



House of Assembly

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SIT DOWN, SHUTUP AND WATCH! FILM & NEW MEDIA FESTIVAL

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (15:13): Members of the Sit Down, Shutup and Watch! Film & New Media Festival Steering Committee have announced that their next international film festival will be held on Friday 21 October 2016 at the historic Angaston Town Hall.

Ms Lee Witczak, chairperson of the SDSW Steering Committee, is urging all film buffs to put that date in their diaries now to ensure they do not miss out.

Because the committee meets in my electorate of Gawler, I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the recent meeting to hear about what progress has been made to screen the next festival.

The committee secretary, Samantha Charles, said that the committee had made disability history in 2014 with their very first film and new media festival for people with learning disabilities in South Australia and across the world.

In 2014, 43 short films made by people with learning disabilities from around the world were screened, and nearly 500 local, interstate and international people attended the festival.

Calls for entries are out and the due date has been extended to Wednesday 3 May 2016.

Matthew Wauchope, a committee member and workshop facilitator, said they are calling on all learning disabled film-makers to send in their films for the 2016 festival.

To be eligible, films need to be no longer than 10 minutes in length and people with learning disabilities need to have had a significant role in the production as actors, camera crew, writer, director, etc.

Mr Wauchope said that in 2014 they were thrilled with the number of overseas entries, and this year they are keen to screen more local films.

To encourage schools and communities involved with people with learning disabilities to put their toe in the water, the committee is running four learning disability-led film-making workshops across South Australia in the first half of the year.

The Sit Down, Shutup and Watch Film & New Media Festival is Australia's premier film festival for films made by people with a learning disability.

Everyone on the steering committee identifies as having a learning disability and are putting their passion for films and film-making to work planning their second festival.

Like its sister film festival, the Oska Bright Film Festival in the UK, Sit Down, Shutup and Watch! is raising

awareness on a growing international learning disability-led screen culture that seeks to promote cultural change, social inclusion and acceptance of high-quality original work by film-makers with a learning disability. The committee's vision is:

To live in a world where learning disabled people achieve their creative dreams and screen their work in Times Square, on iPhones and on every screen in-between.

Through the festival, the committee aims to:

- Form a community of like-minded learning disabled film-makers and new media artists who can teach others
- have our voices heard and to be taken seriously
- Get other learning disabled people to express themselves creatively through digital arts and technology
- Encourage other learning disabled people in the wider Australian and global community to connect, making physical location far less significant for our social relationships
- To become a force for social change.

I would now like to provide some brief details of the festival committee.

Lee Witzcak, the Chairperson, joined the committee when it was set up in 2011 after participating in the first film workshops run by the UK's Oska Bright Film Festival.

Sam Charles, the secretary, loves collecting movies that make her laugh, cry and have sentimental value. As she says, 'Whether films make you feel sad or happy. they get you away from reality,' and that is what she loves the most.

Ryan Thomas is a steering committee member and location scout. He is an active member of the River Road Studios, based in Nuriootpa, South Australia. He is the location scout and gaffer for the festival.

Aileen Pomeroy is a steering committee member. As a person with a learning disability, she still finds the challenge of learning something new rewarding and is enjoying the challenges that film-making presents to her.

James Kurtze is an award-winning film-maker and steering committee member. He started making films when he was still at school. He won the first ever award for Eye TV at the 2013 Oska Bright Film Festival.

Matthew Wauchope is a workshop facilitator and steering committee member, and has been interested in films and film-making since he was very young, even before he started primary school. He has always wanted to be involved in storytelling and making films. Matthew loves the process and the creativity involved in film-making.

For more information and an entry form for the 2016 film festival, the website is at sitdownshutupandwatch.com, or contact the festival coordinator Sue Morley via email at sue.morley@tutti.org.au.

Time Expired