

**BUS
STOP
FILMS**

INCLUSIVE FILMMAKING

ANNUAL REPORT

2021



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Who would have thought that 2021 would be even bigger than 2020! Despite the ongoing challenging and unpredictable environment of COVID, Bus Stop Films continued to thrive as we delivered an exceptional experience to 90 students, created 13 incredible inclusively made films and continued our advocacy for greater diversity on both sides of the camera.



We continued our expansion throughout the year, launching our programme in Brisbane and announcing plans for the Blue Mountains, Melbourne and Adelaide. This enabled us to deliver our 40-week filmmaking curriculum to 90 students and set the course to extend that to 160 in 2022. That's 90 young adults who have developed film making skills, boosted their confidence and created a new circle of friends and supporters.

Our students produced 13 incredible and very diverse films over the course of the year while our previous films continued to be lauded globally including our first Oscar qualifying film, *Stairs*. We are all so proud of the relentless focus on quality in the production of these films and the diversity of topic, genre and style that our students come up with. For me, personally, a huge highlight of the year was joining our team for the production of 'Panther in the Dark', created at Government House with the support of our wonderful patrons, the Governor-General and Mrs Hurley.

2021 was also a huge year for advocacy with our team presenting Inclusion in Action to over 360 workshop participants. Inclusion in Action is now the benchmark in diversity and inclusion training for our industry and has been presented by our team around the globe. We continued our focus on sourcing workplace opportunities for our students and, notwithstanding the challenges of COVID for the industry, secured 17 professional attachments. These opportunities provide invaluable experience, develop workplace skills and build self-confidence in our students.

We continued our focus on building a sustainable organisation with a diversified source of funding to ensure that we thrive well into the future. To that end, 2021 saw our revenues increase by 22% to over \$850,000 and our surplus nearly double to \$94,000 providing the security required for us to continue to expand our reach across Australia. Moving to our first dedicated office in the community arts space, Shopfront Arts at Carlton, is symbolic of our transition to a more sustainable, long term organisation. We are grateful for the ongoing support of our many philanthropic supporters without whom we could not operate and grow. We are also grateful to the NDIS which supports our programme through the funding plans provided to our students.

Of course, Bus Stop's success is driven, first and foremost, by its team and, to that end, I want to extend my continued gratitude to the Bus Stop Films Board: Dianna La Grassa, Jacqui Attard, Brian Maguire, Genevieve Clay-Smith, Emily Dash, Kate Aitken and Jennifer Collins and our Company Secretary Fiona Stuart, for their commitment and dedication to the successful governance of our organisation. A huge note of thanks also to Kallistene Vihas, who gives her time to support the board.

Most importantly, this year's success is a tribute to the ongoing commitment and exceptional leadership of Tracey Corbin-Matchett, our CEO, and Dianna La Grassa, our COO, who have led a phenomenal team through the turbulent COVID environment. A massive thank you to Tracey, Dianna and all of the team, including our tutors and support workers.

As we look to 2022 and beyond, we hope that you share our passion for the Bus Stop Films purpose – to change lives, open minds and unlock possibilities through inclusive filmmaking. We are just getting started.

Peter Tonagh
Chair



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Hold on to your seats... 2021 was an epic adventure for the bus. Whilst it was another year of plan, postpone, repeat due to Covid19, yet all around the bus managed to grow, create and connect. A year of supporting over 90 young adults to enjoy a film school experience, learn new skills, gain confidence and many new friends as well. They all make me so proud and of course shed a few tears of pure joy and happiness whenever I see them in action.

Film wise, it was our biggest production year ever, with 13 amazing films produced, including the very first inclusively made film at Government House with our generous patrons the Governor General and Mrs Hurley, opening up their home, their hearts and acting talents for our Canberra class film "Panther in Dark". Our Brisbane program had a brilliant first year on the bus, with two films produced including the sweet as "Sunshine" co-produced with our sister agency Taste Creative with the support of Screen QLD and a stunning documentary "We'll Always Have Dance" made in partnership with QLD ballet. All films were inclusively made and not only offered each of our participants amazing on set experience they connected and learned from over 150 industry professionals.

Our advocacy work continued with over 360 industry professionals from across Australia and around the world attending our Inclusion in Action workshops, keen to learn more about making a difference through their creative practice and being more disability confident.

We were lucky to squeeze in a wonderful event, The Best of Bus, showcasing our work and bringing together our wonderful Bus Stop Films students, families and supporters. And whilst the 2021 showcase was actually held over until March 2022, the students work for the year was acknowledged with certificate presentations in all states.

Our work was recognised with multiple awards including the HESTA Excellence Award - Outstanding Disability Service. I am so grateful to our amazing team whose hard work, talent and kindness makes our organisation such a stand out service. It takes alot to keep the business running, not in the least a savvy and dedicated board who support the governance and strategic direction of the Bus through another challenging year.



It was also a year of baby's on board, with both our Co-Founder Genevive and Chief Operating Officer Dianna, welcoming babies. We extend our biggest BSF congratulations to Dianna, Gen and their growing families.

The year brought in three new stops for the bus, with the Blue Mountains, Melbourne and Adelaide going live, ready for a bumper 2022 of 14 classes in 9 locations across 5 states..... We're gonna need a bigger bus!

With international travel a rare event in 2021, I was extremely grateful that my year ended with an amazing trip to Expo Dubai, as a guest of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade together with Dubai cares. Traveling to the UAE with our advisory board member Paul Nunnari to present our work at the Dignified Storytelling Forum, it was a truly surreal experience to explore the amazing world expo, premiere our film Visible and show the filmmakers from around the globe, how we're changing the world, one amazing, inclusively made film at a time.

Around all of what we achieved, our kindness game was strong and the experience of our participants was at the core of all we did. I am one lucky CEO to lead such a brilliant organisation and can not wait to see what the new year will bring.... Where will the bus stop next?

Stay kind

Tracey Corbin-Matchett
Chief Executive Officer



A MESSAGE FROM THE COO



Heading into our second year of a global pandemic Bus Stop Films and our community were once again called upon to adapt and learn in a hybrid way of both online and face to face. We had an incredibly stacked group of talented Tutors and Support Workers who helped to guide and engage our students through another year of inclusive filmmaking. Our student cohort grew with over 30 new students and 60 returning. It was wonderful to welcome so many new faces to our community and welcome back our existing ones.

This year we created over 10 inclusively made films with themes ranging from love, loss, consent and human strength. We had the privilege of working with talented industry professionals and emerging filmmakers to bring these high quality films to life. Our big thanks to Kristen Hodges who produced many of our slate of films and kept us on track as we navigated the many COVID restrictions, requirements and date changes. It was a juggling act indeed.

As COVID dominated the airwaves, Bus Stop Films had to separate our awards night and showcase events. The students were awarded their certificates, had a chance to celebrate their outstanding achievements for the year and eagerly await the opportunity to watch their films with a live audience as do we.

With myself heading on maternity leave mid-year we brought in two new staff members Nikoleta Minns, Program and Student Experience Coordinator and Nick Pontikos, Operations Manager, to help support our growing organisation and our incredible CEO. Together they streamlined processes, created great student experiences and fostered new ideas and opportunities for the organisation.

Where to next? With our expansion in Brisbane complete we look ahead to take on Adelaide, Blue Mountains and Melbourne whilst continuing our programs in Sydney, Wollongong, Parramatta, Online, Brisbane and Canberra. The bus is headed national with our road to global underway. Each year I think to myself, how will we top the last year? Then each year I am blown away by how far we've come. A huge congratulations to the team and our fearless leader Tracey who leads with kindness and teaches us all to do the same.

I eagerly await what is sure to be an epic 2022.

Dianna La Grassa
Chief Operations Officer



BSF BOARD

Our board is a collection of amazing minds and hearts who keep the bus on track with good governance, strategic direction and impact. We are extremely grateful for their time, expertise and kindness.

BSF Board as at December 2021:

Peter Tonagh – Chair
Brian Maguire – Treasurer
Jacqui Attard – Board Member
Emily Dash – Board Member
Kate Aitken – Board Member
Genevieve Clay-Smith – Board Member
Dianna La Grassa – Board Member
Jennifer Collins - Board Member
Fiona Stuart - Board Member & Company Secretary
Julia Moriarity - Board Observer

The Board is supported by the kindness, dedication and brilliant skills of Kalistene Vihas.

This year we took part in the Board Observership Program, which supports emerging leaders to gain understanding of the machinery of boards whilst contributing their time and experience to an organisation. We were delighted to have Julia Moriarity join us across 2021.

BSF ADVISORY BOARD

BSF is grateful for the sage advice and support from our Advisory Board, consisting of Paralympian, aerial artist and disability advocate Paul Nunnari together with screen and media executive Courtney Gibson and our CEO Tracey Corbin-Matchett. This year, Paul was a regular presenter of Inclusion in Action, bringing his strong lived experience and understanding of inclusive workplaces to the sessions, including traveling to the UAE with Tracey to present our work at Expo Dubai. Courtney jumped on board to Executive Produce our film Valiant, made in partnership with Northcott.



OUR PATRONS

The support of *His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley*, is something we hold dear to our hearts at Bus Stop Films. This year, they went above and beyond and invited our Canberra class to shoot their class film project "Panther in the Dark" at Government House and they even appeared in the film. The kindness and generosity of our joint patrons is something that we hold dear, right across the organisation.

In April, we were delighted to catch up with our other patron, the talented Rachel Griffiths at the Human Rights and Arts Film Festival with one of our amazing students Audrey. Rachel was also very kind in chatting with students from our Canberra program on set at Old Parliament House for Total Control, series 2.

We are so grateful to our patrons who give their time to amplify our work.



TEAM WORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

In 2021 our team grew with new members joining our wonderful staff of long time members, including Monica Power, our brilliant Support and Engagement Manager and Johnny Gebrael, our trusty bookkeeper.

Across the year we farewelled Marketing and Administration Coordinator Alina Golovachenko and welcomed Serena Moran into the role. Additionally, we added in a new role of Program and Student Experience Coordinator with Nikoleta Minns joining the team and Nick Pontikos stepping in as Operations Manager to back fill Dianna La Grassa while she took maternity leave.





Our brilliant tutors educate, support and inspire the learning of our students. In 2021 our tutors brought so much to the classroom, guiding their students learning and creating some amazing films. A huge thanks to Julian Neuhaus, Martha Goddard, Justice Jones, Waheed Naddafi, Claire Fletcher, Gia Frino, Angela Blake, Kate Vinen and Dan Sanguineti, together with long-time tutor and support worker Sarah-Jane Johnson and new casual team member Claudia Bailey.

Our support workers provide the students guidance in the classroom and on set. In 2021 our support crew included Sarah McCarthy, Lilian Paterson, Lucky Chen, Michelle Sutton, Carly Hawkins, Mathew Bing, Joe Palmer, Julian Rouch, Webster Seade, Bernadette Sainsbury.

We also had the support of a team of generous volunteers -Zofia Burak, Caleb Jacobs, Oliver Heath and Emma Lou Floreani.



A NEW HOME FOR THE BUS

2021 was the year we got our very first office, moving into iconic community arts space Shopfront Arts at Carlton. The co-location with other arts organisations' offers our team a space to come together and to call our own, working alongside other creatives with a similar focus of connecting to the community through the arts. It also means our CEO can move around a little easier in her home office that has been BSF HQ for the past 3 years. The door to the office was even our Bus Stop blue.... it was meant to be!



ACCESSIBLE FILM STUDIES PROGRAM

OUR BIGGEST YEAR YET!

In 2021 we saw new locations and new students join our program, with 90 students learning through our program. Our students attended classes in Sydney, Wollongong, Canberra, Parramatta and through the new class locations with Brisbane and online delivery being added to the schedule. Across the year with the pandemic meaning changing gears to move classes online as required and following Covid protocols while attending classes face to face, the students and the staff showed great resilience in how they adapted and continued to learn, connect and create.

Across the year we also prepared for new locations to be added in 2022, with Adelaide, Melbourne and the Blue Mountains jumping on board the bus.



PROGRAM PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

THANK
YOU

We couldn't do what we do with the support of our program partners. In 2021 we delivered our Accessible Film Studies Program in partnership with Australian Film TV and Radio School, Information + Cultural Exchange, Screen Canberra, University of Wollongong and with new partner Griffith Film School Brisbane. We continued our partnership with Actors Centre Australia, delivering a number of workshops and master classes with the innovative acting school in Leichhardt.

We also added in new partnerships with RMIT University in Melbourne, UniSA in Adelaide and The Blue Mountains Cultural Centre in Katoomba to deliver our 2022 classes. Also jumping on board the bus was FilmPlus in Canberra as our location partner in 2022 and Western Sydney University, as our new Parramatta partner.

Telling the story of Bus Stop Films was made easier in 2021 with the amazing pro bono support of Porter Novelli, with the team coming on board to help us promote our 2022 classes and secure us a wonderful story on 7's Weekend Sunrise set around our film shoot at the home of the Governor-General.



In 2021 we also partnered with Northcott to develop Valiant, a stunning short film which explores healthy relationships and consent and with Actors Centre Australia to develop an Accessible Acting Program. Both projects were funded by the Australian government.

We of course thank our supporters ACT Media Ventures, Actors Centre Australia, Screen NSW, Panavision, Paige-Harrison, The Sherry-Hogan Foundation, The Snow Foundation, PwC, Cushman + Wakefield, Accenture, Ironbark Films, Zig Zag Sound, Realise Business, Brisbane City Council, Screenrights Cultural Fund and Creative Pus Business. We're so grateful for their continued support and assistance to help us to continue to change lives and minds through film. The NDIS continues to support our students to attend their program with resourcing from the plans.





RESOURCING THE INDUSTRY BOTH HERE AND AROUND THE WORLD

We continued to lead change and support the screen industry to be more confident around the inclusion and employment of people with disabilities. We delivered 16 sessions of Inclusion in Action to over 360 screen industry professionals across Australia and around the world. Notable sessions included sessions for Melbourne International Film Festival's Accelerator program, Cinefest Oz in WA, Australian Teachers of Media (QLD) conference and in person for regional filmmakers at the Screenworks Regional to Global conference, and excitedly at World Expo Dubai at the Dignified Storytelling Forum. It was a proud moment to be invited to Dubai as guests of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and education and aid organisation Dubai Cares. Our CEO Tracey and Advisory board member Paul Nunnari presented the workshop in Dubai, and were guests at a wonderful dinner hosted by Justin McGowan, Commissioner General Australia and Clare Cooney, Deputy Commissioner General – Expo 2020 Dubai. Whilst in Dubai, our brilliant film "Visible" had its international premiere and Paul Nunnari performed his "The Other Superman" aerial performance, with both vowing the crowd! [Watch Paul perform here!](#)





Our CEO Tracey together with students Nathan Basha and Audrey O'Connor were appointed as IncludeAbility Ambassadors to the Australian Human Rights Commission. The strategy promotes the employment of people with disabilities in a variety of industries.

This year we also focused on the next generation of filmmakers by hosting nine interns studying a Bachelor of Screen Media at Western Sydney University, who came on board the bus to produce BTS clips of our class projects and support our marketing. It's been wonderful to see the interns secure jobs in industry on the back of the skills and experience they gained on our sets.



CELEBRATING THE FILMS WE MADE IN A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

Each year the quality and quantity of the films we produce continues to grow, and even with a pandemic making the management of the shoots quite challenging, it was akin to a puzzling game of tetris, our team of staff, students, cast and crew delivered an array of amazing, inclusively made films. The 13 films with a team of over 200 cast and crew, over three states are something we are so very proud of. The films included a doco project for the Council for Intellectual Disability “More than just a job”, a comedy shot on location at Government House, rom coms, documentaries, our first ever Iphone film, our first ever wedding scene and a dynamic dancing drag queen!

We were grateful to the powerhouse of Kristen Hodges for coming on board to produce most of the classroom film projects and to Courtney Gibson for Executive Producing our Northcott project Valiant. With Dianna taking maternity leave, the producing support was very welcome.

Our Brisbane program got double the fun in its first year, with the production of “Sunshine” mid year, through Screen QLD’s RIDE strategy, a co-production with our sister company Taste Creative. This was backed up with a second film through their class film project, a doco “We’ll Always Have Dance” made in partnership with QLD Ballet. The support and encouragement from Screen QLD for our work has made us feel very welcome, and grateful that the bus now stops in the sunshine state.

We also made a micro budget film “Overdue” in partnership with Stellar Experiences, and whilst the budget was tiny the impact of the film on the participants was huge.

Our 2021 films included:

More Than Just A Job - Directed by Genevieve Clay-Smith

Sunshine - Directed by Martha Goddard

We’ll Always Have Dance - Directed by Martha Goddard

Ripple - Directed by Gia Frino

Hopeful Romantic - Directed by Kate Vinen

For Better, For Worse - Directed by Julian Neuhaus

It Won’t Define Me - Directed by Justice Jones

Look The Part - Directed Claire Fletcher

The Society Experiment - Directed by Angela Blake

The Legend of Agni - Directed by Waheed Naddafi

Valiant - Directed by Claudia Bailey

Overdue - Directed by Julian Neuhaus

Panther in the Dark - Directed by Dan Sanguineti



THE SHOW MUST GO ON

While many festivals moved online, the screening of our films around the world continued across 2021. We had 28 festival screenings and broadcasts across the year, with “Groundhog Night” continuing to wow audiences at festivals, “Sunshine” premiering to a sell out crowd at Brisbane International Film Festival and “What Was It like?” and “Visible” screening on ABC as part of “Reframe” to celebrate International Day of People With a Disability.

A huge highlight for the year was “Stairs” winning “Best Live Action Short” at the Chicago International Children's Film Festival, meaning we could enter it into the Oscars. We didn't win one of those amazing gold statues, but we are still so proud of the film made in partnership with the Arts Council of Mongolia, and look forward to our next film project with the team in Ulaanbaatar.

We had an amazing event “The Best of Bus” in March to celebrate our brilliant catalog of films and raise funds for our projects. And while our 2021 showcase was technically held in 2022, the delay did not dampen the excitement or the celebration of our students and their amazing skills and talents, brought to life through the contributions of a wonderful group of professional cast and crew. The Actors Centre Australia again generously hosted the showcase, which was hosted by Elle Dawe and Ben Howard. A huge thanks to Julian Neuhaus for his awesome work on our events and film management. And our new team member Serena Moran whose AMAZING event coordination skills are very welcome on the Bus!



AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

In 2021, we won 10 amazing awards. Testament to the skills and talents of the team and the power and impact of our films and organisation. Notable awards include:

Stairs

Live Action Short Film at the 38th Annual Chicago International Children's Film Festival in the USA.

Best Screenplay - Cinefest Oz - Western Australia.

Biogen Award for making the impossible possible at the Short Shorts Film Festival in Asia in Japan.



Groundhog Night

Audience Choice Award winner Austin Film Society - Australian Screen Forum in the USA.

"RTBF" prize (short film fiction category) The *Extraordinary Film Festival*, in Belgium.

What Was It Like?

"Jeune Public" (Young Audience Award)
The *Extraordinary Film Festival*, in Belgium.



Outstanding Organisation

Disability Services



HAVING A JOB IS SO IMPORTANT ON SO MANY LEVELS

Employment which is a profound outcome of our program, and despite the pandemic making access to sets a challenge, we still placed our students in 17 professional workplace opportunities. These included Audrey O'Connor securing a year long nternship with the production team at AFTRS and Nathan Basha, returning to employment with Marvel Disney with a three month attachment on Thor: Love and Thunder. It was so exciting to have Nathan on set with the cast and crew including Chris Hemsworth, Taika Waititi and Sam Neil, though diligently sticking to the confidentiality clause in his contract, Nathan has still not shared all the amazing things he saw on set.

We also partnered with the ABC on their Pathways strategies, which saw emerging filmmakers with disability engaged in year long internships with ABC together with production companies Fremantle and Flying Bark. It was wonderful to work with Sacha Gregson, Head of Content Investment & Policy at the ABC to bring the strategy to life.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR 2021

In unprecedented times we maintained a sound financial position, even with the impact of the pandemic around fundraising, our final assessment of 2021 was a profitable one. Our revenue increased by 22% from \$689,271 in 2020 to \$861,107 in 2021, and our profits increased from a loss of \$47,873 in 2020 to a profit of \$93,656, in 2021. To ensure our operations and programs are financially viable we will be increasing our fees within the NDIS framework in 2022 to better reflect the true cost of the Program delivery and the resourcing required to keep it strong and robust.

Thank you to our brilliant Treasurer Brian Maguire for his dedicated and professional management of our finances and to Gregory Richards and his team at Page, Harrison & Co for their management of our audit requirements and assisting us through the impact of the pandemic and other tax related changes in 2021. Notable thanks to Johnny Gebrael, our long term bookkeeper for making sure everyone is paid on time. A copy of our full financial report can be found on the ACNC website.



