



South Australian **Film Corporation**

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South Australian Film Corporation's response to the National Arts and Disability Strategy consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the National Arts and Disability Strategy (NADS) consultation. The South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC) believes that Disabled people are never just disabled people. They are diverse. They cross all demographics and participate in the world in many different ways. They shed light on a different aspect of human experience and contribute to the richness and diversity of society.

SAFC utilises the Social Model of Disability in its approach to programs, initiatives and wider frameworks. Through this model, disability is re-defined as a social, not an individual, issue and that barriers are not the inevitable outcome of impairment but are socially created through society not taking into consideration the requirements of people with impairments.

We want Deaf and disabled people to use their creativity to express themselves, to share real stories, disrupt assumptions, shatter low expectations and alter perceptions. A disability perspective is important to the evolution of the screen sector. It is a platform for multiple narratives and new ways of working. Disability exposes another aspect of the lived human experience and it deepens the richness of storytelling and content creation. The arts, culture and the screen industry are lesser without it.

The SAFC are committed to creating the conditions for success of Deaf and disabled people. We do this by encouraging, supporting and providing access required by individual Deaf and disabled practitioners in order to reflect the full diversity of Australia today.

According to Screen Australia's report from 2016, *Seeing Ourselves: Reflections on Diversity in Australian TV Drama*, Deaf and disabled characters and more importantly Deaf and disabled people are spectacularly absent from our screens.

"...according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 18.3 per cent of Australians (around one in five) had a disability in 2012.

By comparison only 4 per cent of the 1,961 main characters in Australian TV dramas broadcast between 2011 and 2015 were identifiably characters with a disability, or 71 characters in total. It should be noted that this analysis did not request personal information about disability from actors; rather, it focused on the portrayal of disability on screen."

Delivering Diversity, launched in April 2018, is an umbrella under which the SAFC delivers programs for a multiplicity of under-represented voices in the screen industry - including women, Aboriginal content makers, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, regional South Australians, practitioners with disability and those from the LGBTIQI community. As part of Delivering Diversity, the SAFC launched an inclusive approach to skills development for Deaf and disabled content makers under the banner of Full Tilt in July 2018.

Full Tilt currently comprises programs:

1. Full Tilt attachment program opens opportunities for filmmakers with disability to undertake paid attachment positions in SAFC-supported productions.
2. SBS Full Tilt short documentary initiative supports Deaf and disabled South Australian filmmakers from to produce a short documentary for premiere on SBS On Demand. The first stage of the initiative included five creative teams led by Deaf and disabled people. Three of these teams are going into production and all five teams continue to be engaged with the SAFC.

In addition, the SAFC has other key strategies and initiatives:

1. SAFC appointed Gaelle Mellis in August 2018 to lead the corporation's disability screen strategy.
2. SAFC supports other organisations' programs and projects, such as Sue Austin's live art event as part of the Adelaide Film Festival in October 2018 and the Sit Down Shut Up and Watch Film Festival in October 2018.
3. SAFC is committed to having a diverse workforce and has recently recruited for a staff position where Deaf and disabled people were encouraged to apply. The successful applicant who identifies as deaf, will commence in the role in January 2019.
4. As part of SAFC's disability screen strategy, Disability Equality Training is provided to staff and is also woven into other programs and initiatives.
5. SAFC executives are sought after experts within this area and have spoken at local and national conferences and events.
6. SAFC is member of the Screen Diversity and Inclusion Network, of which Courtney Gibson is the current Chair.

SAFC believes that it is important for organisations to act decisively to initiate programs, even if they are pilot programs designed with evaluation and potential tweaking in mind. These strategic pilots from a Social Model perspective are not only crucial in moving forward and redressing equality within the sector, they will also maximise the chances of success. SAFC can provide further information and case studies on any of its initiatives if it would support the Department's work.

Opportunities identified by the SAFC

- Accurate collection of diversity data is key to other strategies and initiatives. We need to have a precise and comprehensive picture of who is on screen and who is making screen content.
- SAFC supports that the SDIN draws on good practice from international models, such as the UK's broadcaster-led Creative Diversity Network and its measurement system Diamond.
- There is a need for longer term funded attachments – this would require State and Federal funding along with a commitment from wider screen industry.
- Commercial broadcasters in Australia can reach millions of people daily. However, this reach comes with a responsibility to provide content that is reflective of the diversity of Australian society.
- All portfolio screen-related agencies understand and are guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, in particular Article 30 and the Social Model of Disability as the Australia Council for the Arts does.

- The screen sector as a whole should have robust diversity strategies and targets that need to be reported on.
- Portfolio agencies should ensure that any appointments for diversity and/or disability specific roles go to diverse people, including Deaf and disabled people.
- Boards need to be more diverse in general, including appointments of Deaf and disabled people.
- 2018 marked 25 years since the Indigenous Department at Screen Australia was established. Since its inception, over \$35m in funding has been provided for development, production and talent escalation. The model has been so successful it has recently been replicated in Canada. The same model with its long-term commitment and funding could be replicated to give Deaf and disabled people a voice and a platform for their unique storytelling.
- Set guidelines for genuine Deaf and disability consultation should be created.
- Establishment of a Deaf and disabled talent bank – ensuring methods by which Deaf and disabled people are sourced for production are inclusive, in order to constructively build a diverse talent pool.
- NDIS provides several opportunities:
 - an opportunity for both individuals and the broader industry to offer services within Core and Capacity Building Categories. The industry can provide the expertise to assist people in “Finding and Keeping a Job” by offering one on one skills development such as mentoring, coaching, learning, building skills and knowledge, making new connections, and fostering new networks for NDIS participants.
 - Partnering with appropriate NDIS providers, agencies and organisations in the screen sector could co-deliver School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) a two-year program that works with year 11 and 12 students to prepare them for work and further education. SLES could include internships and placements.
 - Acknowledging that it is a difficult industry to break into, the screen sector could engage with NDIS participants, impart knowledge skills and networking opportunities to create a win-win situation. This would improve the confidence, skill levels and aspirations of Deaf and disabled people who wish to work in the screen sector and in the broader creative industries and bring the industry in closer contact with Deaf and disabled people. This could lead to breaking down existing attitudinal barriers, a more inclusive industry with new stories to tell - leading to effective social change.
- Deaf and disabled people need to be employed on screen and off screen as writers, producers, directors and in executive roles.

“Research shows that unconscious bias can heavily influence recruitment and selection decisions, which is why we need to be aware and implement strategies to tackle unconscious bias.” pact. Diversity UK

This bias can start to be addressed when the Social Model of Disability, Access and Equality is understood and owned by all those in the screen industry.

- Redress lack of access to training with implementing successful models of initiatives from other countries. UK in particular is a great role model.
- Implement policy or guidelines that enforce the legal requirements around the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
- There is an opportunity for the Federal Government to mandate audio description on broadcast channels.
- Reframe narratives about Deaf and disabled people to ensure well-rounded, authentic representation on screen. Ensure “cripping up” is no longer seen as acceptable.

In conclusion, success is measured when Deaf and disabled screen practitioners are leading their own projects, creating screen content to tell their own stories from their unique perspectives.

Disability-led practice is valued and sought after by a vast array of producers and broadcaster and Deaf and disabled audiences are regarded as a valued market for all screen content.

The “nothing about us without us” principle expresses that no policy should be decided without the full and direct participation of members of the group affected by that policy. That disabled people know what is best for themselves and their community and therefore must be valued as integral and essential contributors to every facet of life. Social inequality is still a major issue faced by disabled people. To reflect the 18% of Deaf and disabled people in our diverse society, it is vital that we have disabled people as leaders and decision-makers. Disability-led is part of a necessary trajectory to create the world we want. A world that is inclusive and celebrates diversity.

SAFC advocates that there is a need to go beyond “nothing about us without us” – not to confine Deaf and disabled people to lead Deaf and disabled focused organisations, departments or initiatives but to ensure that there is true representation across all areas of the industry and across all levels of decision-making.

“Simone Weil said that if one saw others as another perspective on the world, as one is oneself, one could not treat them unjustly. That means that we must be open to the distinctive voices of others, and that in turn means that we must encourage the conditions in which those voices can form and be heard.” Raymond Gaita

Your sincerely



Courtney Gibson
Chief Executive



Gaelle Mellis
Disability Screen Strategy Executive