

MEDIA RELEASE Monday 23 August, 2021

South Australia's screen crew base to get a boost with second round of successful SAFC Mercury CX Master/Apprentice Mentorship Program

The South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC) is supporting the creation of screen industry jobs for South Australians with the launch today of round two of the **Master/Apprentice Mentorship Program**, presented in partnership with Mercury CX.

The SAFC Mercury CX Master/Apprentice Mentorship Program pairs experienced South Australian Heads of Department (HODs) – the Masters of their craft - with emerging crew members to provide professional mentoring across various areas of screen production including camera/lighting, sound, costume, locations and more.

Last year's inaugural edition of the Master/Apprentice program was a mammoth success, with more than 60% of participants so far going on to secure paid crew work on major productions including drama series *The Tourist* starring Jamie Dornan, Joel Edgerton feature film *The Unknown Man*, Stan Original features *Gold* starring Zac Efron and *A Sunburnt Christmas*, and award-winning children's series *First Day*.

Minister for Innovation and Skills David Pisoni said while the initiative was originally launched as part of the SAFC's raft of COVID-19 industry support measures when production was halted due to the pandemic, the Master/Apprentice program was continuing to deliver on its aims of job creation, skills enhancement, and expanded career pathways in the South Australian screen industry even as COVID-safe production has resumed.

"By developing an individual's capacity, and creating those important networks and connections across the industry, the Master/Apprentice program will contribute to the ongoing growth and sustainability of the screen industry in South Australia," Minister Pisoni said.

"It is very pleasing to see so many of the participants from the first round of the program secure paid work on major productions with their enhanced skills, demonstrating the success of the initiative."

SAFC CEO Kate Croser said South Australia has an incredibly experienced pool of established Heads of Department who have wholeheartedly embraced the opportunity to develop new talent in their fields of expertise.

"In this industry, so much is learned 'on the job' and the practical experience gained in a production environment is important to enhance the outcomes of training and education pathways," she said.

"Along with our Attachments scheme and Skilling SA training initiative currently underway with 50 up-and-coming crew, the Master/Apprentice program is just one of the many

innovative ways the SAFC is supporting the creation of screen industry jobs for South Australians.”

Mercury CX CEO Karena Slaninka said: “Targeted development opportunities are essential to bridging the gap between formal learning and professional careers in the industry. Mercury CX is delighted to be playing a key role in delivering this program in collaboration with SAFC, to help build the crew base in SA.”

Master/Apprentice round one graduate **Anastasia Comelli** said the skilling program had fast-tracked her screen career, allowing her to go from university studies to working on major productions in just 12 months. Since finishing the program under 1st Assistant Director (AD) Mentor Brad Lanyon, Anastasia has worked on See-Saw Films feature *The Unknown Man*, BBC One, HBO Max and Stan series *The Tourist* and season two of ABC and Hulu series *First Day*, which she wrapped earlier this month as 3rd AD.

“Master/Apprentice is a really special program, it allows a lot of emerging crew like myself to see where they want to be in film; there’s people that really take their time to teach you and they really want to see you do well,” she said.

“I was previously working in hospitality dreaming about working in film as an Assistant Director and now I finally am, with major credits under my belt.”

First Day producer **Kirsty Stark** of South Australia’s Epic Films said programs like Master/Apprentice were crucial for upskilling new crew, and having Anastasia trained up and able to step into the role of 3rd AD on the production shooting this month was fantastic.

“Coming from a crew background myself, and now as a producer, I think South Australia is really providing fantastic opportunities to upskill crew, especially for those from a study background coming into the industry and getting real world experiences. Opportunities like the Master/Apprentice program give South Australian crew the chance to get in the trenches and upskill in a real world environment,” she said.

Master/Apprentice round one Mentor 1st Assistant Director **Brad Lanyon** said as well as being a valuable source of income during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the program had been rewarding in other ways.

“Being a part of the Master/Apprentice program was a really rewarding experience. By sharing my skills and experience and introducing my Mentee to my screen industry networks, I’ve helped develop new South Australian crew talent to take the next steps in their career,” he said.

Applications for South Australian HODs to be Mentors open today (Monday 23 August, 2021) and close 8 September, 2021. Mentors will be paid a fee. Applications for Mentees will open in September 2021.

The Master/Apprentice Mentorship Program round two will take place across October and November, 2021.

To find out and more and apply, go to safilm.com.au/industry-and-skills#masterapprentice

MEDIA CONTACT: Cathy Gallagher | 0416 227 282 | cathy@abcfilm.com