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WIFT Australia releases Raising Films Australia Screen Industry Survey SAFC announces sweeping changes in response

The Raising Films Australia Screen Industry Survey report, **Honey, I Hid the Kids!: Experiences of parents and carers in the Australian Screen Industry** released today reveal significant challenges to being a working parent or carer in the screen industry, with 74% of respondents reporting the impact of caring work on their role in the industry as negative.

60% of carers within the industry are freelance or self-employed and state that long hours, financial uncertainty and unpredictable work commitments are the major concerns.

Experiences reported include people hiding the fact that they have children, people taking on more than a full-time load in order to survive, through to those who have had to leave the industry altogether, resulting in an industry-wide loss of knowledge and expertise.

As stated in the report* "Freelancers, the majority of the industry's production workforce, already operate outside conventional maternity leave entitlements and guaranteed return-to-work provisions. This, in addition to fear that employers will discriminate against carers, contributes to a screen industry culture that lacks transparency and that limits the opportunity for open discussion about workplace flexibility or broader industrial innovation."

Megan Riakos, President of Women in Film and TV (WIFT) NSW and Board Member, WIFT Australia states, "The survey findings are a call out to the screen industry to recognise the impact parenting and caring is having on the careers and livelihood of those working in the sector, especially women. The facts and figures give us the evidence we need to drive change to not only support working parents, but to enact a more inclusive industry that benefits us all. I look forward to working in collaboration with the sector to achieve this change."

In response to the report's findings **Courtney Gibson, CEO of the SAFC** said "Enabling parents and carers to find working conditions that match their capacity to work will safeguard our investment in screen practitioners and preserve the vital cultural output of Australia's screen industries. Not caring about caring is simply not an option anymore."

Further, the **South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC)** today announced a range of initiatives designed to make it possible to have a continually evolving career in the screen sector and be a carer at the same time.

The initiatives, to apply from January 1, 2019 include:

The RETURN TO WORK RIDER

In a major policy shift the SAFC will introduce the **Return to Work Rider**, requiring that any project that receives over \$400,000 in state funding, engages at least one crew member, key creative or Head of Department who is returning to work after time away as a carer.

To support industry to deliver this, the agency will create and maintain a **Return to Work Directory** of practitioners ready to return to work.



KEEPING YOUR HAND IN

This is a program designed to support people taking time out as carers to keep pace with changes in production methodologies, trends, technology and skills, so they don't lose ground or disappear from the industry. Measures include:

- To secure SAFC Development funding, any TV drama writers' room must include a paid attachment who is away from the industry, working and living in a caring capacity. These paid attachments - an extra that the agency will fund - can also apply to Production, enabling people taking time out to be parents and carers to do a day, or a week, back on set to "keep their hand in."
- When the SAFC engages consultant screen makers, mentors, workshop leaders, and external assessors, it will prioritise working with people taking time away from work for caring.
- SAFC funds will be available for training for practitioners returning to work to update skills relating to advances in technology, changes in business models or other new developments impacting their areas of expertise.

DOING IT DIFFERENTLY

In addition to these new measures, the SAFC announced a new development and production initiative, **Doing It Differently**, to develop and ultimately provide production investment towards projects that break the mould in terms of production methodology.

A landmark example of Doing It Differently is *52 Tuesdays*, which five years ago the SAFC enabled through development, financing and production.

Adelaide-based Closer Productions developed a unique methodology for *52 Tuesdays*, shooting only every Tuesday, for whole a year, while they kept working on other projects the rest of the week. The result was a calling card film for Closer - for producer Bec Summerton and director Sophie Hyde - and the film was awarded the Crystal Bear at Berlin and Hyde the Best Director World Cinema at Sundance, among many other awards. It was also the screen debut of Tilda Cobham-Hervey, star of *Hotel Mumbai*.

Inspired by *52 Tuesdays*, **Doing It Differently** aims to challenge the often family-unfriendly prevailing production orthodoxies. SAFC will seek proposals for projects – film, web and TV - demonstrating new production models that are outside the box and which will deliver fresh forms of screen entertainment.

Courtney Gibson said, "What we anticipate are proposals that present new ways of working; ways of working which might become new norms themselves."

This announcement follows the recent launch of the first ever creche available to delegates at Australia's premier Screen Industry conference event SCREEN FOREVER. The free creche - now fully booked - was funded by the **SAFC** and **Create NSW**, in partnership with **Screen Producers Australia** (SPA) and **Women in Film and Television** (WIFT) Australia, and recognises the importance of access to the intelligence and opportunities that come with attending the annual conference, and in supporting a sustainable and diverse screen industry.



WIFT NSW has also recently launched its Making It Possible pilot program supported by both Create NSW and Women NSW, a free course to assist women who've had careers stall due to the impact of parenting and caring.

The Raising Films Australia Screen Industry Survey results will now be further digested, with a deeper analysis to be handed down in November. Broader strategies to address the issues raised in the report will then be fleshed out in an industry forum to be held at the Australian Film TV and Radio School (AFTRS), in Sydney on December 6th. More details about the forum will be announced shortly.

The Raising Films Australia Screen Industry Survey can be down loaded at <https://www.wiftaustralia.org.au/surveyreport>

The survey is a collaboration between Women in Film & Television NSW and University of Technology, Sydney with funding support from Create NSW. The launch event was hosted by Adelaide Studios as part of the 2018 Adelaide Film Festival.

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* Verhoeven, D., Riakos, M., Gregory, S., Joly, E. & McHugh, M. 2018, *Honey, I Hid the Kids!: Experiences of parents and carers in the Australian Screen Industry*, Raising Films Australia, Sydney.



The SAFC is proud members of The Screen Diversity Inclusion Network (SDIN).