

## SCREENABILITY NSW: PUTTING DISABILITY ON SCREEN AND BEHIND THE CAMERA

Screen NSW today launched **Screenability NSW**, a new program to create opportunities in the screen industries for people with disabilities.

Screenability NSW is a unique partnership between Screen NSW, Ai-Media, AFTRS, Carriageworks and Bus Stop Films. It will activate a program of initiatives that will deliver on an open-ended policy commitment by Screen NSW to work with industry to grow participation in the screen sector by Australians with disabilities.



*Photo caption: Tim Ferguson, co-director and co-writer of Spin Out and performer with The Doug Anthony Allstars; Sofya Gollan, Screen NSW Development and Production Executive; and Paul Nunnari, performer and disability advocate*

Upcoming Screenability NSW activities include:

- An annual film festival at Carriageworks
- A short film-making initiative to finance and deliver films for premiere at the festival, for travelling around Australia and the world, and for screening online
- A long-term job placement scheme

But it kicks off with the **Screenability NSW Internship Program**, a series of up to eight paid internships on some of Australia's most-watched "event" TV shows and highly-anticipated feature films, working with Australia's leading production companies, broadcasters and streaming services.

Confirmed to participate in the **Screenability NSW Internship Program** are:

- *Eurovision* (Blink TV/SBS TV)
- *The NRL Footy Show* (Nine Network)
- *Playschool* (ABC TV)
- The New Year's Eve live broadcast (ABC TV)
- The Mardi Gras Parade broadcast (Golden Duck/SBS TV)
- Animal Logic (World-leading animation and VFX co)
- See-Saw Films (*Lion, Top of the Lake, The King's Speech*)
- Goalpost Pictures Australia (*Cleverman, The Sapphires, Holding The Man*)
- Proxi VR
- Guerilla Films (*Wormwood*)
- Playmaker (*The Code, Love Child*)
- Matchbox Pictures (*Barracuda, Real Housewives, The Slap, Wanted*)
- Screentime (*Janet King, Anh Do's Brush with Fame*)
- CJZ (*Gruen, The Checkout, House of Hancock, Bond*)
- Jungle (*No Activity, Here Come the Habibs*)
- Foxtel
- Stan
- ABC iView

The program will create opportunities for people in the technical and creative areas of screen production, including set building, art dept, camera and sound depts, make up and wardrobe, along with writing, producing, admin and production roles, plus editing, sound design, VFX, composing and many more. There will also be opportunities in the programming, scheduling and commissioning departments of partners including Foxtel, Stan and iView.

Applications for the Screenability NSW Internship Program open Monday September 19<sup>th</sup> and close Friday October 21<sup>st</sup>.

Guidelines are at <http://screen.nsw.gov.au/funding/industry-support/Screenability+NSW>

The point of having a long list of participating productions is to give the selected interns a greater choice of professional opportunity.

Prior to starting their internship, each of the eight individuals matched with a production will be provided with bespoke training through the Australian Film, Television and Radio School, developed in consultation with Bus Stop Films.

An online network will be created for all the interns to share their production experiences.

“As well as delivering positive outcomes to all the interns, this internship program has the potential to change attitudes in the workplace towards disability, and foster the growth of inclusive practices on a professional basis,” said Screen NSW Development and Production Executive Sofya Gollan. Sofya, an acclaimed writer/director and well known as a deaf presenter on *Play School*.

Tim Ferguson, co-director and co-writer of the new feature film *Spin Out*, will take a lead role in various Screenability NSW activities in the years to come. Tim said: “A smart and dynamic initiative Screenability NSW will encourage and enable new thinking and, best of all, opportunities in the media industries.”

Following the internship program, Screen NSW will convene a forum at Carriageworks, which Tim Ferguson will host, with the interns, participant productions, partners, government, the wider industry and media to discuss the project, its outcomes and how it can be amplified to create ongoing employment opportunities for people with disability in the NSW screen sector into the future.

“We know from our work over the past ten months targeting gender imbalance in the screen sector, the key to creating a diverse industry, delivering richer content and ongoing cultural change, is getting people into paid positions, putting people from under-represented groups on set and into production offices,” said Screen NSW Chief Executive Courtney Gibson. “What we find is that the production sector is very keen to embrace diversity; it’s programs like Screenability NSW which enable them to do so.”

Ai-Media CEO, Tony Abrahams, said: “We're committed to creating innovative access solutions addressing the social, educational and

vocational exclusion faced by millions of Australians affected by disability. We are delighted to participate in Screenability NSW, a program aimed at providing an accessible and inclusive work experience for people with disabilities within the screen sector. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the SNSW team and partners, who have shown strong vision and commitment with this initiative.”

Neil Peplow, CEO of AFTRS, said: "Partnering on this initiative is an important extension of AFTRS' commitment to addressing inclusion in the film industry through specialised training. It is great to work with Screen NSW and to continue our relationship with Bus Stop Films, who have been running filmmaking workshops this year at AFTRS for people with intellectual disabilities."

Australian producer of the *Eurovision* broadcast for SBS, Blink TV's Paul Clarke: "*Eurovision* is a symbol for many people of being who you want to be, proclaiming your individuality with a sense of great enjoyment and passion. I'm sure this initiative will allow someone to expand their opportunities to be themselves, and to hopefully find their place in the film and TV industry."

Glenn Pallister, executive producer of *The NRL Footy Show* said: "What a great initiative by Screen NSW and one that we *at The Footy Show* are thrilled to be a part of. I didn't think twice when asked to participate."

Paul Nunnari, disability advocate and performer, said: "People with disability continue to breakdown many barriers and redefine the meaning of disability across a number of dimensions within our community. Screenability will assist in removing barriers to the film and television industry for people with disability and open up a range of opportunities. Just like orange is the new black, disability will become the new normal in the industry."

Screen Australia's recent milestone study "Seeing Ourselves: Reflections on Diversity in TV Drama", revealed that the percentage of Australians with disabilities is more than four times the percentage of characters with disabilities on TV. It noted that Australians with disabilities have lacked opportunities to be involved with behind-the-scenes decision making, such as a presence in writer's rooms or on-set, which in turn can flow on to a lack of diversity on screens.

“On-screen representation doesn’t change in a meaningful and authentic way unless things change off-screen, and Screenability NSW will be a catalyst for change, with the intention of creating opportunities in the long term for committed screen practitioners with disability,” Sofya Gollan said.

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