



*Led by musician, Neil McLaughlan (squatting right), Feast of Art participants explored percussion instruments and movement.*

## Oh What a Beautiful Feast of Art!

The third annual *Feast of Art* event was held at the Arts Access Studio on June 11. The Feast of Art is a day of celebration for participants in Arts Access artistic projects, featuring performances, displays of artwork, opportunities to contribute comments on Arts Access activities and ideas for future projects, and the traditional feast of refreshments. Among the 40 people in attendance were groups from Kew Cottages, ARBIAS, the North/West Creative Arts Program and members of the Sightless Visionaries.

Michael Norris' piano playing accompanied a sing-a-long of popular songs such as 'Oh What A Beautiful Morning' and 'Yellow Submarine,' warming-up everyone in preparation for the activities to come. Arts Access Program Manager, Bobbie Hodge showed slides outlining the diversity of recent Arts Access projects. Musician, Neil McLaughlan involved the group in musical performances using a collection of percussion instruments, many handmade by Neil.

Two dynamic dance performances followed – one from the North West Creative Arts Program, another from the Kew Cottages Dance Group. Each were enthralling and highly appreciated by Feast participants.

The planning and staging of the *Feast of Art* is an effective way for people with disabilities to be directly involved with Arts Access programs at a participatory level – through the planning committee, and through the feedback process. Its success relates to its capacity to create a highly enjoyable celebratory atmosphere, enhanced by the involvement of a wide range of groups with active artistic interests.

## Disability Anti-Discrimination Act

With the recent enactment of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 there is now a strong, Commonwealth driven incentive for Australians to eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities. A key aspect of the Act is its recognition of inaccessible buildings as a factor discriminating against many people in the community.

For many years Arts Access, has lobbied for improved access to entertainment, cultural and sporting venues, particularly through the advocacy work of the Entertainment Access Service (EASE). The Disability Discrimination Act is a welcome development, introducing a complaint process and the appointment to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission of a Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Hastings.

Arts Access will work to make venue managers aware of the terms of the Act and advise them on the best way to meet their obligations and provide the best access and facilities for people with disabilities.

The object of the Act is to eliminate as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the grounds of disability in the areas of work, accommodation, education, access to premises, goods, services and facilities, land, clubs and incorporated organisations, administration of Commonwealth laws and programs, and also covers harassment.

The Act includes 'disability standards', has the power to order enforcement through the Federal Court, but includes exemptions on the grounds of 'unjustifiable hardship'. This is a major initiative that requires all organisations to assess their provision of access. The full terms of the Act are too extensive to be reported here.

Copies of the full text of the Act, can be purchased for \$9.20 (includes an amendment) from the Australian Government Publishing Service, 347 Swanston St, Melbourne VIC 3000. Telephone (03) 663 3010. Postage is \$5.00 extra.

For information on the role of the Disability Discrimination Commissioner contact the Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission, 365 Collins St, Melbourne VIC 3000. Telephone (03) 602 3222.