

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

**BUS
STOP
FILMS**

INCLUSIVE FILMMAKING



**10 years of
Inclusive Filmmaking
2009 - 2019**

A portrait of Eleanor Winkler, a woman with long dark hair and bangs, wearing a light-colored top, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

CEO'S STATEMENT

January - June 2019

When I started Bus Stop Films, one of the biggest goals I needed to achieve was to turn it into something which could survive without me. Seeing the impact of the accessible film studies program in the lives of our filmmakers with disability and the ripple effects throughout their families, our film industry and society at large, showed me that what I had started was too good for too few. I didn't know how Bus Stop Films would become sustainable, but I was determined to find a way.

A decade after Eleanor Winkler and I began the journey of co-founding Bus Stop, I'm overjoyed that in 2019, my primary focus has been the implementation of a successful CEO handover. Handing my role over to the fabulous Tracey Corbin-Matchett who officially took over the wheel of the bus in July, was one of the most rewarding, terrifying and exciting moments of my career so far.

During the course of my transition out of the CEO role, my primary focus was on successfully handing over the key relationships and partnerships I had built, which had been instrumental in the growth and development of Bus Stop. It was absolutely paramount that our incredible community of partners, donors, supporters and advocates met with Tracey so they felt a part of this move and understood that the organisation was being given into an incredible pair of hands.

One of the projects I was proud to oversee as I finished my appointment at Bus Stop was our Vivid project, funded by Cushman & Wakefield. 10 filmmaking workshops were devised and implemented, where our filmmaking students with intellectual disability worked with stop motion animator, Genevieve Kaiser to create a three-minute film which was screened on loop in Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour during Vivid. The film One Giant Leap is about a group of astronauts who need to get back home.

I was also proud to oversee and produce our inclusive filmmaking program in Mongolia, which I have continued to manage post my resignation as CEO. One of the highlights of my professional career has been getting to know our Mongolian brothers and sisters and watching them flourish through the Bus Stop Films program being delivered at the Arts Council of Mongolia. I returned in October where I produced their first inclusive film with 16 students with intellectual disability and I will be heading back in April 2020 to launch the film with the entire team.

One project I was particularly proud to kick start and hand over to Tracey for completion was, the implementation of Bus Stop's first inclusive Virtual Reality program. VR is something I've wanted our organisation to get into for a number of years and so, it was brilliant to hand this project over to Tracey and watch from the sidelines as it came to life with our Paramatta students. Also, it was fantastic to watch Tracey deliver our interstate expansion to Canberra which had been on my agenda for a number of years.



So, what is next for me? I will remain on the Bus Stop Films board and continue to be involved in various Bus Stop projects. I am excited about helping to develop long form projects with the company and help to move the organisation from only delivering short film projects to potentially delivering feature film, web series and television projects.

Bus Stop couldn't be in better hands with Tracey, it's been a dream hand over and I can't wait to watch the organisation go from strength to strength under her wonderful leadership!

Genevieve Clay-Smith



Well, it's been an honour and a privilege to take over the wheel from the amazing, dynamic and just brilliant Genevieve Clay-Smith. I am grateful for her faith in me, to continue the life changing organisation that she co-founded, and thrilled she remains a part of the BSF family.

With a new role, comes lots to learn in terms of how the Organisation runs, getting to know its people, projects and policies and I have enjoyed learning the workings of a place which, now feels like home. The staff, board, advisory board, supporters, partners, students and parents have made me feel so welcome, thank you.

I started the role with a determination to consider how we can better meet the needs of Indigenous people living with disability, and we proudly launched our first Indigenous Engagement Strategy in November. We move forward with this in hand to guide us towards greater engagement with the Indigenous community.

This year, we had our first involvement with Screen Forever, the leading screen industry conference, with Genevieve, BSF board member Emily Dash and myself part of a brilliant panel called Agents of Change, alongside Matchbox Picture's Debbie Lee and actor/director/producer Rachel Griffiths. Rachel, then gave us another amazing highlight, coming on board as our Patron, a wonderful way to end the year with the announcement being made on the day of our 2019 End of Year Showcase!

We look to 2020 with much excitement, our biggest year yet, with classes in Sydney, Parramatta, Canberra and Wollongong and conversations beginning around expansion to other regions. 2020 will also see us launch our Inclusive Filmmaking Toolkit and Employment Pathways for People with Disability – Training Program. A new year means new possibilities for our organisation, and of course our amazing students, who as always will be the key focus of our work and our joy.

I very much look forward to driving the bus on many new roads and looking in the rear mirror to see all the wonderful things we have achieved, together, and of course a few happy tears in my eyes!

Tracey Corbin-Matchett

**CEO'S
STATEMENT
JULY - DECEMBER 2019**



A message from the Chair, Peter Tonagh



I opened my 2018 report last year by saying “What a remarkable year it has been for Bus Stop Films”, and I can truly say that the momentum has carried through into 2019 as this year has been a spectacular year for Bus Stop Films, our biggest yet. It was a year of transition with Tracey formally taking the wheel as CEO, a year of growth as we continued to expand our reach and funding and, most importantly, a record year for our students with more content and more work experience opportunities than ever before. A year worthy of marking our 10th year as an organisation and a year that we are all extremely proud of.

Our goals were achieved due to the talented, committed and passionate Bus Stop team. It was a big year of transition as Tracey seamlessly moved into the CEO role and making an early mark on the business with her passion for inclusion, her tireless and relentless pursuit of funding and her commitment to providing our students with support, skills and opportunities in the screen sector. Tracey has big plans for the 2020 and has the full support of our Board.

Of course, Genevieve remains core to Bus Stop and will continue to drive initiatives such as our programme in Mongolia, our continued pursuit of creative excellence and our ongoing advocacy for inclusion in the screen industry. I am very grateful for the immense contribution that Gen has made in creating Bus Stop Films and look forward to her ongoing contribution while, in parallel, pursuing different avenues to promote her talent for filmmaking, her passion for human rights and her desire to see more equality in the film and media industries.

Operationally, Dianna, our COO, has continued to improve our processes and effectiveness in the classroom as we embed the NDIS funding model, look for easier ways to manage our communications and relationships with our students and simplify our enrolment process. This core team, together with our staff and tutors make BSF the amazing organisation it is.

As a significantly voluntarily run, not-for-profit organisation, I would like to thank all the supporters including individuals, foundations and screen organisations that have contributed much needed time, money and opportunities so that we have been able to continue to grow in the pursuit of our mission.

I would like to also thank the Bus Stop Films Board: Tracey Corbin-Matchett, Dianna La Grassa, Jacqui Attard, Brian Maguire and Genevieve Clay-Smith, for their tireless support and assistance. This year we added three new Directors - Emily Dash, Kate Aitken and Jennifer Collins. I look forward to working with them in 2020.



Finally, thank you to our students and their families who share the same passion for inclusive storytelling as we do. I would like to give a big congratulations to all of you on the great quality films you produced this year including *Can You See Me?*, *In Motion*, *One Giant Leap*; *Not a Wallflower*, *We Are One* and *The Inclusive Filmmaker* – all absolutely wonderful and so representative of all that we stand for.

Looking forward, you can expect to see an equally big year in 2020. We will continue to advance our recent partnerships with Information + Cultural Exchange, Screen Canberra and University of Wollongong, deliver more exciting work experience opportunities for our students, launch our first Mongolian Film Project, *Stairs*, finalise our Inclusive Filmmaking Toolkit and, very excitingly, advance our Indigenous Engagement Strategy.

Thank you all, and I cannot wait to see what great works we can produce on the Bus in 2020!

Peter Tonagh



Bus Stop Films continues to grow and build momentum both nationally and globally. In 2019 we saw the exit of our co-founder and CEO Genevieve Clay-Smith and the introduction of Tracey Corbin-Matchett. The organisation under Tracey has made larger footprints and stronger connections, forging many work opportunities for our students. The programs were supported by a wide range of new and talented emerging filmmakers and saw inclusion and authentic diversity hit the screens across a number of genres.

Our Support Workers were not just incredible in the classrooms but on sets and in the workplace opportunities with our students. We will continue to grow our support worker network. This was our largest year by far in terms of enrolments and our students continued to grow and diversify their skills and talents. I am so excited for 2020 and to see many new faces join our programs across the country.

2020 will bring Bus Stop Films further into the world of automation with a rebranding of our website, introduction of a student portal and the ability to officially purchase your own Bus Stop Films inclusive filmmaking gear. As a note on climate change, Bus Stop Films is moving our film sets and classrooms to be fully sustainable and looking for ways to be as green as possible. We know that in this trying time all organisations need to do their part. As we stride into 2020 I can't wait to see all that our students will accomplish and the stories we will tell. I am one pumped up COO!

Dianna La Grassa

COO's Report Dianna La Grassa





2019 A Year In Review

CEO Transition

As noted in our CEO's messages, as part of a strategic succession plan, our amazing co-founder Genevieve Clay-Smith, transitioned out of her role as CEO. Under Genevieve's brilliant leadership the organisation grew to the industry leader it is today. In a credit to her commitment and generosity, Genevieve ran Bus Stop Films on a voluntary basis, until June 30 2019.

As planned, and with the organisation now ready to recruit a full time paid CEO, Tracey Corbin-Matchett was appointed as the organisation's CEO from 1 July 2019. Tracey had been on board with BSF as Marketing and Partnerships Manager since 2018 before moving into the role of General Manager in early 2019. With university qualifications in both Community Welfare and Business, together with a 20 year career in policy, stakeholder engagement and communications across social justice sectors and the screen industry, and herself living with disability, Tracey's leadership meshed well with the ethos and intent of the organisation.

It's with much appreciation from many that Genevieve remains on the Bus Stop Films board and in strategic project roles. In May, Genevieve was awarded the 2019 Telstra NSW Business Women's Awards 2019 Emerging Leader Award. A great way to wrap up her time as CEO.

Bus Stop Films board

This year the BSF board farewelled three amazing Directors. Eleanor Winkler who co-founded Bus Stop Films alongside Genevieve, moved on from the board after 10 years with the organisation as she now living in the USA. Additionally, long term board member and collaborator Director Sarah-Jane Johnson stood down from the board, but has remained part of the Bus Stop family in a casual tutor role and directing projects. Claire Hopmans, our wonderful Company Secretary also resigned from the board. We are very grateful for Eleanor's, Sarah's and Claire's contributions to BSF over many years and wish them well in their future projects.

Filling the board vacancies, where three other brilliant women, with the appointment of disability advocate and writer/actor/producer Emily Dash; business and diversity leader, Kate Aitken, General Manager Human Resources Westpac Institutional Bank and Jennifer Collins, one of Australia's leading television executives. The BSF board is a brilliant and highly valued part of the BSF family. They provide outstanding governance and financial oversight to the organisation

BSF Board as at December 2019

Peter Tonagh – Chairman
Brian Maguire – Treasurer
Jacqui Attard
Emily Dash
Kate Aitken
Jennifer Collins
Genevieve Clay-Smith
Dianna La Grassa

Bus Stop Films Advisory Board

BSF is grateful for the brilliant contribution of advice, ideas and strategic inspiration from our Advisory Board, consisting Paralympian, aerial artist and disability advocate Paul Nunnari alongside game changing screen and media executive Courtney Gibson, together with current CEO Tracey Corbin-Matchett. A great sounding board for ideas, the Advisory Board is an important resource for the team in developing projects with broad impact for both people living with disability and screen industry.

Bus Stop Films Patrons and Ambassadors

In 2019 came the news of the appointment of our then Vice Regal Patron, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) Governor of NSW, to the position of Governor General of Australia. Bus Stop Films enjoyed three brilliant years under the patronage of Governor Hurley, benefiting from the un-wavering support and kindness of both he and Mrs Hurley. We can't thank them enough for the impact this patronage had on our profile and the generosity of their positions on our community.





We ended the year with the glittering announcement that one of Australia's most prolific thespians, Academy Award nominee Rachel Griffiths had joined, Bus Stop Films, as our Patron. Rachel has been a long-time human rights advocate and champion of the arts. As director of the box office smash hit *Ride Like A Girl*, she authentically cast Stevie Payne to play himself, a brilliant move that showcased his skill as an actor and as a professional strapper who happens to have Down Syndrome.

At the time of the announcement, Rachel stated - "I have long admired Bus Stops' work and their unwavering commitment to inclusion. Genevieve has championed true inclusive filmmaking, engaging people with disability in the process without compromising on story quality or artistic effect. I am excited to be involved with an organisation whose ethos and focus reflects what I see is one of the key powers of film, to change people's attitudes for the greater good."

Students Gerard O'Dwyer, Joni Campbell and Nathan Basha continued to be brilliant ambassadors for inclusion and for BSF. This year they attended a suite of events and speaking engagements including Melbourne International Film Festival, Youth for Human Rights Summit, Telstra Women's Business Awards, Shireability Film Festival and Cerebral Palsy Alliance careers day and much more.





Brilliant staff on board the bus!

Our staff are a gift. The BSF family is strong on talent, creativity and kindness. We are grateful for our staff who keep the organisation going. Our Chief Operating Officer Dianna La Grassa supports our student enrolments, student communications, managing NDIS payments, ensuring the operations of the company are well oiled and much more. Keeping our social media presence pumping and supporting student industry opportunities, Vivien Mullan came on board this year as Marketing and Partnerships Co-ordinator. Long term star of BSF Monica Powers, continued as our Support and Engagement Manager, ensuring students are well supported in the classroom and overseeing the support staff in their roles. Johnny Gebrael, ensures our accounts and staff are paid, and we're grateful for his skill with figures.

In the class room, our brilliant tutors educate, support and inspire the learning of our students. In 2019 we farewelled tutor, Stef Smith and engaged new tutors Elias Nohra, Nicholas Lineham, Genevieve Kaiser and Sophie Hawkshaw to work alongside returning tutors Lianne Mackessy and Sarah-Jane Johnson in delivering our Program.





10 years of #InclusiveFilmmaking

This year we celebrated 10 amazing years of Bus Stop Films. The magic started back in 2009 with Genevieve Clay-Smith (Director) and Gerard O'Dwyer (Actor) winning Tropfest with *Be My Brother*, inspiring Genevieve and her producing partner Eleanor Winkler to establish a not for profit organisation that would agitate for change in the screen industry towards greater inclusion of marginalised people. Since then, BSF has grown into an award-winning organisation, which, to date has supported 334 students through our Accessible Film Studies Program, produced 28 inclusively made short films, won 76 awards and supported 357 workplace opportunities for our students. It's been a dynamic decade, you can take a quick look back at the last 10 years of BSF captured in this great clip.



Ensuring that BSF is in keeping with a position of reconciliation and looking to how we can better meet the needs of Indigenous people living with disability, in 2019 we developed an Indigenous Engagement Strategy. The policy statement was mapped out with much welcome advice and support from Kyas Sherriff, AFTRS Indigenous; Penny Smallacombe, Head of Indigenous, Screen Australia and June Riemer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer First Peoples Disability Network (Australia).

Key elements to the strategy include our membership to the Media Reconciliation Indigenous Networking Group (RING); a directive to create an identified Indigenous tutor position and through the generous support of the Canberra community and The Funding Network, a full scholarship for an Indigenous person living with disability to attend our Canberra program in 2020, among other organisation wide practices. Story telling is a powerful medium to bring people together and our commitment in this space is ongoing. We look to continually improve our commitment to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with disability and their families to be better represented in the screen industry.

Photo By
Wakagetti Indigenous Corporation

**Indigenous
Engagement
Strategy**



Festival screenings around the world.

This year we had films screen in festivals around the world, including the USA, UK, Japan, Germany and New Zealand and locally in Gympie, Melbourne and Sydney. A highlight this year was Genevieve being honoured with a retrospective of her film catalogue, delivering a keynote address and hosting a filmmaking workshop as part of the Reelabilities Film Festival in Pittsburgh, USA.

Supporting our students to attend film festivals around the world is a vital part of our advocacy strategy and offers students an engaging and professional filmmaker experience. In 2019, we were thrilled to support four students to attend three major festivals, including Sangeetha attending the Doc Edge Film Festival in New Zealand, Natalie and Nathan attending Melbourne International Film Festival and Reuben attending the Heart of Gold Film Festival in Gympie in Queensland.



All aboard! Excursions and adventures

We love taking the students on excursions and are grateful for the support of our industry partners who open up amazing opportunities for students to visit professional sets and studios. These trips support our students' professional development and offer a great opportunity to take the learning outside of the class room. In 2019, we visited the set of "The Voice" with thanks to the team at ITV Studios Australia; the Australian Cinematographers Society; WIN TV in Wollongong and also took a bus load of eager students down to Canberra to explore the National Film and Sound Archive, as part of our Canberra launch. The day was a brilliant day out for staff and students alike, with many students requesting more day trips before we'd even headed home!

One Giant Leap into Vivid

The wonderful team at Cushman & Wakefield Australia commissioned us to create a film for the inclusive play space at Tumbalong Park as part of Vivid 2019. The theme of the space, was just that, "space", reflecting 50 years since the moon landing. Our brilliant tutor Genevieve Kaiser lead her AFTRS class to create a hilarious stop motion animation "One Giant Leap", which was enjoyed by over 211,000 visitors to the park and many more online.



Growing Our Patch

2019 was our biggest year yet with 69 students enrolled across our programs. We continued our wonderful partnership with the Australian Film TV and Radio School (AFTRS) who offer our students access to their world class facilities and much more. We also expanded our programs in many directions.

BSF heads West

2019 saw the roll out of our Western Sydney program in partnership with Information + Cultural Exchange – I.C.E. This arm of the program brought a small group of first time BSF students together under the tutelage of dynamic digital artist Elias Nohra. The students flourished and worked like champions to create an awesome Virtual Reality (VR) film, *The Last Act*. The early development of the film project was kindly supported by Accenture and the production delivered with the brilliant creative expertise from Start Beyond, one of Australia's leading VR tech and production houses.

Regional Delivery

In mid 2019, we completed our 1 year licencing agreement with The Flagstaff Group in Wollongong. With our team coming into the Program in its final term to support the production of a short film, *Can You See Me?* which was shot on location at the WIN TV studios. The project was also generously supported with a grant from Wollongong City Council.

This year we also mapped out a new relationship for regional service delivery, and in 2020 will return to Wollongong, delivering the program at the University of Wollongong. This partnership will see the Program delivered at the region's leading tertiary institution and open up more opportunities for local students living with disability to study filmmaking!

Capitalising on Canberra

A planned expansion to the Australian Capital Territory got underway in 2019, with BSF forming a partnership with Screen Canberra. With the region's screen production growing as the setting of award winning shows such as *Total Control* and *The Code*, it was a perfect time to connect into the industry. The team at Screen Canberra have been brilliant supporters and the free taster workshops reached full capacity. The program kicks off in February 2020 and has already had much community support with funds generously raised for the program by the Canberra community through The Funding Network.





International co-production in Mongolia

We continued our beautiful partnership with the Arts Council of Mongolia, delivering a translated version of Accessible Film Studies curriculum to 12 amazing students living with disability, studying alongside 8 mainstream film students. In October, we supported an all-female crew of Genevieve Clay-Smith, Sarah-Jane Johnson and Liz Vernon to travel to Mongolia to work on the production of an inclusively made short film, *Stairs*. Post production took place here in Sydney, with the skilled team at The Editors even hosting editing workshops with the students in Mongolia via Skype.

The project was made possible through the generosity of our amazing supporter Roger Perry OAM, together with a grant from the Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grant Program from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in recognition of the project's contribution to Australia's soft power influence. This collaborative support opened up a unique opportunity and relationship, that we are sure will continue to blossom for many years to come.





Working it!

2019 saw 15 work place opportunities for our students. These professional work engagements were greatly assisted with a grant from Create NSW to cover support worker engagement and staff training for production companies keen to be more inclusive. We also cemented our pathway program with Taste Creative to streamline and enhance the workplace opportunities offered to our students with a formal internship program offering greater focus on learning and professional development. Our students also worked with:

Endemol Shine – *Survivor*, *MasterChef*
Ellie and Abbie and *Ellie's Great Aunt* -Feature Film
The Long and Short of It - Feature Film
The Other Guy – S2 - TV Series
 Accessible Arts “Arts Activated Conference
 PWC Australia event
 Lion - TVC - Taste Creative
 NDIC - TVC - Taste Creative
Rocky and Me - TV Show



Inclusive Filmmaking

2019 was our biggest production year yet. Nine inclusively made short film projects were produced through our programs. These engaging and entertaining films were profiled at our 2019 showcase. The fully accessible event held at The Wesley Conference Centre in Sydney drew an audience of over 350 guests, who watched as our brilliant students received their certificates. Our student's amazing work, produced with the support of wonderful, generous and professional industry crews made audiences laugh and cry. One key project in 2019 was *What Was It Like?* A documentary film commissioned with the support of Goodpitch through the Shark Island Institute. In 2019, the films our Programs produced were:

AFTRS

In Motion

One Giant Leap

Not a Wallflower

We are One

The Inclusive Filmmaker

Parramatta

The Last Act

Wollongong

Can You See Me?

Mongolia

Stairs

Shark Island Institute Commission

What Was It Like?



Viral viewing

This year one of our most popular films *The Interviewer* went viral on social media, reaching audience of well over 40Million. This brings our total audience views to date of just under 488Million!! This is huge global viewing for our inclusively made content.

We also achieved TV distribution with SBS screening our film *Lives in Action* as part of the SBS Short Film Festival. Foxtel Arts also screened our doco *Breaking The Biz*, together with our acclaimed short film, *Kill Off*. We are thrilled that through these platforms our films and the stories made by and about people living with disabilities can be seen by such large audiences.



**Over 40
Million
Views**



Finances

We're thrilled to have produced a strong financial report, which showcases us in a healthy position for 2020! Profit from 2019 is reinvested back into our organisation, to assist with our growth, our advocacy work and our programs. We continue to look to ways to improve sustainability and ensure our operations and programs are financially viable.

Our revenue increased by 108% going from \$216,724 in 2018 to \$450,526 in 2019, and our profit increased from \$17,583 in 2018 to \$153,419 in 2019, a significant increase of 773%

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. A copy of our full financial report can be found on the ACNC website.

