organisation does not have the resources to contribute financially to any tours.

"We are inspired by the artistic work currently in development and excited about the networking opportunities the festival will offer and the positive influence the discourse component will have on the lives of people with a disability" said artistic director Susan Maley.

"The festival will explore the development of cross-sector partnerships, particularly between the arts and education sectors, and influence policy and program development."

For further information about attending the festival and conference, performing at the festival or presenting at the conference visit the Arts In Action website or ask for an 'Expression of Interest' form and let us know what you are planning.

Contact: Geoff Crowhurst

Role: Program Coordinator
High Beam 2004

Tel: 08 8224 0799

E-mail: highbeamfestival

@artsinaction.asn.au

Web: www.artsinaction.asn.au

Tell your story

Bush Telegraph, ABC Radio National

ABC Radio National are wanting to hear from people aged between 8 - 108 years, who are living in regional or rural parts of Australia, and who want to have their say on ABC radio. If you're interested, you will be contributing to ABC Radio's Country Viewpoint segment. You would be required to write a 400 word script about anything to do with living in a regional area. This can be about ANYTHING, so long as it has a rural or regional perspective. Your piece needs to be written in the way you would normally speak, so that it sounds natural when we record. If you're interested in writing 400 words, sending it to ABC Radio National at the details below.

Contact: Tara Vickers, Producer,
Bush Telegraph, ABC Radio National.

Tel: 03 9626 1261 or

E-mail: vickers.tara@abc.net.au

Performance Space Residency Program

Call for Proposals

Closing date: 28 November 2003

Proposals are invited from independent artistic teams & small companies for our 2004 residency program. If you are a performance-maker, sound artist or new media practitioner engaged in hybrid and/or inter-cultural practice, you are eligible to apply. Performance Space will provide: work/rehearsal space, dramaturgy, technical support, the option of showing the results of the research to peers and a limited travel budget for artists residing outside Sydney. For guidelines & selection criteria...

Tel: 02 9698 7235

E-mail: admin@performancespace.com.au

Chrissie Cotter Gallery

Call for proposals

Marrickville Council, through the Chrissie Cotter Gallery (CCG), encourages innovative and contemporary forms of art and cultural expression by emerging and established artists and cultural workers. The CCG offers a FREE space where experimental, non-commercial art and cultural expressions can be developed and showcased. New policy allows any artist, cultural worker or curator to apply for space if exhibitions of interest to the local community are developed. There is a 10% commission on works sold if a commercial exhibition is held.

Applications are received throughout the year and can be downloaded from Council's website.

Contact: Ricardo Peach
Arts Officer, Marrickville Council
PO Box 14, Petersham 2049

Tel: 9335 2233

E-mail: artsoff@marrickville.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au

Interpretation

A psychological twister in English and Auslan presented by Australian Theatre Of the Deaf (ATOD)

**Performance Space
20 - 22 Nov Thu - Sat 8pm, Sat 2pm**

ATOD is set to unleash some emotional fireworks at the Performance Space in November, a psychological twister in two languages, English and Auslan, about the turmoil created for two sisters when their parents die in a car crash.

Sounds heavy, doesn't it? It's meaty more than heavy, especially with one sister deaf and the other hearing. But it's not all gloom and angst. The humour of the deaf is sprinkled liberally throughout the work, and a mystery lies at its core.

The young hearing man who seems to appear out of nowhere has a secret, you see. Like the sisters, he has been wrestling with his own demons, and his journey into their world is a personal Waterloo.

Who's in the show?

Kate Nelson makes a return to ATOD after starring in all of ATOD's productions from 1998 to 2002. Every conceivable challenge was thrown her way over that time, including having to play a man in *The Smiling Prisoner* in 2000. She also excelled in *The Language Of One* at the Newtown Theatre in 1999.

Amanda Lyons leaps into the theatrical saddle after many years as a professional interpreter and noted sign-singing performer. She actually plays the older sister who is an Auslan interpreter. A case of art imitating life?

Stephen King is a refugee from television-land, most notably in *Home and Away* playing Edward from 1999 to 2000. He is currently featuring in the film *The Rage In Placid Lake* and recently played Julian in *The Misanthrope* at Belvoir.

Tickets: \$22/\$18/\$16

Bookings: 02 9698 7235 (voice)
02 9310 1205 (tty)

E-mail:
boxoffice@performancespace.com.au

Where: Performance Space,
199 Cleveland St, Redfern, between George and Pitt Streets overlooking Prince Alfred Park near the Strawberry Hills post office. Of the buses that go along Cleveland St the only bus to go past Performance Space is the 352, all the rest turn down Chalmers St. There will be four performances from Thursday 20th to Saturday 22nd November.

Access: wheelchair access is to the left of the building but you will need to call 9698 7235 in advance in order for the gate to be opened. From Maroubra - along the Anzac Parade: 395. From Coogee - along the Anzac Parade: 372. From Marrickville Metro/Newtown - along King St: 352 (limited times). Existing toilets can not be accessed by wheelchair.

Hearing: the show will be interpreted into English and Auslan.

Access inquiries: Soraya Asmar
House Manager, Performance Space
Tel: 02 9698 7235 (voice)
02 9310 1205 (tty)

International Day of People with a Disability (IDPWD)

Kiersten Fishburn
Audience Development Officer
Accessible Arts

Last year was the first IDPWD 'Accessing the Arts' project. The project aimed to bring together arts and cultural organisations to work towards a project activity or to show their support of the day and the inclusion of people with disabilities in the arts. It was such a success that we just had to run it again!

This year, we have nearly doubled the number of participating organisations with a great mixture of metropolitan and regional/rural events. We have given you a taste of some of the events in this edition of ACE – there are even more featured on the official program. If you'd like to get a copy of the program, please contact me. It will be available as a poster, in a Word document to e-mail and as a PDF. We can also provide you with audio, Braille or large print (as a printed word document), but please give us a few days to organise those formats if you request them.

I would like to thank all the organisations involved for their support and their eagerness to take part. All of the participating organisations are very enthusiastic about increasing their audiences of people with disabilities and would be happy to be contacted by you for more information. I would also like to thank the NSW Ministry for the Arts and the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care for their support, and the NSW Premier, Bob Carr MP for officially endorsing this project.

I hope you find something exciting in this year's program (I think you will!). I also hope that we can continue to expand the work we are doing in this area, if you know if an organisation (or if you work for one) that isn't yet involved, I'd be happy to discuss the many benefits that participants have found from taking part. Please contact me if you have any questions or comments and we can work together towards 'Accessing the Arts'.

Regional events IDPWD

Albury/Wodonga Disability Service Providers Group

The Albury/Wodonga Disability Service Providers Group is proudly sponsoring the Celebrating Ability Expo, which aims to celebrate the experience and expertise of local people with disabilities. Activities will include art displays and workshops and music and drama performances.

When: Wednesday 3 December,
11am – 3pm

Where: QE2 Square, Dean Street Albury

Cost: free

Access: wheelchair accessible

Contact: Maralee Vogel
Albury City Council

Tel: 6023 8272

E-mail: mvogel@alburycity.nsw.gov.au