



Photographs by: Helen Schwab (1,2,3,7); Mark Ashkanazy (5,6,10,11); Wendy Clarke (4); Lynn Brown (8); Francesca Jell (9).

## the garden as art

**The LIAV Garden as Art precinct was a resounding success with visitors streaming through the site from the start of the day to the end.**

The concept was to design and build a garden based on a Shakespearean theme. The garden was to be an art installation rather than a sustainable or achievable garden. In the way that haute couture eventually filters down to street fashions, the designs for the Garden as Art precinct were to be inspiring rather than practical.

It was the first time the LIAV has put together such a large and diverse project and there were some steep learning curves. Simon Buchanan of TLC and Rohan Blythe of Spaces & Places were the project managers. It was a first for both of them and they acquitted themselves brilliantly. The opportunity to learn about building display gardens from the experts gave them invaluable experience for the WorldSkills international competition to be held in Japan in November. See page 26 for more on that.

A coffee stand was adjacent to the precinct, with chairs and tables well placed near the small stage where the Australian Shakespeare Company performed twice each day.

The installations were all wildly different and drew a range of reactions from the crowd. Young visitors were intrigued by Fat Elvis's racing car track and spooky skull, Richard Bellemo actually sold his 'The Globe' sculpture at the show, and people of all ages were seen

peering into Doug Lord's 'theatre'. Daniel Tyrrell Landscapes' intriguing pin oaks in twisted copper edged onto the walkway, inviting visitors into the precinct. There they were faced with the ingenious 'Bill's Pillars' representing Shakespeare's work with mathematical precision. This installation by James Dawson will be re-built at the Wales Street Primary School in Northcote.

Scott Wynd of TLC's 'theatre garden' was probably the closest to a traditional garden and provided real inspiration for embracing art in the landscape. Grant Saltmarsh of Earth Art Landscapes gave us a quirky view of "Can one have too much of a good thing?", a bath full of blood, overhung by a chandelier and surrounded by piles of gold and rubies. One visitor asked what the stones were painted with, obviously taking that idea home!

'Drought Stories' by Dirtscape Dreaming struck a note for country visitors (and the occasional Goth). Based on 'Now is the winter of our discontent', it used animal skulls and bones to demonstrate the effect of the drought on country Victoria. Wendy Clarke heard many stories while manning the installation:

"A lady who was a farmer herself in The Patch told us this story. She'd been at an Auction the day before where a flock of 50 or so angora goats were sold for \$20 - just enough to cover the cost of the auction to the farmer selling them. They were his breeding stock. She was struck by how his head hung low and he wouldn't look up. He was broken in so many ways.