

Audiences go back for a second taste

The women of Fairlea prison have just completed a return season of their highly successful show, 'Taste of Crime'.

The 90-minute show, written and performed by the women, contained songs and stories about issues relating to women, crime, prisons, drugs, incest, pregnancy in prison, AIDS and much more.

Songs from the show included 'What Was I Supposed to Do?', 'I Don't Wanna Go Home', 'Wild Little Hitch-hiker' and 'You Were Never There'.

Originally scheduled for six performances early in November, 'Taste of Crime' was given its return season due to overwhelming public demand.

The show was the result of a six month project run by Arts Access at the prison. The content of the show came from extensive discussions and workshops centred around what the women felt to be the most important issues relevant to them. These issues tended to focus on their lives before, during and after prison.

The show's effect on both the audiences and performers alike has been moving and profound in its ability to bring new understanding to the women and their situations.

As the performance was staged within the prison, both the Governor of Fairlea and staff within the prison had to cope with considerable disruption to their daily routine so that the show could go on.

An exhibition of art works produced by the women during the project was held in the prison's Visitors' Centre throughout both seasons. The many paintings and backdrops involved in the performance were also created by the women.



A scene from 'Taste of Crime', the Fairlea performance project.

Arts Access' decision to run the six month project was the result of its deep concern and commitment that had developed through contact with the prison over the years. Funding from the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation in association with the Alcohol and Drug Foundation helped the project become a reality.

The four artists involved in the development of this project were Maud Clark (drama), Sally Marsden (art), Greg Sneddon (music) and Mark Gibson (yoga). Workshops run by these artists included extensive improvisation, songwriting, drama, visual arts and yoga sessions, and involved many more women than were involved in the actual performance.

Numerous letters have been received by the prison from audience members expressing their appreciation and congratulations for such a rewarding performance. These letters are testimony to the success of 'Taste of Crime'. One letter stated:

"I found your work powerful, moving and deeply emotional. The words of your songs gave me a completely different insight into the problems of women, both inside and outside of the prison. I wish to thank the women who shared part of their lives with me.

"Also thank the women whose art work we shared. I have never seen such pain, sorrow and suffering conveyed onto canvas."

A Christmas Message

A busy 1989 has seen Arts Access involved in many successful projects.

Projects including Moomba, the Paintings Prints and Poles and 'Closing the Gap' exhibitions, the Taste of Crime performances at Fairlea, the opening of the ACCESS Studio, the Sails project at the Austin Hospital and the production of the kit "Making the Arts Work for Everyone".

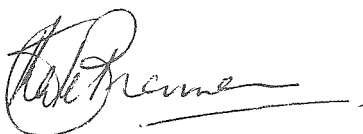
A wealth of developmental and long term projects have ensured that opportunities in the arts continue to be created and challenged.

It has also been pleasing to receive a guarantee from the Ministry for the Arts to support EASE's business plan as EASE works towards a level of financial independence.

Both Arts Access' membership and EASE's user-base have grown substantially over the last 12 months. I must thank all those in the community who believe in and support our activities in practical ways and to those who assist us to develop an on-going base for our work.

I hope that the Christmas and holiday period is a happy one for all our friends and supporters and I look forward to renewed contact with all of you as we start the next decade together.

Sincerely



Kate Brennan
Executive Director

Arts Access plans for 1990

Each year, new projects develop from the previous year's work and exciting new initiatives emerge. Although Arts Access is still awaiting news of its project funding for 1990, plans are progressing steadily for the coming year's exciting range of programmes.

Many of the proposals Arts Access plans to develop in 1990 are the result of the growing interest in the dynamic opportunities the arts have to offer people in the communities which we service.

Some projects of interest include:

The Melrose Street Arts Project

This project has been developed in conjunction with residents of the Melrose Street housing estate in North Melbourne and the local community health centre. The project will combine textiles and music and will assist the residents to tackle some of the issues that concern them on the estate. The project has been financially supported by the Victorian Ministry for the Arts and the Cultural Development Unit of the Melbourne City Council.

The Older People's Performance Project

This project, which has been financially supported by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, is already in the preparation stages. The project combines experienced older performers and those with little or no performing experience in the creation of a major performance piece. The performance will take place during Senior Citizens' week, 1990. Arts Access has been fortunate in being able to engage the Tombolas, a community theatre troupe of older people, as artists on this project.

The Host Artist Scheme

This innovative scheme has been proposed to assist artists to develop professionally or semi-professionally by connecting them with other practising studio artists. The short term relationships will enable new artists to discuss their work, ideas and the business side of the arts with people active in the same field. This project is being developed as a result of the recommendations that followed the successful Paintings, Prints and Poles project.

Touring Exhibition

Also in the Visual Arts area and subject to available funding, is a proposal to mount a touring exhibition. The exhibition will consist of works acquired from the communities in which Arts Access works. Practical workshops and artist training sessions will be run in conjunction with the exhibition as it tours both metropolitan and country regions. Artists whose works are acquired will be supported by more experienced artists in running workshops, exploring their work and their medium.

State Conference

A State Conference about the involvement of people with disabilities in the arts is planned for September 1990. A small working party, involving representatives from a number of organisations, has set a tentative agenda and is in the process of getting responses from a broad cross section of interested groups. Contact Kate Brennan, on 699 8299, if you wish to be involved in this process.

Moomba

Discussions are currently under way for Arts Access' involvement in the Moomba parade for the second year running. The project will possibly involve a Parade/Dance extravaganza and looks to be every bit as exciting as our prize winning float in the 1989 parade.

In addition to these programmes, work will continue with residents of Special Accommodation Houses and people attending psychiatric Day Centres. This work continues to be made possible through the Office of Psychiatric Services.

A further programme servicing this area has been developed in conjunction with the Richmond Fellowship, assisting participants in its programmes to explore a wide range of arts activities.

The Resource Unit will begin to operate as a complete project, incorporating the activities of the Resource Centre, the training project run this year by Tori de Mestre, the Community Linking Project and the ACCESS Studio.

At the moment, a programme of over 20 practical projects is planned for 1990. In addition, the EASE project will continue to operate and develop along its present lines.

As always, projects will be developed based on community needs and Arts Access' staff are keen to hear from you about your interests and assist you to make the arts more accessible.

Programming Update

Arts Access' busy year is slowly drawing to a close with a number of programmes reaching completion during these last few weeks. Staff at Arts Access, however, are as busy as ever setting up the programme for 1990.

During 1989, Arts Access will have run close to 40 different programmes in as many locations. Those projects still underway or nearing completion include:

Turana Residency

This project is a year long artist-in-residency involving all sections of Turana Youth Training Centre in visual arts and music workshops. The project has three different aspects to it - artist Suzanne Fegan is working with the boys on the creation of a mural; musician Paul Agar is involving a group in music and songwriting; and artist Jeff Stewart has been working with a group on the production of a book and artworks.

It has been decided to launch the book and exhibit the drawings on the 14th of December at Turana. The Minister for Community Services, Mr Peter Spyker, has accepted our invitation to launch the book and open the exhibition.

Fairlea Project

Funded by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation in association with the Alcohol and Drug Foundation, this extensive project at Fairlea Women's Prison involves workshops in visual arts, music, yoga and drama sessions.

The culmination of this project was an extraordinarily moving performance piece entitled 'Taste of Crime.' In addition to this, there was an exhibition of the women's artworks that had been produced during the project. (See main article page 1)

EDAR

This project involves a programme of drama and craft workshops at two centres for young people with intellectual disabilities. While the programmes have been running independently of each other, they are to be connected through their involvement in the culminating performance. Artist Kerreen Ely-Harper has begun the integrated drama classes that will work towards this performance, scheduled for mid-December.

Special Accommodation Houses

This project involves six separate programmes with residents from Special Accommodation Houses in the Western Region. The programmes cover a range of art forms and are being conducted by artists Bernice McPherson, Nancy Lang, David Bridie, Jenny Taylor, Michael Mildren and Coleen Burke.

Community Linking Project

This exciting project is designed to connect people with disabilities in the community with existing community based arts activities. Originally run by David Bridie, artist Jennifer McCarthy is currently working on this project.

Music Video

This exciting project involves young intellectually disabled people in music workshops that will culminate in the production of a rock video. A group of young musicians from Geelong known as 'Big Bag Music' have been working with musicians David Bridie and Tim Cole in a studio, recording some of the group's music. In January, the group will put the music and the performance aspect together in a rock video clip.

Austin Hospital Artist in Residency

Following the success of the visual arts project held in the Oncology Ward of the Austin earlier this year, the hospital has provided advance funds to establish a long term artist-in-residency. Two artists have begun work at the hospital in areas including the Renal Unit and the Spinal Unit. A support committee has been set up at the hospital. Artist Sally Marsden is keeping in close touch with the project, as her work earlier in the year in the Oncology Ward played such an important role in paving the way for this residency.

Pleasant View Mural

This mural project is being run for the detoxification ward of the Pleasant View Drug and Alcohol Centre. Artist Frances Gubbay has been running the workshops for this 20 week project. The mural is due to be launched in mid-December.

If you would like more details on any of these projects, or information on the full range of Arts Access' yearly programme, contact Carey Lai, Project Officer at Arts Access on 699 8299.

Sharing success in Queensland

Drama artist Richard Benge, a well-known face at Arts Access for some years, has been spreading his wings through his involvement with Access Arts in Queensland.

Access Arts is run along similar lines to Arts Access and Richard has shared his wealth of experience with the organisation.

Richard's work for Access Arts has been as director of 'Come to the River, Mairwar', a large scale, outdoor performance project, involving many performers and is the largest project undertaken by Access Arts.

This successful project was the result of Access Arts' desire to support the community's growing concern for the environment. As a community arts project, it was designed to bring together people representing the diverse nature of Australian society.

The large numbers of performers involved included a number of disabled groups and individuals as well as groups from youth organisations, hospitals and primary schools.

'Come to the River Mairwar' was staged in a transformed car park with the

Brisbane River and Kangaroo Point cliffs as the spectacular backdrop.

While the project's success has helped Access Arts achieve a much more public face than it previously enjoyed, it goes much further than that.

As Richard so rightly says:

"I think it is highly significant that a combined group of disabled and able people should attempt to address the issues inherent in the continued journey of people on earth."

Now you can access the ACCESS studio

After 12 months of planning and renovations, Arts Access' new studio/exhibition space was launched last month by the Victorian Minister for the Arts, Mr Evan Walker.

The ACCESS studio, once a collection of ramshackle, unused store rooms at the back of Arts Access' offices, is now a fully accessible, multi-purpose space that will mean a big increase in activities within the building.

The official launch in early November included an exhibition of artworks from a variety of artists who have been associated with Arts Access over the years.

At the launch, Kate Brennan, Executive Director of Arts Access, described the many uses the studio will have during the coming months.

She told the guests:

"A fully accessible studio space such as this, close to the heart of the arts in Melbourne, will be an asset to the whole community.

"We are intending for the studio to really complement Arts Access' existing activities.

"The studio will primarily be available to groups and individuals in the areas in which we work, for exhibitions, rehearsals, workshops and small scale performances.



From left: Mr Evan Walker, Ms Kate Brennan, Ms Judy Morton and Mr Race Mathews at the launch of the ACCESS studio.

"The ACCESS studio will also play a vital role in Arts Access' increasing resource activities. Particularly in the last 12 months we have run workshops, seminars and information sessions to promote both the arts and access to the arts.

"It will be a pleasure to run many of these activities from our own home and I would like to say how excited I am that this space is now available."

The schedule of use for the studio will be decided by the following priorities:

- Use by individuals and groups within

Arts Access target groups for workshops, rehearsals or exhibitions.

- Use by Arts Access for information seminars and training workshops.
- Use by Arts Access artists for workshops, rehearsals and exhibitions.
- Available for hire for other community and arts groups for workshops, rehearsals and exhibitions.

If you are interested in using the ACCESS studio, contact Arts Access for details of availability and fees on 699 8299.

The Arts can work for everyone

Finally, after months of writing and re-writing, 'Making the Arts Work for Everyone' has been printed and is now readily available.

Produced by Arts Access, 'Making the Arts Work for Everyone' is a resource and information kit about arts and disabilities.

The kit is about creativity and every person's ability to be creative. The three booklets contained within the kit are designed to help you plan, resource, run and evaluate arts-based community projects.

The first booklet examines the attitudes and issues behind developing interests and skills in the arts.

The second booklet examines the different roles that people play in developing arts projects, particularly projects with people with disabilities.

The third booklet will help you get started by looking at the practical details of running a project. This booklet also contains information on the resources and contacts that are available in the community to help make your project a reality.

Whether you are an individual, a member of a self-help group, an advocate, a parent, a support-worker or a volunteer, this kit will prove invaluable in opening the doors to creativity for yourself and others.

'Making the Arts Work for Everyone' is available from Arts Access for:

Individuals/Organisations: \$15.00

Members/Concession: \$10.00

ARTS for HEALTH goes down-under!

"It can't be easy to be healed in a soul-less concrete box with characterless windows, inhospitable corridors and purely functional wards. The spirit needs healing as well as the body."

This was the view of HRH, The Prince of Wales on the value of arts in health care institutions and ARTS for HEALTH in the United Kingdom.

Peter Senior, Director of ARTS for HEALTH, completed a week's visit to Melbourne as a guest of Arts Access last month.

ARTS for HEALTH, located in Manchester, describes itself as an enabling organisation, assisting a variety of arts programmes to be set up in a wide range of healthcare situations.

Peter's experience in the field of arts and healthcare sees him well suited to his position of Director of ARTS for HEALTH. He has worked in this field for more than 15 years and was a member of the Attenborough Committee of Enquiry into Arts and Disabled People and the Carnegie Council, established to promote and monitor developments following the Attenborough Report.

Peter's week of seminars and lectures in Melbourne allowed many local artists, healthcare workers, arts officers and others to see what interesting work is being done in the UK in the area of arts and healthcare.

Peter's seminars included detailed discussions of the many arts projects he has been involved in throughout the UK. His discussions looked at issues such as funding, hospital management and hospital staff reactions to the many arts projects conducted within their hospitals.

One of the more interesting points Peter made during his discussions is the valuable and acknowledged positive effects the presence of the arts can have on people in healthcare settings.

Peter was impressed with many aspects of work done within Melbourne's communities, not least of all with the amount of enthusiasm among arts workers that seems to be so much a part of what is achieved.

Several artists wished there had been more time to spend with Peter to discuss in greater detail some of the ARTS for HEALTH arts projects outlined in the seminars.

The opportunity to share ideas and experiences is a valuable, two-way learning process and Peter said he learnt a great deal from his time in Melbourne. Arts Access, for its part, found his visit most rewarding and look forward to his being able to return in the future.

Join the Victorian Orchestra for the Disabled

The Victorian Orchestra for the Disabled is being established to provide disabled musicians with a focus for their musical endeavours.

It is hoped that the orchestra will be made up of instrumentalists of all ages and backgrounds, coming together to share a common interest and work towards a common goal.

It is envisaged that the orchestra will rehearse once a week, leading to a series of regular concerts and the establishment of a subscription series. If the musical standard of the orchestra permits, television appearances and other public performances may become part of the Orchestra's performance activities.

Auditions will be held in December of this year and January of 1990.

So, if you play an instrument yourself or know of someone who you think might be interested in this exciting project, telephone for more information regarding auditions or helping with the administration of the Victorian Orchestra for the Disabled.

Contact Numbers: Timothy Smith
534 8135
Dianne Marini
853 8192

Demand growing for Community Linking Project

The response from organisations and participants in the Western Suburbs to the Community Linking Project has been fantastic, according to co-ordinator Jennifer McCarthy.

She said the project, operating since April this year, is designed to assist people with disabilities to join community arts activities. To date, there have been numerous requests and demand is growing.

Jennifer, a visual artist experienced in the area of physical and intellectual disability, took over the role of co-ordinator from David Bridie whose touring commitments with the successful

Melbourne band, 'Not Drowning, Waving', made it impossible for him to continue.

In addition to responding to the many individual requests for arts activities, the project is able to instigate special workshops for particular areas of disability.

For example, a music workshop was established, in conjunction with Footscray Community Arts Centre, to provide for the needs of adults with multiple disabilities. The success of this project prompted those involved to offer another series of workshops, inviting adults with mild disabilities to join the existing group.

Another exciting outcome of the project has been a proposal to establish a permanent theatre group in the Western Region for people with intellectual disabilities. This theatre group will also operate from the Footscray Community Arts Centre.

It is intended that the establishment of such a group will create a valuable opportunity for participants to develop a form of theatre that will be relevant to their needs and disabilities.

If you would like more information on the Community Linking Project, contact Jennifer McCarthy at Arts Access any Thursday on 699 8299.

Arts Access Resource Centre

What forms of art can I use to express my creativity?

Are these available in my locality?

Who can tell me what's available in my area?

How do I become involved?

Answers to these types of questions are available through the Arts Access Resource Centre.

Many performing and visual arts programmes are available in the community. If you need assistance to find one best suited to your needs, the Resource Centre can help.

The Resource Centre has a network of contacts and an extensive collection of directories which are available for individual or group reference.

Inspiration is also at hand for those actively engaged in developing arts projects. All Arts Access projects are evaluated on completion and the artists' reports provide valuable references and practical information.

A sample of the references available include:

- An artist's report and slides of a textile project with patients and families in a hospital setting.

- An artist's report and video of a drama/performance project in a Community Health Centre.

- Slides, tapes and a video of a music project involving people with intellectual disabilities.

- Artist's report, slides and a published book of writings from a writing project with elderly people.
The Resource Centre now has over 50 catalogued sets of slides which, when viewed as visual support to the artists' reports, illustrate both the processes and products of Arts Access projects.

The slides are from a variety of programmes such as music, movement, drama, writing and visual arts projects and from a variety of settings.

This documentation of projects has provided information and inspiration to many people now participating in the arts.

You are welcome to use the Resource Centre to view these slides and reports or contact Arts Access if you have a specific area of interest which you would like to discuss.

For further information, contact the Resource Officer, Carol Downey, at Arts Access on 699 8299.

ARTS ACCESS SOCIETY INC

Arts Access Society is a non-profit organisation committed to providing access to the arts for people with disabilities or who are disadvantaged.

Executive Director: Kate Brennan
Development Officer: Judith Isherwood
Project Officer: Carey Lai
EASE Project Officer: Chris Milton
Resource Officer: Carol Downey
Finance Officer: John Paxinos
Office Administrator: Lorin Troderman
Office Assistant: Samantha Marsh
EASE Bookings Assistant: Barbara Milne

Volunteer Office Assistant: Suzanne O'Dwyer
EASE Volunteers: Hilary Ash

Donations of \$2 and over are tax-deductible.

Have you considered becoming a member of Arts Access? Join now and you will help us reach more people with more programmes.

Memberships range from \$10 for concessional membership, \$20 for single membership to \$45 for organisational membership and is tax deductible.

Members are kept up to date with the year's activities through the quarterly newsletter 'Access'. Members are also invited to participate by attending those programmes which culminate in a public performance or exhibition.

For more information, contact:

Arts Access Society Inc
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SOUTH MELBOURNE 3205

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ARTS ACCESS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Registered by Australia Post
Publication No. VAW7218

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