

Cinema: An invention without a future?

**The career prospects for first-time feature film directors in the
Australian Film Industry**

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

This thesis is the result of a research candidature conducted as part of a Masters degree. I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

10BA	Tax incentive scheme for film production
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation (formerly Commission)
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ADG	Australian Directors Guild
AFC	Australian Film Commission
AFDC	Australian Film Development Corporation
AFTRS	Australian Film, Television and Radio School
AFI	Australian Film Institute
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ARTS	Office for the Arts in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
DCITA	Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (Australian Commonwealth)
DCMS	Department of Culture, Media and Sport (UK)
EFTF	Experimental Film and Television Fund
FFC	Australian Film Finance Corporation
FLICs	Film Licensed Investment Companies scheme
IAC	Industries Assistance Commission (now Productivity Commission)
ICCPR	International Conference on Cultural Policy Research
IMDb	Internet Movie Data base
NIDA	National Institute of Dramatic Art
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OzCo	Australia Council for the Arts
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

Abstract

The initiative for this research project first emerged from a set of statistics, which appeared on the Screen Australia website in 2011 with no accompanying explanation. Over a thirty-year timeframe, the figures showed that almost 66% of feature film directors make only one feature film. The question of how feature film directors build a sustainable career within this sector formed the foundation of this study.

This research project involved a series of qualitative case studies, which focused on trying to reach an understanding of what constitutes the 'essentials' of a director's career.

An online survey was used to capture and measure some quantifiable data: Gender; educational level and duration; type of education; preference for course content; and professional experience were some of the targeted data categories.

Drawing on concepts from critical theory, political economy, education, and filmmaking disciplines the study examines the way that workers make a career in a precarious and uncertain industry.

The results show that prospective feature film directors start out with a high degree of optimism and are adept at positioning themselves through a range of strategies which ensures that they can make a living by utilising their knowledge of the ways in which the entire film and television sector operates.

The study concludes that the primary barrier to an individual career and an extensive body of work seems to be due chiefly to the restrictions imposed on production levels by government policy settings and general economic volatility.