

## Arts for all in local communities

In communities throughout New Zealand, people are making art, going to the theatre, visiting galleries, singing in choirs and taking dance classes. In fact, 2008 research<sup>1</sup> shows that 86% of us are involved in the arts, either as audience members or active participants.

For many people, it's easy to go to an arts event. They buy their tickets, drive to the venue, park the car and then go to a show with minimal planning or effort required. Disabled people, however, often have to overcome significant barriers to get to the venue, and then to engage fully with the arts experience on offer.

A book called *Arts For All: opening doors to disabled people* provides practical and long-term ways to increase access to the arts, market arts events to the disabled community and build new audiences.

Published by Creative New Zealand in partnership with Arts Access Aotearoa, *Arts For All* is aimed particularly at mainstream arts organisations, artists and venues. Complementing the book and its online resources, workshops will be held in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin in May this year, in partnership with local authorities.

So why are local authorities involved in the workshops? Marianne Taylor, Co-Executive Director of Arts Access Aotearoa, says local councils play a significant role in enhancing the lives of disabled people living in their communities.

"Everyone has the right to live a rich and fulfilling life. For many people that means engaging in the arts and creative expression," she says. "Doing the research for this book, we heard of numerous examples where local councils were doing good work in developing policies and providing access to the arts.

"In the writing phase, we worked with Wellington City Council's Disability Reference Group, and really valued their knowledge and feedback."

Auckland Art Gallery, City Gallery Wellington and the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in New Plymouth are all profiled in *Arts For All* because of their commitment to access. They are all funded by their local councils.

Hannah Leahy, Marketing and Audience Development Manager for the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, points out that one in six New Zealanders has experience of disability. Accessibility, therefore, has become an important issue for the gallery.

"We were actively involved in the development of New Plymouth District Council's disability strategy and we're committed to doing the best we can with

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<sup>1</sup> New Zealanders and the Arts: attitudes, attendance and participation in 2008, commissioned by Creative New Zealand

the resources we have," she says. "This guide is a fabulous resource. It's very practical with a lot of ideas to help arts organisations and venues make both immediate and long-term change."

**For more information and copies of *Arts For All*:**

To register your interest in attending a workshop, please contact Laura Armstrong, Community Development Manager (E: [community@artsaccess.org.nz](mailto:community@artsaccess.org.nz) T: 04 802 4356).

You can download a pdf of *Arts For All* [here](#).

An accessible Word document is available [here](#).

You can also [email](#) Arts Access Aotearoa and order a copy.

Arts Access Aotearoa's [website](#) contains checklists, guidelines, information sheets and other useful resources, complementing *Arts For All*.