

BIOGRAPHY SUMMARY

Kate Hood had a full career as an able-bodied actor, writer and director, which lasted for over twenty years. She performed in everything from classics to musicals, working for major theatres (*Melbourne Theatre Company, State Theatre Company Adelaide, Hit Productions*) and commercial production companies (*Gordon Frost, Everyday Productions*). Some of her credits include *Pygmalion, Big River, Buddy* and *Hotel Sorrento*. Her film and television credits include *Prisoner, Dancing in the Dust, The Flood* and *Blue Heelers* and she was a main promotional voice-over artist for ABC Melbourne. She has directed for *Melbourne Fringe, the Brisbane Festival, Opera Plus* and *Jane O'Toole Productions*.

Over a decade ago, she became a wheelchair user, and began a new career as a disabled actor, writer and theatre maker. She worked extensively as a commercial voice-over artist and won awards for her audio book narrations for *Bolinda Publications*. She began writing and performing her own work, which includes monologue, short story and spoken word. Writers Victoria awarded her a mentorship to work on her play *'Ruthie'*.

She now collaborates with disabled and non-disabled artists as director, mentor and dramaturg. She advocates strongly in the mainstream for performers with a disability, has sat on the board of Arts Access Victoria, and has founded and co-chaired the Performers with Disabilities Committee. Kate was elected Deputy Chair of Actors Equity's Diversity Committee and stayed in that role for its first seven years.

She was Keynote Speaker for an international Arts and Disability Conference in Singapore (ADIC). She is a sought-after speaker and panelist, advocating tirelessly to bridge the gap between artists with disability and artists who are non-disabled.

Her most recent acting and directing credits include *Cost of Living*, *Peacemongers*, *Escaped Alone*, *That's Why the Lady Needs a Ramp*, *Takeover!*, *Contest*, *The Real and Imagined History of the Elephant Man*, *Risky Business*, *Love Child* - Raspberry Ripple Reads, *Neighbours*, and the *Words in Winter Festival*. She has recently been an Artistic Associate at Melbourne Theatre Company, and continues working as actor, writer and director in the mainstream .

Her theatre company Raspberry Ripple Productions works with disabled and non-disabled performers to make theatre which tells everyday, heroic stories of disabled and non-disabled people living in the world together.

Raspberry Ripple is supported by Creative Australia , Malthouse Theatre, Creative Victoria, Chapel Off Chapel, Stonnington Council, Darebin Speakeasy, and others and was a Company in Residence at Footscray Community Arts Centre.

Kate is excited at the possibilities opening up in her career as an artist with a disability and creative leader, and feels that her years of experience as an actor, writer, director and advocate with a foot in two worlds - the worlds of Australian Theatre and Disability Arts - will serve her well into the future both as a performing artist and as Artistic Director of *Raspberry Ripple Productions*.