

## **2014 Award Winners Announced!**

The 2014 Sit Down, Shutup and Watch Film & New Media Festival Award Winners were announced on Friday 31 October 2014, at the Red Carpet Awards Ceremony held in Angaston, Barossa Valley, celebrating and acknowledging the creativity and outstanding talents of filmmakers with a learning disability.

Winning films were selected from more than 40 films entered from around Australia and the globe. There were nine separate award categories: SA Film Corporation Most Original Film, Access2Arts Best Music Video, Arts Access Australia New Media and Video Art Award, Best Animation, Best Special Effects, Funniest Film, The Hive Award, Our Story and Best of the Festival. Finalists reflected the global interest in learning disability-led filmmaking with films nominated from Germany, UK, Ireland and Israel as well as across Australia.

A formal welcome by Lee Witczak, Chairperson of the SDSW Festival Steering Committee kicked off proceedings. This was followed by an introduction from Councilor Margaret Harris from the Barossa Valley Council, and official opening address by Jennifer Layther, Director Presenting Programs, Organisations and Initiatives, Arts SA. Angaston Town Hall played host to approximately 300 festival patrons throughout the day, with approximately 150 attending the Red Carpet Awards Presentation on Friday night.

“Our first SDSW festival has been a huge success and has exceeded our expectations. We say a big, big thank you to all who entered and to all who supported our vision to make this first festival a reality. After three years in planning we are thrilled with our achievements,” said Lee Witczak, Chairperson SDSW Steering Committee.

Mervyn Bradley’s *The Sea Reminds Me* was the first film to screen and went on to win the Best of Festival Award presented by SDSW Committee member Matthew Wauchope. The afternoon program included an International Showcase of films from the UK-based Oska Bright Film Festival and a Filmmakers Forum. The Forum provided an opportunity for the audience to take part in an insightful discussion amongst learning disabled filmmakers, chaired by The Honorable Kelly Vincent MLC.

SDSW Steering Committee members Lee Witczak, Samantha Charles and Ryan Thomas hosted the Red Carpet Awards Presentation that night. Nine awards were presented to learning disability filmmakers by guest presenters who included The Honorable Kelly Vincent; Joost den Hartog, Director of the Australian International Documentary Conference; and The Honorable Tony Piccolo, SA Minister for Disability, representing The Honorable Jack Snelling, Minister for the Arts. Becky Llewellyn from Arts Access Australia who represented national disability organisation Arts Access Australia and SA’s Access2Arts, commented on South Australia’s vision in leading the sector to establish SDSW as the first learning disability film and new media festival in the southern hemisphere, thereby providing a strong platform for learning disabled artists perspectives and storytelling voices to be heard; her comments echoed those made by Arts SA’s Jennifer Layther at the festival opening.

A Best of Fest screening will take place this coming Saturday 8 November 2014 at Adelaide Studios including the 21 finalists plus a showcase of films from the UK’s 2013 Oska Bright Film Festival which was the inspiration for the SDSW Festival. The People’s Choice Award will be presented at the event to the film voted festival favourite by the public. Voting can be done via the SDSW website (below) or through voting cards available on the day.

The SDSW Festival is produced by Tutti Arts with in-kind support from long term partners The Barossa Council, Yorke & Northern Rural Region, Country Health SA and more recently, the South Australian Film

Corporation. SDSW began in 2011 with funding from Country Arts SA and Newman's Own Foundation. This first festival has received funds from Arts SA, Bank SA and the Sunshine Foundation.

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