

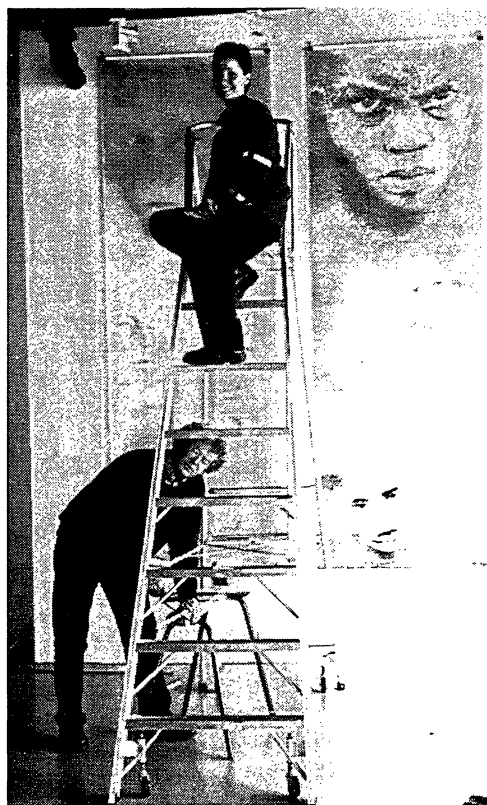
A magnificent art installation on children's rights is on show at the Canberra Museum and Art Gallery. 20 ceiling-to-floor panels of young faces ask to be taken seriously, beg to be heard. The artist, Greg Fergusson, of Mittagong, dedicates his work to the children of the world.

## "First Listen to Me"



Alena Almassy, exhibition organiser, and Katie Connor who spoke at the opening.

The Exhibition, sponsored by DCI, was opened on 20 November 98, to critical acclaim both as art, and as a message about children. It will continue in Canberra until 26 January and is expected then to go overseas.



Greg Fergusson and gallery staff install the panels.

### Visionary agenda from National Children's Summit

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This was young people discovering each others' concerns, learning that they can claim the issues and act together.

Many of the young speakers expressed appreciation of the support they felt from adult participants. They felt empowered; they felt listened to; they were filled with enthusiasm and hope.

However they also expressed disappointment at the poor level of political and media interest in the Summit. The Prime Minister did not send a representative, let alone show his own face. Many adult participants were disappointed about that too. But they could barely claim to be surprised! At that level, nothing much has changed ... yet.

The Summit issued a Declaration which is a supplement to this issue. It includes many principles which have been said about children for generations. They bear repeating nonetheless. However it contains new and powerful elements for a better response to children by government, by service providers, by business and the community. It is an Australian statement of values about children and young people - a set of expectations in which children, young people and adults are united.

This Declaration should be taken VERY seriously by Australia's governments. It should receive the commitment of *everyone* who says that they are concerned about children. And that means *everyone and the PM*, of course.

**Helen Bayes**