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Arts Centre Melbourne

**Why Are We So Shit at Access in Australia
and What Are We Going to do About It?**

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Captioned by: Gail Kearney

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Welcome. It's very good to look out in the audience and realise you know so many people in the room. We are going to extend the conversation. Thank you all for coming and being for here and for those joining us online. We are being live streamed on YouTube which is very exciting. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Caroline Bowditch and I have the privilege of being the Cultural Equity Consultant currently with the Melbourne Fringe Festival. This is the fourth conversation in a series of conversations that I have been having over some months as part of the radical access program which I will tell you a bit more about in a little minute.

Tonight's conversation is kind of - I decided not to mince my words. Why are we so shit at access in Australia and what are we going to do about it? Nothing like stating the obvious really. I thought I would just cut to the chase. We've had other conversations previously about feedback called how do we tell them they're crap. The first one in the series was does access really make for better performance? So I wasn't mincing my words in the putting together of this program.

I've been working in collaboration with the fabulous Simon Abrahams who makes me braver and makes me ask bigger questions which I greatly appreciate, which is so great. Tonight I am joined by three incredible arts leaders who you will meet. I'm sure they are all known to you, I have no doubt about that. So I'm going to be joined by Wendy Martin, Morwenna Collett and Fayen d'Evie.

But I want to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the lands on which we meet. We are on the traditional owners of the Eastern Kulin nations, the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people and also acknowledge the neighbouring Boonwurrung and Bunurong people and pay respects to elders, past and present.

I've come from doing a beautiful exercise over at VCA led by my

lovely colleague Lauren Swain who is in the audience, which was asking us to do drawing exercise but connecting us to being present to what's around us. I want you to take a moment now for yourself to think about on your journey here, what might you have noticed in terms of something that you saw, something you heard, something you smelt that might be in the air, that might be about spring and the fact that we've just changed seasons. So just take a moment to just think about something that you noticed in the natural beautiful world around you that has been preserved for millennia for us to share in.

We were talking about wattle and the smell of wattle that's in the air that gives some people hayfever. Well, maybe it's not the wattle that gives the hayfever, it's other things come spring but there is lots of beautiful - definitely the air smells different at the moment.

We are in a disability-led and held space tonight. That means that we make the rules and the rules are that the doors will remain open at all times, you can come and go as you please. We are here because we are hardcore for 90 minutes. So, and we all know in this room, we can talk about this until the cows come home. 90 minutes isn't going to be hard in terms of conversation but might be hard in terms of concentration or sitting still. Please feel free to take breaks as you need, come and go, come back.

And also there is a quiet space that is back towards the lift and there will be front of house people who can direct you to the quiet space if you need it throughout tonight. But also I'm being live televised. The whole thing is being shown in the foyer. So if you would rather be in another space for part or all of tonight's conversation, you are very welcome to be in that space as well.

I am being joined by the fabulous Ilana and Gen who are Auslan interpreters. And we also have live captioning which is very exciting

given that we are in a world of automation and auto generation but we actually have real live people doing our captions. So thank you to our real live captioner who tonight is Gail Kearney. So thanks, Gail, for being with us and captioning us in all the ways.

What else do I want to tell you before we start? Let me tell you a bit about Radical Access and I'm sure some of you will know about the Radical Access program. But basically the Radical Access program, project, whatever you want to call it, imagines a radical version of best practice accessibility for the independent arts sector and moves the conversation beyond the provision of access or access services into a place of cultural equity, which is something for my disabled and allied colleagues in the room that often is something that is really hard to imagine.

But sometimes we can conjure it enough to think what would it be if there were no barriers for us engaging in the arts either as makers or as audience, as facilitators, as practitioners, whatever it might be. That's what Radical Access is wanting to get to. It's really a provocation for change and for any of you that know me, you know how much I love change and it's a call for accelerated access because we also know it can be glacial. We want to give it a little shove up the bottom to move it on, move it on faster! That's why we're here.

So in order to move us and to really open the conversation, I would love to invite my fellow colleagues to introduce themselves before we launch into very tricky - not tricky, but it's going to be a robust conversation, believe you me. We've had a briefing session all together and I was like, how long have we got for this conversation? Did you say a week, maybe four months! But we are going to try and get as much into 90 minutes as we can.

There will be a moment towards the end for you to ask questions of

us. Those people that are online, please add your questions to the comments under the YouTube link and one of my colleagues, the fabulous Millie, I think, is keeping an eye on them and will field them through to us in the space so we will get to questions through the end. I keep dangling the carrot. Without further ado I would like to invite Wendy Martin, Morwenna Collett and Fayen d'Evie to introduce yourselves. Wendy, could you introduce yourself.

WENDY MARTIN: Caroline, I'm totally honoured to be invited to participate on this panel with you three amazing people. I'm calling in from Gadigal country and honour their continuing connection to land and to culture. I'm a white woman with dark hair, dark eyes and a dark blue shirt and old enough to have earned the privilege of having a senior's card.

Behind me is, well, half of a beautiful artwork by a Torres Strait Islander artist, Susan Wanji Wanji and it's a dance ceremony and dance is something I absolutely love. When saw that painting compelled to have it in my life in my home.

So why am I here today? In 2011 I moved from Sydney to London and took up the position of Head of Performance and dance at the Southbank Centre in London. And week one on the job, I was given the extraordinary gift, I always say, of being asked to produce the Unlimited Festival which as it turned out was a great highlight of the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

But that invitation terrified me in many ways because I had never prior to that - my experience in Australia had been once in the mid 80s seeing the incredible work of the UK dance company Candoco and in the early 2000s seeing an incredible piece in Adelaide by Restless Dance Theatre with the phenomenal Dan Daw. I'm sure everyone will know who

that is - blew me away.

But given this invitation, what I really realise is there is so much I don't know that I have so much to learn. So I asked my boss Jude Kelly who was Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre at the time, if she would call a town hall meeting and invite artists and arts leaders from the disability arts sector into Southbank to talk about how we were going to do this with them. And essentially at that meeting I said to them, I don't even know what I don't know and I would love to be able to have a series of meetings with many of you, as many of you as possible, one-on-one, to understand what this festival is that you want and how it should be done and how you would like it to be.

I was then introduced to the extraordinary Caroline, the amazing Jenny Sealey, the incredible Jo Verrent, who is leading 12 years later now. I won't go on too much. It was an incredible festival. Morwenna was there, Caroline was one of the stars of it. But I suppose when I came back to Australia, I came back as Artistic Director of the Perth Festival.

And one of the strongest commitments I made straight up was to bring everything that I learned in London from the Unlimited experience and put disability and incredible artists at the heart of the Perth Festival program across the four years of my tenure. And I'm sure across the course of this conversation will have the opportunity to talk about some of the amazing artists and projects that came to the festival and I believe still has left a legacy across the country with their presence, both with audiences and other artists and other arts programmers. That's me.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Thanks, Wendy, that's brilliant. Morwenna I will ask you next, because you are next on our screen.

MORWENNA COLLETT: Thanks Caroline and Wendy. What a great intro.

So nice to be with you. I feel sad I'm not in the room with you. I bet there is lots of great people in the audience. For anyone I haven't met, my name is Morwenna Collet and I'm from Tasmania, on the lands of the Melaleuca people. Tasmania has a very complicated history with colonisation, dispossession and invasion. So very grateful to be on this incredible land tuning in with you today.

In terms of a description of myself, I'm sitting in a hotel room wearing all black today with love heart earrings and black glasses. I've got some light coming in from the windows, it's nice to have natural light in the room with me. And I'm a proud disabled woman and the carer of a neuro divergent little person.

I am a musician originally but disability kind of changed the course of my career. I was a classical musician 25 years ago and lived with a particular impairment which affects my fine motor skills. That sort of gave me my sojourn into arts management and had a long career working since with arts funding agencies.

And for the last five years or so I've been running a consultancy practice specialising in accessibility, diversity, equity and inclusion - lots of big words - getting global attention and chitchat at the moment. And I mostly work with arts and culture organisations because we are the most fun, quite frankly.

This conversation tonight about are we shit and why and what are we going to do about it, I've built a business, in a way, on the fact that we are a bit shit but we are wanting to do better and are starting to do a lot better. Yeah, really excited to see where the conversation goes tonight and looking forward to getting into it. So thank you. That's me and I might flick over to Fayen.

FAYEN D'EVIE: Greetings all and yes, I did receive an alert from

Instagram that Carly Findlay has shared a photo of us all. Great to know you are there. Feel free to others, if you tag us, we might know that you are there too. My name is Fayen d'Evie. I'm joining you from the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Kulin nation. I live near the flying fox colony and in my zoom picture I have a Magnolia tree from downstairs where I live at the former Kew lunatic asylum which is important in terms of the project. I have dressed up including a necklace by Debris Facility in a great effort to overcome my current illness. Excuse me if my voice goes a little during this conversation.

To give a quick intro, I'm an artist, I'm an access advocate and researcher. I've worked for the past decade in access-led and access-infused creative practice, mainly in contemporary art galleries and museums with you in other cultural settings as well. And mostly internationally because those of us who work in the space know, there is a lot of great conversations going on with international collaborators.

The kind of work I do now has come to me through my degenerative vision and my moments within blindness and approaching blindness. I work more broadly than that and particularly interested in intersensory conversations between those amongst of us who experience variation. I had the privilege of being awarded the Fringe Radical Access Commission in 2023 and was an experimental disability-led choreographic extravaganza translating an episode of Star Trek through experimental movement languages that came from disability. It was presented at chunky move and won a green room award for designer technical excellence. We were award are for outstanding and won two awards for innovation and dance.

It was an utterly thrilling opportunity but also it was incredibly frustrating because of the numbers of barriers to access that I faced an exhausting fight to what I wanted to be truly radical. That has led to the

co-founding of the Access lab and library and hopefully I will get to talk about that more tonight.

In the brief it reflects the hope that access can be more widely embraced, it can be more ex-of ambitiously experimental and more generous in sharing methods, tools and cases with one another so beyond those of us who are committed to and excited about this work more broadly, access can become something people are excited about. Thanks everybody.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Thanks, Fayen. The really interesting thing - this conversation - because it's the last conversation of the series, this was supposed to be the in-person one but it's fascinating to me that I've ended up in conversation with three people on a screen. So it's consistent with the whole series but I feel very much all of your embraces with me in the room even though you are on a screen.

Thanks for the beautiful introductions. I'm sure you will all agree with me that this is a star-studded line-up. So we are in for a good one, folks. I wanted to just start us off with a very simple question, just to begin, and that is are we actually shit at access in Australia? And if so, why do you think that? What makes us shit. But I thought it was time to release the elephant into the room and just start where we mean to go on.

So whoever wants to begin that? Fayen, I might ask you to start first because you were actively working obviously in this space. I also really love the concept of access infused performance. How beautiful is that as a concept? We could just be infused by this. It's amazing. I will stop talking. Fayen, are we shit at access?

FAYEN D'EVIE: Well, I think that the examples which I will refer people to

again of the playlist of the conversations you have had before, they show that there are beyond wonderful institutions that have not been shit at access. In the contemporary moment across the board, yes. I think that this is an exciting opportunity for me to be in conversation with you because I think that it's time we really get to grips with what's a going on here. There are those of us who are doing the exciting work, we know how revolutionary it is, we know it liberates people's thinking and perception so you don't have a narrow reading of what a cultural work is.

Yet we are continually facing these institutions where we are struggling to compromise, to get our work in there or just facing a lack of interest and a lack of imagination and ambition from people. We are facing situations where they compartmentalise access and I want to call out tonight situations where even here with Melbourne Fringe and the notion of access and inclusive design.

I was supposed to talk at another panel tomorrow night which is another Fringe event about inclusive design because I can't because they don't offer a video feed. They only offer in-person. Here is an example where we are getting compartmentalised in the disability event has all these wonderful accommodations. Why is it not across the board?

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Yes. Really interesting. Morwenna, you have a bit of a different perspective on this because in our briefing you talked about that maybe we are not globally shit at it but maybe there's bits that are really excellent and I wonder if you could talk to that?

MORWENNA COLLETT: Yes. Thanks, Caroline. I've been doing this interesting project with UNESCO actually and looking at disability inclusion and culture internationally. So I would say that, you know, often we feel the grass is greener and everything is better somewhere else. But having

had a look at a range of different countries now, I think we are a bit shit but we are certainly not as shit as perhaps some other places, to put it not politely.

But I also don't think it's the arts' fault. I think it's part of bigger issues around disability in Australia and I think this is where this all comes from. I think, you know, part of why we've gotten our receive into this predicament, things like the social model is still not something that we actively particularly use here, particularly when we look at things like the NDIS and how medicalised a lot of conversation around disabilities. I also think our laws here haven't done us any particular favours. They are not as strong as in some other places.

It was really interesting, you know, to be in the UK earlier in the year working with Glastonbury in a place which has had stronger laws, but also laws aren't everything. What really struck me about working with Glastonbury, they've been doing access since before the Equalities Act in the UK.

While I say the law might be part of the problem here, it's not a kind of get out of jail free card. And I think when it comes to the arts, something perhaps that I think also maybe hasn't helped us here as much as perhaps in other places is that we haven't had particularly high expectations around this from some of our major funders. When you look at the subsidised sector, our funding bodies haven't mandated, haven't asked for a long time about access.

When you think about carrots and sticks, I'm a fan of a stick every now and again, because you have to move forward if there's a stick behind you, in a way. So, yeah, I think a bit shit but I have hope because I'm an optimist and it can be worse, I think. I will leave it there.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Yeah, somewhere in the middle. Wendy, I'm

wondering for you coming back to Australia, having had that experience in the UK and you came into the director at Perth Festival, did you meet with resistance? Were you shocked that when you were wanting to bring someone amazing like Claire Cunningham into the country to show her work, was there resistance or questions about why are we doing this or are you sure?

WENDY MARTIN: I remember when I first introduced the idea - I wanted to have an artist in residence each year of my four-year tenure. And with each of those artists, I wanted them to show audiences and other artists other ways of thinking of being an artist, of doing things. And for me in the UK, Clare was one of the great artists and the great advocates. And when she was making a work, Claire Cunningham for those who don't know is an incredible Scottish performance maker who her life is lived on crutches.

When I was describing Claire and her art at meetings to potential funders and philanthropists, et cetera, people seemed uncertain that the idea of having a solo dancer who navigates the world with crutches, doing two performances across the course of the month and inviting other artists from across the country to do a workshop with her, I did get some raised eyebrows.

But once Claire Cunningham landed on Australian soil, she took only minutes to change everybody's perceptions. And when we're talking about are we shit at access, Claire's show, the first show she presented was called Guide Gods. Guide Gods was a response to a British Council trip Claire took to Cambodia. Cambodia has the highest number of people per capita living with disabilities.

Claire interviewed a Buddhist monk who was a double amputee. He looked at Claire and he said, "You and I, we are being punished for

something we've done wrong in a past life." Of course this absolutely riled Claire. But it spurred on this beyond piece of work that she created called Guide Gods. Guide Gods was an exploration into the different religions Claire faced in Glasgow and she talked to people from different religions.

One of the brilliant things she did in her artwork, she had cups of tea with people as she interviewed them about their perspectives. And as she performed this week, there was an audio description of what she was doing but actually the audio description was like the voice of God seeing and listening to what Claire was doing and describing it for the audience. She led workshops. She was all over ABC TV and ABC Radio. She was a page 3 pin-up girl in a Murdoch-owned Western Australian newspaper.

The last day of the festival I took her out to lunch in North Perth to a wonderful cafe that's on the street. I didn't get to talk to Claire because she had so charmed the audiences and even people who only saw her on TV or who only read about her, wanted to talk to her. And that changed so many people's understanding and perception and it set the tone for this fantastic four-year journey of discovery into the world of disability arts in WA.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Thanks, Wendy. We are somewhere in the middle. We're not completely shit but we're not great. So we've got things to do. Fayen, you've already mentioned some of the things that there has been three conversations prior to this one. And how many people - I'm going to ask for a show of hands - has anyone watched or engaged with any of the conversations, the three in advance of this coming tonight? Yep, there is a couple of people. Brilliant. If you haven't, I encourage you to go and have a look at them, have an engage with them.

I'm wondering for our three panellists whether there were things in those conversations that really stood out to you, whether they were

things that affirmed you, whether they were things that surprised you, shifted or strengthened your thinking? Morwenna, I wonder if you want to start this one off?

MORWENNA COLLETT: Thank you. You had such a great line-up for those conversations, like what an amazing bunch of people. You know, some familiar and some not familiar to me. So it's always good to hear from a wide variety of people. The one that kind of stuck in my memory was the conversation around feedback with Michelle and Jo Verrent.

It was talking about how and when and why we give disability artists feedback. Obviously feedback is really important in terms of helping us improve and make better work. It made me think about a couple of things. One is, I think, one of the challenges that we have here in Australia is that it can be really difficult to see each other's work. We are such a big country and we don't always get an opportunity to see the work of other disabled artists that often.

We've got great things happening like under cover artists festival and under stayed but other than that, I remember coming to my first Unlimited with Wendy and Caroline in 2014 and I could see more work by disabled artists in a week, than I would see in a year because of the tyranny of distance. So that's interesting. In terms of how we get better at seeing each other as work is part of that process.

It made me think about feedback from others and there was this ridiculous review from Opera Queensland's La Boheme maybe a week or two ago, I don't know if anyone saw that he got a one star review because the reviewers got fixated by the fact there was an Auslan interpreter on the stage alleged they couldn't understand why there would be an Auslan interpreter at the opera. I thought gosh, you know, that is still a thing here and how do any of us get decent critique and criticism when even

our reviewers aren't educated and, you know, I gave that review zero stars, of course.

It highlighted to me how difficult actually it is to get feedback in lots of ways and particularly, you know, critiquing criticism from mainstream reviewer types. That interesting and I think we've known for a while there is a piece of work to do there. I was kind of shocked in 2025 that that happened still. I kind of thought we were past that. But no. But I think that conversation around feedback is a really important one to keep having and we'll continue to have for a while yet.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Thanks, Morwenna.

FAYEN D'EVIE: Is it possible for you to read out a couple of quotes from Robert Gale. I would love to respond to those.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Robert Softly Gale who is the artist director of Birds of Paradise which is disability-led theatre based in Glasgow said, "If you have got a budget line for catering but you haven't got a budget line for access, then you are saying that food is more important than disabled people. That's what you're saying. That's what you're saying and whether it's what you mean to say, maybe it's not. But that is what you're saying. I can't think of any other group where we said you can't come because you cost too much. Any other group in society, if we think that women can't come, it costs too much to have them there or black people can't come because it costs too much, like, that would be outrageous. We just wouldn't. We wouldn't accept that and we should never. So why is the finance argument okay when it comes to disabled people? We are in a world where there's plenty of money, you know. There's not a lack of resource in this world so it's about where you put it, you know."

FAYEN D'EVIE: Thanks, Caroline, for reading that. Because when I was listening to those talks which were so fantastic, it struck me that this is the crucial issue and that is the extent to which our contemporary system, the arts institutions, the attitudes that we encounter and reviewers and other people are built on colonial eugenic logistics and colonial responses about whose bodies are economically valuable.

I've done some extensive research particularly within Victoria, the beginnings of the institutional landscape here and the cultural institutions. One of the things that happened here was in colony of Victoria you had this network of public organisations that they deliberately established to foster what they called an informed citizenry, things like the National Gallery, the library, the museum, they had an industrial technology logical museum, the Botanical Gardens and zoological gardens and they called this the institution.

The institution was legislated as reinforcing tools of civic culture. What they wanted was to develop what they called a self-managing and self-directed public who would absorb codes of behaviour and aesthetic and technical excellence and devote their leisure time to self-educate so they could contribute to the settler colonies cultural development. Melbourne was the most successful example of a citizenry who would go out and self-educate themselves about these types of behaviours.

The ideals of the productive citizen were enmeshed with eugenics and other marginalised people were sidelined off into places like the lunatic asylum and other asylums and we were not considered acceptable bodies to educate or entertain.

So the problem is our contemporary culture sometimes does not realise the extent to which they are continuing and proliferating these codes of behaviour. We've got these big institutions that are still made for

an ideal body. Either they are not accessible to us or people haven't retrofitted them. You have got ingrained codes of behaviour that say yes, it's too expensive to do access or we will do access because it's about disability but I'm not going to do it across all of the programming. Or we will do access one touch tour at 2pm on a Tuesday afternoon when I can't go because my son's got basketball. If I don't go to that one, I don't get the audio description or touch tour.

The entire exhibition season that includes a blind performer. Apparently radical experimental, top of the line, cultural institutions are reinventing as eugenics logics and we have to understand that and transform it. I took great inspiration from Aboriginal leaders at the sovereignty protest who said everyone is welcome. The problem at the moment with our cultural institutions is not everyone is welcome. White able-bodied people are welcome. Unless we can transform that, we cannot move on from access being harsh or compartmentalised and, you know, something that you do when you've got enough money.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Thanks, Fayen. You are allowed to clap. Can you hear clapping? There is clapping, Fayen for what you said. I don't know if you want to add anything, if there was something...

WENDY MARTIN: There is two things that come to mind. Thank you Fayen for that fantastic articulate framework that you have given us. Something struck me when Morwenna was talking. I wonder if that person who wrote that review had considered that for years and years and years every opera that they had gone to see performed in Italian or French or German was translated into English so that she could understand that. I think it would be a very nice thing if somebody pointed out that out.

You might want to write to her and point that out. This is thoughtless, right, not understanding her own context. But I mean what Fayen has said about institutions, I suppose I just want to give the example of Southbank Centre, that when Southbank Centre was invited to put this festival on, Southbank Centre is a brutalist, concrete 21-acre site on the Thames that was built before accessibility - people were still living with a medical model of disability.

And so for Southbank Centre to be able to host this incredible festival, it had to take a long hard deep look inside. Every single doorway to every bathroom, every single door to every venue, every cafe in that building had to be reassessed. The whole staff had to undergo training.

When the Olympics and Paralympics were on, there were welcome teams all over London. As a result of what we learned, this learning transformed to the welcome teams across the city which was - the Southbank Centre sits between Waterloo Station and West End and Charing Cross. People who cross that site get lost and hosts at the Southbank Centre would be used to saying to people, you are looking for the Queen Elizabeth Hall and they would point, it's over there. What all of us had to learn is that you this - maybe I'm getting this wrong, but the Queen Elizabeth Hall is about 50m to your right and there is a doorway that you need to go through, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. So there is a whole series of understandings.

The website had to be completely overhauled. The programs that we used, the whole site had - we did the best job that we could in the time but the organisation and the Arts Council of England committed to that investment. Because how embarrassing would it have been to have invited the world in but not really to enable the world to walk through those doors. It was an incredible example of taking this responsibility as an organisation really seriously.

But, of course, the conversations were all led by people with lived experience of a disability. It wasn't for the organisation to scratch their heads and work it out. It was to invite the people who had the lived experience to tell us what we needed to do to make this festival genuinely welcoming.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: The great thing is they were paid to do that. It wasn't can you come and tell us what it was like, we will pay you to join the conversation which is crucial. I just want to tell a slight aside about being in London when the Olympics and Paralympics were on. I was on a bus somewhere in London and this little kid was eyeing me up and at one point they just kind of lent to their mum and said, "Can I ask a question?" And she said "sure". This little kid went what sport do you play? And I just went I'm really sorry, I'm just an artist. And they went, "Oh okay", and went away. I wasn't quite good enough that day.

I think we've talked about so many things. We've talked about the baked- of ableism. We've talked about how some laws attempt to address that and have addressed that in other parts of the world but it's still not perfect. We know that in this country our DDA has undergone or is undergoing a review so it will be really interesting to see what comes out of that and whether it comes back with any more teeth than it currently has. We can all keep our fingers cross bad that.

I have a million other quotes from people from those conversations but I won't go into them because I think there is something about - I want to just ask the three of you, I recently had the privilege of having a conversation with the beautiful Dan Daw who some of you will know. And in that he shared with me a quote that everything could be different. And my beautiful partner Laura made me badges of that. I wear them proudly in the world going it doesn't have to be like this, you know. Everything

could be different.

So what do the three of you think we need to do or what needs to change in our artistic landscape for us to be able to embed access as a natural, expected part of artistic practice in Australia? There will be just a few things I'm sure. But what does that make you think about? And how, Fayen, when it's baked in so family to literally the bricks and mortar, what do we do?

FAYEN D'EVIE: Well, let me start there then. Because luckily as frustrated as I get, I'm also equally absolutely excited about the possibilities. Firstly, sometimes organisations come to me and they want me to write image descriptions for all of these art works. I say you could pay me five hundred, I will teach your staff to write image descriptions, we will do it in a way where they love this writing practice and an ongoing basis you don't need consult amounts in. I've been thinking about that since I pitched that. I was thinking about the ways you can actually embed access into organisations in a way people will get to love it and the way that we get to experience that.

So imagine that you could introduce these like three or six-week blocks, 30 minutes in the morning and it's effectively also like a bring you together time, a grounding time so like from 9 to 9.30 in the morning, gallery staff would come together and experiment with a different kind of image description practice. This could be a meditative approach or it could be learning how to co-author, co-write. They could be describing imagery important to the nature or mission of that place. A theatre could be describing together the imagery been used to profile an upcoming work, like what's important about this.

I think similarly you could have a six-week block where each morning for an hour, people learn basic Auslan and then you flip out

something else and come back to the next layer of Auslan. Auslan is not just about having a sign interpreter on the stage but it becomes part of our casual and playful conversations.

I want to shout out now Arts House, I'm on the warehouse residency at Arts House. They together with also Creative Australia have resourced me to gather together this incredible group of disability-led artists, writers, architects, sound artists from around the world to just really experiment with what it can be to have a blind architect developing a tactile stage, to have spatialised captions that is performative, to have all kinds of methods and practices. So we do need resourcing to be able to dream big and play and to be able to invite others in and because we are resourced, to be able to be generous and sharing our methods to others from within and outside the access community so people get to see this is not just some boring compliance but actually joyful and playful.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Yeah, we are coming back to that, Fayen. I want to know how do we implement that broadly. Other thoughts on how do we change it? How do we change the landscape? Wendy.

WENDY MARTIN: Caroline, I want to turn this on you for a second. Because of the one magnificent and joyous experiences that I have ever had in a theatre was the project that you worked on with the British Paraorchestra and six or eight dancers called the nature of why. If you want to explain the work, I would love to hear, it was so accessible and it was just built into every moment in the theatre. I wonder if you can tell people a little bit about that work and how your process began to make that work the joyous thing it was for everybody. And the levelling that it did for everybody, that it gave everybody.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Sure. So in 2018 I came back to Australia to take up the job at arts access but before I could leave the UK I was commissioned to make this work as co-director and choreographer with British power orchestra called the nature of why. It was composed by - we were working with Will Gregory who is part of Gold Fratt and I was working with 10 musicians, four dancers. Everywhere we took the work we would inherit a string ensemble who would join us while we were there. Every performance had interpretation, live audio description and captioning.

There were no seats. So it was - you need to imagine lots of musicians, lots of musical instruments including things like Marimba and a whole percussion section and all these things. On stage as well as 200 audience members, no seats, there are a few seats around for people that needed them. But I wanted every performance was obviously relaxed. Because people were encouraged to move around and the dancers and the musicians moved in and around people.

And it became this completely immersive thing that we had no idea if it was going to work. I arrived to a group of musicians that were sitting in a U-shape like orchestras do and kind of went, great, I need to make them dance. This is going to be good! Four dancers who also played instruments throughout the show at various points. But it just became this incredible magic that just happened.

Yeah, it was a lovely thing. And I would say that the reason - we honestly didn't know if it was going to work until we had an audience in. So we didn't really know until the opening night. Lucky for me people came on the journey with us and it did work. Carle didn't know that I had necessarily made that but when we were having a conversation one day about what is the most accessible piece of work you have ever seen. She said I saw this amazing thing at Perth Festival, some orchestra. I went,

"Oh, that's nice. That's really lovely." I think that the reason that it worked was because I just asked the question.

So I worked with audio describers in the room while I was making the work. So they knew the language I was using. They knew how I was describing types of movement so they were able to weave that in. We tried different versions of audio description and the description that worked best were words but very poetic words rather than we were trying another type which was about sound.

But because there was already so much sound - all the musicians led the touch tour. I witnessed this beautiful moment with one of the blind musicians talking to a blind audience member who kind of before he started his description, just went, "Do colours mean things to you? Do you want me to talk about light? What do you actually need from me or what is useful for me to say?" I was like, that is incredibly nuanced and a beautiful thing.

So that's one of the proudest moments of making that work and we did bring it to Perth Festival and it was amazing. But we also took it - it was at Unlimited and Wendy saw it and had immediately afterwards said, "I need that in Perth." I said, "Okay, talk to Jonathan." He was the producer, I wasn't doing anything with it. It was a very exciting and beautiful thing to have made. And we are about to remount it in Hong Kong, so next March it's going to Hong Kong. Is that enough Wendy?

WENDY MARTIN: Sorry to put you on the spot like that. I want to add one more thing, we were all smooshed on that stage together and there was a sense of care. Everybody became mindful of everybody else in the way they moved. A wonderful sense of care that I rarely experienced in a theatre.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Yeah, it was fun. I think the thing that I love about it is that when people say you can't have all that access all at the same time. It's kind of like, really? Actually, I don't believe that. I have evidence that tells me otherwise. Shall I show you how you can do it? And I think that's what Feyen is so good at doing too going you can and it can be really interesting and really great, it's possible. You just have to put the effort in and want to do it and you have to have a budget. Imagine that. Crazy. Feyen.

FAYEN D'EVIE: I was reading this afternoon some writing by Humberto Echo about the poetics of the open work. He was talking about visual art. He described a viewer who can choose their own points of view, connections and directions and who can detect behind each individual configuration other possible forms that co-exist, who is excited by the new freedom of the work by its infinite potential for proliferation and exchange rich and unforeseeable discoveries.

When you were describing your work then, it reminds me of that so much, the ways that access can dramatically liberate the abundance of ways some of us, any of us, shall all of us can express the work and the way we experience the work. I think your question is how do we actually get these kinds of change. I guess we have to be smart about what are the lever points.

You know, to continue this kind of goal that I had today of actually being, to go with what you said with the provocation and being honest and speaking out is that Morwenna and I were recently involved in a funding body who had invited disabled artists to be part of something. I went, you know at great home expense, I'm a single mother with my son, and went up to this event.

Not a single presenter knew anything about image description. And

so I said after the event that that was a failing of the organisation, major national funding organisation that they would invite disabled artists and know they had a number of blind artists coming in and not a single presenter had image description. I said you should make it one of the requirements of you actually hiring your consultants and presenters that they need to identify what their methodology and approach is in relation to a number of access points.

They said back to me, "We can't do that because there aren't enough people who have experience in that." That is the major failing. Until you say it is that important, these places will fund people like us to show them it's exciting and not scary and you can do image description and it's not some big expense. We have to look with each situation and go why is it not happening, what are the excuses and where can we shift the requirements so that actually people start to take this as something that is a part of their work.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Absolutely. And I think it goes back to Morwenna's point about the carrot and the stick. And maybe that's the stick that we need to be wielding. Morwenna, did you want to add anything in?

MORWENNA COLLETT: Very pro stick over here, absolutely. I love a stick. We shouldn't be afraid to use a stick more in this country, absolutely. You know, just as an example, to get national portfolio organisation multi-year funding in the UK, you have to submit a plan to get that funding. There is lot of things in the EDI bucket, but that's something. We just don't have very high expectations from our funding bodies at the moment. So that's one thing.

I love the point from Fayen and Wendy about fun and joy and how

important that is. I would add into the mix as well something that I think we should talk about more which is the business case for access. There are so many things on the to-do list, especially for small to medium arts organisations, there a never-ending list of things to do, there is very much limited budgets, et cetera.

I just think access isn't going to get to the top of the pile unless we talk about the economic potential of providing access as well. And in the UK they do a good job of measuring things like the purple pound which is the spending power of disabled households in the UK which is something like £2.5 billion annually. What that does, it helps break that perception that disability people don't have money to buy tickets to go and see your shows.

Yes, we know there is a big crossover with disability and lower socioeconomic access, of course. But there is also, I believe, a strong business case from an economic standpoint for access as well. And I wish that was something that we talked about more.

One of the other actions we need to take is just invest in more high-quality work and the funding program that Wendy is running now I'm excited about because it is about big investment in major work. Because I think maybe something we haven't touched on yet is just this perception that is always lurking about our sector of the quality not being there which of course we all know is not true.

But when I think back to - I think I've been going to Unlimited for 10 years now and in 10 years I think I've seen two Australian programmers there. One of them is on this call and that's not okay. You know, that is the place to go and see, you know, the top echelon of deaf and disabled work. For whatever reason, our programmers aren't seeing it as important to be there and see that work and I think that's also. One action I would take is to send them all there or to any of the other

international festivals that program this work well because we have to do the business case thing but we have to tackle the perception of lower quality front on as well.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Absolutely. I think I always describe Unlimited as disabled artists on a silver platter. There we are. There is no shortage of disabled artists producing amazing work at Unlimited. I think there is ones closer to home. For example, No Limits in Hong Kong. If people can't make it all the way to London, it's a direct flight to Hong Kong and that festival runs every two years. So there is really exciting things happening in Asia. Really exciting things happening.

FAYEN D'EVIE: How about somebody out there fund us to develop some accessible case studies that are produced in really exciting ways of historic works that have been fantastic, contemporary artists who are doing great work, work within Australia. I'm happy to go to Asia with you. Let's grow to Asia and then we find ways of getting these stories out in exciting ways that is not buried in some report but we are putting them out there. We have some sort of various YouTube channels, social media, whatever.

But getting the methods, we are not just getting "here is this amazing show" but drilling into how did they do it, how cow do it, how could it be translated or interpreted at different budget levels for different audiences. If we are here and going to make some change, here is a pitch.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: I think it's great, absolutely. Come to Hong Kong with us. That would be amazing. I think it is the moment to get to solutions and what do we do next before we get to questions. I hope you

have got your questions brewing. I'm going to encourage you to chat to the person next to you to come up with some in a minute. What are the kind of ideas, things that we could do. FAYEN you have no shortage of them which is delicious. But are there other things that we could be doing?

Initially I had this thought if we could start again. It's not about that. It's about how do we move from where we are now to where we want to get to? I just want you to conjure a thought with me. When I asked myself and other friends of mine, I've asked this question of, if you can imagine Radical Access, what does that look like or what is that for you?

Actually, I think it might have been Robert that said, "I would want to be able to just buy a ticket and turn up and not have to make another phone call, not have to go to a special bit of the website, not have to search for the access information." For anyone to know that I could turn up and every performance would be audio described and I could just wander through and pick up a head set and not have to pre-warn anyone of my presence. Wouldn't that be amazing if we didn't have to send out the bells and whistled before we get there. Watch out, disabled person coming, argh. What could we be doing?

FAYEN D'EVIE: Can I offer one more suggestion and I will be quiet. It came to me because I was thinking again about what Wendy said about the festival and the issues of the brutalist building, et cetera. We have had a pavilion. What if there was every year - I'm working for example with a blind architect at the moment on this tactile stage. But what about if every year there is a disabled architect and performers paired up to create some staging pavilion that is programmed with exciting performance that are access led and access enthused. Some performers

who are not disabled but excited about access. It happens every Summer, if these temporary structures so we are not stuck with retrofitting.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: That would be amazing. Let's do that.

WENDY MARTIN: I think you need to propose that, Fayen. Serpentine in London, all eyes are on that from all over the world. We propose Caroline, could you organise Fayen and did you say Poppy?

FAYEN D'EVIE: What other ideas. Why don't we get all of these ideas out there and see where they might land or fly.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: I'm grateful that this conversation is being recorded because I'm going to need back and write them all down and work out where they all go. Morwenna, you've done vast research and are engaging with a million organisations. What do you think are the major opportunities that people are constantly missing or what we could conjure?

MORWENNA COLLETT: So many, aren't there? What Robert said, isn't it wild that that's radical and that feels so radical to me right now because it feels so far away from where we are that when you say it, it's so ordinary. I guess that's the whole thing of this Radical Access conversation really.

I think the biggest change happens when there is more of us metaphorically, physically, whatever in the building in organisations, in positions of power, in decision-making roles. We do have a lot of research out there and there is at love research to get depressed about. My favourite piece of research to get depressed about is it's only 3 per cent of cultural leaders are disabled and that feels to me like a real

opportunity.

Caroline can't be on every board. She is trying but there are many of us. I think infiltrating organisations and just more of us, I think that's where change will happen because we have to be in the building, as it were, to make that change happen.

I worked at what was then the Australia Council for years and years. It took like 10 years but it was just me banging on the door for years and years and years to get things like that dedicated funding program happening. And while it's got pluses and minuses, it's more money for disabled artists that I think just more of us infiltrating.

FAYEN D'EVIE: Don't you think the problem with that, we get expected to spend all this time advocating to make the work we wish we were making in the first place and less time. On top of that, I'm not denying that would be great, but it would also be great to have more allies out there doing the work so we don't need to be in those positions because we can make the work themselves.

MORWENNA COLLETT: Would love allied too, Fayen, of course. More of us all round. I think from what I've seen, I think that's where change happens. It's when people are face to face to disability people, they have to listen to us. All of the above, I reckon.

WENDY MARTIN: I think artists in the UK, one of the things that I learned was the role that artists play in showing Governments that the world that they could not navigate the world. So you had people who were wheelchair users who couldn't get on a bus to navigate the cities that they live in. And eventually the kind of public demonstration on the streets or the inability to enter a building, through artists doing

interventions in public spaces, it became clear that something had to be done. I think the artist voice in all of this is really important, not just the people leading organisations but the work that artists are making that can show us the change that needs to be made.

Fayen, when we talked last night, the work that Jenny Sealey and Robert were talking about, Wendy, it would be fantastic to get a library together of work that have magnificent access embedded into them. And for people just to see that work, you know, a kind of library for people to access, to understand how great art can be made using accessibility as a tool of artistic expression.

FAYEN D'EVIE: That would be the dream that we can do that. At the moment the majority of the time is volunteered and squeezed in between earning money here and doing art projects here. That is the plan and the dream. But it comes back to resourcing. Keep putting ideas out there.

If people will resource us to do this work, we are committed to sharing these examples. I mean to getting them out there. I think that would be so exciting to feel the energy around that. You could then also bring it in across education formal and non-formal levels. Both within dedicated arts programs and in mainstream areas. There is so much you could do and if there is a way that we cannot do this library as volunteer effort but actually be developing some really rich and exciting case studies, that would go a really long way.

I do have to bring this back to something else and it reminds me because Wendy you talked about Cambodia and the disability and the percentage of disability. I feel like I need to say that we are in this time in this history, we have the genocide in Gaza which I suspect is now taking over from Cambodia in terms of the greatest proportion of disabled. We have many other situations of violence around the world and we have

COVID of course which hasn't gone away.

There are these mass disabling events going on. It means it's more imperative we don't allow there to be a smaller and smaller pool of able bodied people who are accessing and getting this funding for these very discrete institutions and instead we can be - not just ambitious but we can be serious and committed about expanding access to art making and the arts. The majority of us who are actually in these situations of either being disabled or having a disabled family member or being future disabled.

I think we need to do this as an imperative within society culturally. As a result we have to be careful not to silo disability away from other kinds of concerns like, you know, language groups, cultural groups and others who have been marginalised. Usually there is this intersection on of cross marginalisation that is happening. It's just a clarion call for there to be more access and not just on the perhaps that are labelled Radical Access.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Morwenna, you have your hand up I can see?

MORWENNA COLLETT: I was thinking about the situations like case studies and just to maybe finish on optimism before we move to questions, but a couple of things I'm kind of excited about or hopeful about around this particular moment in time in Australia, obviously we've got this equity arts and disability associated, the first time we've had a plan like this with money attached, 8.1 million. Would have been lovely to see another zero on the end but it's awesome.

On the case study thing, just to let everyone know, one of the things that is one of the first deliverables out of this plan will be a new national code of practice around accessible for the arts, screen and games

sector that. Is not just for disabled artists and arts organisations it's for all disabled artists and arts organisations. Hopefully it will set national minimum standards for us in this field which I'm excited about especially if there is a few sticks flying about that might help people sign up to it and get into it.

Of course, you know, I was in Brisbane last week and you can't go to Brisbane without talking about the Olympics right now. When I think about what that did for the UK, I'm really excited about what 2032 might do for us here if all the right ingredients line up to make that happen. That could be an incredible opportunity for us to hopefully with some real investment behind us. They are two things I think I'm excited about that might lead us into action in the future as well.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: I too am excited about the Olympics. Because I have seen, felt, witnessed what it did in the UK and I think if it can be do anything like that here, that would be amazing. Amazing. Okay. We are going to turn the camera and the microphones towards the audience, the fabulous audience. I would like you to just turn to the person sitting next to you and potentially have a quick chat to them about questions that you might have, anything that might be resonating, things that you want to extend, things that are firing your embers, all of those things. So we are going to take two minutes to do that. So chat to the person next to you.

I'm going to bring you all back. This is the hardest thing. It's like I open a can of worms and then you all squirm around the room for a little minute. Sorry. That's a terrible description. You are not worms, I promise. The lovely Simon is going to be the runner with a microphone in the room. Anton. Brilliant. We've got two microphone runners. Please wait for the microphone to come to you before you share your question otherwise my lovely colleagues online won't be able to hear your question and it will

make it easier for everybody in the room.

So, can I please have questions, thoughts, embers that are firing? Ideas that might have emerged. Please say your name because I won't know everyone in the room. Say your name before you start your question.

>> Hi, I'm Sansara. I'm always the ice breaker, sorry.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Never apologise for that.

>> I was talking to Lauren here. The thing I feel like a lot of the conversation around access is about audience and it is and I understand that that's usually important. I'm just wondering what is the economic argument for the artists? The disability artists and spaces that the artists can access for whatever reason. How do we get to Unlimited if we have nowhere where we can practice and develop our skills, for example?

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: It's a great question. And thoughts lovely panellists?

FAYEN D'EVIE: It's a great question because we obviously need all kinds of pipelines into those kinds of festivals. So we need these kinds of actions that, you know, at all kinds of levels, including in community arts centres, in education, in young people's theatres and centres. In studios, I've been in exchange lately who have done fantastic things in Western Sydney in terms of disability-led studios. It's a major endorsement for the proposal that we do need to continue to support the existing initiatives and expend more to have these pipelines through to these kind of higher level stages.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Great. Thanks. Carly Findlay down on the beanbag.

>> Peter and I were saying that we find the onus is often on the disabled person to do the work around access ability and when are the allies going to step up? I think disabled people do most work around disability. That's not in my work at Fringe but in my work in the writing sector and Peter's work in podcasting. I think people here and online would think that too. How do we ask them to step up?

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Great question. Fayen's genius idea about us going in for half an hour a day and then saying, "I'm going to teach you how to do this, you can do it", is a really great one. For a few years now I've struggled with that thought about the concept of nothing about us without us. So how do we do that but also pass it on so we are not the ones having to do it. If anyone has a solution to that, please let me know. Panellists, do you have thoughts about this?

WENDY MARTIN: Caroline, what is the expression you use about buzzing the ears, you are always buzzing in the ears of people saying we need this. Telling people what you need and having them understand the absolute necessity and Carly, it's as boring as that, having to repeat yourself. Because somebody without the lived experience can be an ally, can be empathetic but unless they are constantly reminded of how vital this is, it's not going to happen. What is your expression, Caroline, I love it?

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: I used to get described as a mosquito buzzing in

the ears of the arts industry.

WENDY MARTIN: I didn't want to refer you to as a mosquito.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Stella Young used to call herself an agitator, like a washing machine. I called myself an irritant.

FAYEN D'EVIE: There is a number of times I can't do this any more, I'm too tired, it is too much fighting, I wish I could do the art work and not show the conditions. Another idea I would like to put out there, how about we have more funded residencies for people like us who are putting in the hard yards. Where we don't have to make any work, perhaps some sort of lovely retreat or hotel where we just actually get to rest and recover and, you know, get our energies back so we can get out there again.

If we could build and followed these into our year, I do get to go, now I get to go and have my week or weekend at this place and I don't have to do anything, I just need to recover and recentre, then I think we would have the energy to do more. We are just expected over and over every single day to keep putting - it's not just about unpaid labour because we do that all the time. It's about the fight. I advocate, if you have got hotel years in the licence, I would love a five-star retreat, especially if I don't have to cook dinner every night. And that will enable people like us to keep going.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: I don't know how many of you know the beautiful artist Jess Thom who did a whole festival about the festival of rest and resistance and how rest is resistance but it also is absolutely critical. Thank you. Peta.

>> My name is Peta Hook I'm the host of the podcast. I'm interested in disabled culture in particular. Even sitting here as a woman with cerebral palsy, I feel very behind in understanding what has happened before. And I would really wish there was a resource that we could, you know, put all together to say this is what amazing disabled people have produced in the past. Because I think there is that resource, particularly non-disabled people don't understand how amazing we are and how undervalued we are as a community.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Thanks, Peta. Can I give you a bit of shining hope.

>> Please do.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Next week on Wednesday, there is going to be the launch of a National Archive of disability arts in Australia. So it's capturing 40 years of our history.

>> Solved my question very clearly.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: It was a collaboration, it's been happening for years. It was arts access, lots of the disability arts organisations. But it was funded by the Australian research but headed up by QUT, so Queensland Uni and the brilliant Bree Hadley has been the major researcher, principal researcher.

>> Where do we find it?

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Let me get back to you on that one. I will make

sure there is a link in the comments under this on the YouTube.

>> Thank you.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: You're welcome. I'm really glad I had an answer to that one. We can go, okay, we've done it. It won't be exhaustive but there is something at least. Hello, another hand in the audience. Please tell us your name.

>> I'm Suzanne. I work at Performing Lines. Especially as we look forward to the Brisbane Olympics, what can we learn from London and to ensure that the change that we make for those big events when they come to town is actually sustained?

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: I have thoughts on this. Panellists, thoughts on this? Wendy?

WENDY MARTIN: One of the visionary things that happened, when a city bids for the Olympic Games, they also need to present a cultural Olympiad. One of the things that was at the centre of London's bid for the Olympic Games was Unlimited. And the Arts Councils across the UK, so Scotland, Wales, England, mostly from England, but invested in the four years leading up to the Paralympics, Olympics, it was £9 million which was a hell of a lot of money. And the invitation to artists was Dream Your Biggest Dream and great ideas were funded and supported at every level to do these things that we've been talking about today.

So it would be really interesting with the Games coming up in Queensland to see what commitment the Queensland Government is making to disability arts, artists with disabilities I should say.

MORWENNA COLLETT: They've got an arts and disability strategy they've put out. They've got some money but not a lot of money attached to it but there is still time.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: There is still time. We are hopeful.

WENDY MARTIN: It was transformational in London. For example, the media got behind it. Channel 4 made documentary series so that people could meet the artists and just members of the community who are people who are living as people with disability. They became the heroes. When Unlimited was on, the artists became heroes in the community.

And what was fantastic about the program is it happened outdoors. People stumbling, walking across the Thames would stumble across fantastic art. Caroline made this wonderful work Leaving Limboland. Grey Eye, incredible performances on the streets, in the parks so people didn't have to go inside tiny little doors in big intimidating venues to experience the wonderful art that was being made.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: It was amazing. We have time for one last question. Please tell us your name.

>> My name is Anu. I'm an immigrant and I came to Australia when I was nearly 13 and I didn't know how to speak English before I came here. And I really struggled to engage with the arts before I became fluent in English. I feel like artists love a good Yap. We love talking about our feelings but it's so kind of inaccessible when someone doesn't speak the language very fluently to be able to articulate what they think.

Like even going to the theatre sometimes as well, every theatre has

their different protocol. If you are not confident in speaking English, you don't feel confident reaching out to the front house staff to ask questions about the venue and the procedure and everything. I don't really have a solution for that problem and I'm wondering if you guys might have some insight into that?

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Fayen?

FAYEN D'EVIE: I faced this issue with some of my very talented graphic design communication design students who just struggled to go to art galleries because of the language barrier. And these are students who were Chinese as their first language. And so I assisted to cat lies to form the Chinese art club and brought them together with curators and the director of ACCA and they would spend time developing Chinese language art tours and cultivating relationships between the curatorial leader of these institutions and the Chinese community who were interested.

They moved on, they did something at the Melbourne Arts Fair and other places. I think this is another really crucial thing in our city, especially with all of the conflicts over migrants and immigration. It's a problem if almost everything is in English and we are not providing the ways that people can understand the concepts and the richness that underlies the work that you might go to see. I don't know if you are interested but they are on Instagram. They have amazing printing and marketing. But they also might be a place to think about can you do that, use that kind of model across other cultural venues.

It's not saying that you are segregating just in Chinese but it's providing a link of conversation so that you can engage in the art works. If you are somebody coming from the arts anyway, in a way that is really rich and you are not kind of like afraid of even asking for things to be kind

of translated or, yeah, the conversation to happen.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Thanks, Fayen. Just on that point about language, one of the conversations involves Ben Evans from our project called Europe Beyond Access. Everyone of their events is translated into at least six languages. So it's something we are so bad at it here. But it's all possible. We just don't do it because we don't...

FAYEN D'EVIE: You could do it if you did multi- channel audio description more like radio. Anybody interested in that? That's another thing that he we are we are exploring.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH: Amazing. We managed to make it to 90 minutes, team. Well done you! Amazing. I just want to say a huge thank you to my incredibly talented and generous panellists for sharing your wisdom and ideas and insights with us. So please can we thank the panellists.

I also want to thank our brilliant Auslan interpreters, our captioners and the very crucial people behind the scenes that have made tonight happen. I've got a list. I want to thank Millie and Ollie and Carly and the team of volunteers from Fringe. Thank you all also to Simon, Abrahams, Kate Ulan and all the previous access panellists in our digital conversations. Robert suggested that he might be tuning in. So Robert, if you are out there, we love you.

Thank you also to Simon, Anna, Tom and Cynthia at Arts Centre Melbourne for making this happen. To Tim and Cale and Luke and Sam who are our technicians that have made all the magic happen, we couldn't have done it without you so thank you so much. And a huge thank you to all of you who have come into this amazing space with us and shared this conversation. We hope it was rich and fulfilling and has left you with more

fire in your bellies and long may it continue.

We will just now gather all of Fayen's great ideas and put them in a very large document and try and get them funded. That will be amazing. Thank you all. Safe journeys home, go gently with yourselves. Thanks lovely panellists.

(End of transcript)