

**Cinema: An invention without a future?**

**The career prospects for first-time feature film directors in the  
Australian Film Industry**

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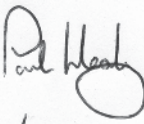
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## CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

This thesis is the result of a research candidature conducted as part of a Masters degree. I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student:   
Date: 30/09/2016

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

10BA	Tax incentive scheme for film production
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation (formerly Commission)
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ADG	Australian Directors Guild
AFC	Australian Film Commission
AFDC	Australian Film Development Corporation
AFTRS	Australian Film, Television and Radio School
AFI	Australian Film Institute
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ARTS	Office for the Arts in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
DCITA	Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (Australian Commonwealth)
DCMS	Department of Culture, Media and Sport (UK)
EFTF	Experimental Film and Television Fund
FFC	Australian Film Finance Corporation
FLICs	Film Licensed Investment Companies scheme
IAC	Industries Assistance Commission (now Productivity Commission)
ICCPR	International Conference on Cultural Policy Research
IMDb	Internet Movie Data base
NIDA	National Institute of Dramatic Art
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OzCo	Australia Council for the Arts
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

## **Abstract**

The initiative for this research project first emerged from a set of statistics, which appeared on the Screen Australia website in 2011 with no accompanying explanation. Over a thirty-year timeframe, the figures showed that almost 66% of feature film directors make only one feature film. The question of how feature film directors build a sustainable career within this sector formed the foundation of this study.

This research project involved a series of qualitative case studies, which focused on trying to reach an understanding of what constitutes the 'essentials' of a director's career.

An online survey was used to capture and measure some quantifiable data: Gender; educational level and duration; type of education; preference for course content; and professional experience were some of the targeted data categories.

Drawing on concepts from critical theory, political economy, education, and filmmaking disciplines the study examines the way that workers make a career in a precarious and uncertain industry.

The results show that prospective feature film directors start out with a high degree of optimism and are adept at positioning themselves through a range of strategies which ensures that they can make a living by utilising their knowledge of the ways in which the entire film and television sector operates.

The study concludes that the primary barrier to an individual career and an extensive body of work seems to be due chiefly to the restrictions imposed on production levels by government policy settings and general economic volatility.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

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Cinema is an invention without a future.

(Louis Lumiere, 1900)

Our invention can perhaps be exploited for a certain time as a scientific curiosity, but it has no commercial future.

(Auguste Lumiere, 1900)

### 1.0 Introduction

What follows is a study examining a small section of the Creative Industries workforce. The study's primary intention is to consider the individuals who make up a further subsection of this labour force, namely, feature film directors working in the Australian feature film industry. Chapter 1 provides a background of this particular sector along with a brief outline of the history of the Australian feature film industry. A restatement of the research question and an explanation of the study's theoretical framework are then proposed. Next, a summary of the mixed methods research design is presented and consideration given to the contributions the study's outcomes make to the existing theory and practice. The review is followed by an overview of the following chapter contents. Lastly, a thesis outline in diagrammatic form is provided.

### 1.1 The Australian feature film industry

The Australian drama feature film industry is highly emblematic of contemporary technological culture. The creation of the elaborate art form hereafter referred to as cinema occurred at the end of the 19th century. The shape of the contemporary cinema industry still retains aspects of 19th-century modernisation (Crary 2013).

An examination of the period between the years 1940 and 1970 shows a very low level of production in the Australian feature film industry. For the period

1916 to 1939, Australia did have a self-sustaining domestic industry but the Second World War, and Australia's changing economic allegiances saw this activity fade away into a thirty-year hiatus. Feature films were made in Australia in the 1940-1970 period, but they were chiefly foreign productions (*On the Beach*, *The Overlanders*, *A Town Like Alice*, and *Age of Consent*) or co-productions between Australian and international production companies (*Walk into Paradise* and *They're a Weird Mob*)(Bertrand & Collins 1981, pp. 139-45).

It was the creation of the Australian Film Commission that saw local feature film production slowly get underway during the 1970s. Before 1970, directors gained experience through making screen advertisements (both for cinema and television exhibition) and through working on dramas produced for television. Aside from the relatively young television industry, private production companies like Crawford Productions in Melbourne and the Federal Government's film unit, Film Australia, in Sydney maintained an experienced workforce that later provided a nucleus for local feature film production.

There was also a tiny underground filmmaker's movement, which aside from encouraging and fostering technical skills development also produced some experimental films and offered an alternative distribution and exhibition outlet. Other director aspirants came from the university film societies (Mudie 1997, p. 6) . It wasn't until the mid-seventies that film studies courses were accepted by universities (King, Verevis & Williams 2013, p. 81) and so the directors who emerged from the universities in the late 60s to early 70s were liberal arts students. Some of these filmmakers attempted making 'commercial' feature films with some notable success (Dermody & Jacka 1987, pp. 48-9).

The new age of government subsidisation that began with the foundation of the Australian Film Commission also saw the creation of the Australian Film Television and Radio School in 1973. Its establishment had the express aim '... to seed the revival of the Australian film industry with skilled practitioners who could deliver artistic productions of distinction' (AFTRS 1998, p. 6). Thus began

the renaissance of a local feature film industry.

The two opening quotes for this chapter from the Lumiere Brothers (Bardeche & Brasillach 1938, pp. 10-1), might suggest that their belief in their own technology was uncertain. And, despite its century-long persistence, people are still lining up to proclaim the death of cinema. The death of cinema presents us with a twofold problematic. Firstly, we have the anthropomorphic paradigm of dead cinema versus living cinema. As Witt points out, the underlying assumption behind the notion of the death of cinema is that it must have been alive, to begin with (Witt 1999). Secondly, when talking about cinema in such an abstract way we are separating the director from the industrial process, and it is this process, which is really what the word cinema describes.

Questioning whether or not the industrial process known as cinema has a future might perhaps be seen to be part of this general confusion. While it might appear naïf and just wrong to identify a career in an industry with the technology apparatus itself, it is the intention of this study to attempt to position the director's career squarely within an economic framework to examine its viability as a career pathway in the cultural production sector. This particular industry is mainly built on human creative and imaginative capital rather more so than any large-scale human enterprise and so it could be argued that it is only right and fitting to identify the key human progenitor in this creative business with the industry that relies so much on the labour of the director. It is in this spirit that this study offers a portrait of the Australian feature film director.

The feature film director differs from other directors working in the television industry across some importantly different dimensions. Firstly, the feature film project is usually developed over a very extended period. Some projects are in development for around ten years. According to a 2003 survey conducted by the Australian Film Commission, scripts on average take almost four years between first draft stage and pre-production (AFC 2003, p. 7). There appear to be several business models that determine at what stage the director is

involved with the project, and these models pose some of the main difficulties in the director's ability to maintain an income stream.

The first business model requires the director performing a combined role as the screenwriter and the person who initiates the search for development support and capital. This model accounts for 79% of projects in Australia (AFC 2003, p. 5). This is because, for the first time directors, this is one of the most certain ways of starting their career as a feature film director. This scenario presents many inherent problems for the director. It requires a very particular type of person who is not just imbued with an entrepreneurial spirit but one who is also well versed in the intricacies of contract law as it pertains to general business as well as to the specifics of copyright law. This understanding is essential because the most important aspect of attracting investment for a feature film project at this stage is ensuring that the intellectual property at the heart of the project is not jeopardised through ill-advised agreements. This approach requires an expert negotiator. The AFC survey also reported that the stop-start nature that was entailed in this model of development also caused problems for the film (AFC 2003, p. 3). The biggest problem with being the prime mover for the project is that usually, it is a full-time job that involves no income. The question then becomes for somebody pursuing this path: how do I make a living? Without knowledge of or access to the wider network of funding and expertise, this business model is fraught with problems that often result in no film being made.

The second business model involves a feature film producer and a scriptwriter, who may not be the director, looking for initial finance. In this model, it is the producer who is the driver of the project, and it may be the case that the director is brought on to the project at a relatively late stage. This model may insulate the director from some of the vagaries of fluctuating finances and may provide a little more certainty about the eventuality of the production. More importantly, it allows the director to seek alternative sources of income during this development phase. It doesn't, however, offer any guarantee that the project



will reach the critical production stage. The advantage is that success is more likely because the additional expertise that the producer brings to the project means that there is a greater chance of gaining access to funding networks. The effort is facilitated further by the fact that an experienced producer will have access to a range of industry entry points that the producer may have used previously. More people working on the project at this stage also help to spread the effort across more specialised experts who may have a broader understanding of legal and marketing strategies. This amelioration of the labour load also contributes to protecting the project from the potential of personnel burnout when too few people are trying to accomplish too much. The AFC survey reports for this instance only 60% of producers join the project at the treatment stage, with 35% coming on after the second draft or later (AFC 2003, p. 6).

The third business model involves a project that is developed completely from script commission to preproduction without the feature director's involvement. This model is uncommon in the Australian industry where the first two models, or an amalgam of them, prevail. The primary barrier for production companies adopting this business model in Australia, however, is that there are very few independent production companies capable of attracting what is referred to as slate funding (Brass 2007). Slate funding is where the production company develops several or more films with funding coming from traditional investment institutions such as banks and private firms. This model is more commonly found in the US where wealthy individuals are seeking to diversify their investments into alternative forms of investment to stocks and bonds (Vogel 2011, p. loc 3075). Both the film production company and the investors share the risk at various stages of the investment cycle, but the risk is spread across ten or twenty films and the investment fund receives a higher-than-average investment return.

The reported obstacles to this third business model are first that the filmmakers need to learn how to communicate with financial institutions that are not familiar

with the arts community and secondly the production companies need to overcome the chief obstacle of having to build that sort of increased production capability. This model would be of great benefit to the director community however because it would mean that the burden of having to develop their script property and be responsible for raising script funding, would become somebody else's responsibility. The director would then be free to earn a living and work on other projects.

These three business models have created the most difficulty for the director's ability to make a viable living from the practice of their skills. Feature film directors, like the general population of workers, find real satisfaction in their labour. Like most workers however the reality that they face in their workplace is that they have little control over their work and conditions and for some of their working life, they are 'an instrument of alienated performance' (Marcuse 1955, pp. 45-7).

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework of the Study**

The initial research at the proposal stage uncovered the theory that the feature film industry has its foundations in a mixed-economy approach applied by successive Australian Federal governments over a thirty-year timeframe. This theory of direct government intervention and support in the building and sustenance of this creative industry is distinctly at odds with the industry's free market, venture capital image. The reality of the feature film director's employment and career trajectory, while in some ways resembling an entrepreneur, also exhibits some aspects of an employee at the mercy of a capricious employer.

The labour force conditions for the Feature Film industry consist of short-term employment contracts. Individual's negotiate their own wages and conditions and are responsible for what are seen as employer 'overages' such as superannuation, workers' compensation, sickness benefits, and holiday pay. Workers in the film industry sector generally see this employment model as a

sign of independence; the appeal seems to be directed towards individuals who are happy to think of themselves as something other than an employee.

Short-term contracts with employment starting and ending according to the mechanism of supply and demand demonstrates a commitment to a free market philosophy which isn't extended to the film industry's financing model. The industry is distinctly reliant on government intervention to support both the infrastructure and the direct funding of its production output. All appearances would suggest that this is an inherent contradiction for a business model that superficially looks as if it is based squarely on a venture capital, free market economic framework. However, the mixed-economy resemblance seems to hold true for all film culture production throughout the world. With a high reliance on government subsidies and competitive exchange rates, the global film industry, including Hollywood, is in all ways dependent on the generosity of government subsidisation to attract and supplement private investment.

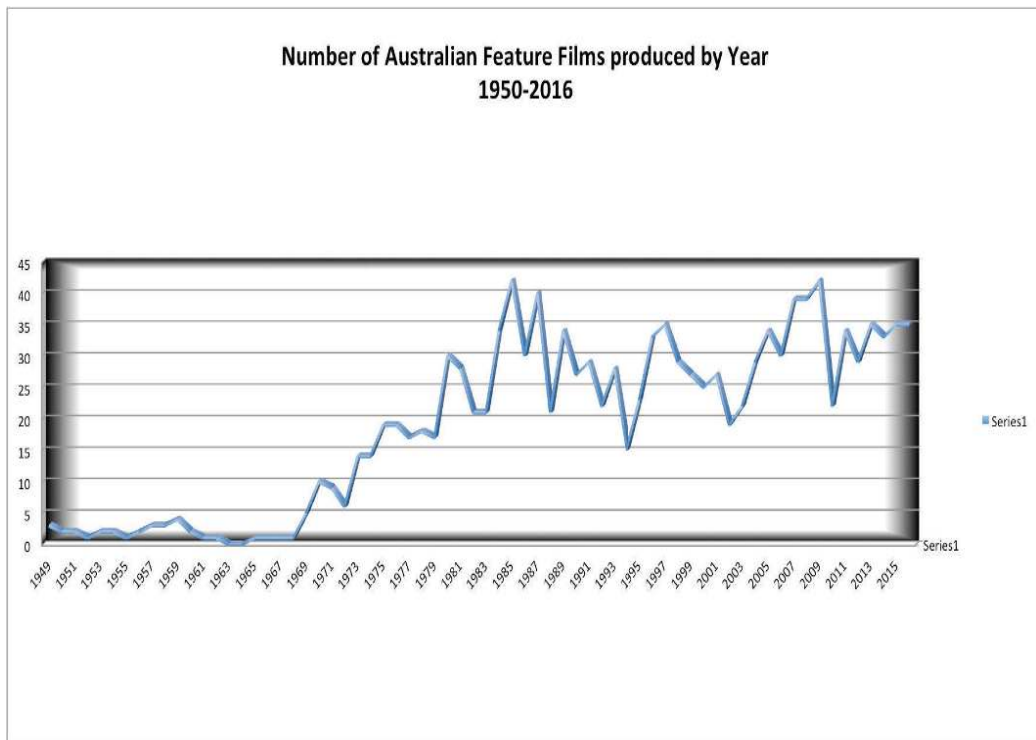


Figure 1.0 Increased productions since 1970.

An obvious example of this dependency on direct government policy intervention can be seen in just a tiny snapshot of the Australian feature film industry between the years 1950-1970 (Figure 1.0). Between 1950 and 1970 the Australian Feature Film Industry produced one-to-three films a year. These films were highly reliant on foreign co-production financing arrangements, particularly due to the restrictions on raising investment capital in Australia, which was part of the Australian Government's post-war recovery policy (Moran 1987, p. 4) .

The Australian Film Institute was formed in 1958 with a cultural mission to promote and help develop an active film culture in Australia. It was also at the beginning of the 1960s that the Australian feature film industry began to develop a distinctive official government policy objective. This period has been referred to as the third stage in what Radbourne (1993) cited in Craik (2007) has characterised as phase three of a five-stage evolutionary process in arts and cultural policy-making in Australia (Craik 2007, pp. 3-4). This period, which Radbourne calls 'the establishment of an inspectorate,' saw the creation in 1964 of a government working party to consider a national film and television school. In 1968 the Film and Television Committee of the Australia Council for the Arts was set up and in 1969 the council produced recommendations for the establishment of the National Film and Television School.

These events were followed in quick succession by the creation of the Australian Film Development Corporation in 1970; a Tariff Board Inquiry that was set up to investigate the extent of the foreign domination of the Australian distribution and exhibition network (1972/1973); and finally the passage through Federal Parliament in 1973 of the Film and Television School Act, which paved the way for the start of operations for the first National Film School in 1974.

This study argues that this chain of government initiatives directly resulted in the increased film production of 153 feature films in the decade 1970 – 1980 when the previous decade 1960-1970 realised only thirteen feature films.

Furthermore, the study maintains that this policy initiative and direct government funding created the talent pool and the infrastructure that led to today's film industry.

### **1.3 Research Question**

The research project originally set out to examine the question: How does a first-time feature film director in Australia develop and sustain a career? As the study developed, however, this issue was broken down into three topic areas or themes, and each of those themes could be seen to be a subset of the original question. 1) The Emerging Filmmaker: from first beginnings to the first feature. 2) Skills Development: Ways to learn the Director's Craft. 3) How to build and sustain a career.

The project's original objective was to attempt an understanding of the motivation and initial impetus behind first-time feature filmmakers, and at that early stage, the anticipated understanding would form the basis of further analysis and theorising. The result of that process would, in turn, lead to a clearer understanding of successful strategies used by directors in the feature film industry. The intended purpose was to examine the various entry points, both personal and historical, that feature film directors in the Australian feature film industry use to join such a precarious occupation.

As the project data collection and analysis processes became more complex, new themes that required a different approach became apparent. The fundamental question that emerged from the assembled data concerned the notion of attraction to an insecure job. Essentially, the central research question then became: How are directors constituted by their identification with the film industry and how do those constituted subjects act to sustain a career?

### **1.4 Research Methodology**

The study employed in-depth, semi-structured interviews and Grounded Theory analytic strategies to explore the career-related experiences of the sample of fifteen feature film directors from the Australian feature film industry. The aim of Grounded Theory is to construct an emergent theory from data collected from participants relating to their experiences of the phenomena under study. The argument is built through an iterative process of data collection, data coding, and conceptualisation/theorisation. Emergent theoretical constructions are repeatedly verified, modified and enhanced through the addition of new information until theoretical saturation is reached; that is, further data collection does not result in further changes or additions to the theory. According to Charmaz (2006), Grounded Theory emphasises what people are doing. In Grounded Theory, the theories emphasise an attempt to understand the phenomena under investigation, rather than to pretend to offer an explanation. The conduct of the interview analysis is interpretivist in its approach.

As is customary in qualitative research, a theoretically drawn sample was used in this research study. Fifteen feature film directors from the Australian feature film industry were sourced progressively through direct approaches to individuals, a general appeal for participants published in the Directors' Guild newsletter, industry directory information and by word of mouth. The participants were selected according to eligibility criteria, and also by the constant comparative method for maximum variation within the sampling frame – particularly by primary field of practice, which helps ensure maximal generalisability of the generated theory.

Research studies will always define their participant population in acknowledgment of the fact that this is crucial information for establishing the appropriateness of the survey. In most studies, the participants are interchangeable and in principle, this is a good thing because it signals an aspect of generalisability. In this study, the participants have been selected on the basis that they are examples of very particular representative characteristics of the larger feature film director population. D.K. Simonton has identified this

method of sample selection as 'significant sampling'. Simonton states that multiple qualitative case studies are the optimal strategy 'if the goal is to seek abstract associations or regularities'. This principle is what Crotty refers to as 'nomothetic'. While this term is usually associated with the natural sciences, this study claims this for what is, in essence, a social science study. Simonton offers a rationale for the testing of nomothetic hypothesis through qualitative case studies.

It is often difficult for a qualitative study of this type, using a limited number of case studies (N=15), to validly generalise from the individuals under investigation, to the broader director population. This study contends that it transcends the idiopathic through its sampling method.

Cinema and those people who work in this domain could be looked at by way of a product definition. In fact, this is the way that some of the more notable quantitative studies have chosen to look at this problem. By using the film as the unit of analysis, it is possible to include not only the personal achievement but it also becomes possible to examine other factors such as critical evaluation, collaborative input, and box-office success.

The deliberate choice in this investigation is to use the individual as the unit of analysis. The central interest of this study is the person, and the study's intention is to focus on the individual's strategies and other goal determinants. By deliberately targeting these aspects it is hoped that the study will uncover and reveal the ways in which individuals build a career for themselves within a precarious and ever-changing employment landscape.

This research project uses single behaviors as the unit of study. The multiple case studies facilitate an examination of standard features across the population. The research question bears an inherent connection with the study participant's status. It is a study that is wholly comparative in its design. Significant samples are used precisely because the sample representatives are

different from the general population but are expressly representative of a particular part of the target population. Because it is possible that the individual participants may possess qualities unlike any other person, it is possible that at least some of the time, the study will be describing intrinsic and idiosyncratic differences rather than what might be common in comparison to the wider population.

Working by a typology which distinguishes between different career starting points for feature film directors, the study developed an approach which determined case selection and the number of cases needed to be considered. The typology is included as Appendix 1. The study began following an early hunch, which at this point centred on the role that the training institution played in the director's career. This hunch had a further importance when considering aspects of government policy concerning the establishment of a national film school and the continuous supply of elite school graduates to service the needs of the local industry. The surprising conclusion suggested that the school's role was probably of less importance than originally thought.

To supplement the data gathered from the case studies and to broaden the possibilities for generalisability of some of the data, the study also involved an online survey (Appendix 3). The study was designed for the single purpose of capturing quantitative data covering missing statistical information surrounding the training issue. The survey was advertised only by way of a letter that the Australian Screen Directors' Guild sent out directly to its members. This advertising strategy ensured an exact targeting of the desired respondent population, which in turn ensures the study's ability to generalise from a relatively small sample.

#### **1.4.1 Data Interpretation and Analysis**

Percentages reported in this thesis pertain to the proportion of the total sample a particular category represents. For example, '44% worked in production', implies 20 out of 45 respondents worked in production. In some cases, the



percentages vary because all respondents did not attempt some questions in the survey.

Cross-tabulations were also developed so the sample could be segmented, meaning numbers could be expressed as a percentage of the sub-groups in the cross-tabulations. For example, using gender as a sub-group, 4% of women had a master's degree compared to 11% of men.

The responses are represented as numbers in bar charts. This is to avoid confusing the shifting response proportion.

The survey had a total of 45 replies. 14 responses were incomplete, and the final number of completed responses was 31. According to the latest Screen Australia statistics, there are currently 204 active feature film directors working in the Australian feature film industry (Australia 2017). Screen Australia defines 'currently active' as individuals who have been credited in the role in the last five years. The 31 directors in the survey represent an 18% percent sample size of the particular target group. 35% of the respondents were female, and this is significantly higher than the number of active women features film directors (16%) in the general population.

The questionnaire (Appendix 3) is comprised of closed questions and the responses to these types of questions were converted to numerical data. The survey has been set up as an online questionnaire, and the responses were imported into IBM's SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Limited descriptive statistics were used to describe and explore the collected data. The SPSS Code Book generated to facilitate this purpose is Appendix 4.

## **1.5 Expected Theoretical Contributions of the Research**

This thesis is expected to make three significant contributions to theory. It will: (1) expand the existing knowledge and ideas on factors affecting the feature film

director workforce, (2) develop new insights into the factors that promote and inhibit the feature film director's career, and (3) demonstrate the application of mixed methods research in a creative economy context.

### **1.5.1 Expand existing theory and knowledge on career Development**

The director's accounts of their training, industry entry, and their strategies for developing a career form the framework for the investigation in this study. Previously, research looking at the director's success consisted of mainly quantitative studies examining such variables as predictors of box office success and marketing strategies. It is the intention of this study to add some qualitative data to this body of knowledge.

### **1.5.2 Develop new insights into the factors that help and inhibit feature film directors' careers**

When trying to gain an understanding of the network of relationships between the various factors that both help and hinder a director's career, it is important to examine the strategies that individuals employ. This study is focused across a recent historical epoch, which allows a consideration of broader factors such as government policy and economic ideology to be included as possible controlling factors in an individual's career development.

### **1.5.3 Demonstrate the application of modified mixed-methods research in this study**

This study also expects to contribute to the implementation of mixed methods research in creative industries studies. The thesis will apply this approach to answer emerging research questions by using both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry while also generating theory through the qualitative exploration of unknown aspects of the phenomena.

## **1.6 Expected Practical Contributions of the Research**

The outcome of this research project will be a contribution to an understanding of the career of the feature film director and their role in the creative economy.

### **1.6.1 Enhance an understanding of career factors**

Global changes in the reorganisation of labour tend to look at the economy on a macro-level. Research into how individuals experience their work in environments of change help workers better equip them to address their response.

## **1.7 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1, this chapter, begins with an introduction to the study and contains an outline of the research question and the methods used to explore the matter under investigation. Chapter 2 presents the review of the literature, which explains the theoretical framework that underlies the relationships among the research topics of this study. The chapter first presents the conceptual framework to guide the order of the subsequent sections. An extensive review of the literature is then presented, with a focus on discussing the three most important research topics of skill development, employment conditions, and human capital. From the literature review, concepts are developed to test the relationships among the constructs for the quantitative phase of the study. The research questions are also designed to explore the concept of career development for the qualitative phase.

Chapter 3 presents the research methods used for the study. The mixed methods nature of the research is first discussed. By a mixed methods design, the chapter is divided into two sections, one detailing the methods used for the quantitative phase and another describing the methods employed for the qualitative phase. The first section explains the design of the quantitative phase of the study. Justifications for the sampling method and research instrument used in this phase are presented. Then, the process of developing the survey

instrument and its appropriate measures and scales is explained. This section concludes with a detailed discussion of the collection and analysis process of the quantitative data.

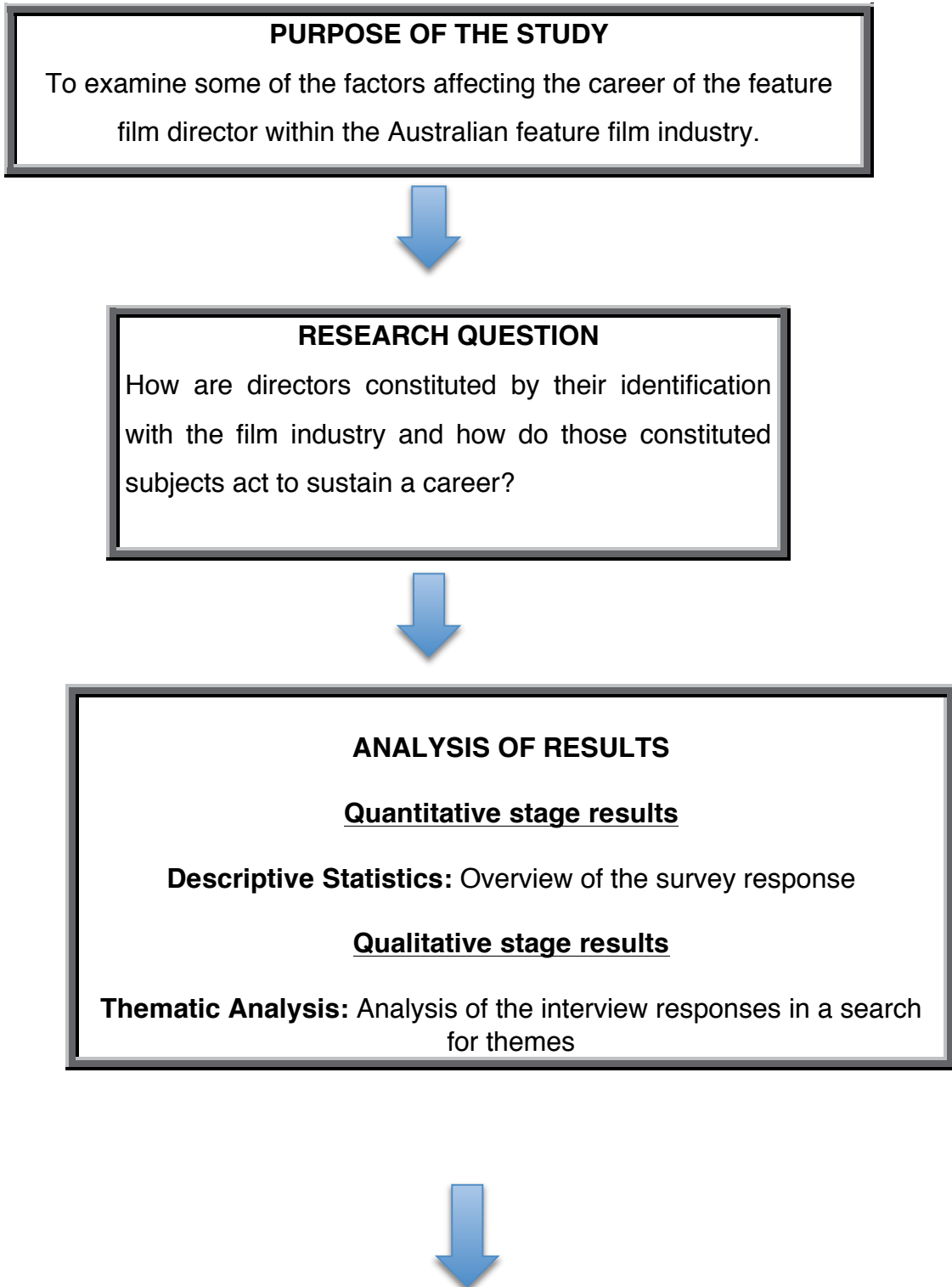
The second section details the design of the qualitative phase of the study. Justifications for the sampling method and research instrument used in this phase are presented. Then, the process of developing the appropriate questions and interview protocol is explained. This section concludes with a detailed discussion of the collection and analysis process of the qualitative data.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the analysis techniques used on the data collected. The first section details the analysis and results of the quantitative phase. A descriptive overview of the quantitative research sample is first presented. The second section presents a comparative case study analysis of the participant interviews conducted during the qualitative phase of the study.

Chapter 5 presents an in-depth discussion based on the results of the data analysis conducted in Chapter 4 to respond to the research questions developed in Chapter 1. The research question is answered through a discussion of the outcomes of the questionnaire in the quantitative phase and the results of the thematic analysis of the qualitative phase.

Finally, Chapter 5 presents the conclusions drawn from the research. The chapter begins by revisiting the rationale for conducting this study. It continues with a summary of the preceding four chapters of the thesis. A discussion of the contributions of the research to theory is subsequently presented with a focus on highlighting areas in which new knowledge has been contributed to the literature. Also, the input of the investigation to practice is discussed highlighting how the results of the thesis could be useful to first-time feature film directors, general industry practitioners, and policy makers. Finally, the limitations of the study are considered, and directions for future research are discussed.

## 1.8 Thesis Outline



## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Quantitative stage to establish some preliminary data**

**Sample:** 45 feature film directors

**Method:** Online Questionnaire

### **Qualitative stage to investigate emerging themes**

**Sample:** 15 feature film directors

**Method:** Semi-structured face-to-face interviews



## **DISCUSSION**

Results of thematic analysis in both phases



## **CONCLUSION**

Summary of the thesis

Theoretical contributions of the study

Practical contributions of the study

Limitations of the study

Directions for future research

## **CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

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### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this chapter is to explain the theoretical framework used for this study. Chapter 1 stated the research question, which was to be investigated using a mixed-methods research design. Part of the study design came out of an early hunch, which suggested that a factor worth exploring was the educational development phase within the director's career. This hunch led to the deployment of a quantitative online survey to gather some basic statistical data to provide a foundation for the investigation of the idea. The research design was also very much informed and guided by the literature review, which initially focused on the research done up to that point. The following represents an outline of the initial unanswered problem, which led to the study, and a presentation of the relevant research that informed the theoretical investigation.

### **2.1 RATIONALE**

The Australian feature film industry ranks only slightly behind the broadcast television industry and the Internet regarding its economic importance to the broader Australian economy. While there have been some quantitative studies that look at the underlying reasons for the success of the film as a unit of economic and cultural output, there has been little research done that looks at the career of the feature film director and uses the individual director as the unit of analysis. While much of the existing research is focused on aspects of creativity, a large proportion of the research has originated in the fields of marketing and management studies (Plucker, Holden & Neustadter 2008).

The two sets of statistical data (ScreenAustralia 2006) and (ADG 2010), which first raised the research question, contained no accompanying analysis or explanation. The Screen Australia statistics revealed that almost 80% of directors who made one feature film didn't go on to make a second one (see

Appendix 2). The Australian Directors Guild figures, which came from a submission to a 2010 Review of the Australian Independent Screen Production sector conducted by the Federal Government's Office for the Arts (Arts 2011), revealed that 58% of its members earned less than \$50,000 in the previous year, and that 69% of directors with a feature film credit make one or less films every five years (ADG 2010, p. 4). These figures in themselves required further investigation and an attempt at some explanation.

While there have been several quantitative studies that have examined restricted aspects of the career of the feature film director, there have been no qualitative studies to answer the rather obvious question as to why the career of most feature film directors is brief and unsustainable. Researchers who publish on this topic hail from many distinct disciplines, including economics, marketing, advertising, communication, journalism, broadcasting, management, sociology, culture studies, statistics, mathematics, and even psychology. As a consequence, they use very different theoretical frameworks and methods. De Vany (2004) measured the number of films made by feature film directors and found highly skewed outcomes militating against success for most directors. He didn't, however, attempt to draw any conclusions about why this might be the case. Zickar and Slaughter (1999) conducted a study calculating the age-achievement curve for 73 Hollywood directors. They found that directors who launched their careers with an exceptionally successful film were most likely to exhibit a linear decline in performance rather than rise to a yet higher peak. Other research looks at Cinema success criteria such as critical acclaim (Boor 1990; Simonton 2004), awards from professional organisations (Ginsburgh 2003), the film's production cost (Basuroy 2003), box office success and artistic merit (Delmestri, G. Montanari & Usai 2005). There are no qualitative studies looking at the underlying reasons why the majority of first time feature filmmakers find it so difficult to progress beyond the career mean of two feature films.



Previous studies have relied on quantitative methods to assess elements affecting the success of individual films rather than the careers of film directors. Some of the more notable studies have come out of the field of psychology and are more empirically oriented in their methodology. Simonton (2009) uses a recursively statistical model to examine and describe the relationships between aesthetic and economic variables, which he claims may offer a plausible narrative that explains an individual film's success (Simonton 2009). It is this search for a predictive formula to explain a film's success that occupies a large part of the research corpus in this area. Other studies (Zickar & Slaughter 1999) use another quantitative technique, hierarchical linear modeling. In this study, the researchers are again trying to explain the between-and-within cluster variability and the dependency and variance in the dependent variables. Zickar and Slaughter chose variables such as box office success and creative teams to test their model.

Researchers conducting quantitative studies (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh 2006) have used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). While this is appropriate for confirmatory analysis in which the hypothesised model has been proven in prior theoretical research, SEM will also exaggerate the amount of variance. Where it is useful is for measuring latent variables (achievement, intelligence); in other words, things that can't be measured directly. In a study into creativity within organisations (Sullivan & Ford 2010) the researchers warn that a failure to acknowledge inconsistencies between construct definitions and measurement models 'may put researchers at risk of reporting findings with limited statistical conclusion validity.'

Delmestri, Montanari, and Usai in 2005 combined data from 14 qualitative interviews and a quantitative analysis of the Italian box office to try and determine the success of Italian feature films and by extension, the success of the director. They found among other things that the commercial reputation of a director is a 'useful way to ensure future success' (Delmestri, G. Montanari & Usai 2005, p. 978). Delmestri et al.'s study, while having as its principal

objective an examination and an analysis of the feature film as a unit of economic output, uncovered some very useful criteria, which helped form the basis of this study. Their investigation uncovered links between a director's artistic reputation and creative partnerships, and their economic success is dependent on producer networks they can access. Their emphasis on 'reputational ties' provided a valuable insight into a line of questioning that was further pursued in the case study interviews.

## **2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.2.1 Creativity**

Existing teaching practices and theories of creativity and entrepreneurial capability also inform an approach to understanding the preparations and maintenance of a successful feature film career. Adler and Obstfeld (2007) explore the notion of affect (in their terms, impulse) as one of the main emotional underpinnings of individual and collective creativity (Adler & Obstfeld 2007). Amabile et al (2005) theorise about the Affect-Creativity relationship and suggest that the sort of cognitive variation that stimulates creativity is susceptible to the affective influence (Amabile et al. 2005, p. 369). An important factor for consideration was highlighted by Borghini (2005) whose paper showed the necessity for studying the entire system or community that the individual worker inhabited (Borghini 2005, p. 28). The affective influence on creativity became a central focus of this study as the data analysis developed. While Borghini's insight into the worker's entire system required an examination of their immediate community, an early hunch developed in this study that pointed towards the global economy as the major affective influence in the case of the film worker.

Eysenck (1993) outlined several aspects of the creative mind. Most interestingly, Eysenck says that the act of bringing ideas from memory to produce new ideas is not blind or random, but the intelligence of the individual

guides the search process with an 'explicit or implicit idea of relevance' (Eysenck 1993, p. 147) . Eysenck's article deals at some length with the idea of problem solving which, for him, links intelligence with creativity. Eysenck's theory complements other ideas coming from the literature on entrepreneurs and has a significant bearing on considerations for training and professional development of the directors. D.K. Simonton, working in the similar area of creativity and intelligence, explores the notion of how developmental factors in the early years of an individual contribute to their achieved eminence. He examines such things as personal intelligence, education, versatility, and life span (Simonton 1976). While seeming unrelated to both Eysenck and Simonton, Malcolm Gladwell introduces an important topic that complements the entrepreneurial learning style by introducing the idea of skills learning through practice and repetition. This is an important concept in the discussion on the types of training that directors currently undertake (Gladwell 2008). These three theoreticians have made valuable contributions to the literature on entrepreneurialism and it was this topic that became an increasingly useful way of examining the director for this study.

A very important aspect of this study was foregrounded in a paper from Apitzsch (2010). Apitzsch advanced the notion that artists and people working in creative fields generally are faced with one-off projects, with unpredictability and indeterminate schedules being the main features of the work. These three features accurately describe the working conditions for feature film directors and Apitzsch study was influential from a very early stage of my investigation (Apitzsch 2010). Apitzsch's findings led to a consideration of the feature film director population as a perfect exemplar of what is described as the neoliberal workforce.

### **2.2.2 Neoliberalism**

As the investigation progressed a working assumption began to form. This assumption strongly suggested that the Australian Feature Film Industry is an

ideal workforce prototype for a Globalised Economy predicated on traditional Hayekian economic rationalism (Dean 2014, pp. 6-7). This idea developed from Hampson and Morgan's 1999 paper that discussed the transition of employee/employer relations within a framework of what they termed 'Post-Fordism' (Hampson & Morgan 1999, p. 764); All of the features of this workforce: the individual enterprise bargaining for wages and conditions; the heavily constrained jobs-market; difficult entry; subjectivation, extreme uncertainty and precarity (Gill & Pratt 2008, pp. 3-4; Hamann 2009, p. 38; Lazzarato 2014, pp. 48-9); high competition level for a few positions, all point to a 21<sup>st</sup> century ideal for labour conditions. Cunningham (2013) points out that a lot of these views comprise what he sees as a 'negative critique' (Cunningham 2013, pp. 88-90). Cunningham maintains that while the debate about the nature of creative labour is still open, there is some attraction in being what some see as an autonomous worker. It was Richard Florida who in 2002 first coined the phrase 'creative class'. At the time he suggested that we were all creative and the shift to this kind of new economy was necessary to replace the dying manufacturing economy (Florida 2006, p. 25). Cunningham argues that Florida included too many people in his 'creative worker' categorisation (Cunningham 2013). Florida's work appears to be utilitarian and practically oriented toward town planning and lacking any political dimension. Cunningham eventually concedes that while creative labour has a 'precarity perspective' creatives manage it by moving outside the creative industries (Cunningham 2013, pp. 103-6). This study focuses on how the feature film director might stay within this core art practice.

### **2.2.3 Entrepreneurialism**

One of the features of what is defined as a neoliberal workforce suggests that entrepreneurial activity is the prime condition for workers. Baron (2006) suggests some ways that workers as entrepreneurs use pattern recognition to identify specific opportunities (Baron 2006); Bierly et al (2009) offers a counter to the perception that entrepreneurs are ruthless and rule-bending (Bierly,

Kolodinsky & Charette 2009). Drazin et al. (1999) cited in Dewett (2004) raised the point about the uncertain nature of the outcome of creative acts. Dewett points out that risk is always present in creative efforts and he further discusses the chance of failure (Dewett 2004, p. 259).

Keh et al. (2002) examine the underlying cognitive processes that inform the entrepreneur's decision making. While their study is looking at Chinese businessmen, they uncover cognitive biases that suggest that biased information and intuition play a large part when making opportunity evaluations (Keh, Foo & Lim 2002). So much of the literature on entrepreneurialism suggests that most entrepreneurs are operating under the principle of bounded rationality but Keh et al.'s study is informative because it takes the view that chance and impulse play a more substantial part than most people would want to admit.

Gabrielsson & Politis (2012) explore a theory that states that it is accumulated work experience, which plays a significant role in the success of enterprising individuals (human capital theory). Performance differentials between individuals can be explained by differences in education, training, and life experience (Gabrielsson & Politis 2012). This theory provided a lens to examine personal biographical aspects of the case study participant's responses, and provided a means of examining these sorts of personal variables.

Choi 2006 outlines the concept of charismatic leadership and discusses its core features with a particular emphasis on a theoretical understanding of how leaders influence their co-workers. Leadership style is an essential factor of the director's role and Choi's description helped to identify some aspects of what the case studies were describing (Choi 2006).

Entrepreneurship is linked to innovation and competitive advantage. The importance of entrepreneurship is evidenced not only in public policy

initiatives that encourage new business development but also within established organisations that actively encourage the development and pursuit of new opportunities. De Carolis and Saporito (2006) suggest that entrepreneurial behaviour is a result of the interplay of social networks and specific cognitive biases in entrepreneurs (De Carolis & Saporito 2006).

A significant disadvantage for first time feature filmmakers is the expectation that their creative potential can be realised and exhibited to its full extent in their first filmmaking effort. New theoretical frameworks in the area of individual creativity systematise the interaction between knowledge and creative thinking. These frameworks also demonstrate how the nature of this relationship changes as a function of domain and age. No longer is creativity seen as a spiritual gift or as anything particularly mysterious. Research on insightful problem solving, creative cognition, and expertise acquisition, as well as historical case studies of individuals with exceptional creative accomplishments, have instead created a more solid foundation for the examination of creativity.

Boden (1998) cited in Dietrich 2004 maintains that creativity is a fundamental activity of human information processing (Dietrich 2004, p. 1012). Lubart & Sternberg (1999) cited in Dietrich 2004, claim that creativity is generally agreed to include two defining characteristics: 'The ability to produce work that is both novel (i.e., original, unexpected) and appropriate (i.e., useful, adaptive concerning task constraints)' (Dietrich 2004, p. 1012).

When people produce less, they have less probability of getting a creative 'hit' (Lubart & Sternberg 1998).

The number of masterworks during a specified period is a probabilistic function of the number of works produced in the period. In other words, during very productive periods of a person's life, there is a higher chance that a creative masterwork will be produced according to Simonton (1990) cited in

(Lubart & Sternberg 1998, p. 3). The brief career of most directors and the limited opportunities that are presented to them to allow an accumulation of experience raises the theory concerning the relationship between age and directorial achievement. This last theory is interesting only because the Australian operating environment precludes much chance of the director having a long career. If there is a positive correlation between age and achievement, it is unlikely that many directors will have careers that run long enough to substantiate the theory. However, if the theory is borne out by, as yet non-existent, research, it will prove a difficult task to establish the favourable conditions necessary in the local industry to sustain all director's careers over an extended timeframe.

#### **2.2.4 Creative Industries**

The feature film industry is of course part of the Creative industries. Eltham (2009) examines the history of the development of cultural policies in Australia and identifies innovation as what for a long time in that developmental history had been a missing concept. He theorises that the time when innovation began to be taken seriously was during the time of the Hawke government (Eltham 2009, p. 231). He further speculates that because a definition of innovation refers to 'new work', which is really the only kind of work that the screen sector produces, that a turn away from innovation in the production of scripts towards more commercial material will do nothing to ameliorate the potential for failure that every film project faces. Feist (1998) conducted a quantitative survey using a between-groups comparative study. Feist reported that artists compared to non-artists were less cautious, controlled, conscientious, orderly, and reliable; they were more aesthetic, creative, curious, imaginative, open to experience, sensitive, and original; they were less rigid, conventional and socialised (Feist 1998, p. 298).

Hennig-Thurau et al (2006) continue this theme in an examination of what they term as success drivers for motion pictures. Using a quantitative

methodology and a large sample size of Hollywood feature films, their study concluded that the power of the Director's name to attract an audience was very low on their scale (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh 2006).

Ginsburgh & Weyers (2006) conducted a study looking at artists and their creative output according to an age scale. They concluded that the number of important, creative or 'best quality' works is proportional to the total number of works produced, so that the ratio of quality to quantity is, on average, constant over the life cycle, leading to the so-called 'constant-probability-of-success model' (Simonton 1988, p. 254), and creative achievements are generated at any moment in the life cycle. This also is in agreement with Simonton's exploration of creativity and aging. This has obvious implications for film directors when considering the restrictions on their overall output (Ginsburgh & Weyers 2006).

Hesmondhalgh & Baker (2008) introduce the notion of 'affective labour' or 'emotional labour' to look at the ways in which creative people are affected by workplace tensions within a creative workplace. They also conceptualise something that they call 'symbolic power' which is unique to people who work in areas of immaterial labour whose output is 'a kind of one-way power interaction, which is primarily monological, and is oriented toward an indefinite range of potential recipients'. The authors of this study maintain that it is the inequality in the distribution of this symbolic power which causes tension amongst workers in these areas (Hesmondhalgh & Baker 2008).

Kurtzberg & Mueller claim that within the creative process there exists tension and conflict at several stages. They argue that one of the results of this creative conflict is the introduction of multiple viewpoints to the creative problem, which can provide a vehicle for more creative thinking (Kurtzberg & Mueller 2005).



It is in Masquelier (2013) where we see the synthesis of the two concepts of emotional labour and Marxism. While most discussions about emotional labour are free of any discussion about politics, as if their point of view is without a political dimension, Masquelier repeats Horkheimer and Adorno's claims that all contemporary works of art have been turned into mere entertainment and amusement by excessive commodification, resulting in a desublimation of instincts. Contemporary works of art are not only failing in their duty to emancipate the viewer, they also contributing to the emotional destruction of the individual (Masquelier 2013).

### **2.2.5 National Cultural Identity**

The principal reason the Government funds the screen sector is because of the cultural benefits to the nation. Proponents of film assistance argue that exporting Australian films generates positive externalities. Schou (1982) cited in Molloy & Burgan claims:

The externality effects of the showing of Australian films overseas is the dissemination of knowledge about Australia... the effects of this increased exposure of Australia in international markets are to stimulate demand for other Australian products and to promote Australia as a tourist industry (Molloy & Burgan 1993, p. 75).

In the 1997 Review of Commonwealth Assistance to the Film Industry, Mr. David Gonski described the cultural and social role of the Australian film and television industry and ascribed to it a key role in the exploration and definition of what it is 'to be Australian'. The screen industry would offer the Australian population a means of developing a mature and independent national identity, which it would then promote nationally and internationally. Through an honest appraisal of Australian society and the recognition of our social diversity the screen industry would promote a more thoughtful and inquisitive society which would also provide future generations with an historical record (Clark 2000,

pp. 61-2). The Gonski Report found that the way of ensuring that the Government's cultural objectives were achieved was to use direct funding to support production (AFC 1997).

A form of nationalistic fervour has been one of the primary justifications for the establishment and maintenance of a local feature film for over 100 years. Hayes & O'Shaughnessy (2005) argue that in France, cultural exceptionalism is an unsustainable argument when it comes to the defence of the French feature film industry. Throughout the world, national culture is capitulating to the forces of global capital. They explore the notion of cinema product and posit a duality of event cinema and what they term oppositional (more narrowly commercial) cinema as two cinema forms fighting it out for national screens (Hayes & O'Shaughnessy 2005, p. 12).

### **2.2.6 Education & Training**

The Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) was established in 1976 with two main aims. One was to train people for the film and television industry and for work with film and television in education. The second aim was to train people who want to be professional film or television directors, producers, writers, production managers, or cinematographers, either in the film and television industry or in some area of education (Townsend 1975, pp. 1-24). According to Jerzy Toeplitz, the school's inaugural director, the idea of AFTRS was to develop the embryo talents and embryo possibilities of students, to give them the opportunity, the proper education and training to become artists (Townsend 1975, pp. 1-24).

The first wave of Australian Feature Film directors however, came from other training experiences and backgrounds. Film Australia, a Federal Government film production house, had been in existence since 1949, when it was originally formed as the Department of Information film unit. This is where the eminent feature film director, Peter Weir, received his training and formative

experience, and this is where he made contact with some of the members of his creative team (The cinematographers Russell Boyd and John Seale). Gillian Armstrong established her reputation as a graduate of the Swinburne Film School (A Victorian Institute of Technology, which had been in existence since 1967), while other directors from this period emerged from University Film Societies (Bruce Beresford, *Adventures of Barry McKenzie*, 1972 and Michael Thornhill, *The American Poet's Visit*, 1969), or through their work as actors (Sandy Harbutt, *Stone*, 1974).

In the conception stage of the Australian Film, Television, and Radio School (AFTRS), there was some competition with an already established film school in Melbourne. The Swinburne Institute of Technology had been running a Graphics Design course and in 1967 its Dean, Brian Robinson began teaching a specialist film course under the auspices of the design school. According to Paterson (1999), at first there was no formal training and it was very much the case of the students surviving on their inherent artistic talent, confidence and optimism (Paterson 1996, p. 45), although some students, like Gillian Armstrong were reported by Paterson as saying that they experienced great stimulus from the art and design components of the course, which, for her, represented the foundations of her 'philosophy of film as a means of expression and vision' (Paterson 1996, p. 45).

Film schools, both here and overseas seem to take the view that the film education is one of two things: it is either a time of theorising and building an intellectual capacity, or it is a time to let the students learn the filmmaking process through trial-and-error. AFTRS has seemed to combine both approaches over the past forty-five years, with a fluctuating emphasis on one or other of these two modes. These modes closely match what Galenson & Kotin (2010) have identified as two different approaches to career as a feature film director: they call these two approaches the 'conceptual' and the 'experimental' (Galenson & Kotin 2010, p. 29).

According to Galenson & Kotin, conceptual innovators tend to produce their most influential work early in their careers. They base this work on preconceived ideas, which have little or no relation to their first-hand experience of the world. Experimental innovators, in contrast, tend to produce their most influential work later in their careers. Their work most often arises directly from their experience of the world, while contributing to it as well. Experimental innovators often describe the making of their work as a process of discovery (Galenson & Kotin 2010, pp. 29-30).

Politis & Gabrielsson (2015) explore the notion of how entrepreneurs differ in their mode of learning. They explore experiential learning, which is the mode most preferred by entrepreneurs. Their research proposes that there exist two dimensions of experiential learning: 'grasping' and 'transforming'. The first concept deals with the idea of opportunity recognition while 'transforming' conceptualises the development of 'elemental insights' into how to serve markets and deploy resources (Politis & Gabrielsson 2015, pp. 101-4). Politis & Gabrielsson's research suggests that the learning mode for budding entrepreneurs is an explorative mode of learning. This type of learning is thought to complement the development of the budding entrepreneur's experiential learning preference.

McWilliam and Dawson explore the notion that currently there exists an imperative to build creative activity capacity. They contend that while policy makers understand that this is a good and necessary task, they outline a number of principles which they say may constitute a framework for systematically orchestrating a 'creativity-enhancing' learning environment (McWilliam & Dawson 2008, p. 2).

### **2.2.7 Early foundation history of the Australian Cinema**

In 1970 the Australian Film Development Corporation (AFDC) was set up under an Act of Parliament to encourage the making and distribution of

cinematographic and television films. In 1974 an interim board for the Australian Film Commission was set up to make recommendations to the Minister about the nature of the Commission, which was eventually established in 1975 to replace the AFDC (Dermody & Jacka 1987, pp. 58-69).

The original aim of the Australian Film Commission was to treat the first years as 'developmental' (Mitchell 2006, p. 5). What at first began with adventurous investment risk-taking was hoped to eventually settle down into a stable commercial industry. In fact, in the period between 1975 and 1979, investment returns started to flow and the investment community as well as the producers and directors in the screen sector grew increasingly confident as the reputation of the nascent industry continued to grow (Alysen 1981, p. 351). At this point (1980), the Australian Film Commission began to explore ways of moving from a direct funding model to a taxation incentive model with the explicit purpose of encouraging the private investment market (Alysen 1981, p. 352).

When the Fraser government introduced tax concessions in 1981, there were ninety-two applications for certification lodged. Division 10BA taxation concessions granted investors a 150 per cent deduction on the qualifying capital expenditure of an 'Australian Film' (Clark 2000, p. 68). The net result of the 10BA provision was to attract a dramatic increase in private funding. Private funding rose from \$120 million in 1982, to \$180 million in 1987, at which time the incumbent Hawke government wound the scheme back.

Government policy makers readily acknowledge the significant effects of government policy decisions on the levels of feature film production in Australia but at the same time their understanding about what to do is curtailed by what others want them to do. A 2001 inquiry by the US Department of Commerce and International Trade found that 50% of Los Angeles film producers were concerned about the 'lack of surety' surrounding Australian tax incentives. In September 2001 a new tax incentive was

announced by the Australian Federal Government, 'reportedly after consultation with the American Motion Picture Association and studios including Warner Roadshow and Fox' (AFC 2002, p. 15).

Relevant to this study is the literature covering the economic and creative aspects of the Australian feature film industry. Eight published works which cover the period 1970 – 1990 are: ((Bertrand & Collins 1981); (Dermody & Jacka 1987); (Dermody & Jacka 1988); (Blonski, Creed & Freiberg 1987); (Hall 1977); (Moran 1991); (Adams & Shirley 1983); (Syron & Kearney 2007)). The material gained from these books was useful in presenting an overview of the industry, both prior to and after the reestablishment of the feature film industry in Australia.

### **2.2.8 Contemporary newspaper commentary**

Some data representing career trajectories and box office and critical success for the period covering 1990 to the present is represented by newspaper and television interviews conducted with industry figures (feature film directors and policy makers). The collected data from these sources provided supplementary information surrounding the industry conditions.

## **2.3 Chapter 2 Summary**

This chapter presented the relevant literature used to construct the theoretical framework applied to the three areas of investigation of this study. The first area focuses on identifying the difference between the different participating cases launch their careers; secondly, the education and training they received; and thirdly, the way they approach the maintenance of their career. Therefore, the first section of the chapter reviewed the relevant literature, which informed the approach to the overall research design, which is further elaborated on in Chapter 3.

The investigation focuses on exploring the concept of career development with an emphasis on trying to gain an understanding of what it takes to be successful in this domain. The study suggests that it is this understanding, which has escaped much of the previous research in this area, which has been substantially quantitative. Therefore, the second section reviewed the relevant literature to guide the exploration of the following research issues discovered in the area of career innovation: (1) The entrepreneurial and creative theories behind notions of success, (2) the position of the worker within a neoliberal workforce and a neoliberal economy, (3) cultural identity and immaterial labour and (4) the conflicting theories surrounding education and training. The understanding of these issues will answer the main research question of the thesis. The next chapter presents the methods used to conduct the study.

## **Chapter 3 Methods**

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### **Chapter 3.0 Introduction**

This chapter details the mixed methods used to conduct this research. The term mixed methods research is usefully defined as 'the use of two or more methods in a research project yielding both qualitative and quantitative data' (Hall 2012, p. 1). The two approaches for this analysis were used at different times during the conduct of this research. The staging followed a sequential process with an online survey followed by a series of interviews. The primary focus of the study is on the design and findings of the qualitative phase, using the quantitative phase to supplement and provide data that at the time seemed necessary to support the findings from the qualitative phase.

An overview of mixed methods research is first presented, with a focus on explaining the advantages of using this approach, the purposes of such a design, and the types of research designs available. The chapter continues by explaining the methods employed in the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. The quantitative phase involved an online survey of feature film directors in Australia. The methods section for this step details the sampling method, the online survey design, the construct measures, and the techniques used to analyse the data. The qualitative phase of the study involved semi-structured face-to-face interviews with feature film directors. The methods section for this period details the sampling method, the semi-structured interview design, and the technique used to analyse the data.

### **3.1 Overview of Mixed Methods Research**

What was once a 'paradigms' war' (Kelle 2006, p. 294) with quantitative methods being seen as the more 'rigorous' and 'scientific' (in a Kuhnian sense) opposing the 'softer' and more speculative qualitative methodology employed by social science researchers, has shifted to an accommodation of the space in between the two paradigms, where contemporary research



practice recognises a third research approach. Combining quantitative and qualitative data is a practice that has been conducted in research studies going as far back as the late 1920s (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007, p. 113).

While the process of using a blended methodology is approaching its centenary, it is only relatively recently that the rigid distinction between the two paradigms has been abandoned and the purpose and methods of this approach have begun to be described as Mixed Methods Research (MMR) (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007, pp. 116-7). As Creswell (2010) cited in Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) points out the methodology question has opened out to ask a series of questions about what exactly it is that is being mixed (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2010, p. 50). The range of considerations identified by Creswell included: the stage of the research process the mixing was taking place; what was being mixed (e.g. methods or methodologies), along with the breadth and purpose for mixing.

### **3.2 Types of Mixed Methods Research (MMR)**

Prior to the development of the conceptualisation of MMR offering a third way to approach a research question, Johnson et al (2007) say that combining more than one method was understood as a way of explaining variances in the result method. The approach was seen as a way of applying 'two or more independent measurement processes' to a proposition, thus supposedly reducing any uncertainty surrounding the validity of the data (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007, pp. 113-4). In what was to become known as 'across- or between-method' triangulation by Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, and Sechrest 1966, cited in Johnson et al 2007, MMR or blended research approaches could be thought of as a way of employing multiple 'imperfect' measures to give confidence to the conclusion of the analysis of the data. If the proposition could survive the 'onslaught of a series of 'imperfect' measures, and any errors in the instruments applied to the proposition were

minimised, than it was thought that the 'persuasiveness' of the evidence would be enhanced (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007, p. 114). This idea that the paradigms are independent and can mixed in various ways is referred to as an 'aparadigmatic' stance (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2010, p. 53).

This study approaches issues of validity in accordance with the approach to validity that Huberman and Miles outline in their 2001 *Qualitative Researcher's Companion*; 'validity pertains to a relationship between an account and something outside of the account' (Huberman & Miles 2002, pp. 40-1). In this instance, the understanding and interpretation of the study group is based on an 'emic' perspective (Morris et al. 1999, pp. 781-4) or 'participant's perspective' (Huberman & Miles 2002, pp. 48-50). The accounts given by the individuals in these case studies offer unique insight into this milieu, all of which adds a 'depth and richness to the explanatory framework' (Morris et al. 1999, p. 791). However, in order to make the bridge to the external world beyond the participant's own experience, this study also needs to take on an etic perspective. According to Morris et al (1999) this is following on from a tradition established by B.F. Skinner and highlights an identified divide between an ethnographic study and a comparative research technique (Morris et al. 1999, pp. 781-2).

## Phase 1 – Quantitative Research Design

### **3.3 Introduction – Quantitative Phase**

The collection of quantitative data for this project involved conducting an online survey. The original research design purpose was to collect basic statistical data that was missing from any sources that could be uncovered during the period of the literature review.

The use of online survey research was deemed the most appropriate method to gather data for this phase. Survey research has the foremost advantage of

being generalisable – inferences about an entire population can be drawn based on data from a small portion (Rea & Parker 2014, pp. 4-7). It enables the generation of data that are standardised and quantifiable, enabling the application of statistical analyses as well as allowing the study to be replicated. Being replicable allows the theories to be tested in multiple contexts, further enhancing the ability to generalise the results. Quantitative analysis involves analysis of data that can be counted, and it is most typically associated with statistical analysis.

Using survey questionnaires means that the time and expense of collecting the data was reduced significantly. The survey designed for this study was a web-based survey. The target population is a notoriously busy section of the workforce and it was thought that the advantages of convenience for the respondent (i.e. they could answer it in their own time); confidentiality; and the very nature of the easily identified population meant that this method was ideal for the intended data collection purpose.

The study's aim in the quantitative phase was to collect simple counts of variables such as gender, experience, education, and age.

### **3.4 The Sample Population**

The survey was targeted specifically at those people who identified as feature film directors. For the purposes of this study, a feature film is defined as a dramatic (long form) narrative, with a running time of over seventy minutes, intended for a commercial cinema release (Dermody & Jacka 1987, p. 165). The feature film director differs from other directors working in the television industry across a number of importantly different dimensions. Firstly, the feature film project is usually developed over a very long period of time. Some projects are in development for around ten years. The longer structural form of the film form generally requires that directors have a highly developed ability to control the script and the performance of the actors. Other aspects such as

choice of equipment, dealing with large crews performing complex tasks, and controlling the staging aspects of the production require that the directors also have an understanding of the particular technology that the feature film industry employs.

In 2017, there are 204 active feature film directors working in the Australian feature film industry (Australia 2017). The survey returned 31 completed surveys out of an initial response of 45 who completed the survey to varying extents. 31 respondents represent a 15% sample size of the specific target group. 35% of the respondents were female and this is significantly higher than the number of active women feature film directors (15%) (Australia 2017). 15% of the specific population is sufficient to make a claim for generalisability.

An approach was made to the Australian Director's Guild (ADG) to elicit their support in the distribution of this questionnaire among its members. Another strategy involved targeting individual directors through the Production Book, the Encore Directory, and through IMDb (Internet Movie Data base). Personal industry contacts were also exploited.

In order to target the exact part of the director demographic (the feature film director), the study's approach strategy had two features:

1. In the first instance, email contact was made with ninety people who listed themselves as feature film directors in the two leading Australian industry employee directories: The Production Book and Encore Directory. The chief contact for the majority of those listed was for their agent. This approach yielded three respondents.
2. The second feature of the approach to the sample population was through two advertisements that appeared in the ADG newsletter. This resulted in forty-five survey respondents.

Fortunately, the main contact strategy involved the collection of contact details from those people who had responded to the survey and who were prepared to undertake an interview. This yielded twenty informants, twelve of whom were subsequently interviewed. In addition, three people were interviewed as a result of a direct contact.

### **3.5 Designing the Survey Instrument**

Threats to test design quality can arise through various aspects of data collection including respondent selection rules, interview procedures, and questionnaire design (Mullin, Morton & Biemer 2008, p. 75). Numerous pretesting methodologies have been used in survey research with the goal of increasing the reliability of questionnaires and reducing measurement error. Some of these methodologies include expert review, focus groups, behaviour coding, respondent and/or interviewer debriefing, and cognitive interviewing (Mullin, Morton & Biemer 2008, p. 76). Test-retest reliability may provide an indication of measurement error due to time sampling but we must also calculate the standard error of measurement of the scale itself. People's attitudes change over time, but that change, which would appear in a measured re-test, might also be due to measurement error (Reynolds, Livingston & Wilson 2009, pp. 95-101). According to Reynolds et al, Forsman and Schreiner (1991) and Thurstone (1928) give us two different versions of what Reynolds et al. (2009) refer to as Alternate-form reliability. This approach is sensitive to measurement error due to content sampling.

#### **3.5.1 Designing the online survey**

The online survey (Appendix 3) was used to collect demographic information and included questions centred on the question of training types and levels. The measures of the constructs and demographics were combined and sequenced in a logical manner so as to start off with introductory questions, which are related to the subject matter but are relatively easy to answer (in

this example, questions about type of professional experience). Then, the more complex measures of the constructs appeared in the middle (in this example, questions about level and type of education), with more sensitive questions (such as gender and age) placed late in the survey (Denscombe 2007, p. 165).

The majority of questions in the survey were developed as closed questions. Closed questions were used as opposed to open-ended questions for a number of reasons ((Denscombe 2007, p. 166)):

- 1) It reduces the amount of time and effort required of respondents to answer questions, increasing response rates.
- 2) The uniformity in responses facilitates direct transfer of data from the survey into the statistical software package for data entry.
- 4) The respondents' answers are restricted by the range of options provided by the researcher.
- 5) The list of responses helps to make the question clear to respondents.
- 6) The questions were grouped in separate sections, which reflected a topic area of interest to the research question.

Finally, the overall questionnaire was examined for accuracy, legibility, length, and completeness (Rea & Parker 2014, pp. 30-2). The wording of questions was examined to ensure that the language used was simple, straightforward, to the point, and appropriate to the target sample. The length of the survey was also assessed, with the number of pages kept to a minimum, ensuring that the questionnaire could be completed in a relatively short time. The survey was developed to take approximately 7 - 10 minutes to complete as recommended for web-based surveys (Rea & Parker 2014, pp. 42-4). An introductory notice (Appendix 6) was composed to inform respondents of the purpose and importance of the study, include a link to the survey, and to

alleviate any potential concerns respondents may have (Denscombe 2007, p. 159). At the end of the survey respondents were given the option to indicate whether they were interested in participating in follow-up interviews by leaving a contact telephone number. The next section explains the construct measures used in the online survey.

### **3.5.2 Construct measures**

If education is a factor affecting the feature film director population then it is not immediately apparent in the statistics gathered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. According to the Census of Population and Housing conducted in August 2011, the proportion of people in film and video production and post-production services with a bachelor degree or higher has steadily increased, from 17% in 1991 to 43% in 2011. About one in four people identified themselves as having other qualifications, while around one-third indicated they had no formal qualifications (Australia 2016).

In an income survey of women workers in the Victorian film, television, and related industries conducted in 2012 by Lisa French, education and training was similar across the film and video industry, except that women were twice as likely to have undertaken postgraduate degrees than men. The greatest participation in training for both men and women was in short or industry training courses. Although most of French's respondents reported that it was networks and not training that was important in the industry, French found that there were positive benefits or correlations for those with degrees (e.g. more often in full-time work; more often applied for, and gained funding; were more likely to work in the most highly remunerated sector of television; and had greater optimism about opportunities) (French 2012, pp. 35-8).

Both of these sources have a similar and homogenised approach to their data representation, which makes the data unsatisfactory for this study. It is not clear from either data set which specific employment role within the population

the data is representing. The study required specific numbers for the target population, and consequently, the design of the questionnaire was based on this requirement of being able to specify educational levels and attitudes to education and training.

The constructs employed by the study, with two exceptions, are relatively straightforward and unproblematic. Respondents are being asked to state exactly which part of the industry they worked in and for how long, and what sort of qualifications and education they have. The responses are limited and there is an 'other' category for data that is not described by the provided categories.

The analysis of what, in the main, is categorical or continuous variables (age, gender) is carried out by using descriptive statistics functions generated from within SPSS. Cross tabulation tables from SPSS are being generated to get a 'snapshot' of relationships between gender and what appears to be significant independent variables such as education level and type and years in the industry. The only meaningful statistical measurements, which can be used for these variables, are mode and frequency.

The two questions (Q21 & 22) are problematic because they require a subjective response to a series of constrained variables. The area under examination here is subject content and survey respondents are being asked to rank their subjective belief as to its relevance to the director's job and, indirectly, relevance to instructional matter that may form part of a training curriculum. The scale of course defies any of the requirements of good questionnaire item design. The Likert Scale can fit Cronbach's four features of a psychometric test (Cronbach 1990, p. 36) but it requires a careful and systematic design phase to make it work. While Q21 & 22's use of something that resembles a Likert Scale could be said to have a definiteness of task, given that it is a choice-response test, the objectivity of recording feature may be in some doubt.



While it looks like a Likert Scale, its item Cronbach's Alpha score is around .3 for all items when a sufficient internal consistency score is generally rated at .7 or above. While this interpretation of the use of Cronbach's Alpha for this purpose is in itself controversial (Sijtsma 2009, p. 119) this is an acknowledgement that the questionnaire is impressionistic and apart from the fact that all responses are from a specifically targeted population, there is a general acknowledgement that the survey findings would be difficult to use to make claims for either generalisability or reliability.

### **3.5.3 Accessing The Sample Population**

The first request for participants was published in the Australian Directors E-news on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014. This advertisement yielded a total of seven respondents, three of whom opened the survey but then skipped all questions. It may have been the case that this was too early in the year or that members don't really pay attention to the guild newsletter because a second notice, this time directly mailed out to members of the Australian Screen Director's Guild by the guild, resulted in a total of forty-five respondents. Of these, four answered the first six questions and then stopped. It would be reasonable to assume that these four plus the original three who skipped all questions were just seeing what the survey was all about but the survey design would not have allowed them to get past the first page without answering any of the preceding questions.

The seventh question (Have you had formal filmmaking training?) would appear to be unproblematic. It might be the case, however, that this was seen to be an invasion of privacy or that the people who skipped the question could see the other questions related to training and skill development and lost interest.

Question six (Table 3.1), from the survey (How long have you been in the industry?) shows that, out of forty-five initial respondents, seven failed to complete the response. These respondents are the seven who skipped all responses. The response from the remaining thirty-eight indicates that the majority of respondents are clustered around the five-to-ten-years point on the scale. This would probably be expected of established workers, who belong to their peak industry guild.

**Years in the industry**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than one year	7	15.6	18.4	18.4
	One year and five years	5	11.1	13.2	31.6
	Five to ten years	16	35.6	42.1	73.7
	Ten to fifteen years	6	13.3	15.8	89.5
	Fifteen to twenty years	4	8.9	10.5	100.0
	Total	38	84.4	100.0	
Missing	System	7	15.6		
Total		45	100.0		

*Table 3.1 Years in Industry*

Below (Table 3.2) is the response to the second-to-last question in the survey. By this stage there are thirty-three respondents remaining, representing just over seventy three per cent of all respondents. Twenty-four percent of this sample is made up of women, which is a slightly higher percentage than the industry sector estimation of seventeen percent female participation amongst the feature film director population (Australia 2017).

		<b>Gender</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	22	48.9	66.7	66.7
	Female	11	24.4	33.3	100.0
	Total	33	73.3	100.0	
Missing	System	12	26.7		
Total		45	100.0		

*Table 3.2 Gender*

## Phase 2 – Qualitative Research Design

### 3.6 Introduction – Qualitative Phase

The second phase of the study utilised a qualitative approach to explore the concept of career development to address the Central Research Question. This method came about because of a suggestion by D.K. Simonton in a 1999 paper where Simonton states that multiple qualitative case-studies are the optimal strategy 'if the goal is to seek abstract associations or regularities' (Simonton 1999b, p. 427). It seemed sensible initially to engage in a grounded, idiographic approach to this particular inquiry. As far as research methods in previous creativity research are concerned, Mayer (1999) cited in O'Reilly (2005) surveys the principal methods, which have been used, including psychometric, experimental and case study approaches. In this inquiry, therefore, it was not a question of seeking to make law-like generalisations about this field. It was rather an attempt to identify potentially fruitful themes, watch for emerging patterns and facilitate a more precise problematisation of this area. A benefit of in-depth exposure to an individual case is the grounding of inquiry in a level of detail which may facilitate richer conceptualisation of the area (O'Reilly 2005, p. 264).

The use of semi-structured interviews was deemed the most appropriate

method to gather data for this phase. It enabled the study to understand how individuals discovered their vocation, to identify types of education and training the individuals undertook, to explore the sources of the individual's first feature film project, and to examine the practices the individuals developed to continue their career. The sampling method for the qualitative phase is described in the next section.

### **3.7 Determining the Sample**

#### **3.7.1 Case Selection**

Case selection and the concept of a targeted population are crucial factors in this type of study. Huberman & Miles (2002) discuss the typical constraints on most research projects, which have to do with research time and resources. For this reason it is best to choose cases that are 'likely to replicate or extend the emergent theory' (Huberman & Miles 2002, pp. 12-4). The obvious path to an ideal case was through the pursuit of exemplary cases of the Australian feature film director population. The strategy, which targets a representative 'having immense theoretical interest in his or her own right', is what Simonton refers to as a 'significant sample' (Simonton 2014, p. 11). Simonton maintains that whatever descriptive statistics are derived from a case study conducted using this sampling strategy the results will be meaningful and replicable because they describe the 'actual properties' of the population under examination.

#### **3.7.2 Selection method**

The sample for the qualitative phase was derived from responses to the questionnaire in the quantitative phase of the study. Respondents who completed the survey were asked to volunteer for an interview by registering their contact details. Of the 33 completed surveys 24 respondents indicated that they were willing to participate in a post-survey interview. Multiple

attempts to contact these respondents by telephone and e-mail resulted in 15 of the 24 respondents agreeing to an interview. The remainder of respondents was unable to arrange an interview time or was in a remote location for the duration of the interviewing period.

***A Typology of Feature film directors***

<b>Case</b>	<b>Historical Epoch</b>	<b>Educational Institution</b>	<b>Number Of films</b>	<b>Local Success</b>	<b>International Success</b>
001	'New wave'	AFTRS	More than 2	Yes	Yes
002	'New wave'	General University	More than 2	Yes	No
003	'New wave'	AFTRS	More than 2	Yes	No
004	'New wave'	AFTRS	One	Yes	No
005	'Middle Period'	TAFE	More than 2	Yes	Yes
006	'Late period'	General University	One	Yes	No
007	'Middle Period'	General University	One	Yes	No
008	'Middle Period'	AFTRS	One	Yes	No
009	'Middle Period'	General University	More than 2	Yes	Yes
010	'Late Period'	VCA AFTRS	One	Yes	No
011	'Late Period'	AFTRS	One	Yes	No
012	'Late Period'	UTS	One	Yes	No
013	'Late Period'	AFTRS	One	Yes	No
014	'Late Period'	General University	Two	Yes	No
015	'Late Period'	General University Swinburne	Two	Yes	Yes

*Table 3.3 A Typology of Feature film directors*

**3.7.3 Defining the sample**

Working on the basis of a typology (Table 3.3) (Silverman 2013, pp. 139-40) which distinguishes between different career starting points for feature film directors, I developed an approach which determined my case selection and the number of cases I needed to consider. An early hunch I was following at this point centred on the role that the training institution played in the director's career. This had a further importance when considering aspects of

government policy concerning the establishment of a national film school and the ongoing supply of elite school graduates to service the needs of the local industry.

One of the most striking comparative factors when considering a choice of cases was that of historical era. The epochal categorisation emerged very early on in the consideration of the case selection criteria and proved to be a very significant factor in the director's career development. I have represented the historical factor by a column header in my typology table (Table 1.1) labeled as historical epoch. In my typology, the 'New wave' period describes the period in the Australian industry between 1970 and 1980 (pre-tax concession era), 1980 – 2000 represents the 'Middle Period' (pre-FLICs), and the 'Late Period' is 2000 – 2016 (current era policy).

### **3.8 Designing the Interviews**

The type of question to be asked in a qualitative interview is one of the first decisions to make when designing the interview study. Generally, the question should be of a type that avoids generalisations from the respondent. Qualitative interviews should be focused on collecting data about the meaning of experience of those within a participant group (King & Horrocks 2010, pp. 33-4). It is also important to try to control the scope of the response by trying to use the questions to elicit a tight response. This is to avoid any possibility that the flow of data from the responses will become overwhelming.

Patton (1990) cited in King & Horrocks (2010) describes six distinct categories of questions which Patton claims lead to a particular kind of response. Patton's categories include: Background/Demographic questions; Experience/behaviour questions (i.e. 'what did you do...?' and 'what happened when...?'); Opinion/values questions (i.e. 'what did you hope to achieve...?' and 'what do you think...?'); Feeling questions (i.e. 'how do you feel...?' and 'how did you respond...?'); Knowledge questions (i.e. 'what did

you know about...?'); and Sensory Questions (i.e. 'can you recollect what you saw?') (King & Horrocks 2010, pp. 44-6).

Most importantly, the question design and the conduct of the interview should avoid at all costs any suspicion of leading the interviewee. All precautions should be taken when designing the interview questions to exclude any leading questions and over-complex questions.

Charmaz (2006) cites Blumer's (1969) notion of beginning the question design by using sensitising concepts (Charmaz 2006, p. 16). Charmaz claims that this approach guides you toward the ideas to pursue as well as the particular types of questions you should ask. The sensitising concepts provide the starting point for developing our responses to the data analysis process. Birks & Mills (2011) explore this sensitising concept further and suggests three dimensions to consider: 1) the sum of your personal, professional, and experiential history. 2) Ways of enhancing the sensitivity through the use of tools, techniques, and strategies. 3) Understanding that your sensitivity (both to the data and how it applies to your research question) grows as your research progresses (Birks & Mills 2011, pp. 69-70). Birks & Mills warn against forcing the data to fit existing theoretical concepts. Glaser & Strauss caution that the 'discovered, grounded theory will mostly use concepts and hypotheses that have emerged from the data' but will combine these with some of the existing concepts (Glaser & Strauss 1967, pp. 56-7). Outside of Grounded Theory research Huberman & Miles (2002) discuss the usefulness of what they term 'a priori specification of constructs' to help in the confirmation of the emergent theory. They refer to this confirmation of emergent constructs with constructs found in the literature as 'triangulated measures' (Huberman & Miles 2002, pp. 11-2). 'Theory' in Grounded Theory terms generally refers to formal generalisations that emerge from the data under examination and the 'exploration of the dimensions (of the data) and the relationships between them' (Travers 2001, p. 43).

The interviews usually can take one of three forms: structured, unstructured, or semi-structured. Structured interviews involve a pre-determined number of questions, with each question having a fixed range of responses, which the interviewee has to choose from (Denscombe 2007, pp. 175-6). This is very similar to a questionnaire and the benefit of this format is that it enables comparisons to be made between respondents and ensures a high level of reliability and repeatability (Denscombe 2007, p. 176). Unstructured interviews on the other hand do not have a specific set of questions. Questions evolve and are generated as the interview process unfolds. A broadly worded question is first presented and probes and additional questions are used to explore the topic being discussed (Denscombe 2007, p. 176). Semi-structured interviews represent a middle ground where the characteristics of structured and unstructured interviews are combined. An interview guide with a fixed set of sequential questions is used during the interview. However, there is no set range of answers and the interviewer can also use additional questions and probes to elicit further exploration of issues brought up during the conversation.

After considering the three types of interview structures, semi-structured interviews were considered to be the ideal format to meet the objectives of the qualitative phase. In order to elicit responses regarding the objectives it was deemed necessary to have a pre-determined sequence of questions to ensure that the interviewee would stay on topic (Appendix 5). On the other hand, it was also deemed necessary to allow the interviewee to have the freedom to express his or her own opinion rather than to choose from a set range of answers, which would be too similar to the quantitative phase. Also, as the objective of the qualitative phase was on the exploration of certain topics, having open-ended questions would allow for a richness of data to be captured.

Face-to-face interviews were judged to be the most effective option for the interviews due to the researcher's dissatisfaction with self-reporting or web-



based interviews. One of the study's informants insisted on providing a written response. The data was very thin and provided no insight into the topic under examination. There was no opportunity to do a follow-up interview.

A number of steps were adhered to in order to successfully conduct the semi-structured interviews. These were: 1) designing the questions and interview protocol, 2) conducting the interview, 3) transcribing the interview, and 4) analysing the data.

### **3.8.1 Designing the questions and interview protocol**

The first step is to design questions around the key themes to be explored. This research task was approached with openness to the description of the director's job role. Several question types were devised in order to ensure that the key theme could be understood.

For this research, to ease participants into the interview the feature film director was first asked to describe how they began their career in the feature film industry. This sort of simple question prompted a surprising number of different responses (see chapter 4 for case study reports). The openness of this question, free of any obvious response constraint meant that the interview could begin with a fluidity and spontaneity that then made the rest of the questions appear to come out of the initial interviewee response.

The interview protocol comprised of questions that sought to address the objectives of the research. These were complemented with probes and/or prompts, which were used to elicit additional information about a core question. Once the questions were designed they were then sequenced into an interview protocol, which served as a guide to conducting the semi-structured interview (Appendix 5).

Two well-known aspects of case study interviews that potentially raise some issues are those of stake and interest (Potter & Hepburn 2005, pp. 295-6). In the instance of the study's participants, there was no question of any confusion about their position as a stakeholder in the research task. The research was only targeting feature film directors and was specifically targeting respondents from amongst those members who belonged to the Screen Directors' Guild. The original request proposed the notion that this research might uncover helpful information that could offer assistance to directors' career development. There was absolutely no representation in any part of the recruitment and interview processes that could have suggested a required neutral response or objective and balanced response from the interviewees. Instead, the interview scenario tried to avoid setting a 'social science agenda' (Potter & Hepburn 2005, p. 300) by keeping the questions generic (see Appendix 5). However, it is undeniable that the interview is an artificial situation and that what people might say may be 'artifactual', that is their response may be tailored for a formal situation and may not be their first and more natural response.

### **3.8.2 Pilot testing the questions**

Once the interview protocol has been developed, it is necessary to pilot test the questions as any faults with the questions could potentially elicit unreliable responses from the interviewee. Questions need to be tested for their understanding and sequencing, so they should first be shown to colleagues and experts in the field for a review and feedback. Once this has been done, to further refine the questions interviews should be conducted with a small number of people from the sample population. It is important that after conducting the pilot interview the interviewee should be asked to review the interview and give comments as to what needs to be improved.

In order to pilot test the interview protocol the first draft of the questions was presented to the researcher's supervisors as well as several colleagues

working in the related area under investigation. These colleagues were asked to assess the wording, sequencing, suitability, and clarity of the questions included in the protocol. Based on this feedback several minor modifications were made.

### **3.9 Conducting and recording the interviews**

The interviewees were first contacted by telephone or e-mail to arrange a suitable time to conduct the interviews. Fifteen feature film directors were successfully contacted to arrange an interview.

The interviews were scheduled and conducted between May and September 2014, based entirely on the availability of each respondent. The interviews were conducted in three states to ensure the sample population was represented by different local industrial conditions.

At the start of each interview the purpose of the interview was clearly explained. The interviewee was presented with the formal request that was initially part of the ADG general request (Appendix 6), a consent form that explained their rights and my ethical obligations to them (Appendix 7), and the list of questions that made up the interview protocol. Explicit consent was obtained for the audio recording and a secondary explanation, further to the formal statement of purpose, about how the interview data was going to be used was offered to each interviewee. Every effort was made to assure the respondents that their interview data would be de-identified. Interestingly, the majority of informants stated that this was of no concern to them. Once these steps were completed the interviews were conducted following the questions outlined in the interview protocol. The 15 interviews ranged between 60 and 120 minutes in duration.

#### **3.9.1 Transcribing the interviews**

Transcription is often thought of as the first step in the analysis of the data (King & Horrocks 2010, pp. 150-1). In this study, the decision was made to have every part of the interview transcribed by a professional transcription service. In this study, the interview recording was treated as narrative data and so a non-naturalistic (denaturalised), verbatim transcript suited the methodology for the qualitative phase. With this approach comes a tacit understanding that in conversation analysis (CA) and discourse analysis (DA) methodologies a more detailed approach to the transcription would be required. While acknowledging that paralinguistic features are necessary to convey what would otherwise be an ambiguous statement in a 'script' style transcript, any difficulties with ambiguity can be overcome by referencing the high-quality interview recording.

Therefore, when transcribing, non-informational content such as pauses were omitted, but involuntary vocalisations such as indications of laughter or crosstalk were included. The grammatical styles and/or errors of each interviewee were transcribed without changes or omissions, and false starts and repeated words were also included.

TranscribeMe, a web-based transcription service run by NVivo software, transcribed the interviews from the digital audio recordings. The interviews were transcribed with a timecode stamp, which meant when they were imported into NVivo the transcript matched the timecode on the audio file that had also been imported into NVivo. This facilitated a quick navigation of the audio recording to clarify any ambiguities in the transcript. Timecode stamping the transcriptions facilitated the checking of the interview transcripts against their recordings to ensure accuracy.

### **3.9.2 Analysing the data**

To address the objectives of the qualitative phase the data was analysed based on steps for data analysis in grounded theory described by Birks &

Mills (2011), and facilitated using NVivo 11 software. In grounded theory everything is a concept, and data, codes, categories, and concept are interchangeable terms (Birks & Mills 2011, pp. 98-9; Charmaz 2006, p. 16). A theme represents a recurring patterned response within a dataset and captures important information in relation to the research question. The first question to ask in grounded theory is: What's happening here? (Charmaz 2006, p. 17)

### **3.9.3 Generating initial codes**

Grounded theory analysis is predicated on the principle that data generation is concurrent with analysis and analysis begins from the first interview (Huberman & Miles 2002, pp. 14-5). Smith (2008) suggests that there are two good reasons why the analysis should start concurrently with the start of the data collection. His view is that it firstly stops the researcher from being overwhelmed by the data and secondly, it helps the researcher narrow her focus in subsequent interviews because the early analysis will reveal general, unfocused data (Smith 2008, pp. 86-9). Smith emphasises the point this simultaneous process of collection and analysis is 'explicitly aimed toward developing theory'.

### **3.9.4 Coding the data**

The analysis phase began with the initial coding using NVivo 11 software. This was primarily because NVivo is eminently suitable for the generation of low-level concepts through the generation of 'fledgling' codes. The transcriptions were in a form that was readily imported into NVivo complete with section breaks and timecode stamps for easy and accurate identification and searching. Examining the transcripts line-by-line was the approach taken toward the initial coding and at this stage general attention was directed to any phenomena or incident without thinking beyond the immediate account. This part of the process yielded a large number of potentially useful properties, which were later discarded when an understanding of the implicit

meanings through an across-case comparison began to emerge.

In the early stages of the coding work, terms were often interchangeable with the same experience being assigned several different codes. It was much later in the coding when core categories began to emerge and a sense of theory development started to become apparent. Sensitising concepts that had been developed from the literature review began to reveal a match between the participant's experience and existing theoretical constructs. Sensitising concepts also came from personal experience of working in this field. Themes at first were very general and suggested entirely by the data and the sensitising concepts were the means of being able to begin to make sense of what at first seemed like an endless and ambiguous set of descriptions.

### **3.9.5 Searching for themes**

Huberman & Miles (2002) suggest that beyond looking for codes to describe concepts and themes within a case there is a profitable tactic in searching across cases for patterns (Huberman & Miles 2002, pp. 17-8). This 'cross-site' tactic is largely an iterative process with the researcher working backwards and forwards to compare the emerging concepts. This is also useful in identifying what Silverman (2013) describes as deviant cases. Deviant cases can often show us the distinction between the way the participant group construct reality and the notion of substantive truth (Silverman 2013, p. 105). Huberman & Miles (2002) also cite Kahneman & Tversky (1973) in relation to the general unreliability of first hand accounts. Kahneman & Tversky warn us that humans are 'notoriously poor processors of information' (Huberman & Miles 2002, pp. 17-8). Silverman makes a claim that these deviant cases are really an important but rarely seen facet of qualitative research. Categories start to emerge once pattern similarities and conceptual reoccurrences are identified (Birks & Mills 2011, pp. 102-3). It is at this point when all of the multiple codes describing similar if not the same thing begin to be identified

and grouped into themes. This is the moment in the examination of the data when the researcher starts to move toward a more sophisticated understanding of the data.

### **3.9.6 Reviewing themes**

It is also at this stage that the researcher starts looking for a close fit between the existing theory and the evidence from each case. Miles & Huberman (2002) recommend a two-step process that begins with a refining of the definition of the construct and is followed by a process of evidence building which 'measures the constructs in each case' (Huberman & Miles 2002, pp. 18-20). Charmaz also counsels that it is around this point that the researcher asks a number of questions to determine the progress of the data analysis: 1) Have I collected enough background data to be able to understand and portray the full range of contexts? 2) Have I gained detailed descriptions of a range of participant's views? 3) Do the data reveal what lies beneath the surface? 4) Have I gained multiple views of the participant's range of actions? (Charmaz 2006, p. 18).

### **3.9.7 Defining and naming themes**

The defining and naming of themes began with a line-by-line examination of the data, concentrating initially on the actions and properties implicit in the participant's narrative. In the beginning stages of the coding process, there were often many codes that were applied to the same line or sentence from the interview. Eventually, after comparing the codes across the cases, methods were developed that facilitated the collapse the codes to represent larger themes. In a particular example, what started as a dozen or more original codes about how directors approached their first feature film project became a topic about the history of film funding. The access to film funding was a universal theme encompassing many important aspects of career development, but it leads eventually to an even larger theme concerning the way the director constructs a professional identity. The 'constant comparative method' (Glaser & Strauss 1967, pp. 113-4) of between-case data helped

facilitate the generating of conceptually high-level categories. The low-level analysis generated the initial codes and helped in the approach to the first-stage analysis of the interview data. However, it wasn't until many more attempts at approaching the data that the conceptualising of the data shifted to a more abstract understanding. The conceptual dimensions seemed to grow as an understanding of what the comparisons of the between-case data were really saying became clear. Birks & Mills (2011) anticipate this transformation in the researcher's conceptual understanding (Birks & Mills 2011, pp. 103-5).

### **3.9.8 Producing the results**

Once the analysis has been conducted the next step involves writing up the results of the thematic analysis. This can involve reporting the themes, which were discovered from the interviews accompanied by excerpts, which serve to illustrate the essence of the theme. The exploration of the themes and the possible relationships among them subsequently serve to answer the research question of the study. The results of the thematic analysis are presented in Chapter 4.

### **3.10 Chapter 3 Summary**

This chapter discussed the methods used to collect and analyse the data. The study used a mixed methods approach, and was categorised as a partially mixed design. The research was conducted in two sequential phases. In the first and primary phase, an online survey was conducted to gather the data necessary to complement and broaden the constructs in the study. The survey contained questions to measure education type and level, gender representation in both the industry and in relation to education, human capital, and attitudes to training content. The online survey generated a total of 45 responses resulting in a 22% response rate across the entire feature film population (N=204). The number of responses was deemed satisfactory, as the only participants were exemplars of the general feature film director



population. The responses were then downloaded, coded, and analysed using the data analysis software program SPSS 23.0. The main data analysis technique used generated graphs and cross tabulation tables to represent basic data relating to education and training.

In the second phase, post-survey interviews were conducted to further explore the concept of career development approaches and strategies. The interviews contained questions exploring the types of strategies implemented, the sources of strategic ideas, and the barriers to a career. Fifteen post-survey semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted and the results were transcribed and coded through the use of the transcription service TranscribeMe and NVivo 11.0 software. The main technique used to analyse the qualitative data was Grounded Theory analysis following guidelines provided by Glaser & Strauss (1967); Charmaz (2006); and Birks & Mills (2011). A detailed presentation of the analysis of the statistical data and results of the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study are presented in the chapter 4.

## **Chapter 4 Analysis and Results**

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### **Chapter 4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis of the data and the ensuing results. The first section demonstrates the analysis of the online survey data and the generation of the basic statistical data to establish some general population information. The purpose here is to generate some supporting data for a discussion of one of the themes, education, which emerged from the qualitative interviews. The second section presents an abridged representation of the post-survey interviews. The next section discusses the quantitative results.

### **Phase 1 –Quantitative Results**

#### **4.1 Introduction – Quantitative Results**

This section presents the analysis and results from the quantitative phase. The objective is to provide some supporting data for one of the sensitising concepts uncovered in the literature review. First, a descriptive overview of the sample is presented. Then the results of the analysis of the survey data are shown. This phase is designed to elucidate the thematic question: What part does education and training play in the director's career development?

#### **4.2 Descriptive Overview of the Sample**

The data for this study was collected in between January and July 2014 using an online survey (Appendix 3). The survey achieved a total of 45 responses. Of those, 31 respondents completed the survey after five months of the administration. The other 14 respondents did not supply all required data. 31 respondents represent 18% of the 169 active feature film directors currently working in the Australian feature film industry (Australia 2016b). Once the

data collection period ended, the data was coded and imported into SPSS 23.0. A Code Book was generated from inside SPSS 23.0 (Appendix 4).

#### **4.2.1 Assessing non-response bias**

Non-response bias refers to a bias in survey results that occurs when the population of respondents who do not participate in a survey is not randomly distributed (Lahaut et al. 2002, p. 256). Assessing non-response bias is important because if the population of non-respondents differs significantly from the population of respondents to a survey, the results will not allow one to make generalised assumptions for the entire study sample (Armstrong & Overton 1977, p. 9) Non-response bias is assessed by comparing respondents and non-respondents based on their demographic information. If there is no significant difference in their characteristics, it can be concluded that the survey results are representative of the overall study population (Barclay et al. 2002, p. 110).

Of the 45 responses received, only 31 responses were usable for the data generation. Usability was affected by the fact that 14 respondents had data missing on their demographic variables. Otherwise, because the study was targeting a very specific demographic, there is a reasonable degree of confidence that any effect of non-bias response on this survey is negligible.

#### **4.2.2 Dealing with missing data**

Missing data was a fact of this survey. For the first seven survey questions, eight respondents out of 38 skipped the response. Skipped responses remained constant until Question 7. Then 12 respondents omitted their response. Question 10 saw the number of non-responses climb to 15. For Questions 11-12, the number climbed to 17 and then dropped back to 12 non-responses for Question 13. Question 14 saw non-responses climb to 21 out of 46 respondents. Questions 14, 15, and 16 were related questions so 26

respondents who skipped these questions probably found that those three questions did not apply to them. 12 people skipped Questions 17 & 18. 20 skipped Question 19. 28 skipped Question 20. Questions 17, 18, 19, and 20 related to acting so again it was anticipated that these questions would not be relevant to all respondents. Questions 21 to 24 were missing 12 responses.

Using SPSS 23.0 to process the data facilitated the adjustment of the data processing to account for missing data in each analysis by using the Options setting, 'Exclude cases pairwise', which excludes the case only if they are missing data required for the specific analysis (Pallant 2011, p. 211).

#### **4.2.3 Details of the respondents**

The survey had a total of 45 responses. 14 responses were incomplete, and the final number of completed responses was 31. There are currently 190 active feature film directors working in the Australian feature film industry (Australia 2016b), and so 31 represent a 18% percent sample size of the specific target group. 35% of the respondents were female, and this is significantly higher than the number of active women feature film directors (16%).

All respondents to the survey were recruited from the very specific population referred to as feature film directors. This study has previously underlined the point that the statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Screen Australia tend to refer to homogenised industrial groupings in their reports. It was necessary for reasons of generalisability that the study targets this very specific population. Table 4.1 tells us that the majority of the respondents have been in the industry for between 11-15 years. The distribution curve would suggest that this is the actual average for the main workforce in an industry where the mean for the working age is 40.

#### 4.2.4 Employment in the feature film director sector

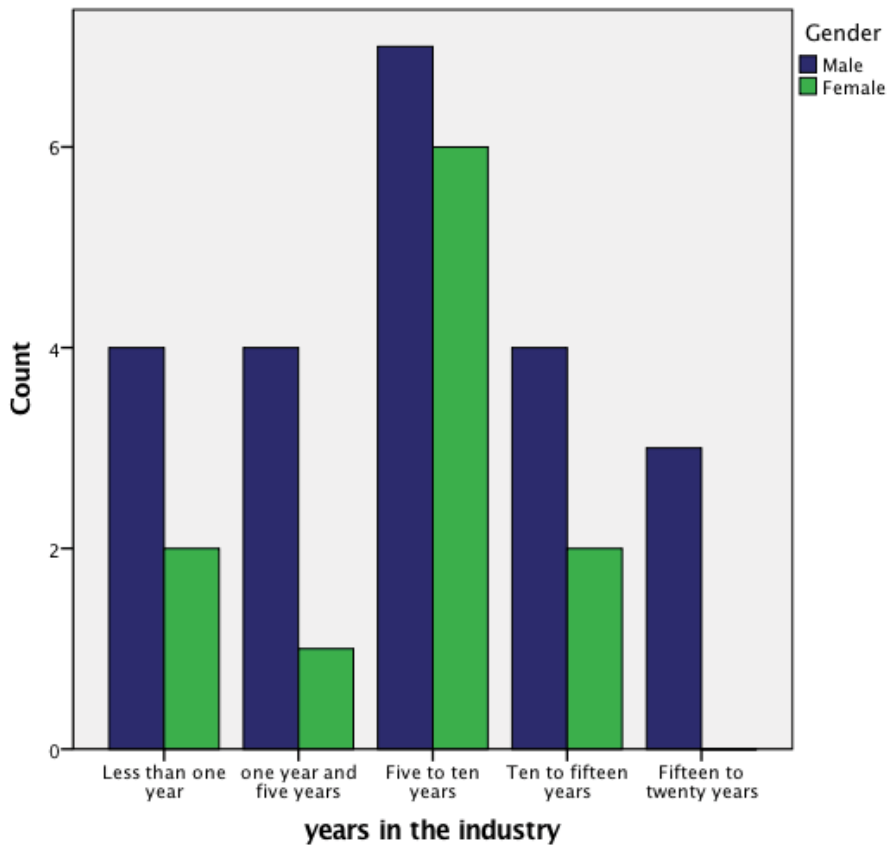


Figure 4.1 years working in the Australian film industry

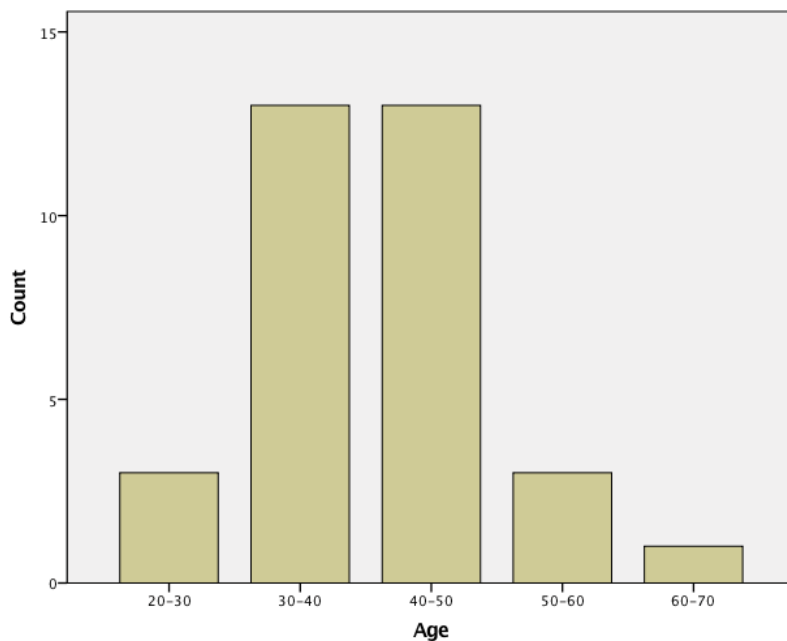
#### CAREER PROSPECTS FOR AUSTRALIAN FEATURE FILM DIRECTORS

Cross Tabulation Frequency / Percentage	How many years have you been working, in any capacity, in the Australian Film In ...							
		Less than one year	Between one year and five years	Six to ten years	Eleven to fifteen years	Sixteen to twenty years	More than twenty years	Row Totals
Please tick the appropriate box, indicating your sex.	Male	0 0.00%	4 20.00%	4 20.00%	7 35.00%	3 15.00%	2 10.00%	20 66.67%
	Female	0 0.00%	2 20.00%	1 10.00%	6 60.00%	1 10.00%	0 0.00%	10 33.33%
	Column Totals	0 0.00%	6 20.00%	5 16.67%	13 43.33%	4 13.33%	2 6.67%	30 100%

Table 4.1 reported time in industry as a gender distribution of survey respondents

A cross tabulation is a way of comparing two variables such as in this case, gender and years in the industry. The percentage figure below the count,

suggests a proportion of the entire sample divided into the gender category. So, for example, those at the 'eleven to fifteen years' working duration point, 60% of the female group and 35% of the male sample are represented. However, when we get to the 'more than 20 years' point there are 10% of the male sample still working but 0% females. Although these data only really indicate the survey respondents, it might be possible to consider that this gender/age relationship may be the case in the broader director population and this would be something worthwhile looking at in a future study. It is also apparent though that because there are no respondents that have worked for less than one year, that this sample group may be suffering from a sample bias due to the population being drawn entirely from the guild organisation. It may be the case that people only join the guild after working for one year.



*Figure 4.2 reported age distribution in years of survey respondents*

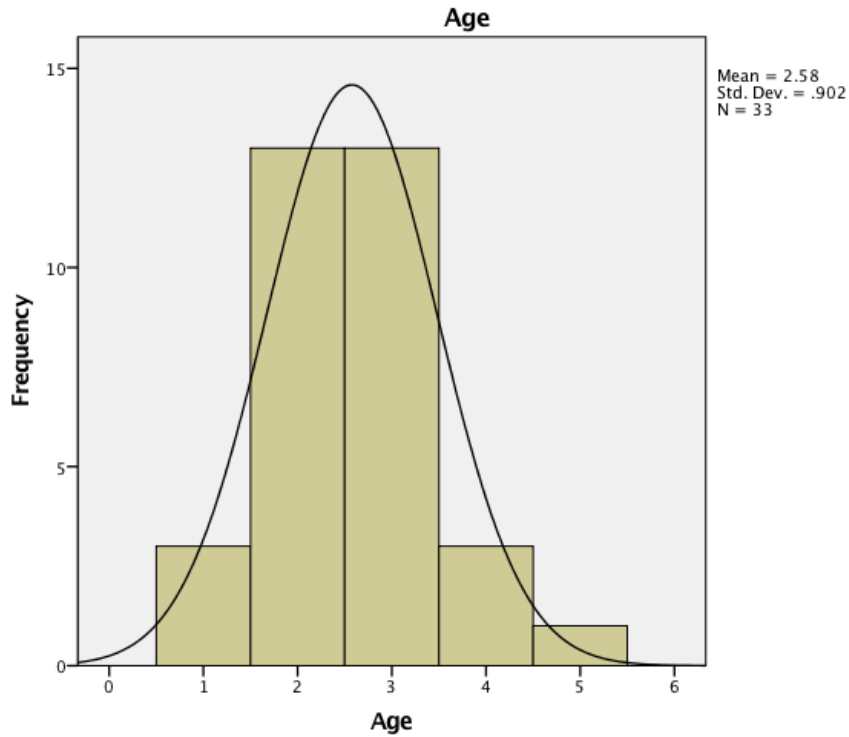


Figure 4.3 Distribution curve for age of survey respondents  
The average age for the sample is 35-40.

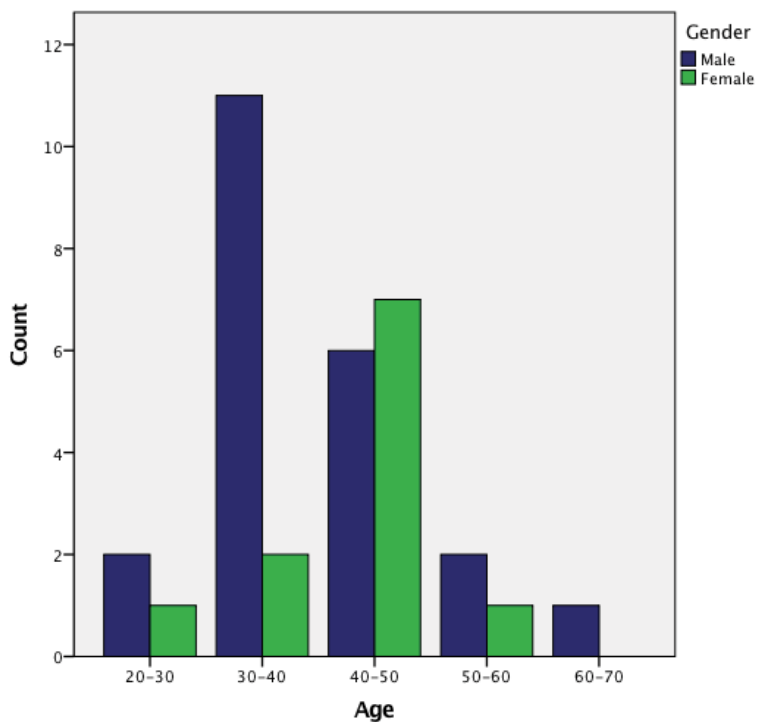
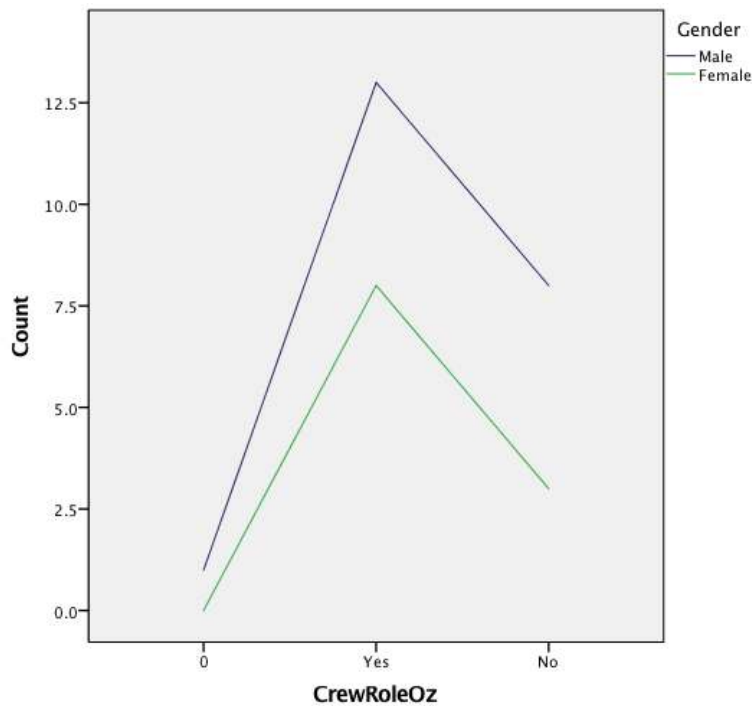


Figure 4.4 reported gender representation against age distribution of survey respondents

The average age recorded for this population corresponds with a reported phenomenon in the case studies. There was an observation made that the average age of the first-time feature filmmaker was shifting towards the mid-thirties' age demographic. The age shift was despite the fact that funding body policy seemed to be directed at applicants in their mid-twenties.



*Figure 4.5 shows that 63% of all respondents from the survey have worked on Australian feature films.*

On average, 63% of all male and female respondents have worked on an Australian feature film (Figure 4.5). Broken down by gender, this represents 59% of males (13 out of 22) and 72% of females (8 out of 11). An absence of feature film work experience is surprising because a reasonable assumption underpinning a concept of feature film worker-aspirants would be that they had prior experience working in feature films. This assumption is supported by a commonly reported theme emerging from the interview data that has a first-hand observation of a working film set as an important source of training for the feature film director's job.



### Crew Role Oz \* Gender Cross tabulation

Count

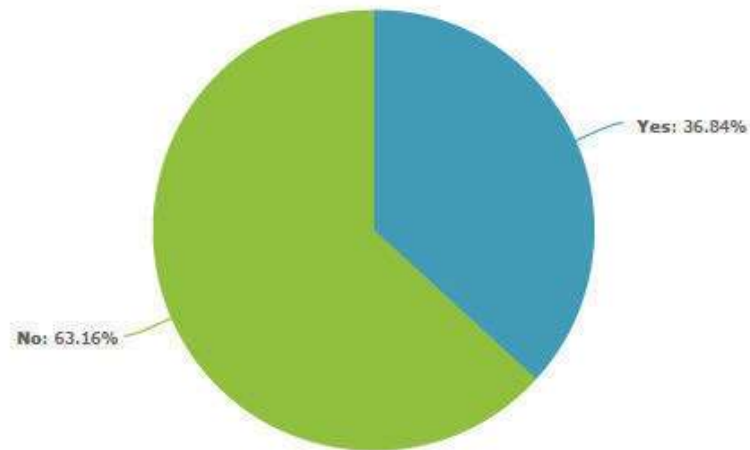
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Crew Role	0	1	0	1
Oz	Yes	13	8	21
	No	8	3	11
Total		22	11	33


*Table 4.2 shows that on a Gender balance, 72% of female respondents and 59% of the male respondents have worked on an Australian feature film.*

The first question in the survey protocol was asking if respondents had been employed on an Australian feature film (Table 4.2). Less than 40% of the survey sample has not worked in a crew role on an Australian feature film. Leaving aside the possibility that they may fall into the 36% of the survey sample who have worked on an International co-production, it would be worth a follow-up investigation to understand why this is the case. We are talking about a segment of the industry that has worked or intend to work as feature film directors, and yet this is suggesting that their first-hand work experience in this form is limited.

2.

Have you previously worked in a crew role on an International feature film?



Yes	36.84%		14
No	63.16%		24
Total Responses			38
Skipped			8

*Figure 4.6 Percentage of respondents who have worked in a crew role on an International feature film*

A later question (Figure 4.6) offers a vague suggestion that this response is due to a fault in the survey question design. The 'crew role' in the question may be confounding some respondents. Response to a later 'crew role' question would seem to suggest that some respondents may not consider the director's role as a 'crew role'. The underlying assumption in formulating the question was that it did constitute a crew role.

### Crew Role INT \* Gender Cross tabulation

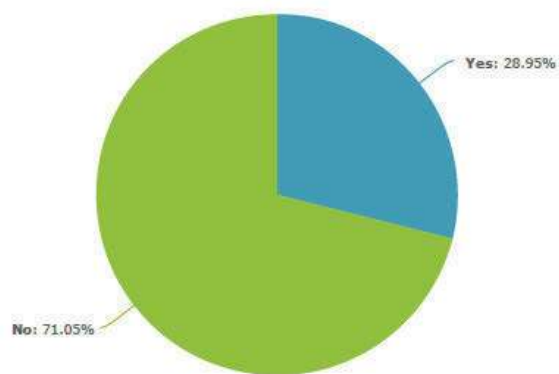
Count

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Crew Role	Yes	10	4	14
INT	No	17	7	24
Total		27	11	38

Table 4.3 Cross tab gender and crew role on an International feature film.

The first rationale used by the proponents of International co-productions is the argument that locals benefit from the presence of what are in all reality ‘foreign’ productions. The next pie (Figure 4.7) chart offers an explanation about why the benefits of working on co-productions may not be as great as their proponents claim.

3. Thinking about your crew role, was it as a Head of Department?



Yes	28.95%	11
No	71.05%	27
Total Responses		38
Skipped		8

Figure 4.7 Percentage of respondents who have worked as a Head of Department on an International feature film.

This response is relevant to the questions surrounding the importance of International co-productions to the growth and maintenance of the local industry. International co-productions bring the majority of their skilled workers with them. The remainder of the roles filled by locals are not lead roles (Heads of Department).

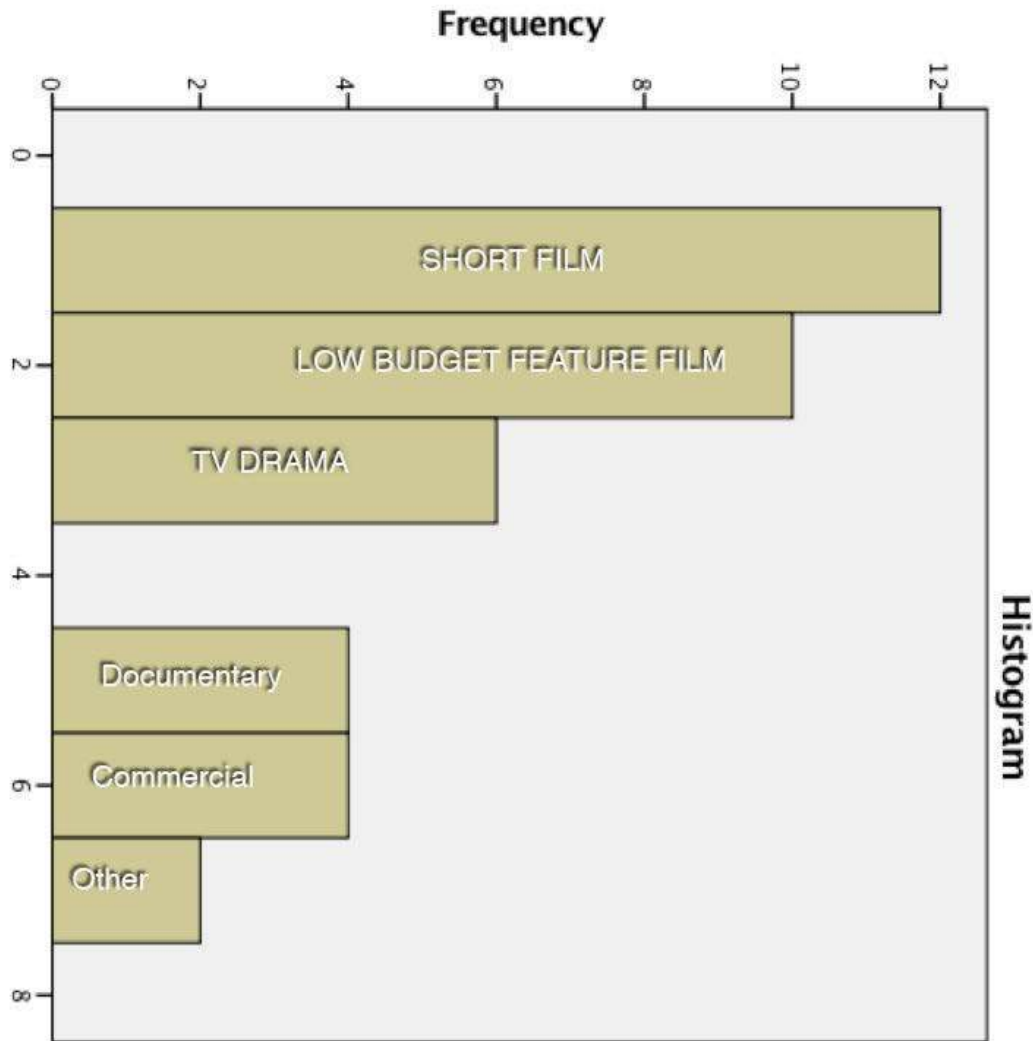
However, the benefit of International co-productions, as far as providing a wider work experience, may accrue in more subtle ways. One of the consistent reports that emerged from the qualitative interview data referred to current practicing directors having learned parts of their craft from directly or indirectly observing other directors working. This benefit may be part of a case for continuing to encourage co-productions. This finding of the more beneficial side of international co-productions is also supported by a research report examining the internationalisation of the Australian film and television industry (Maher 2004, p. 25).

A 2002 report from the Australian Film Corporation indicated that 64% of general crew had been able to expand their craft because of the bigger budgets and while 43% of general crew thought that foreign production was vital for maintaining employment, 29% were concerned about the dangers of privileging foreign productions over the Australian industry (AFC 2002, p. 34).

		Kind of experience			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A short film	12	26.7	31.6	31.6
	Low budget feature film	10	22.2	26.3	57.9
	A television drama	6	13.3	15.8	73.7
	Documentary	4	8.9	10.5	84.2
	Commercial	4	8.9	10.5	94.7
	Other	2	4.4	5.3	100.0
	Total	38	84.4	100.0	
Missing	System	7	15.6		
Total		45	100.0		

*Table 4.4 shows the type of work experience this population has had and the work sectors they have been in.*

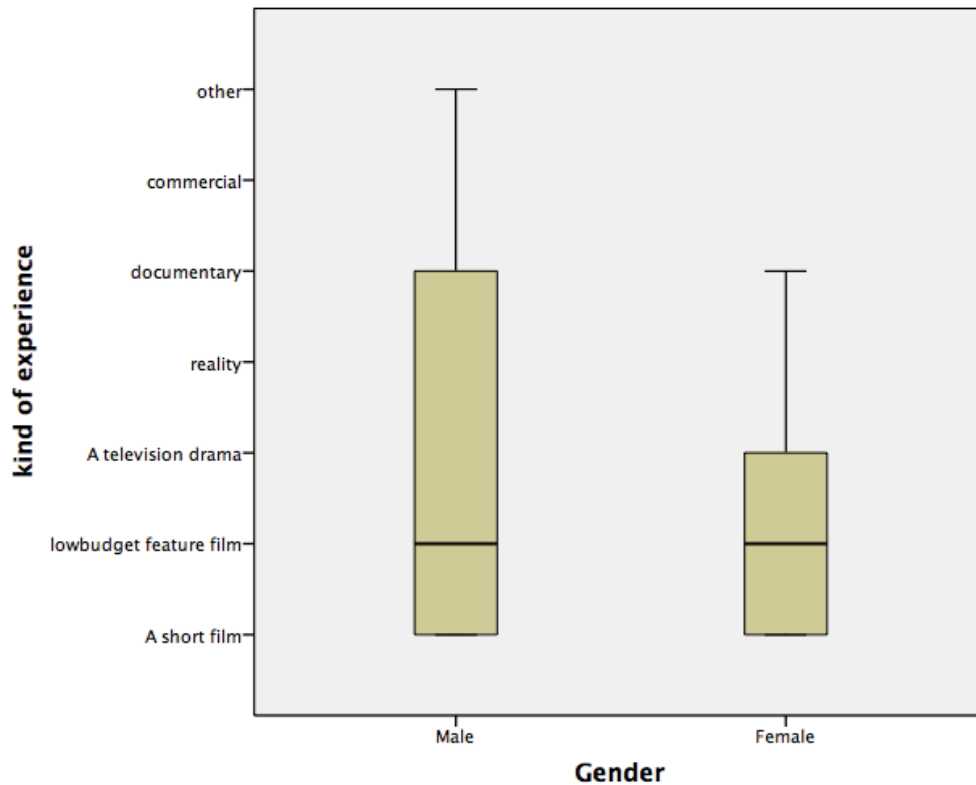
This response (Table 4.4) indicates that short films are still one of the most common crewing experiences for all workers. An anomaly in this response shows the number of respondents to the question about crewing for low budget features at 57%, when the original question asking about feature experience returned 63%. This is a contentious survey item with a number of comments indicating that they didn't regard a role as a director as a crew role.



*Figure 4.8 shows the type of work experience this population has had and the work sectors they have been in.*

This response (Figure 4.8) is intended to establish the kind of work experience a feature film director may have had previously. There were two objectives behind this question: The first was to determine the likelihood of having had some work experience that is related to the feature film role. The second objective was to establish a notion of gender differences within the director population. The Other category is for people who had a different categorisation conception than the one I provided in the survey. In this instance, the 'Other' work, the respondents, are referring to is in the corporate video sector.

The next Figure (4.9) shows a clear difference along gender lines in the industry sectors that people are employed in.



*Figure 4.9 reported work in industry sectors of survey respondents*

This boxplot (Figure 4.9) is measuring the distribution of male and female workers across the defined industry sectors. The cross tab (Table 4.5) explains the exact differences against each of the work categories. This study argues that the sample proportions represent a typical gender representation in the work sectors. The horizontal line within each box represents the median (middle) point of the sample. The line (‘whisker’) extending out from the box represents the outliers for each sample. In the case of the female population, the whisker captures the two workers who had documentary experience. It stops there because no female respondents reported working in the advertising sector. The other category was provided to capture respondents who may have disagreed with the survey’s categorisations. It was only used on two occasions for people who had worked in the Corporate Video sector.

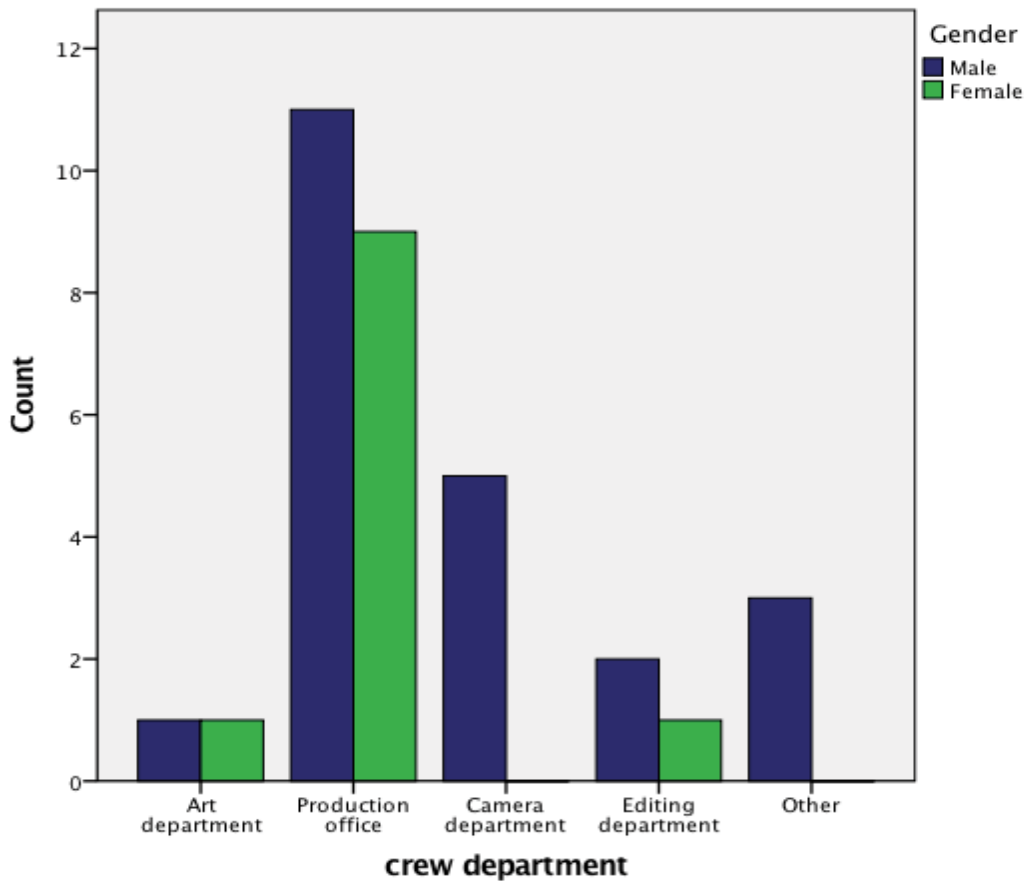
**Kind of experience \* Gender Cross tabulation**

Count

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Kind of experience	A short film	6	4	10
	Low budget feature film	8	2	10
	A television drama	2	3	5
	Documentary	1	2	3
	Commercial	3	0	3
	Other	2	0	2
Total		22	11	33

*Table 4.5 Differences in types of work for Gender*





*Figure 4.10 Number of respondents by gender-distribution across different feature film work departments*

Figure 4.10 and Table 4.5 are intended to establish the departments a feature film director may have had been employed in previously. There were two objectives behind this question: The first was to determine the location of previous work experience, to be able to make some judgment about the relationship of professional experience to the feature film role. The second objective was to establish a notion of gender differences within the director population. The 'Other' category is for people who had a different categorisation conception than the one provided in the survey. In this instance, the 'Other' work, the respondents, are referring to is a script supervisor, an assistant director, and a director. The study's assumption in formulating the question was that these three crew roles would have been categorised as 'Production Office'. Notice that none of the female respondents

had worked in the camera department while all other departments were represented in the female count.

**Case Processing Summary**

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Crew department * Gender	33	73.3%	12	26.7%	45	100.0%

**Crew department \* Gender Cross tabulation**

Count

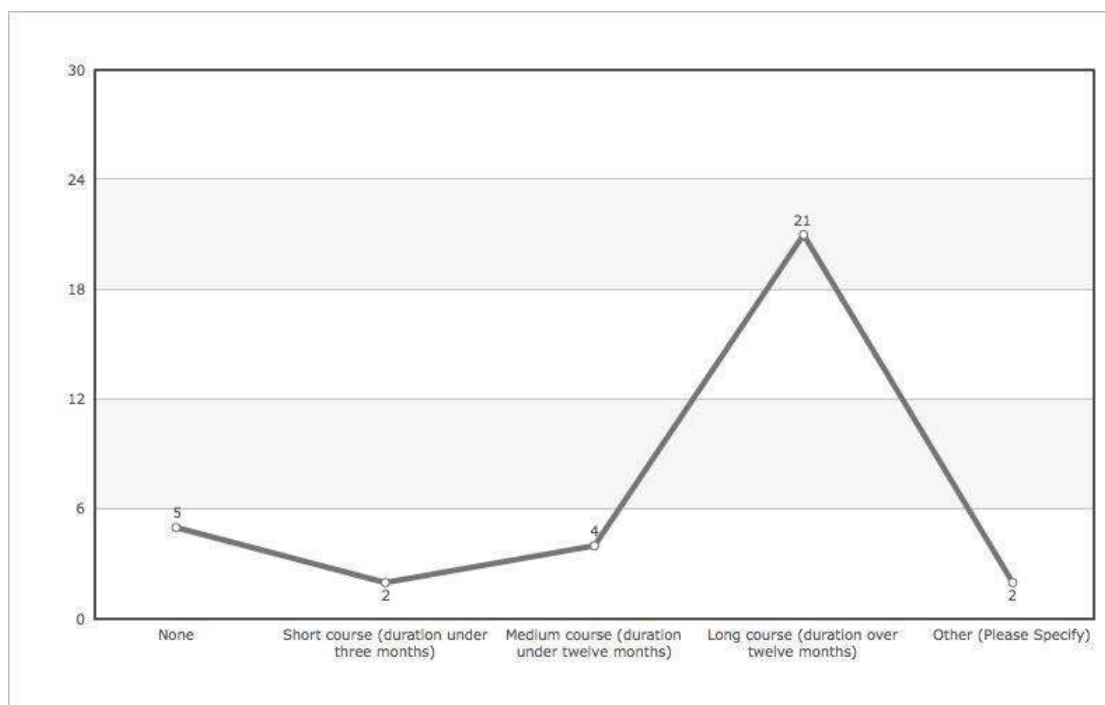
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Crew department	Art department	1	1	2
	Production office	11	9	20
	Camera department	5	0	5
	Editing department	2	1	3
	Other	3	0	3
Total		22	11	33

*Table 4.6 Cross tabulations measuring gender against work department*

These data (Table 4.6) covered the employment situation of the feature film director specifically about the type of professional experience they had. Female experience is notably different, and future studies could focus more on the underlying reasons for these differences.

#### 4.2.5 Education in the feature film director sector

The next set of quantitative data covers some of the aspects of the feature film director's training and education. The preferences expressed are of significant interest to all sectors of the industry, for some different reasons. Some of these issues will be explored in the discussion chapter, chapter 5. The delay is because some of the findings from the qualitative data can be used to substantiate some concepts that emerged from both sets of data.



*Figure 4.11 Type of formal training*

It is not surprising that the majority of respondents have experienced university education; in the case of 10 respondents, the education has been to postgraduate level with three respondents having completed doctoral studies. What is surprising, however, is that five respondents report having no formal qualifications (Figure 4.11 & Table 4.7).

**Case Processing Summary**

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Gender * qualification type	31	68.9%	14	31.1%	45	100.0%

**Gender \* qualification type Cross tabulation**

Count

	Qualification type					Total
	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Master	Other	
Gender Male	2	6	3	5	4	20
Female	0	4	4	2	1	11
Total	2	10	7	7	5	31

*Table 4.7 Type of formal training by gender*

In this table (Table 4.7), the 'Other' category responses were two Advanced Diplomas and three PhD's. This 'Other' response is clearly due to a survey design fault that failed to anticipate that anybody in the population would have an Australian Qualification (AQF) Level 9 qualification. The study also incorrectly assumed that any type of Diploma would be categorised under the 'Diploma' category.

Respondents were also asked to nominate the institution where they received their training. Contained within this response was a request to nominate whether or not they considered that the course offered formal training in

screenwriting. The perception of course activity seems, in most cases, to be highly subjective (Figure 4.12). For example, the first bar in the graph identifies attendees at AFTRS. Five attendees say they received formal scriptwriting training while one attendee reports receiving no formal scriptwriting training. UTS is the only institution where all respondents are confident that they received formal scriptwriting training.

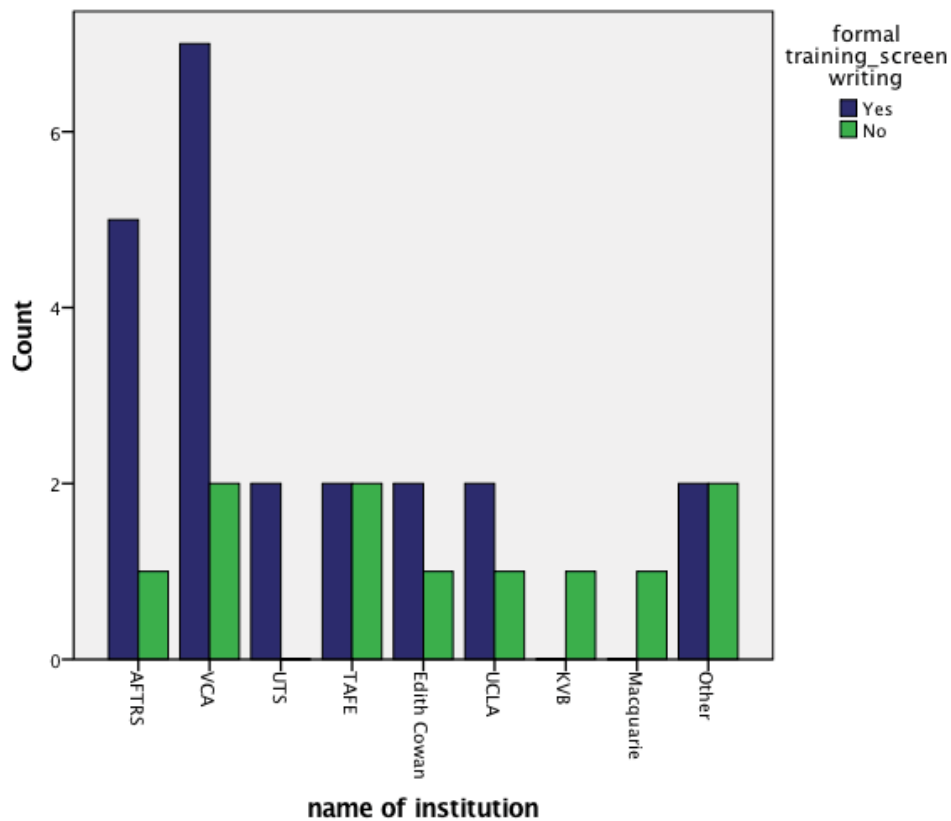


Figure 4.12 did your course offer formal screenwriting training?

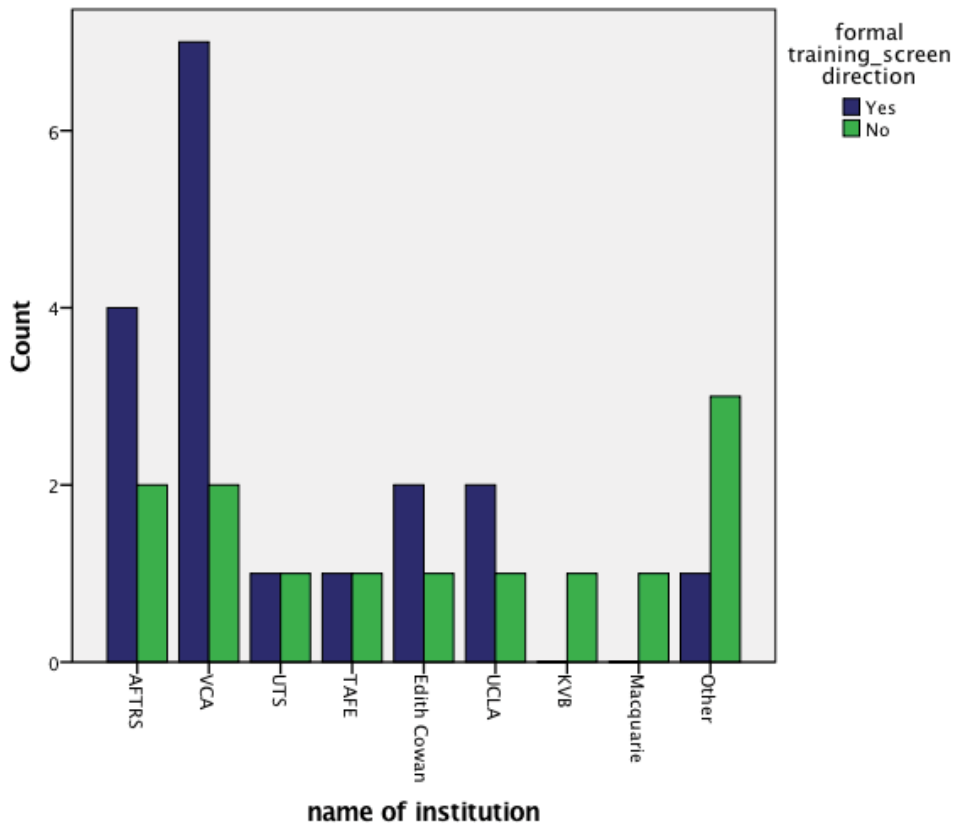


Figure 4.13 did your course offer formal screen direction training?

A second, similar question asked the respondent to nominate whether or not they considered that the course offered formal training in screen direction. Again, the perception of course activity seemed to be highly subjective (Figure 4.13). For example, the first bar in the graph identifies attendees at AFTRS. 4 attendees say they received formal screen direction training while two attendees report receiving no formal screen direction training. Edith Cowan University and UCLA attendees are split on the opinion with, in both cases two respondents reporting there was formal training and one respondent saying they did not receive formal training.

In Figure 4.12 and 4.13, there is an 'Other' category. The 'Other' category is an artefact of the computation where the software saw only one instance of an institution. The outlier institutions are Leeds Metropolitan University in the U.K., The Drama Center, London, 'Katherine Dean' (a search could not

establish which institution this name referred to), University of Southern California, and NIDA.

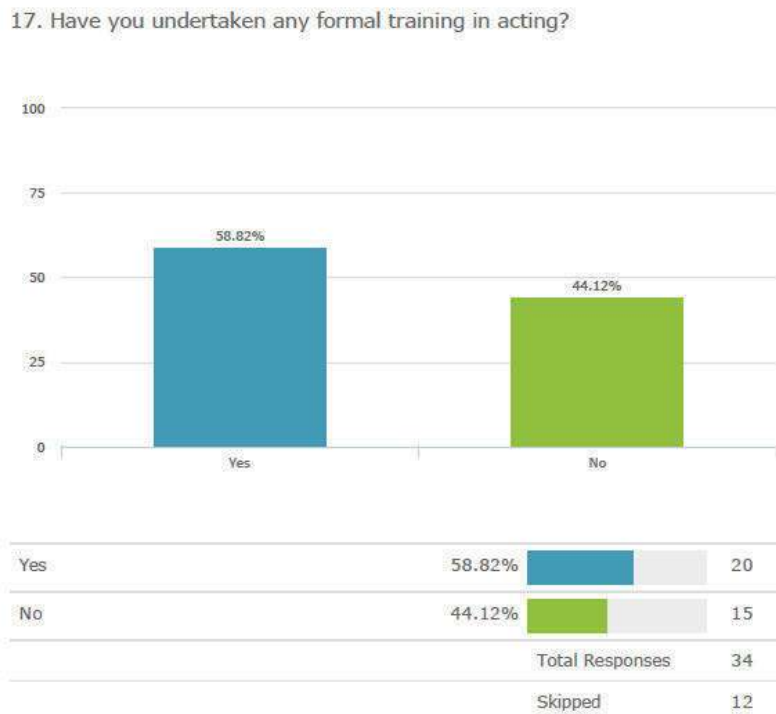


Figure 4.14 have you done any formal acting training?

Most screen directors would see having acting training of some description as an essential skill domain. The disposition to this attitude is reflected in the results of Figure 4.14 & Table 4.8. In Figure 4.14 we can see that almost 59% of screen directors have undertaken some form of screen acting training and in Table 4.8 they confirm this understanding when almost 83% of the respondents rate the category Understanding of performance skills to work with actors as Very Important.

	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Understanding of performance skills to work with actors	<b>0</b> 0.00%	<b>0</b> 0.00%	<b>6</b> 18.18%	<b>27</b> 81.82%	33
Understanding of postproduction technology	<b>1</b> 3.03%	<b>3</b> 9.09%	<b>16</b> 48.48%	<b>13</b> 39.39%	33
Understanding of cinematography and camera lenses	<b>0</b> 0.00%	<b>1</b> 3.03%	<b>15</b> 45.45%	<b>17</b> 51.52%	33
Understanding of interpersonal psychology	<b>1</b> 3.03%	<b>0</b> 0.00%	<b>8</b> 24.24%	<b>24</b> 72.73%	33
Understanding of business management practice	<b>1</b> 3.03%	<b>8</b> 24.24%	<b>18</b> 54.55%	<b>6</b> 18.18%	33
Knowledge of the history of cinema	<b>1</b> 3.12%	<b>5</b> 15.62%	<b>16</b> 50.00%	<b>10</b> 31.25%	32
Understanding of marketing and promotional activities	<b>1</b> 3.03%	<b>5</b> 15.15%	<b>18</b> 54.55%	<b>9</b> 27.27%	33
A practical understanding of scriptwriting	<b>0</b> 0.00%	<b>0</b> 0.00%	<b>8</b> 24.24%	<b>26</b> 78.79%	33
A practical understanding of dramatic narrative structure	<b>0</b> 0.00%	<b>1</b> 3.03%	<b>0</b> 0.00%	<b>32</b> 96.97%	33
Understanding and an appreciation of music	<b>0</b> 0.00%	<b>1</b> 3.03%	<b>13</b> 39.39%	<b>19</b> 57.58%	33
Understanding and an appreciation of production design	<b>0</b> 0.00%	<b>0</b> 0.00%	<b>14</b> 43.75%	<b>18</b> 56.25%	32
Total Responses					33
Skipped					13

*Table 4.8 On a scale ranging from 1 (not important) to 4 (very important), how would you rate the following skills and knowledge?*

The intention behind including this information is related to an idea that these conceptualisations of types of educational topics demonstrate something that is useful for general film course design. Business management principles and marketing principles are clearly seen as secondary aspects of the screen director's craft. Surprisingly, though, an understanding of postproduction technology and knowledge of the history of the cinema also rank comparatively low. This display of bias toward certain skill domains could be



construed as a distinct preference but the study might suggest that it reflects more of an attitude or disposition toward the different skill domains listed. There is a general acknowledgement, however, that this statement is not making a claim that this ranking question is a genuine Attitude scale.

As stated before in Chapter 3 when discussing methods, the two questions (Table 4.7 and Table 4.8) are problematic because they require a subjective response to a series of constrained variables. The study is looking at course subject content and asking survey respondents to rank their subjective belief as to its relevance to the director's craft and, indirectly, relevance to instructional matter that may form part of a training curriculum. The scale, of course, defies any of the requirements of good questionnaire item design. While Table 4.7 and Table 4.8's use of something that resembles a Likert Scale could be said to have a definiteness of task, given that it is a choice-response test, the objectivity of its recording feature may be in some doubt. For reasons stated before in Chapter 3, it is acknowledged that the questionnaire is impressionistic and apart from the fact that all responses are from a specifically targeted population, it is acknowledged that its findings would be difficult to use to make claims for either generalisability or reliability.

The last table (Table 4.8) asks the same kind of disposition question. The difference is in the phrasing of the question. Table 4.7's question asks for an attitude directed towards an 'Understanding and Knowledge'. Table 4.8's question asks a question about the respondent's disposition towards the importance of 'ability' in those skill domains. There is a surprising correspondence when comparing both responses.

	Not Important	Neutral	Important	Very important	Responses
Your ability as a writer?	0 0.00%	10 30.30%	10 30.30%	13 39.39%	33
Your ability as a director of actors?	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	3 9.09%	30 90.91%	33
Your ability as a team leader?	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	6 18.75%	26 81.25%	32
Your knowledge of film history?	3 9.09%	8 24.24%	18 54.55%	4 12.12%	33
Your knowledge of Australian film history?	4 12.12%	15 45.45%	11 33.33%	3 9.09%	33
Your knowledge of film technology?	0 0.00%	5 15.15%	16 48.48%	13 39.39%	33
The director's role in the marketing of the film?	1 3.03%	7 21.21%	16 48.48%	9 27.27%	33
The importance of other member's of the collaborative team in the success of the film?	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	3 9.09%	30 90.91%	33
Total Responses					33
Skipped					13

*Table 4.9 Thinking about working as a director, on a scale ranging from 1 (not important) to 4 (very important), how would you rate the following factors?*

## Phase 2 –Qualitative Results

### 4.3 Introduction – Qualitative Results

This section presents the results from the qualitative phase. The objective of this section is to explore the concept of feature film director career development in the feature film sector. An analysis, based on a comparative case study across fifteen cases, is presented. The results from that analysis appear in sections 4.7.

## 4.4 Research Question revisited

The research project originally set out to examine the question: How does a first-time feature film director in Australia develop and sustain a career? As the study developed, however, this issue was broken down into three topic areas or themes. Each of those themes could be seen to be a subset of the original question. 1) The Emerging Filmmaker: from first beginnings to the first feature. 2) Skills Development: Ways to learn the Director's Craft. 3) How to build and sustain a career. The project aim, at that early stage, was to understand the motivation and initial impetus behind first-time feature filmmakers, and it was hoped that this understanding would form the basis of further analysis and theorising, which would subsequently lead to a clearer understanding of successful strategies used in the feature film industry. The intended purpose was to try and identify what was and wasn't working within the realm of career development for feature film directors in the Australian feature film industry.

The original question asked how the director made a career. The interview protocol deliberately consisted of anodyne and open questions; the strategy was devised because the majority of the case study group had participated in a large number of interviews previously. For interviewees in the business of self-promotion, the difficulty in conducting the interview came about because the interviewee would invariably slip into an automatic biographical account that they had developed and formulated in previous interviews. While taking the tendency of automatic biographical response into account, the interview strategy was to try to tease out a more detailed account of how the subjects made their identity as directors. The notion of subjectivation became a more interesting line of inquiry as the project developed. This led me to substantially abandon the original line of inquiry and examine theories that helped to tease out an understanding of the way the subjects constructed their professional identity.

I was not asking the subjects to describe their relationship with their industry. Rather, I was looking for the parts of their discourse, which described their constitution as subjects and how their subsequent actions were constituted as a result. This accords with the structuralist idea of signifier and signified. By the end of the project the research question had become: How are directors constituted by their identification with the film industry and how do those constituted subjects act to sustain a career?

As a consequence of this shift in the study's focus, a more direct link to the literature review became apparent. The following section headings are drawn from the literature review while maintaining their direct affiliation with the emergent themes that came out of the case study analysis.

#### **4.5 Descriptive Overview of the Sample**

The case study sample consisted of fifteen cases. Fourteen post-survey interviews were conducted as face-to-face interviews between May and September 2014. Four face-to-face interviews were conducted interstate, and ten face-to-face interviews were conducted in Sydney. One interview was a self-report response to the interview protocol by a director living in the U.S.A. In order to try and eliminate the geographical location as a variable, it was important to try and capture some responses from directors who lived somewhere other than the eastern states of Australia.

There was a breadth of age and experience between the members of the sample population. Five members of the participant group were between 50 and 70 years of age (30%), followed by those aged between 20 and 40 years of age (70%). The study was looking for the widest range of age groups, educational experience, and position in the sector as could possibly be achieved. While most of the participants made contact after doing the survey, the rest of the group were found through previously established contacts in

the industry. This was important because the study was looking for particular representatives of the feature film director population. Table 3.3, 'A Typology of Feature Film Directors' (Appendix 1) sets out the characteristics of the typology governing the sample selection.

#### **4.6 The Emerging Filmmaker: from first beginnings to first feature**

Within the corpus of education theory surrounding the theory of creativity and its encouragement in learners, an emphasis is placed on the ideal study environment and the ideal curriculum. Often, and often for reasons of practicality, the literature ignores the external circumstances, such as family, and even the historical context.

What is made apparent from these interviews is that the subject's identification with the feature film director's role and their aesthetic disposition is more a product of their social class and parental influences. For this reason the study will present an abridged biographical narrative of each of the fifteen respondents in turn (Appendix 2). The salient points of their interviews have been transposed; the voice has been changed from first person to third person; and the study is only using limited verbatim quotations. All of these things have been done because the primary ethical obligation is directed towards trying to preserve the secrecy of the identity of each respondent. This is an extremely difficult task in this domain when to talk about the work in any meaningful way means to give very broad hints as to the identity of the informant. Therefore, the study is not talking about specific works by name but it is estimated that any reader with a passing knowledge of the Australian feature film industry could make a close guess about who is talking. The study's ethical undertaking has been scrupulously adhered to but at the same time, most respondents explicitly stated that they weren't overly concerned about concealing their identity.

In the section identified as 4.7, the study will present the themes that emerged from an analysis of the case study interviews. In Chapter 5, the study will present a discussion based on theoretical concepts that have emerged from the comparative case analysis.

## **4.7 The Emerging Filmmaker: The case study analyses**

The case studies described in this chapter are in many ways different but in some ways share similar characteristics. Their social upbringing and education, their entrepreneurial persistence, and their identification with, and successful transformation to, a specific industry sector uniformly typifies the following case studies.

### **4.7.1 Historical Circumstances**

The initial investigation of the existing research on the policy formulation and development surrounding the Australian feature film industry produced the central notion that the intersection of an individual's career with the historical circumstances was one of the significant factors in the career trajectory for the individual. There is a general overriding factor that has first to be considered and that is the fact that on average it took all of the cases ten years after they left film education to make their first feature.

Putting this finding aside for one moment, it would also be reasonable to conclude that it was easier to find funding in the years between 1971 (the foundation of the Australian Film Development Corporation) and 1989 (the end of Division 10BA tax incentive). For directors after this time, it appears to have become progressively more difficult to find either development funding or production funding.

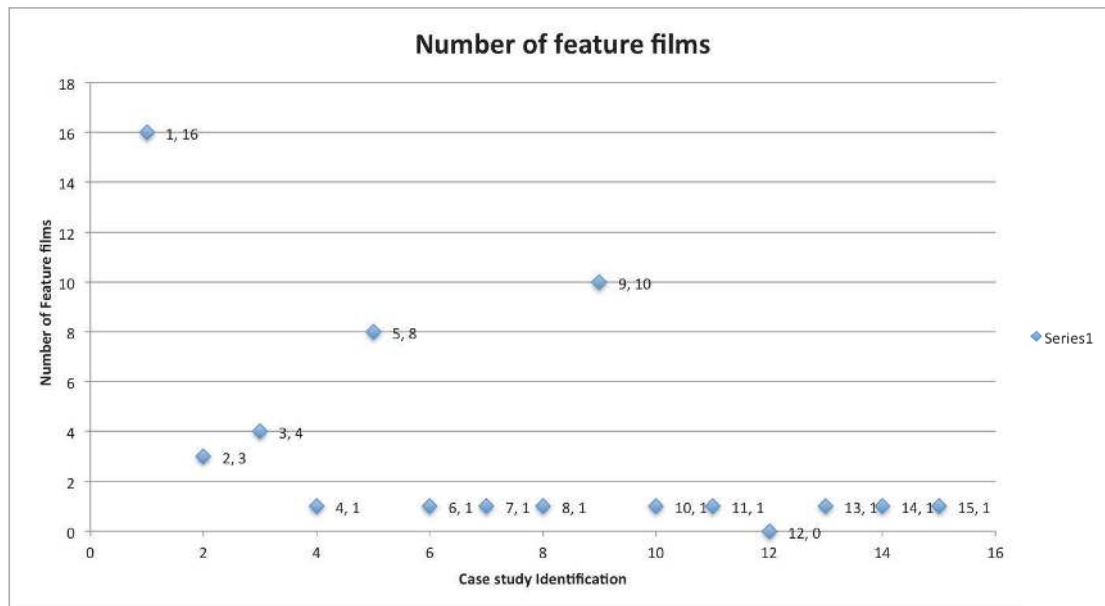


Figure 4.15 case studies and number of films

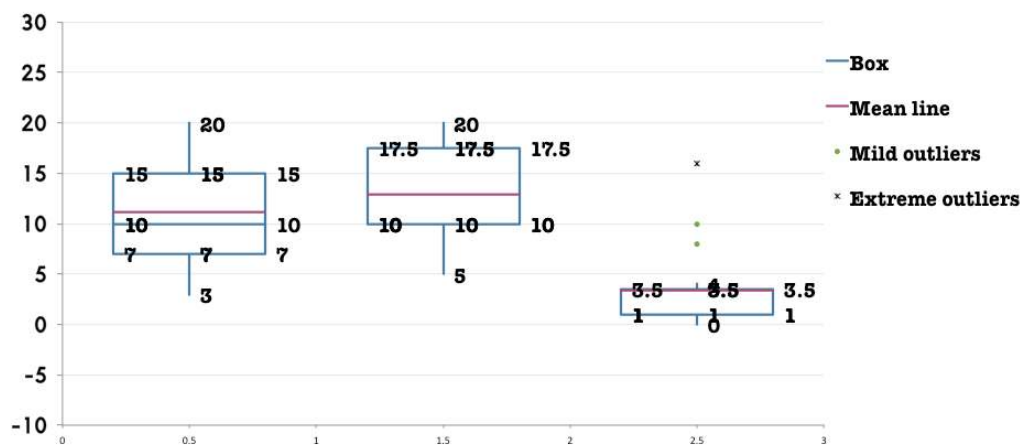
Variable	Count	Mean	Minimum	Lower whisker	Q1	Median	Q3	Upper whisker	Maximum
Number of years after finishing education to first feature	15	11.2	3.	3.	7.	10.	15.	20.	20.
Number of years in the workforce before starting first feature	15	12.93333	5.	5.	10.	10.	17.5	20.	20.
Number of feature films	15	3.33333	0.	0.	1.	1.	3.5	4.	16.

Table 4.10 multi-factors among case studies

Comparing the above scatter plot (Figure 4.10) with the typology (Appendix 1\_Table 3.3 A Typology of Feature Film directors) we can see that three of the four ‘New Wave’ directors have escaped the statistical mean of 3.3 films seen in Figure 4.11. In the ‘middle period’, one of the five directors has made more than the mean of 3.3 films, while none of the six late period directors has made more than one feature, with one case having not yet made one. This mean is 50% higher than an average reported by a 2010 Screen Australia survey (ScreenAustralia 2010). This would suggest that within this study’s sample, the three outliers are significantly affecting the mean.

The Screen Australia figures (Appendix 2) collected over a thirty year period demonstrated that 66% of Australian feature film directors has a career that

consists of one feature film. In the Screen Australia study, the average number of features was 2. In a preliminary phase of this current study's investigation, it was established that on average, a director's career over a thirty-year timeframe yielded 3.17 feature films (Figure 6.1). This average came from a random sample of 69 Australian feature filmmakers selected from a professional film worker directory. A study conducted by De Vany (De Vany 2004) using data collected from 259 U.S. directors yielded a similar average (2.0) to the Screen Australia survey. In both Figure 6.1's and De Vany's distribution curves, we can see that the majority of directors are 'lumped' together at the lower end of the curve. These studies would suggest that the sample size of this study's sample population is often a significant influence on the general conclusions.



Variable	Count	Mean	Minimum	Lower whisker	Q1	Median	Q3	Upper whisker	Maximum
Number of years after finishing education to first feature	15	11.2	3.	3.	7.	10.	15.	20.	20.
Number of years in the workforce before starting first feature	15	12.93333	5.	5.	10.	10.	17.5	20.	20.
Number of feature films	15	3.33333	0.	0.	1.	1.	3.5	4.	16.

Figure 4.16 3-point Box Graph showing Years in Industry/Years after education/ Number of features.

There are many factors to consider here. The 'new wave' directors, while being in the industry for the most extended period, in the main, still had to wait for project development and funding decisions, processes which, uniformly



amongst this group, seemed to take on average ten years. Case 001 began his career relatively late in his working life. His education and training were spread out over ten years, and his initial feature was made five years after he left the film school. This meant that he was in his mid-thirties when he made his first feature. However, chiefly because his approach to filmmaking aligned perfectly with the funding body policies, he was able to make his next 15 feature films in quick succession.

While the twenty-five years of policy development between 1945 and 1970 established the general conditions for the industry that was to follow, there seems to have been little advantage afforded to early practitioners. All case studies seem to have experienced the same delays in achieving financing and the same intermittent productivity.

It is however worthwhile to point out that all of the case studies from the early epoch are above the mean (3.3 films) for this sample population.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Lower whisker</i>	<i>Q1</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Q3</i>	<i>Upper whisker</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
<i>Number of Feature films</i>	15	3.33333	0.	0.	1.	1.	3.5	4.	16.

Case 005 is the only example from the middle epoch that has made almost three times the mean number of feature films. In the two other case studies representing the early epoch, Case 001 represents an extreme outlier in this sample while 003 is just above the mean. Generally, people in the later epoch (post FLICS) seem not to have fared so well, but this could have some relationship to another figure, that showing the relationship between years in the industry and number of features.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Lower whisker</i>	<i>Q1</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Q3</i>	<i>Upper whisker</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
<i>Number of years after finishing education to first feature</i>	15	11.2	3.	3.	7.	10.	15.	20.	20.

The variable, *Number of years after finishing education to first feature*, suggests that it could take as little as three years and as long as twenty years

(the mean is 11.2 years) before the first feature film is made. While another factor complicates this variable (number of years in the workforce) it is a common experience for the feature film director to spend ten years after graduation working to generate their first feature film project.

008 graduated from the AFTRS at the end of the 80s. He feels that this was a piece of historical bad luck because he graduated into “a sort of financing vacuum”. He says that while he was at film school, his ambition was to make feature films. He thinks that this was the most common ambition amongst most of his student cohort.

The year that 008 graduated from the AFTRS was the year that the Federal Government decided it was going to modify the Division 10BA tax concessions effectively disallowing the massive investment incentives that had been fuelling the film industry since 1981. 008 says that he graduated into that gap where there was just no financing for anything at all:

No matter where I went with any project that I might have, there was no interest because nobody was making anything and the whole industry was just in complete...people's lives had stopped for a couple of years and by the time that financing eventually...the new system was eventually set up, came forward and so on, there was a new generation of filmmakers was coming through and so on, so I slipped into that gap, into that small cohort of people who missed out, as it were, on the opportunities.

008 then reports that it took him about ten years after leaving the AFTRS to finally make his first feature. He says that two members of his student cohort started shooting their first features around the same time. Case 008 is an example of the ‘middle epoch’ group who made only 1 feature film.

When first finishing his training, 012's ambition was to work as a Director, but this proved impossible so he started working in the local Western Australian film industry as a second Assistant Director, and for the past 13 years he has worked as an Assistant Director (AD). 012 says that working as an AD is very hard because there are quite a few workers who were all competing for very few jobs. He is on the verge of making his first feature.

011 admits to the precarious nature of the filmmaking process that arose partly out of her ignorance of the process and partly out of the lack of proper investment funding. Realising that the only way to achieve her ambition and utilise her training, 011 tried unsuccessfully to gain funding for a feature film project that she had written and put five years into developing. Since those early endeavors at trying to mount a feature film production 011 says she has only had five years of employment in the advertising sector. She says that this is because she chose to spend some time away from employment raising her children. She also reports that of the four directors that she went to film school with, there were two males and two females. While all four have had babies, the men's careers weren't affected, but for both of the women, they felt as if their careers had stopped and further to that she says: "I think it's very hard to climb back up that ladder."

#### **4.7.2 Educational And Social Factors**

The early life and education of the director's in these case studies conforms entirely to the notion (Gans, 1974, cited in Chan 2010) that cultural tastes and an orientation towards employment in the cultural system have a close fit with the socio-economic strata of the Australian society (Chan 2010).

All of the cases reported an interest in filmmaking that began in early childhood. This was almost always invoked by a strong response to a cinematic experience. The most interesting aspect of this phenomenon is that their response was to want to practically engage with the film production

mechanism. This early strong response seems to be the inciting factor for all of the cases. While it might be conjectured that the affective power of cinema produces the same intensity of affect for all of its audience, the clear difference in the response amongst this cohort is that it inspired them to set out on some practical road to realise this early ambition.

Three of the case studies reported being given filmmaking equipment by their parents at a young age. All case studies reported receiving encouragement not just from their parents but also from their secondary school teachers in their pursuit of a career in the film and television industry. Two case studies attended progressive grammar schools, which afforded them a liberal arts secondary schooling. Teacher-practitioners who helped them build informal networks, which they could exploit at the very early stages of their career, attended this secondary education. Two cases reported that their secondary education included a theatre-acting component. In one of these instances, the individual started in the film and television industry as an actor but then transitioned into a director's role when presented with the opportunity.

A case study reported that the impetus received from having a teacher practitioner with a strong network enabled that case study to be accepted into the AFTRS training program, straight out of his final school year. Case 003 reported that his teacher was a Melbourne Filmmaker's Co-operative member, who also happened to be the founder of Cinema Papers (the Australian version). This teacher encouraged 003 to apply for funding. With this funding 003 was able to create an impressive show reel, which helped with his early selection into the school. He had also acquired a cultural appreciation of film, which had come from the RMIT Cinematheque and the Melbourne Filmmaker's co-operative film screening programs.

The case studies that started their careers in the early 1970s and right up to 1990 undoubtedly found the path to their first feature much smoother than filmmakers who started after that period. By the evidence from their narratives

alone, it is inarguable that they were the clear beneficiaries from Division 10BA and the two decades of favourable government policy-making, which resulted in one of the biggest contributions to the current industry, the creation of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS). Directors, who are graduates of the AFTRS, particularly in the early years of the school when it was in its elite cultural training school mode, are more likely to have found success over the past thirty years. Although, it is interesting to note that three of the respondents who started their careers in the epoch before the creation of the school experienced a larger field of job opportunities than generally anybody else. The greater number of jobs is probably more certainly attributable to the fact that, between 1970 and 1990 (the end of the 10BA investment regime in its less restricted mode), there were around 490 productions when the previous twenty years (1950 – 1970) had seen less than 15 productions.

Case study 001 reported that he was unsure of his ability to take on the director's role but that his time in the second intake of the AFTRS three-year program convinced him otherwise. At the time he attended the school the teaching program considered of a skills acquisition by practice approach. 001 said that students in his cohort were given no idea of how to make a career: in his words 'it was crash-or-crash-through'.

Film schools worldwide have had a longstanding tradition of approaching the teaching problem by taking one side or other of the practical training versus a theoretical education paradigm (Miller 2016). Film schools tend to take the view that the film education is one of two things: it is either a time of theorising and building an intellectual capacity, or it is a time to let the students learn the filmmaking process through trial-and-error. AFTRS has seemed to combine both approaches over the past forty-five years, with a fluctuating emphasis on one or other of these two modes.

003 said that the AFTRS bureaucracy was always struggling with the students and, as a consequence, changing their selection criteria to try to find the best outcome, for both the school and the student. One intake with particularly demanding students was followed by an intake that concentrated on people with technical skills. In 003's opinion it was these sorts of policy changes surrounding student selection criteria that resulted in gender imbalances within the cohorts. 003's cohort comprised of a range of people who had prior work experience across the commercial and non-commercial film and television industry. 003 says that in some ways the cohort was mismatched in skill levels and this created some initial problems amongst the cohort, which was later overcome, mainly by the students resolving any conflicts themselves. 003 thought that the idea that the AFTRS had at the time of trying to corral students into specialisations was antithetical to an idea of allowing the students to develop fully. 003 also reports that he had many opportunities to work with his previous contacts on film productions while he was enrolled at the school but that this was discouraged on the grounds that the AFTRS didn't countenance the productions as being valid industry experiences.

003 thought however, that despite the constant repositioning of the school's student recruitment criteria, he gained an enormous amount of practical experience in the three-year program, which stood him in good stead in terms of gaining a constant stream of crew roles on leaving the school.

Approximately half of the case study cohort experienced a theoretical film studies education, primarily as part of an undergraduate qualification, but in the example of two cases (007 and 014), as part of postgraduate studies. Both of these examples produced what could be considered as experimental works according to two approaches described in a 2010 study. Galenson & Kotin (2010) have identified two different approaches that are made by feature film directors, which they have labeled as the 'conceptual' and the 'experimental' (Galenson & Kotin 2010, p. 29).

Case 007's first feature employed both a high literary style and a complex film-within-a-film structure. He set out to make a commercial film, acceptable to a wide cinema-going audience and succeeded in making what he describes as "an Arthouse piece of work". 014's experience was that he made films influenced on readings of European art cinema and American independent directors like John Cassavetes. His first feature was character improvisations, which he then used to retrospectively create a script. He readily acknowledges that this experimentation caused his film to be not so favourably received by the general public.

According to Galenson & Kotin, conceptual innovators tend to produce their most influential work early in their careers. They base this work on preconceived ideas, which have little or no relation to their first-hand experience of the world. Experimental innovators, in contrast, tend to produce their most influential work later in their careers. Their work most often arises directly from their experience of the world, while contributing to it as well. Experimental innovators often describe the making of their work as a process of discovery (Galenson & Kotin 2010, pp. 29-30).

#### **4.7.3. Social Capital**

The successful directors have also discussed at some length the contribution that their family circumstance brought to their careers through encouragement and material assistance. Encouragement by parents and teachers was a factor that was a feature of a large proportion of the interviews. Their exposure to a wide range of literature and films was also generally acknowledged as a factor in their development, both professionally and culturally. The respondents statements about their appreciation of cinematic history was distinctly at odds with the survey outcome (Table 4.8) that reported a low score for both the importance of knowledge of cinema history (12% thought is was important) generally and Australian film history (9% thought is was important) in particular.

The feature film industry is of course just one aspect of the culture of the modern Australian society. It can be seen as a class culture, characterised by 'socially ranked symbolic differences that mark out classes and make some seem superior to others' (Gartman 2012, p. 42). This is the theory postulated by Bourdieu and is part of his idea to explain the way culture is used to legitimate and reproduce class power and wealth.

Case 005 was the only individual amongst the cases in this study that readily identified his class position.

I actually don't care what people think of me. In fact there's a fuel that comes out of that upper-middle class upbringing that came from my background. ... I don't know if it's a spoilt child thing, but basically you put something on the top shelf, I want it.

005 had a large degree of self-awareness about his privileged socioeconomic position in relation to the advantages that afforded him in his passage through the industry.

Bourdieu's theory of habitus takes the idea that a successful person has an internalised awareness of theoretical rules and strategic choices (habitus). These are acquired through repetition but importantly they are acquired in a social context (St Clair, Rodriguez & Nelson 2005, p. 144).

This aspect of habitus was played out amongst all of the respondents. 005's 'ranked symbolic difference' along with his ambition and experience impressed his future production partners who were also of the same socioeconomic status. They were so impressed by his demonstrated capability that they proposed that they would produce his debut feature film. He was 24 years old at this point. The ambition of his three production partners matched his own and their first strategy was to produce two short



films to demonstrate 005's director-capability. 005 crewed these films through his work contacts and by calling in a lot of favours he was able to make two very professional looking short films.

#### **4.7.4. Networking**

Another way of looking at the concept of social capital is afforded by De Carolis and Saporito (2006) who suggest that entrepreneurial behaviour is a result of the interplay of social networks and certain cognitive biases in entrepreneurs. Feature film directors exhibit many of the characteristics of an entrepreneur, something that is examined in more detail in section 4.7.5. De Carolis and Saporito cite Adler & Kwon 2002 and Leanna & Van Buaren 1999 in describing the 'bonding' form of social capital (De Carolis & Saporito 2006).

What might be described as an example of this 'bonding' form of social capital can be found in many parts of the interview record. A large part of the interview record is comprised of what some from outside the industry would label as gossip. The respondents all made reference to other directors and their work. Apart from one of the respondents who may have been seen as an outsider to the general director population, all respondents spoke in a very positive way about their association with other local directors and particularly about their association with leading local industry figures. The display of knowledge about leading director's current work and future projects could be ascribed to a form of identification with the industry through the sharing of this information.

We can see the 'bonding' perspective of social capital played out amongst feature film directors when we look at how they talk about eminent directors amongst their cohort. The discussion of other directors suggests a self-identification, which, in itself, represents a tacit shared-agreement about norms and goals amongst the collective group (De Carolis & Saporito 2006, p. 42).

Social capital also provides a bridge to a wider network, which, in 006's case has proved very beneficial. 006 is involved in a church community and it was through this community that he was given a number of film directing opportunities. His first short film, although not particularly religious, was funded by a couple in London who went to the same church. The second film he made was a feature length documentary funded by the same two people. Both films didn't have any connection with the church other than the two wealthy philanthropists attended the same church. He was then fortunate enough in the mid-2000s to be headhunted to take up the role as the Creative Director of Film and TV for his church. His first film in this new role was a \$2,600,000 documentary series. His next project was a large budget feature film, also financed by his church. It's based on the true story of the founders of the church and was written by a Hollywood screenwriter who worked with 006 on developing the characters, and making them relatable to a contemporary audience.

A 'new wave' director, case 002, graduated from a liberal arts degree course in the mid-sixties, at a time that preceded the establishment of favourable feature film production conditions. He initially worked as a scriptwriter in the local television industry before going to the U.K. where he successfully established a professional network amongst other expatriate film workers. This network was to benefit his career on his return to Australia.

This idea of an overseas network formed amongst Australian expatriate workers in a foreign feature film industry is a little-discussed benefit of a globalised industry (Manning & Shackford-Bradley 2010). In this instance of workers gaining overseas experience, a large number of skilled workers who had gained training chiefly in the U.K. feature film industry provided a readymade skilled workforce at the very commencement of the Australian industry's rebirth.

This 'activation of network ties' (Adler & Kwon 2014) is a hugely important factor in the performance and success of the feature film director as it has a multi-dimensional aspect which not only facilitates access to financial assistance and job leads but can also provide emotional support in the form of reinforcing the individual's sense of legitimacy.

Sometimes, however, a fresh reputation and a strong network isn't enough, other factors can cancel out these advantages. For a short period after graduating from the AFTRS, 011 felt that she was considered to be "a hot young thing"; but with five short films, a direction qualification, and a list of influential contacts, she realised two things: Her age was going to be an obstacle in terms of getting a job; she was now 36 and she felt that she was too old to start at the bottom. Nobody was going to ask her to direct their film and nor was she going to be offered any television drama work at the director level. She had a reasonable amount of confidence in her writing ability and so she embarked on writing a feature film script.

Her other dilemma was that she wanted to have children. In the mean time, she worked in the advertising industry and as a freelance scriptwriter while being on an In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) program. She applied for script development funding from Screen New South Wales and received sufficient funding to develop her script to second draft stage. Her second draft received negative feedback and, as she says:

And then I sort of couldn't face it. I knew it was a mess. I couldn't give it to another writer, and I just couldn't face it. I don't know why I thought I had to do it all on my own.

011 says that after the second draft she received no more funding support from any Government sources. She says that in her naivety she approached other producers with that script. She says that at that stage she felt very alone which was hard for her because she likes to work with other people. What she

came to realise was that most producers don't want to develop the script; they just want a finished product.

#### **4.7.5 Negotiating bureaucracy: the director**

The importance of a bureaucratic philosophy that enables and promotes entrepreneurial experimentation while providing encouragement and guidance is a factor that this study asserts is the indisputable foundation of the Australian feature film industry. The 'early' and 'middle period' cases particularly benefited from the establishment of the Australian Development Corporation (1970) and the Experimental Film and Television Fund (1970). The original funding philosophy clearly involved a large degree of risk-taking but the objective was to settle into responsible investment and finally move toward a private investment model, which saw the establishment of the Division 10BA taxation concessions in 1981.

At the inception of the Australian film bureaucracy phase, the people who made up the funding body bureaucracies and those recruited to teach into the AFTRS had almost identical education and experience as those people who were making up the director population. Some of the cases from the 'early period' complained of a lack of experience amongst film producers particularly.

002 chose his first project on the basis of his wide experience. He knew that it could be shot very economically and he knew the finished duration would suit the investment model. The film was shot in his house over nine days, produced by a first-time producer with money from Division 10BA.

Two cases reported that their pathway to government funds was by way of overseas recognition. 015 applied for government funding and was rejected on the first application. He then worked with a producer that he knew from his commercial directing network who suggested that they by-pass the

government funding agency and self-fund. The Cannes Film Festival picked up the short film, and 015 won the Palme d'Or that year for his self-funded short film. This international success ensured that his later approach to the funding agencies met with absolutely no resistance.

005 reports that he to was turned down by government funding bodies on his first approach. His first short film, which he says was explicitly made to showcase his feature filmmaking potential, attracted financial backing when the film was showcased at the Cannes Film Festival. 005 and his producers found an International sales agent and enough foreign funding to convince the AFC to provide matching funds for his feature film proposal. The team also made contact with an American distribution company at the Cannes festival through whom 005 was able to secure a lucrative U.S. presale.

The American distributors allowed 005 to direct the film without interference but on showing them the rough cut they fired him. 005 reports that he was destroyed by the experience and had to suffer the humiliation of having to represent the finished film at Cannes, even though it bore no resemblance to the film he set out to make. This version of the film met an extremely hostile reception, which further traumatised 005.

He says that he was fortunate to finally discover a producer who knew how to protect him from the surrounding hostilities and he eventually recovered and went on to eventual local and International success. Eventually, the biggest lesson he learnt from that first experience was how to compromise. 005 reports that the only time he felt unrestricted freedom in his choices was in the first draft of the script and the first cut of the film. He says that he learnt the trick of including obviously redundant material in the edit to allow other people working on the film to have a voice.

Case 015 reported that he felt that his first feature suffered in some ways from a lack of a more conservative bureaucratic intervention.

I remember someone from the AFC came and looked at a cut and they just kind of sat back and they went, “Yes, that’s really good. I really like the film.” And I think they could see that it was a competently made film; the entire story made sense, it was well edited. All those sort of things worked, but we didn’t have—I think I would have loved for someone to say at one point, “Are you sure about this?” Or, “Why are you doing this?” Or asked harder questions.

He is not certain whether that would have made him argue harder and still make the same film:

I just was like, “Man, I just wanted to sit there with my editor and make the film. I don’t care what everyone else thinks. It’s what we want to do.” And I think now, I ride that line where I really value difference of opinion, where someone’s going to come in and say, “That doesn’t work because X, Y, Z,” or, “Here’s ten reasons why it doesn’t work,” and I will take five of the reasons and make it better. And the other five, I’ll go, “Because it’s not that film. We don’t have the footage.” There’s that sort of feeling where you’ll lose your sense of authorship, but I think there are people out there who have a difference of opinion that can make your film more universally appealing.

#### **4.7.6 Entrepreneurialism**

The case studies from this research project make clear that there is no one pathway to a career. The cases report that they have had to invent the means to reach their job goal and have often had to work on the very margins of the film industry to secure their final objective. These findings accord with the 2004 findings of Peterson and Anand, whose 2004 review of the literature surrounding careers of cultural production workers identified three key features, which are confirmed by this study (Peterson & Anand 2004, p. 317).

The first of these three features is the very structure of the industry. The film industry in Australia consists of small competing firms producing a diversity of products. This type of organisational structure conforms with an early stage of industrial development that Peterson and Anand recognised in the commercial music industry (Peterson & Anand 2004, p. 316). In this organisational environment, while there is much cultural innovation, careers are chaotic. The first obstacle that successful career builders have to overcome is a series of gatekeepers. In the Australian feature film industry these gatekeepers are represented in the first instance by the film schools; secondly by the firms that give the young protégé their first work experience; and thirdly by the various government agencies that provide funding.

A majority of the case studies reported the chaotic industry structure in various ways. 007 says that when he started working independently he saw himself as a filmmaker rather than as a director. Chiefly because of his political orientation 007 was happy with the idea of being called a filmmaker, working on projects collaboratively and everybody sharing whatever money was attached. At this stage he thought that the idea of the film director was the last bastion of the tyrant and he preferred to think of himself as a media activist, than as something called a director. He continued to work in a fairly individualistic way and his early directing career was within the experimental filmmaker section of the film industry.

When 001 first graduated, it took three years to launch his first production. 001 created his own company and, rather than seek out established producers and production companies, he fulfilled the producer's role. Much of the time was spent looking for investment funding, and after a series of financial misadventures his first film was financed through Division 10BA investment money. 001 had an option on a documentary script that was owned by a third party. He managed to buy the rights to the project and adapted it into a successful feature film. 001 reported doing unaccredited work

as a producer on his first feature and learning to distrust people who called themselves producers. His first feature wasn't the result of a deliberate choice on his part but rather it was byproduct of a set of events that led indirectly to that particular project. He acknowledges however that it was astuteness and control that placed him in a position where he could take advantage of the set of circumstances that resulted in his first feature.

From that point on, he was independent of other production companies and his production methods and budgets found favour with the local funding bodies while his film productions found a worldwide audience and won much local acclaim. This situation highlights an important of the local film production industry generally.

The production sector consists of very small production companies that expand when needed and then contract or sometimes completely disappear at the end of the film production phase. The general production and postproduction infrastructure is a highly volatile sector and many companies are created and disappear over a very short time span. This would appear to be at odds with the espoused ideals of the AFTRS in particular and the funding bodies in general, in the accounts of some of the case studies.

#### **4.7.7 Entrepreneurialism: Convention versus innovation**

Government agencies such as the film funding bodies and the AFTRS represent the interface between official institutions and 'extreme artistry' (Adorno 1991, pp. 126-8). It is the very structure of bureaucratic institutions to neutralise the danger inherent in art and present the neoliberal ideology, which constrains the artist and forces them into conformity with the mainstream population. This 'neutralisation' of danger sometimes spills over into a policy that contradicts contemporary social policy. One of the respondents reported on recent film funding policy as an obstacle to her choice to take time out to have a family:



Disposability...they've built in so to be eligible...eligibility guidelines, you have to have made something that - and there's a list of festivals that has to have played at - and it has to have been in the last five years or something like that. So they're wiped out a whole generation of people. They're also wiped out a lot of parents who may have taken ten years out to be a parent. People who might have worked in areas of the screen industry but have gone part-time and just didn't want to embrace the full on nature filmmaking. That's a real problem because they've actually institutionalised the disposability of people who might have put 15 years of good solid work into the screen industry, and they've closed the gate - they're not allowed back in. That's inherent in the current guidelines.

Adorno points out there is no honor in poverty and it is of paramount importance to the film director's career that they learn to negotiate the 'administrated world' (Adorno 1991, pp. 129-31). The problem arises when administrative authority enters a fields of expertise in which it has no competence because the administrator's aptitude, quiet rightly, lies within the technicality of administration. There were several reports of clashes with administrative authority particularly with students at the AFTRS. One case indicated that the student body in her year was 'politically active' as had been the cohort the previous year. The school administration seemed to be changing their approach to each year's education method in response to the previous year's criticisms.

...they were always struggling with the student body, because their first intake was a lot of co-op people. I'm actually thinking of [name], it's a whole lot of people from that era, and they were a pretty feisty lot. Yeah, and they didn't like that, they didn't like it at all. So the next year they got people who really are technically interested, so they had a lot of young men, and only three women. [name] came through that

year...it was something else, but very different. Then I had our year, which was like a mismatch of all sorts of people... I was the token co-op person, they had a token television person, it was...but nonetheless, parts of us bonded with that third year, and that very first year, so that was just a distraction, but it was about the people; those creative voices saying, "Hang on, we want to do this." And from my point of view, I was there to learn, I wanted to do sound, I wanted to learn everything I possibly could. They were much more into corralling people into specialisations.

A deviant case however reported that the education experience at the AFTRS was rich and rewarding. This respondent received exactly the sort of education that she had been looking for and felt that her time had the school had enriched her career. This example was someone who had been an exceptional student and had experienced a number of education systems before attending the AFTRS.

I spent years trying to find the knowledge I found at AFTRS. I learnt it in one year, and then it started consolidating for me, when I started making the feature, and I'm learning as I go. But AFTRS, without that course I have no idea where I'd be.

The lack of acknowledgement of positive educational experiences by most people is not unexpected in the educational research domain. The main benefit of an educational experience is often felt some years after the education experience, and the beneficiary may not always consciously acknowledge the true source of this affect. Those who reported positively on their education experience generally reported on the 'Halo Effect' that their alumni status of a school like AFTRS afforded their careers. It would seem though that some of the respondents believe that the school's current reputation is seeing this 'Halo Effect' wearing off.

A notable contribution came from one case study where the respondent pointed out that he realised while working on his first feature that his training meant that he always felt well prepared and could cope with any contingency. This was a response to a question about learning feature film direction experientially. The respondent reported that all of his previous training, short of making a feature film, contributed to his success with his first feature.

A majority of respondents reported on the educational aspects of a deep and long term involvement with a film project. The script and project development phases required a complex research process, which necessitated a sophisticated understanding of the topic under examination. The research process also required a sustained involvement with people who may have been central figures in a social movement or a dramatic incident. It was widely held that this kind of obsessive involvement, which is central to researching a feature film, is different from historical research because in the film script example the director is trying to find the artistic essence of the moment or event.

001, a 'middle epoch' case, reports that his milieu was that surrounding the Experimental Film and Television fund and consequently he saw the film director as more of an artist than as somebody as part of a wider industry. He reports that this caused problems for him when he attended the AFTRS because his attitudes and ways of working were not seen to be in accord with the mainstream industry.

...You come to a place like the film school in Sydney (AFTRS) and they have 35mm gear, so I went and shot my film on 35mm black and white stock, and that was just phenomenal. But I shot it with a crew that I was used to, five or six people. The film school did not like the way I worked at all; they just saw me as a...they were very much into the conventional industry.

The indication from this and other case study reports suggests that the film industry bureaucracy at this stage was modeling a conventional, established industry image. It would appear that the bureaucracy's central ambition contained a desire to transmit and inculcate the novice filmmakers under its purview with the values and techniques that were employed in the established film industries of Europe and the U.S.A.

I said, "Oh look, I've got this opportunity to shoot for four weeks. I'm going to shoot 60-70 rolls of 16mm down in Melbourne, can I have that as an attachment?" And they refused; they wouldn't let me do it as an...I had to take my holidays to do the...they didn't actually stop me, but they really wanted to. They said, "You won't learn anything. You're not going to learn from doing that." As a learning experience that wasn't going to work, because you can see, their path was okay, go and be a [?] on a feature film, and that's where you work with a great DOP and you'll learn.

#### **4.7.8 Entrepreneurialism: Mentoring versus Experiential Learning**

It is clear that bureaucratic bodies formal training objectives were distinctly at odds with those of the case studies. It is apparent from their accounts that the cases learnt very quickly, and with varying degrees of astuteness how to overcome or adapt to the various officially imposed prescriptions and conditions. Politis & Gabrielsson (2015) offer an explanation for this mismatch in learning styles. This experience of conflicting learning styles is concerned with the notion of how entrepreneurs differ in their mode of learning. The aspirant directors who make up these case studies uniformly favour experiential learning, which is the mode most preferred by entrepreneurs.

The research conducted by Politis & Gabrielsson proposes that there exist two dimensions of experiential learning: 'grasping' and 'transforming'. The first concept deals with the idea of opportunity recognition while 'transforming'

conceptualises the development of 'elemental insights' into how to serve markets and deploy resources (Politis & Gabrielsson 2015, pp. 101-4). Politis & Gabrielsson's research suggests that the learning mode for budding entrepreneurs is an explorative mode of learning. This type of learning is thought to complement the development of the budding entrepreneur's experiential learning preference.

004 reports that the corporate video sector in the mid-to-late 80s was booming and as a consequence 004 did about maybe six or seven corporate videos and reports that they were his real training ground. This confirms the notion of experiential learning providing the most consciously beneficial training. The phenomenon reported here also underscores another aspect of the career of a feature film director; that of pragmatism altering the original ambition as other, more frequent opportunities present themselves.

A common response to questions about gaining experience centred around the strategy of being on a set, either as an actor or in any kind of crew position, and watching experienced directors' work. There is a caveat with that recommendation which emerged from a discussion about the ideal crew role in relation to learning important aspects of the director's job. It seems that when an actor becomes a director it is equally as difficult for them to direct actors as it is for people who have had little experience of acting. One respondent speculated that the performance process is different for each actor and the greatest skill the director can bring to a production is a deep understanding of general human behaviour.

#### **4.7.9 Entrepreneurialism: opportunity recognition**

The other clear and repeatedly reported feature of entrepreneurialism that emerged from the case studies was the importance of being able to recognise and act on opportunity (Keh, Foo & Lim 2002). Many of the reports included accounts of being constrained by other life decisions, such as the choice to

have a family, and many cases were under the impression that opportunities would continue to emerge from their initial success. This however, in every case, was not what happened.

004 reported that he emerged from the AFTRS in the mid-1980s and Division 10BA funding was in full swing. 004 acknowledges that consequently, “There was a lot of work out there”. His first and only feature, a telemovie, was produced by PBL Productions (Pavel Brian Lindner Productions), which fell under the aegis of Kerry Packer’s Publishing and Broadcasting Limited (also confusingly PBL). PBL had already completed one telemovie with a well-known theatre director as the film’s director. 004’s telemovie was the second one, and PBL went on to make 14 productions in all, comprising a mixture of miniseries, telemovies, and feature films.

When asked, 004 explained that a telemovie was different from a feature film inasmuch as it was intended only for small screen distribution. He recounts that he had previously worked as an actor on a telemovie that gained a theatrical release, “...because it was felt it merited it, but it's pretty unusual”. His telemovie was only released on television, so as far as he is concerned it is a telemovie.

After directing this telemovie 004 was still determined to be a director but admits that he wasn’t quiet sure how to go about it. For the first eight years after leaving the AFTRS he took acting and directing jobs until eventually the directing became the main job. Because of his experience in the filmmaking business his determination to ensure that he made a living was stronger than his ambition to be a feature film director. As much as this choice of job role might seem privileged to outsiders, the reality is that the choice is always tempered by pragmatism. An often-admitted truth throughout these case studies is an acknowledgement that there are always external demands that are modifying or restricting the ongoing engagement with only the feature film production side of the industry. In most instances, the director at some point in

her career is faced with the proposition that feature director work is not always on offer and consequently other, often unrelated, avenues of earning a living need to be considered.

003 worked in the mainstream sector as a director of photography and it was through this work and the contacts he was able to create in this time that facilitated his feature film director opportunity after a ten year working history. The realisation that it was through providing a complete production package to musicians and record companies in the market for a music video provided him with both a means of making a sustainable living and the extension of his industry network. This meant two things for him: firstly, he continued to develop his talent and understanding of the director's role, and secondly he was building a reputation throughout the industry, which would later facilitate his acceptance by the funding bodies.

#### **4.7.10 Entrepreneurialism: bureaucratic enabling**

Mathieu (2006) in his examination of the Danish film industry has identified an important and often overlooked feature which he has identified as intermediary entrepreneurialism (Mathieu 2006, p. 246). While the state bureaucracy dispenses government subsidisation to the film industry, it also plays an active role in the selection and development of individuals, not just projects; it assumes the role of a co-developer of the project; and finally it works to grow a public audience through cultural and screening activities.

The Australian funding bureaucracies in their various guises from 1970 to the present, assumed a number of these identified roles and responsibilities. The difficulty in the funding arena is chiefly one of reaching a mutual agreement between the bureaucracy and the applicants as to what constitutes the 'right' objectives. Policy is constantly changing and the types of film projects that appeal to funding bodies is also subject to personal taste and philosophy. In

the past fifty years we have gone from a policy of absolutely no genre film projects to what seems like only genre film projects receiving funding.

An example of this change in attitude is best illustrated in one of the cases. At the time that 007 was looking for feature film funding, the historical funding context was that the Australian Film Commission (AFC) was financing low-budget drama. A well-known film producer from the U.K. had been brought into the AFC in an attempt to bring a more entrepreneurial practice to the decision making process. 007 says that the AFC at that stage wasn't necessarily in the business of making commercial films, rather it was in the business of making films with impact and they were looking to finance low budget films with new writer/directors attached.

In 007's case he was approaching the AFC as a team because the novella's writer was attached as the screenplay writer. 007 says that at the time he approached the AFC the U.K. film producer had left the organization but that the people who remained after he left were very imbued with the values and approaches that he (the U.K. producer) had brought to the organisation.

Before 007 made his initial approach to the AFC, he contacted the U.K. film producer to ask him if he would be interested in taking up a producer-role on his production. He says he did this in anticipation that the AFC's response to his initial funding request would be negative, on the basis that he was a first-time director. This searching out and subsequent alignment of the funding body's contemporaneous disposition meant that 007's application was successful and his project was funded through to completion.

He later fell victim to yet another shift in the funding body's guiding philosophy. He suggested that he lost the interest of the funding body to invest in other projects of his because they had advised him to change his film, after it had been made, to avoid an R censorship rating, but he refused.



#### 4.7.11 Emotional aspects of Creative Work

Building a capacity within the workforce to pursue creativity and innovation is a worthwhile policy objective but often the disadvantages of entrepreneurial enterprise are overlooked. El-Awad et al. (2017) have pointed out those industries, which have limited opportunities for continuous engagement, lose out on improvement opportunities which come with team reflexivity (El-Awad, Gabrielsson & Politis 2017, p. 24). This process is the main process that organisations use to develop mental models, which in turn facilitate growth and improvement. Seo, Barrett and Bartunek (2004) cited in Adler & Obstfeld (2007) maintain that 'the successful implementation of a routine typically requires some degree of improvisation' and this improvisation and its three components – direction, intensity, and persistence, are shaped by affect.

I'm sorry for those who want a career and they don't get one, but show business is difficult. Actors, the same thing happens. DOPs. It's a difficult business to find your feet in. The students that I was with at school, I liked but I could tell that - I don't know what it is about an individual - that means that they're going somehow forge a pathway in the business as it stands. I think [inaudible] of place apart, but I think also drive and determination, etcetera - obviously - make a difference.

Unsurprisingly, the main qualities that directors brought to their careers were perseverance and tenacity. Every aspect of their autobiographical account illustrated their focus and their personal commitment to the task. The same informant who gave accounts of missed opportunities also offered examples of other opportunities that were exploited. It seems, that for this population they were displaying a form of hyper vigilance to opportunity and it was more a case of choosing one opportunity from among many than it was a case of missing out altogether.

You have to be determined and you have to be ready to live cheaply. It's very, very competitive. It's a buyers market in terms of who is going to work or who isn't. You've got to be ready to make sacrifices. One of the reasons I ended up going into television directing was that I wanted a family. As an actor in film and television, my income fluctuated so drastically that I wasn't sure that I could do that on that income. In fact - as I look back now - had I not crossed over; I don't know that I could have. What was going into television meant was, I was reasonably confident I could earn enough money to buy a house and a car, the things that - I think - a lot of people take for granted.

The absolute essential quality that a director needs in the Australian feature film industry is persistence. While waiting for a chance to direct a feature film after graduation, 008 found himself performing the role of a scriptwriter on other people's projects. In that time, he was never considered for the role of director on those projects. In the interim, 008 worked in the theatre sector as a director. A famous actor came to one of the performances and expressed interest in 008 as a writer/director. This provided 008 with the opportunity to try to interest the actor in the now moribund feature film project. 008 and the actor met and at the end of the meeting, he handed the actor his old script and then he didn't hear from him for another eight years.

The actor made a secondary contact with 008 who said that another two years went by before he and the actor approached the funding body. 008 remembers the fund only by the popular name 'The Chook Raffle'. He remembers that it was a special fund set up for first time directors and that it was only just sufficient an amount of money. Adler & Obstfeld (2007) identify four aspects specific to creative tasks, all of which have affect as the central condition. The four aspects are as follows: tasks are less familiar and more complex; generative direction and high intensity are critical; there is a long interval between goal setting and goal attainment; and there is greater ambiguity of progress information. In these circumstances, motivational

persistence is crucial and the 'affectual basis of this persistence' is critical to the success of the enterprise (Adler & Obstfeld 2007, p. 25).

In the eight-year hiatus period, 008 had been supported by the arts sector he was employed in. He was given permission and funding to research and develop his film synopsis. In turn, he was able to adapt his screenplay for a theatrical presentation that was enormously successful. This encouragement and the subsequent success, created a favourable affectual basis for his necessary persistence.

#### **4.7.12 The Appeal of Creative Work**

Feature film work is centred on symbolic, expressive, and informational creativity. These three aspects of creativity have a powerful appeal to workers drawn to a creative industry. Hesmondhalgh & Baker point out in their 2008 study into workers in the television industry that, despite the uncertainty of continued employment, creative work in the media (and here I extend this concept to feature film direction), holds-out a promise of a particular type of power-laden interaction, which they call, via an attribution to John Thompson (1995) a 'mediated-quasi interaction' (Hesmondhalgh & Baker 2008, pp. 101-2). A mediated-quasi interaction is a powerful form of communication with an unspecified range of potential recipients (audience) because it is primarily one-way (monological). The power from this interaction is derived from the fact that it is primarily one-way and to be successful, it has to be attached to artistry and knowledge. These factors create 'influence, recognition and occasionally prestige' for the successful worker. For the unsuccessful employee, Hesmondhalgh & Baker maintain that they too are enthralled by this aspect of what they identify as symbolic power (Hesmondhalgh & Baker 2008, p. 102).

Many interview responses centred on the notion of having control over the projects that the directors were involved in. For many it was astuteness about

the direction the project should take and control over the key decisions surrounding the project that placed them in a position where they could fully exploit the circumstances surrounding their first feature to their own advantage.

002 began his career in the nascent Australian industry as a scriptwriter. He had come from a background as a successful print journalist and was attracted to the idea of public recognition for a wider creative expression that book and film authorship would afford him. The political tenor of the times was wholly conducive to individuals claiming the right to experiment within the filmmaking sphere. 002 admits that his first feature was received with only mild acclaim and no commercial success but that it led directly to another film which was produced by a more experienced producer and was a much more devastating personal experience.

Often it's an alliance of a producer and a director who are loyal and they fight for their next project. Often it's independent money, people who can afford to live between projects and, often it's dumb luck.

The notion luck at play in the director's career raises the question of entrepreneurial theory's intrinsic belief in networks and personal discernment as the main contributions to success. One of the main lessons 002 learnt from his second filmmaking experience was not to work with inexperienced producers. 002 reported also that as far as both projects were concerned he learnt to expect unbelievably bad luck. Generally, 002 blamed inexperienced film producers for the lack of certainty and continuity of production. His third feature was produced by a very experienced U.K. producer and was a happy and successful experience.

By nature, we're loud and we're monsters - we're a breed. You are reduced to screaming and usually - particularly within the Australian film confines as you don't have enough money, you don't have enough

time, you don't have enough light - it's usually the successful Directors, and all of us are the same, that are reduced to screaming. You start with *Gone with the Wind* at the beginning of the day and you end up with *Home and Away*.

#### **4.8 Working**

Some directors had no experience or knowledge of working with crews before assuming a role as a director. In one instance the response was along the lines that this gave the individual an advantage at the time because they didn't approach the crew with a work hierarchy in mind. This respondent said that it was far more rewarding to approach everybody in the cast and crew on an individual level and employ interpersonal skills rather than employ some notion of management style command-and-control approaches. This reliance on, and emphasis of, interpersonal skills and the director's ability to have an advanced understanding of human behaviour was a recurring theme throughout the case study interviews.

Some interview responses highlighted the investment in time that was required to not only launch a career, but once having started a project the focus and energy required gave the person the characteristics of a 'workaholic'. This was countered by the enthusiasm that each of the respondents mentioned was the main attitude that they had toward their role. "It doesn't feel like work." The common response was, that while the work was extremely stressful, the work was also so personally satisfying that the stress became a minor consideration by comparison.

A finding from these interviews was that the most significant change for first time feature film directors now is that the median age has shifted to the 35-40-age range. There was some speculation amongst the response group that this was due to the fact that we are living in a time when people who may be considering a career in feature films are more financially conservative and so

are waiting until after they establish a family to make their first feature. It might also be the case however that people are starting at a later age and it is the case that a common development period was ten years. Successful first time directors in this sample were typically in the 28-35-age range when they made their first feature film.

This shift towards an older first-time feature director is at odds with an outstanding feature of the contemporary funding demographic. Case study responses suggested that current funding policy seems to favour applicants in their early 20s and there was some speculation amongst the response group that this might be due to the fact that the younger demographic might be prepared to take more risks with their financial future. This response also recalled an earlier respondent who reported thinking that the busy production phase of the 1970s and 1980s was due to the prevailing social attitude towards traditional career paths. The formerly traditional jobs-for-life approach to work was no longer seen as relevant (this is late 1970s) and this respondent reported, "I didn't want to go down a traditional path."

The part-time nature of feature film work has been described as a boundaryless career system (Jones & DeFillippi 1996). Boundaryless careers unfold as people move among firms for projects, develop market niches rooted in competencies and strategies, and create opportunities based on prior performance and networks of professional contacts. In contrast, in a bounded or employer defined career, loyalty, skills, and value are attached to the firm (Jones & DeFillippi 1996). According to Bridgstock, a worker with a boundaryless career is also referred to as someone with a 'portfolio career' (Bridgstock 2005, pp. 4-5). This term can be applied to those whose work could be 'characterised by a series of periods within and outside paid employment, linked by experiences of learning and retraining'. Pongratz and Voss (2001), cited in Sperlich (2011) have also identified what they term as an '*Abeitskraftunternehmer*'. This term refers to a self-employed individual whose legal status is that of an entrepreneur, but who otherwise has the

characteristics of an employee (Sperlich 2011, pp. 138-9). The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) defines an employee as someone who is paid for the time they work; has their tools supplied or is reimbursed by their employer for the tools they need for their job; takes no commercial risk, and is not operating independently from the employer (ATO 2012). The ATO description seems to match all of the characteristics of a feature film director.

The promise of a Knowledge Economy offers many distinct advantages: Knowledge and Creativity are two economic inputs that are endlessly renewable, thus offering a viable alternative to unsustainable economic activities such as the mining and minerals sector. It could be said that the Knowledge Economy offers the promise of an economic perpetual motion machine, a machine that produces creative and educated workers who in turn provide more innovation and more economic opportunities. The ideal economy is, of course, an unregulated market place whose workforce consists of contractors or at worst, part-time, casual labour engaged in entrepreneurial industry. In this environment, the forces operating in the market economy set wages and conditions, and the viability of individual businesses is determined by their successful negotiation within their respective market place.

I had a rich and interesting life, that's one of the things about directing that I do really like, that privilege thing that happens - particularly in pre-production on location surveys and...where you get to go places where no one else goes, you get to meet people that other people doesn't get to meet. You get to learn things that are peculiar to what everybody is trying to do at that time. A lot of that stuff is really fascinating. There is an upside, there isn't necessarily financial.

Only six of the fifteen case studies were able make a living based entirely on income derived from directing work. While two of these examples worked only in the feature film domain, the other four examples worked extensively in the

television industry sector. The remainder of the sample population worked either in crew roles on other director's productions, as actors on film and television productions, or worked in the screen education sector.

## **4.9 Chapter 4 Summary**

Chapter 4 presented the analysis and results of the data from the study sample. The first section presented the results of the quantitative phase. First, a descriptive overview of the sample was shown. Then, the data was modeled graphically and a brief discussion offered an explanation for the data inclusion in the survey.

The second section of Chapter four presented the results from the qualitative phase of the inquiry. The section began by acknowledging that the objectives of the research had changed from the objectives outlined by the original question. As the collection and analysis of the research data developed, a more interesting theme surrounding the creation of a professional identity began to emerge.

Section 4.71 gives an overview of the intersection of the government policy formulation and the individual case study's entry into the industry. The study argues that it is government policy that provides the conditions for a thriving industry and consequently a career that goes beyond the mean number of films, which invariably only amounts to two or three films throughout the working life of the director.

The chapter goes on to look at education and social factors and the way in which they start to form the individual and the individual's consideration of a career in the creative industry. While the formation of the AFTRS provided an enormous boost to the feature film industry, it was more the opening up of the film investment sphere that saw the number of productions increase from 13 productions in the previous 10 years, to 153 films in the next 10 years.



Socioeconomic status as a factor in the choice of role and also as a means of gaining the necessary access to career networks is also briefly examined.

The many aspects of entrepreneurialism, which is the closest description of the feature film director's approach to filmmaking, are teased out from the biographical data in the case studies. The film industry is a chaotic employment sector; work is precarious; there are absolutely no guarantees surrounding the success of any project; and the individual director is forced to work in other jobs, sometimes totally unrelated to the film industry to maintain their ability to persist with their filmmaking projects. Some directors manage to stay within the sector by assuming producer or writer roles. Others are forced into work and become inclined to thinking that they are being forced out of the industry. Some cases report that the choice to have children adversely affects women's careers particularly. Several cases report that the choice of having a family with children has a significant bearing in the film industry sector that they choose to work in, with two cases choosing the television sector to pursue a directing career because, despite the fact they both thought the production mode of fast turnaround television wasn't as satisfying as feature film direction, it was a far more assured way of making a living that could support a family. The next chapter, Chapter 5 is a discussion of the conclusion formed from the quantitative and qualitative data collected for this study.

## **Chapter 5 Discussion**

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### **5.0 Introduction**

This final chapter presents the conclusions of the study. First, the research rationale is outlined revisiting the objectives that were set out for this study. Then, a summary of the preceding four chapters of the thesis is given. The summary is followed by a discussion of the contributions of the study to expanding theoretical knowledge and the practical contributions of the research to feature film directors, educators, and policy makers. The chapter ends by identifying the limitations of the study and presents directions for future research.

### **5.1 Research Rationale**

With the Australian Government spending \$121 million dollars in 2014/2015 and the Australian cinema box office ranking number 10 in the world with an income of \$1.1 billion dollars (Australia 2015), the Australian feature film industry represents an important industry in the Australian economy. The industry's importance comes at a time when general manufacturing industries are in decline and mining revenues are extremely volatile.

While there have been some quantitative studies that look at the underlying reasons for the success of the film as a unit of economic and cultural output, there has been little qualitative research undertaken that looks at the career of the feature film director and uses the individual director as the unit of analysis. As previously discussed in Chapter 2 under the Research Rationale section, the extremely poor outlook that had been revealed by both Screen Australia and the ADG required a closer investigation.

## 5.2 Summary of the Thesis

One of the most important policy decisions of the Australian government in the 1960s and the one that has had the longest lasting impact on the Australian feature film industry was the creation of the Australian Film and Television School. The policy decision was made in an epoch described by Radbourne (1993) cited in Craik (2007) as ‘the establishment of an inspectorate phase’ (Craik 2007, p. 7). The policy decision to form the school represents an intersection of government policy, non-market selection process (Santagata 2010, p. 16), and training institutions. It typifies an example of what Wallis identifies as a moment when ‘power is productively and diffusely harnessed in the governance of others and the self’ (Wallis 2013, p. 344).

Both the fundamental importance of the film school’s establishment to the growth and sustenance of the Australian feature film industry, as well as the nature of the feature film industry as a globalised workforce and economic sector, are the underlying reasons why this study begins with an online survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather data surrounding the training of the feature film director. This area of focus seemed to be the one area where there was little existing research while at the same time being an area that was crucial to gaining an understanding of the career development of the feature film director.

As outlined detail in Chapter one and Chapter three, the study design was based on a mixed-methods approach that utilised a survey and case study interviews. The response for the survey represented 18% of the total feature film director population. The 15 case studies represented a sample size of 9% of the total feature film population (N=169). Because the study was targeting only feature film directors, this increased the generalisability of the case study findings. The point about significant samples is that any descriptive statistics

that emerge from this study describes the actual properties of the population under investigation.

While the majority of the respondents had studied at a University undergraduate level, the surprise from the survey results came from the five respondents who said that they had no training. Seven had attended the Victorian College of the Arts; seven had attended AFTRS; six had trained at various TAFE colleges; six had done multiple courses at different institutions; two had enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles; and two had been to the University of Southern California.

The number of respondents who answered in the affirmative to the question of having had director training corresponds fairly closely to the number of people who said that they had undertaken a course longer than twelve months in duration. It was a somewhat similar outcome for the responses for the question about formal scriptwriting training (*Figure 4.12*). Again it is the people who undertook the longer courses who identify as having had formal scriptwriting training.

Approaching the qualitative case studies analysis using an application of sensitising concepts to the emerging themes, an understanding of the interview responses that went beyond what was offered as an explanation by the respondents began to emerge. This new understanding formed a basis of a theoretical conceptualisation, which the study proposes might go some way to explaining the obvious attachment to what was in some ways a precarious career choice. This conceptualisation is detailed below.

### **5.3 Theoretical Contributions of the Research**

The director's accounts of their training, industry entry, and their strategies for developing a career form the framework for the investigation in this study. Previously, research looking at the director's success consisted of mainly

quantitative studies examining such variables as predictors of box office success and marketing strategies. This study expressly set out to look for the attitudes behind the reasons why people would enter such a precarious field of employment.

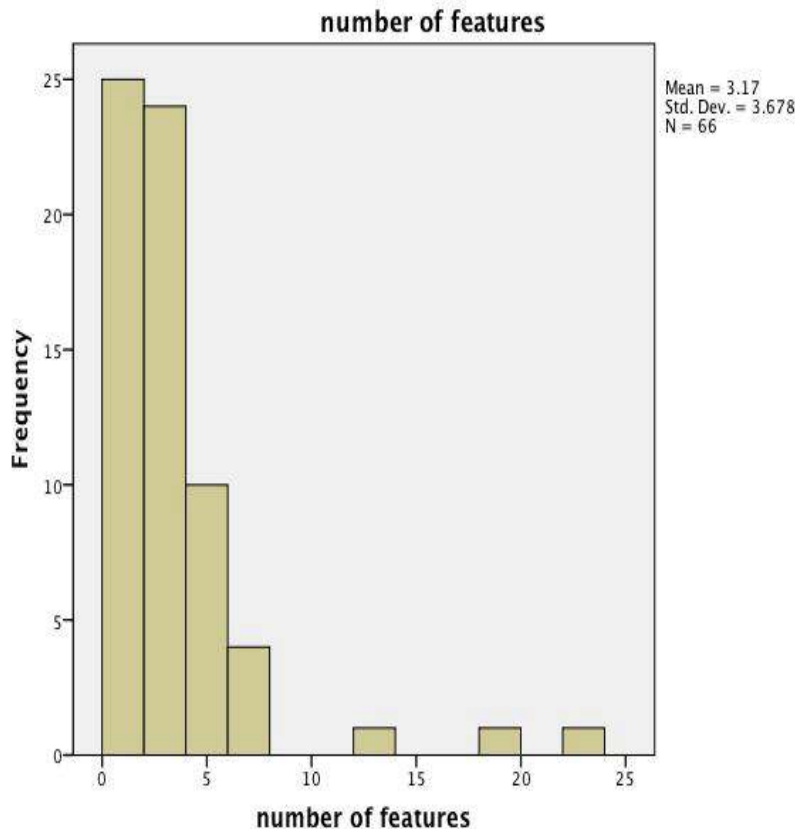


Figure 5.1 Average number of Feature films per director

### 5.3.1 Expanding theories of social repertoire and symbolic power

The following section discusses the surrounding theories surrounding the entry of people into such a precarious industry. The section goes some way to answering the research question: How are directors constituted by their identification with the film industry and how do those constituted subjects act to sustain a career?

A 2004 study by Arthur De Vany, in one of only two studies that directly examine director success in the feature film industry, produced a graph, which

is only slightly different from Figure 6.1. De Vany was exploring the Hollywood industry, and his sample was 259 directors. In Hollywood, a director can expect to make two features, but the usual career, experienced by seventy-five per cent of feature film directors is one feature film (De Vany 2004, p. 28).

Figure 6.1 represents a random sample of 66 Australian feature film directors out of an estimated population of one hundred and sixty-nine. We can see that the expected number of films for half of this sample group is three feature films. The people producing the significant figures at the end of the horizontal axis are the directors who have been consistently working in the feature film industry for thirty years or more.

The feature film industry is an example of what Nassim Nicholas Taleb refers to as 'lumpy' (Taleb 2007, p. 144). That is, success seems concentrated in a very narrow band along a distribution curve, with the majority of participants experiencing low or no success. So it should come as no surprise to any of the willing participants who line-up year after year for a chance to direct a feature film that their chance of success involves what is known in the statistical jargon as a highly stochastic process. In this career field, the outcome of achievement is highly indeterminate.

People, particularly at the launch of their career naturally consider that, despite all of the evidence to the contrary, they will have all of the success that they see befall the most notable practitioners in their field. What these early career-stage players willfully or blindly refuse to acknowledge is that their success, in all likelihood, is a low-probability event. So having factored-in the most likely outcome for the feature film career scenario, why would anyone willingly choose to enter this particular job market?

Feature film work is centered on symbolic, expressive, and informational creativity. This holds out a powerful appeal to prospective workers who are drawn to the creative industries. John Thompson (1995) outlined a power-

laden interaction, which he saw as a new form of interaction (Thompson 2005, p. 33). This interaction is particularly powerful because it is potentially, via the screen medium, global in its reach. This affect is spelt out in more detail in Chapter 5 on page 157.

It is one thing to be attracted to career rewards, but it is quite another thing to assume an identity that aligns with the 'system of signs' associated with the particular circumstances of the industry that we aspire to (Konings 2015, p. 38). This assumed identity had been referred to as the by-product of mimesis (Taussig 1993). Taussig's '*mimetic faculty*' simultaneously relates to the ability that humans and other animals have to imitate things that they see and hear. Sometimes the imitation is an exact representation of the original form and at other times it undergoes a transformation and becomes a new form. It is often the basis for producing culturally symbolic and expressive forms in an industry such as the film industry. It is not only the art form itself that employs mimesis as a strategy, but it also extends to film production's labour force. According to Walter Benjamin, it is man who has the highest capacity to 'become and behave like something else' (Benjamin 1978, p. 333). While mimesis seems to be a major function within cultural production, it is also an important aspect of the formation of a worker identity.

According to Konings, notions of social and discursive construction lie at the heart of political economy. Capitalism's hegemonic signs are seen as organically embedded discursive practices that shape our conduct from within (Konings 2015, p. 22). The system of signs that Konings is referring to is the network surrounding the job or industry that we desire to join. It is through the identification of the iconic signs that the modern worker finds clues about how best to develop responses to all of the various required responses (their social repertoire) in the workplace. Konings refers to this individual development as modern performativity. For Judith Butler, performativity is not something that one is but something that one does (Butler 2010). It is an act of self-constitution. The act of self-constitution is an acknowledgment that while

personal identity is contingent and changeable, changes to behaviour or character brought about by external influences are not making someone a different person. This process of role taking, through an acknowledgment of the tacit hegemonic forces in the modern workplace, leads to the building of the worker's identity and assists with their acquisition of a social repertoire and the necessary workplace skill set. It is a distinct workplace identity that the person is assuming, but it doesn't preclude the range of other identities that a person may carry as part of their persona. It is a necessary rationalisation for a very particular circumstance.

For years, an orthodox view in sociology was one which could be labeled as the homology argument (Chan 2010, p. 3). The argument was first used by Herbert Gans in 1974 who found that cultural tastes and consumptions had a close fit with the socio-economic stratification of American society (Chan 2010, p. 3). Bourdieu expands Gan's idea in the form of an insistence that society, as a cultural system must not be separated from its social and cultural processes. By adding the concept of a social script, Bourdieu is further arguing that discourse is not only structured, but it is also contextualised (St Clair, Rodriguez & Nelson 2005, p. 149). A successful person has an internalised awareness of theoretical rules and strategic choices (habitus). These are learned through repetition, but importantly they are acquired in a social context (St Clair, Rodriguez & Nelson 2005, p. 144). There is a definite sense of contingency surrounding the choices people make around their social activity, but for most of the time, the choices that they make are ultimately obscured by other options and constraints that they are forced to make (Bourdieu 2008, pp. 48-50).

According to Paulle and Emirbayer (2016), it was Max Weber who first identified this rationalisation process as 'a peculiar form of rational inner orientation' (Paulle & Emirbayer 2016, p. 40). For Weber, the biggest problem for objectively determining the degree of autonomy that surrounded the individual shaping their identity was the extent to which the observer could



make a claim for knowing a person's accomplishments and how and to what extent they were changing (Honneth 2004, p. 464).

Judith Butler describes performativity as a repetition that is 'very often a repetition of oppressive and painful gender norms' (Butler 1988, p. 519). For Butler performativity is a trap and it becomes a question for the individual about how to work the trap. Konings, however, sees a way to work the trap. For Konings, to mimetically replicate what we perceive as the essential attributes of the role in the workplace, we are generating a new meaning. We make this new meaning through a building of a personalised representation, which is not just a passive representation but also a genuinely creative act (Konings 2015, p. 55).

### **5.3.2 Advancing new knowledge on the conceptualisation of work**

A further rationalisation has to take place to counter what Herbert Marcuse identified as repressive desublimation. His critique of the culture industry includes the notion that man has destroyed the sublimations of higher culture through a wholesale incorporation of the oppositional, alien and transcendent elements in the higher culture into the established order by way of their reproduction and display on a massive scale. The profit motive is projected onto the cultural forms and subsumes all of the representative values of the higher culture. The original purpose of making art is lost, and all is swept aside by the commercial aspect of the cultural production (Marcuse 1964, pp. 58,9). In Marcuse's words, 'the alien and alienating oeuvres of intellectual culture become familiar goods and services' (Marcuse 1964, p. 61).

Marcuse's position is also taken by Theodor Adorno who maintains that modern culture is a mass culture that must make a profit on the market (Adorno 1991). In this climate we see two things happening: 1) Cultural production is governed by production costs and reduced to just a few types of standardised formulas and 2) The participants in the cultural production field

are marked out by 'socially ranked symbolic differences'(Gartman 2012, p. 142).

These 'differences' privileges those candidates above the general population to work in a field that requires economic and social capital to succeed. The social capital advantage is particularly significant because it is through the exploitation of social networks that successful candidates are led to more rewarding positions (Brauer 2010, p. 1389). Marx described labor as being subsumed under capital. He meant that capital appropriates and extracts a surplus from the labor processes. Hardt and Negri (2001) cited in Shaviro (2013), go further by claiming that capital also subsumes 'all aspects of personal and social life' (Shaviro 2016, p. 26). The subsumption means that labor, subjectivity, and social life are no longer 'outside capital'...they...'are themselves already functions of capital.' This leads us to make reference to our lives and our experience as if they 'only had instrumental value and needed to be invested'. Thus we have social capital, cultural capital, and human capital.

## **5.4 Practical Contributions of the Research**

The results of this study provide several practical applications for feature film directors by identifying the importance of 1) developing entrepreneurial capabilities, 2) developing education and training and, 3) favourable government policy. An examination of all three areas can assist feature film directors to recognise ways in which they can find more effective means to sustain a career and to enjoy a sustainable industry. This in turn will help fulfill the Government's objective to motivate both public and private investment in the Australian feature film industry and to actively encourage foreign co-productions as part of the production mix.

### **5.4.1 Raw data for future studies into this population**

Also of some potential use is the collected data from the survey and case studies. This information could be used in future research projects in this field to either supplement or extend further collected data.

The outcome of this research project will be a contribution to an understanding of the career of the feature film director and their role in the creative economy.

#### **5.4.2 Enhance an understanding of career factors**

Global changes in the re-organisation of labour tend to look at the economy on a macro-level. Research into how individuals experience their work in environments of change help workers better equip them to address their own response. It is anticipated that some of the theoretical conclusions that emerged from a comparative analysis of the case studies will not only provide some insight into the feature film director's work environment but also provide the basis for future studies into this specific domain.

The conditions for the growth of the local feature film industry and the parallel development of the feature film director in that industry seem to hinge on two foundation stones, both of which seemingly contaminate the ideological purity of entrepreneurialism. In the Australian film industry example, it is argued that it is direct government intervention in the marketplace that provides the opportunity for the individual. The bureaucratic apparatus, including the elite national training school, then supports the individual director who, with minimal permanent infrastructure support, creates what are generally innovative films.

This local example of innovation within the scriptwriting and film production areas contradicts theorists like Adorno who argue that cultural expression has been subsumed by a capitalist dilution of originality. It is clear that the local director truly innovates and in fact it is this innovation that comprises the

entire identity of the local film industry, although this too makes a detrimental contribution to the public perception of the local filmmaking industry.

The innovative local filmmaking is sometimes seen as the factor that is holding back the industry generally. 015 thinks his film is probably seen as one of those dark, horrible, depressing, violent films that Australians make, “and no wonder no one goes to the cinema [laughter].” He suggests that this problem of uncertainty surrounding marketplace reception of the local cultural product, could be remedied by having more experienced producers and more certain control coming from the independent producers and the co-production partners within the film bureaucracies.

For 008 the most inhibiting factor for his personal success was marketing uncertainty. The local distributor really didn't have a clear idea of how they wanted to sell the movie. The distributor knocked back the opportunity to have the film open the Sydney Film Festival because they felt it was too far away from the release of the film and they were worried that because of the politics of the movie there might be some negative publicity. The distributors eventually released the movie in the second week of November, which is two weeks before the Christmas movies came in, and it did two weeks in the multiplexes and then just disappeared. They had some success on the film festival circuit but 008 says that the film's real success came when the film was next released at an art house cinema and managed to hang onto its cinema spot over the Christmas period and into New Year. At this point 008 says that the famous actor did a television and newspaper interview with a sympathetic critic and suddenly, their film which had only been taking \$1,000 a week and was about to be taken off, went up to \$10,000 the following week. It then stayed in the Arthouse cinema for seven months. It turned out to be the highest grossing Australian film they (the Arthouse cinema) had ever had and the second highest grossing film they had overall, internationally.

## **5.5 Limitations of the Research**

Sources of data describing demographic features such as education and gender representation were undifferentiated and homogenised in existing data, which made the data unsatisfactory for my purposes. I wanted specific numbers for my specific population and chose to design the questionnaire precisely for the purpose of being able to specify educational levels and attitudes to education and training.

My constructs, with two exceptions are relatively straightforward and unproblematic. I am asking people to state exactly which part of the industry they worked in and for how long, and what sort of qualifications and education they have. The responses are limited and I have an 'other' category for data that is not described by my provided categories.

The analysis of what, in the main, is categorical or continuous variables (age, gender) is carried out by using descriptive statistics functions generated from within SPSS. I am generating cross tabulation tables from SPSS to get a 'snapshot' of relationships between gender and what I suspect are maybe significant independent variables such as education level and type and years in the industry. The only meaningful statistical measurement I can use for these variables is mode and frequency.

The two questions from the online survey (Q21 & 22) are problematic because they require a subjective response to a series of constrained variables. I am looking at subject content and asking survey respondents to rank their subjective belief as to its relevance to the director's job and, indirectly, relevance to instructional matter that may form part of a training curriculum. While the scale I am using resembles a Likert scale, and could be said to have a definiteness of task, given that it is a choice-response test, the objectivity of its recording feature may be in some doubt.

The scale of course defies any of the requirements of good questionnaire

item design. The Likert Scale can fit Cronbach's four features of a psychometric test (Cronbach 1990, p. 36) but it requires a careful and systematic design phase to make it work. I acknowledge that the questionnaire and its analytic capability is largely impressionistic, and apart from the fact that all responses are from a specifically targeted population, I acknowledge that its findings would be difficult to use to make claims for reliability.

## **5.6 Directions for future Research**

### **5.6.1 Age and Artistic Achievement**

'...but for people in that generation which I'm part of as well, you're getting to an age where you mentioned people working into their 80s. Probably from your 50s onwards it's going to be very difficult in Australia to make-- it's actually going downhill rather than uphill. And I remain very concerned that there are going to be a group of - I don't want to mention any names because I'm thinking of a few film makers who are on the pensions or their creative lives aren't finished - they're physically capable of working, but there's just not the work there for them.'

(Case study respondent)

I can feel at 59 the business calling slowly away from me. I don't like it, but I have to accept that it's the way it works. I see younger directors coming through - some of them really good - and I do see a preference from producers toward a new face, toward the hot young thing. That's part of the business. I was once the hot young thing. It's the way it works. It's not pretty. I think it doesn't happen so much in other countries. I think Australia is particularly prone to this.

(Case study respondent)

A very superficial viewing of available statistical data demonstrated that what

is needed is an inquiry into what Simonton (2011) has classified as 'age and artistic achievement' (Simonton 2011, pp. 129-30). Simonton (1999) has proposed that during very productive periods of a person's life, 'there is a higher chance that a creative masterwork will be produced' (Simonton 1999a). Crucially, it is only when people have the opportunity to produce a body of work that it becomes likely that they will produce a successful film. Typically, Simonton proposes that it is during the 'middle period' of an individual's lifespan when they are more likely to produce a 'hit'. Lubart & Sternberg also have found that when people produce less, they have less probability of getting a creative 'hit' (Lubart & Sternberg 1998, p. 4). This has significance for government policy concerning director development. A conclusion of my research is that people exit the industry with very few opportunities to build on their career. This severely disadvantages the career development of what Simonton has identified as 'experimental' directors, whose best works are often accomplished as their talent matures (Simonton 2011, pp. 135-6).

...there's more money in doing another job and a lot of people do, and you know, you understand it, you get it, the hours are insane, it's just I'm 50 years old now I've been - before you arrived here - I've got America online from the second I wake up in the morning, the Americans are on, middle Europe kicks in at about four in the afternoon, my co-writer lives in Geneva at the moment, so from four o'clock my European hours kick, in and around about a reasonable time of about, I try and make it about nine, 10, 11, is when England kicks in. But they can go late and the other ones can go really early. As you hit a certain age, 17-hour days, and particularly on set, at that level of screaming, it just becomes tiring.

(Case study respondent)

### **5.6.2 The health effects of film work**

Well, the whole culture of the film industry was...when I was growing

up, there were 'wrap beers' and everybody would come together and watch rushes together, your double head rushes at the end of the day from the previous day, and it was a very social thing as well. There was a sense that people were working together. I was really disappointed when I came to television that that didn't happen. More fool me. It doesn't happen on movies anymore. Everyone gets...the heads of the department get given their DVD, go home and watch it. I can't see people wanting to return to viewing rushes because it's eating into their personal time but in terms of being part of something, they were also six-day weeks. I mean, people were...and in sound post, [name] and people like that destroyed themselves.

(Case study respondent)

The feature film director requires an understanding of, and sensitivity to, an actor's performance and the emotional affects that both the performance and the film's emotional tone are producing in the audience. This is the notion that both the feature film as an art form and the feature film labour force are working on an affective level where the feature film as viewed by an audience is working on a level of generating emotional affects that will resonate within a susceptible and sympathetic audience (Seyfert 2012, p. 12). Seyfert cites Guyau (1887) in support of this idea as a longstanding principle of Affect Theory:

For example, novelty in artistic creation cannot simply be explained by the genius of an artist, but by a 'public, which repeats in itself states of mind, sentiments, emotions, thoughts through sympathy. Thus, the ingenious invention emerges out of the suggestion of the artist and its imitation by the members of a society, who, by their enthusiasm, make it an affective invention (Guyau1887: 43, cited in Seyfert).

Several respondents reported on the absolute dedication and fixedness required when working on a feature film project. One respondent touched on



the number of people who had suffered from substance abuse and mental and physical breakdowns. Generally, worker health in the feature film sector starts to resemble an aspect of a Neoliberal workforce described by Lazzarato (2014) as a 'machinic assemblage' (Lazzarato 2014, pp. 62-4).

The filmmaker is incorporated into the machinery of filmmaking technology and, in the process, becomes less human. Their need for sleep and nourishment are diminished as they become more machine-like. The 'machinic enslavement' aspect (Lazzarato 2014) also applies to cinema product as a consumption item in contemporary life. The availability of cinema product outside of the cinema, in the form of video on demand and streaming services is a manifestation of a deterritorialised machinic experience. This fits with the machinic work experience where leisure time has been reduced to no time and entertainment is experienced as more machine time - networked in (Lazzarato 2014, p. 92).

It is crucial that more work is done in this area to ensure that worker's conditions and welfare are kept uppermost in any policy approaches to the regulation of the feature film workforce.

## **5.7 Chapter 5 Summary**

I began this study with the working assumption that the Australian Feature Film Industry is an ideal workforce prototype for a Globalised Economy predicated on traditional Hayekian economic rationalism (Dean 2014, pp. 6-7). All of the features of this workforce: the individual enterprise bargaining for wages and conditions; the heavily constrained jobs-market; difficult entry; subjectivation (Hampson & Morgan 1999, p. 764); extreme uncertainty and precarity (Gill & Pratt 2008, pp. 3-4; Hamann 2009, p. 38; Lazzarato 2014, pp. 48-9); high competition level for a few positions, all point to a 21<sup>st</sup> century ideal for labour conditions.

For traditional capitalist enterprises, there is a tension surrounding the workforce component within the field of production. All companies employ various strategies to preserve their profit, often by economising on their workforce; cutting industrial conditions such as sick leave and overtime; choosing cheaper labour and making the application process competitive. This strategy to ensure profit maximisation can only go so far before it reaches the tipping point where total purchasing power starts to be affected by falling wages. In an industry such as the feature film industry, the relatively large pool of willing workers ensures that labour costs are highly competitive, and it is one of the primary drivers for the high mobility of feature film production throughout the world.

The logic of obsolescence contains a promise of the future, a future that is less attractive than the promise that futurist predictions traditionally contain. In the mid-to-late-twentieth century, when futurist predictions seemed to have persuasive power, obsolescence generally referred to consumer goods, best summarised in the phrase 'planned obsolescence' (Toffler 1970, pp. 61-4). Market uncertainty amongst consumers has now been replaced by labour market uncertainty as a monopolising preoccupation of futurists. Accelerationism, which has been described as a 'strategy that tries to ride the infinitely self-expanding value of capital' (Noys 2014, p. 96), has seen capitalism abandon any pretense of a commitment to labour.

The neoliberal global hegemony sees itself as setting free the forces of 'creative destruction' (Schumpeter 1942, p. loc 1665) while unleashing ever-accelerating technological invention (Glezos 2010, p. 2). One of the side effects of this growth of endlessly improving technology is the inevitable relegation of carbon life forms to redundant figures in a futurist landscape, with neither our labour nor our intelligence required. Furthermore, it also leads to a growing economic uncertainty, which in turn makes it increasingly difficult for workers to make decisions and plan their economic future.

But, it wasn't like that at first. According to Alvin Toffler in his 1970 book *Future Shock*, the mass migration of scientist from Europe to the USA could be ascribed to a version of Accelerationism. Toffler saw the scientist's desire for a faster-paced existence as a hidden motivating force (Toffler 1970, p. 37) but this mobile army of labour, constrained 'within a framework of surplus value' was not what Noys was describing in his version of Accelerationism. Rather this labour mobilisation on a global scale is due to a more mundane capitalist-induced speed, which is only forestalling the crisis that faces capitalism (Shaviro 2016; Williams & Srnicek 2013). As James, cited in Shaviro, argues for the neoliberal subject, the point of life is to 'push it to the limit... privileged people get to lead the most intense lives, lives of maximised investment and maximised return'.

The Australian society saw a similar mass-migration of young people during the 1950s and 1960s, attracted to a Europe that was extending the possibility of a vibrant culture. This 'brain drain' was reversed by the resurgence in the film industry in the 1970s. Thus, a previously unacknowledged benefit of an active film industry as a result of deliberate government policy intervention was the bringing home of a large talent pool in the creative industries. This reverse brain drain could be said to be an important aspect of an argument in support of further and more widespread government funding and involvement in the arts. As Santagata (2010) points out, a country's cultural heritage is a resource that can be invested to generate jobs, and in a globalised world a country that does not accumulate culture will risk hegemony and invasion by other countries (Santagata 2010, p. 10).

This is not to say that the involvement of government ministries and departments in the funding of the arts is entirely unproblematic. The film industry is an industry where 'extreme artistry' might be fostered by official institutions (Adorno 1991, pp. 126-8) but the very structure of bureaucratic institutions acts to neutralise the danger inherent in art but even worse

continues to support the neoliberal ideology which constrains the artist and forces them into a conformity with the mainstream population. It is in this push for a heterogeneous workforce where the ideology of neoliberalism can be seen to contradict the creation of dangerous and contradictory art forms.

### **5.7.1 Summary of findings**

The research project initially set out to examine the question: How does a first-time feature film director in Australia develop and sustain a career?

As the project data collection and analysis processes became more advanced, new themes began to emerge from the data. The fundamental question that then presented itself concerned the notion of attraction to an insecure job. The case study data yielded rich descriptions that went some way to uncovering at least some of the ways the individual director approaches the contemplation of a feature film career. The new research question that arose from this growing theory then became: How are directors constituted by their identification with the film industry and how do those constituted subjects act to sustain a career?

The results show that prospective feature film directors start out with a high degree of optimism and are adept at positioning themselves through a range of strategies which ensures that they can make a living by utilising their knowledge of how the entire film and television sector operates.

An exciting aspect of the director's attraction to the role is that their response to an early exposure to the cinema was to want to practically engage with the film production mechanism. This initial strong response seems to be the inciting factor for all of the cases. While it might be conjectured that the affective power of cinema produces the same intensity of affect for all of its audience, the apparent difference in the response amongst this cohort is that it inspired them to set out on some practical road to realising

this early ambition.

In amongst the chaos of launching and developing a career, the first-time director has to learn to negotiate bureaucracy. The first obstacle that successful career builders have to overcome is a series of gatekeepers. In the Australian feature film industry these gatekeepers are represented in the first instance by the film schools; secondly by the firms that give the young protégé their first work experience; and thirdly by the various government agencies that provide funding.

The three feature film business models outlined on pp.4-6 have created the most difficulty for the director's ability to make a viable living from the practice of their skills. Feature film directors, like the general population of workers, find real satisfaction in their labour. Like most workers however the reality that they face in their workplace is that they have little control over their work and conditions and for some of their working life, they are 'an instrument of alienated performance' (Marcuse 1955, pp. 45-7).

The initial research at the proposal stage uncovered the theory that the feature film industry has its foundations in a mixed-economy approach applied by successive Australian Federal governments over a thirty-year timeframe. This method of direct government intervention and support in the building and sustenance of this creative industry is distinctly at odds with the industry's free market, venture capital image. The reality of the feature film director's employment and career trajectory, while in some ways resembling an entrepreneur, also exhibits some aspects of an employee at the mercy of a capricious employer.

This study argues that this chain of government initiatives directly resulted in the increased film production of 153 feature films in the decade 1970 – 1980 when the previous decade 1960-1970 realised only thirteen feature films. Furthermore, the study maintains that this policy initiative and

direct government funding created the talent pool and the infrastructure that led to today's film industry.

One of the most prominent comparative factors when considering a choice of cases was that of the historical era. The epochal categorisation emerged very early on in consideration of the case selection criteria and proved to be a very significant factor in the director's career development.

The study began following an early hunch, which at this point centred on the role that the training institution played in the director's career. This notion had a further importance when considering aspects of government policy concerning the establishment of a national film school and the continuous supply of elite school graduates to service the needs of the local industry. The surprising conclusion suggested that the school's role was probably of less importance than initially thought.

There was an observation made from the data that the average age of the first-time feature filmmaker was shifting towards the mid-thirties' age demographic. The age shift occurred despite the fact that anecdotal reports indicated that funding body policy seemed to be directed at applicants in their mid-twenties. Several reports attributed this to the fact that people were finding it harder to balance a career and family life, primarily due to the increased cost of living. Some respondents reported a further barrier, which was the difficulty in gaining and maintaining steady employment. It was these reports that led the study to look for underlying theories to explain why, given the difficult circumstances and the high risk of career failure, so many highly creative people are attracted to a feature film directing career. The study found prospective directors were drawn by what they identified as symbolic power.

The quantitative phase of the study revealed that while 60% of the female respondents aged between 30 and 50 are still working for up to 20

years, the female cohort aged 50-to-60 shrinks to 0% after 20 years in the industry. By comparison, 10% of the male group aged 50-to-60 is still working. Overall, the female experience was different across all measured dimensions. This signals a matter for future investigation.

This response (Table 4.4) indicates that short films are still one of the most common crewing experiences for all workers. An anomaly in this response shows the number of respondents to the question about crewing for low budget features at 57% when the original question asking about feature experience returned 63%. This is a contentious survey item with some comments indicating that they didn't regard a role as a director as a crew role.

Surprisingly, it took all but one of the cases ten years (the mean number of years is 11.2) to make their first feature after they left film education. In most cases, this was due to the difficulty of raising finance, but in some cases, a more complex on-again-off-again process resulted in the protraction of the production development and realisation.

Only six of the fifteen case studies were able to make a living based entirely on income derived from directing work. While two of these examples worked exclusively in the feature film domain, the other four cases worked extensively in the television industry sector. The remainder of the sample population worked either in crew roles on other director's productions, as actors on film and television productions, or worked in the screen education sector.

It would also be reasonable to conclude that it was easier to find funding in the years between 1971 (the foundation of the Australian Film Development Corporation) and 1989 (the end of Division 10BA tax incentive). For directors after this time, it appears to have become progressively more difficult to find either development funding or production funding.

Some of the information that came out of the quantitative study is related to an idea that conceptualisations of types of educational topics demonstrate something that is useful for general film course design. Business management principles and marketing principles are seen as secondary aspects of the screen director's craft. Surprisingly, though, an understanding of postproduction technology and knowledge of the history of the cinema also rank comparatively low. This display of bias toward certain skill domains could be construed as a distinct preference, but the study might suggest that it reflects more of an attitude or disposition toward the different skill domains listed.

Government policymakers readily acknowledge the significant effects of government policy decisions on the levels of feature film production in Australia, but at the same time, their understanding about what to do is curtailed by what others want them to do. A 2001 inquiry by the US Department of Commerce and International Trade found that 50% of Los Angeles film producers were concerned about the 'lack of surety' surrounding Australian tax incentives. In September 2001 the Australian Federal Government announced a new tax incentive, 'reportedly after consultation with the American Motion Picture Association and studios including Warner Roadshow and Fox' (AFC 2002, p. 15).

While the dominant employment model for feature film directors is what Cunningham describes as 'sole practitioners' (Cunningham 2013, p. 104), some feature film directors manage to make a success of working within the film industry while simultaneously managing to capture all of the promises of entrepreneurial life. There is no question that much can be learnt from a close observation of entrepreneurialism, but this study concludes that it is indeed in the domain of direct and robust government policy formulation where the most employment stimulus can be found. It is a historical curiosity that it was a nascent neoliberal political party that did so much to lay the foundation for the resurgence of the film industry in the 1970s. Through direct policy



intervention, the Menzies and Gorton governments acted as if they were operating a mixed economy, contrary to the espoused beliefs of the Australian Liberal party. There is some optimism that perhaps there can be a softening of the current neoliberal approach to matters of employment and recognition on the part of policymakers of the importance of a direct intervention in this fragile employment area.

## APPENDIX 1 TYPOLOGY

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### *A Typology of Feature film directors*

Case	Historical Epoch	Educational Institution	Number Of films	Local Success	International Success
001	'New wave'	AFTRS	More than 2	Yes	Yes
002	'New wave'	General University	More than 2	Yes	No
003	'New wave'	AFTRS	More than 2	Yes	No
004	'New wave'	AFTRS	One	Yes	No
005	'Middle Period'	TAFE	More than 2	Yes	Yes
006	'Late period'	General University	One	Yes	No
007	'Middle Period'	General University	One	Yes	No
008	'Middle Period'	AFTRS	One	Yes	No
009	'Middle Period'	General University	More than 2	Yes	Yes
010	'Late Period'	VCA AFTRS	One	Yes	No
011	'Late Period'	AFTRS	One	Yes	No
012	'Late Period'	UTS	One	Yes	No
013	'Late Period'	AFTRS	One	Yes	No
014	'Late Period'	General University	Two	Yes	No
015	'Late Period'	General University Swinburne	Two	Yes	Yes

*Table 3.3 A Typology of Feature film directors*

## CINEMA: AN INVENTION WITHOUT A FUTURE

Number of Australian Feature Film Directors  
And the  
Timeframe for making one or more feature film

	TOTAL NO.	MADE ONE FILM ONLY	TWO OR MORE
30 YEARS	267	65.9%	34.1%
10 YEARS	154	79.9%	20.1%














Source: Screen Australia 2011

## APPENDIX 3 QUESTIONNAIRE










### CAREER PROSPECTS FOR AUSTRALIAN FEATURE FILM DIRECTORS







#### Page 1. Introduction to the survey

#### Page 2. Professional Experience


1.		% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Have you previously worked in a crew role on an Australian feature film?	Yes 	60.53%	23
	No 	39.47%	15
	<b>Number of respondents</b>		<b>38</b>
<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b>		<b>7</b>	
2.		% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Have you previously worked in a crew role on an International feature film?	Yes 	36.84%	14
	No 	63.16%	24
	<b>Number of respondents</b>		<b>38</b>
<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b>		<b>7</b>	
3. Thinking about your crew role, was it as a Head of Department?		% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
	Yes 	28.95%	11
	No 	71.05%	27
	<b>Number of respondents</b>		<b>38</b>
<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b>		<b>7</b>	
4.		% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
If your previous experience working in a crew role was not on a feature film, which of the following categories best describes the type of film it was?	A short film 	26.19%	22
	A low-budget feature film 	15.48%	13
	A television drama 	15.48%	13
	A television reality show 	5.95%	5
	A documentary 	13.10%	11
	A television or cinema commercial 	17.86%	15
	Other (Specify) 	5.95%	5
	<b>Number of respondents</b>		<b>38</b>
<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b>		<b>7</b>	

CAREER PROSPECTS FOR AUSTRALIAN FEATURE FILM DIRECTORS













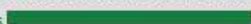

5. Thinking about your crew role, was it in:	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Art department? 	9.86%	7
Design department? 	2.82%	2
Production office? 	21.13%	15
Camera department? 	11.27%	8
Editing department? 	14.08%	10
Marketing department? 	1.41%	1
Set construction? 	4.23%	3
Casting? 	5.63%	4
Other (Specify) 	29.58%	21
<b>Number of respondents</b>		<b>38</b>
<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b>		<b>7</b>

6. How many years have you been working, in any capacity, in the Australian Film Industry?	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Less than one year	0.00%	0
Between one year and five years 	18.42%	7
Six to ten years 	13.16%	5
Eleven to fifteen years 	42.11%	16
Sixteen to twenty years 	10.53%	4
More than twenty years 	7.89%	3
Other (Specify) 	7.89%	3
<b>Number of respondents</b>		<b>38</b>
<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b>		<b>7</b>

Page 3. Qualifications and education

7. What type of formal training in filmmaking have you had?	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
None 	14.71%	5
Short course (duration under three months) 	5.88%	2
Medium course (duration under twelve months) 	11.76%	4
Long course (duration over twelve months) 	61.76%	21
Other (Specify) 	5.88%	2
<b>Number of respondents</b>		<b>34</b>
<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b>		<b>11</b>

CAREER PROSPECTS FOR AUSTRALIAN FEATURE FILM DIRECTORS

8. What was the name of the educational institution?		
		<i>Number of Respondents</i> 34
		<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question</i> 11
9.		
Have you had any formal training in screen direction?		% of Respondents
Yes		73.53%
No		26.47%
		<i>Number of respondents</i> 34
		<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question</i> 11
10.		
What type of formal training in screen direction have you had?		% of Respondents
Short course (duration under three months)		6.45%
Medium course (duration under twelve months)		0.00%
Long course (duration over twelve months)		61.29%
None		19.35%
Other (Specify)		12.90%
		<i>Number of respondents</i> 31
		<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question</i> 14
11.		
What qualification did the course offer?		% of Respondents
Certificate of participation		10.34%
Diploma		24.14%
Bachelor degree		20.69%
Masters degree		24.14%
Other (Specify)		20.69%
		<i>Number of respondents</i> 29
		<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question</i> 16
12.		
Did the training specify that its central purpose was training directors in screen craft?		% of Respondents
Yes		62.07%
No		37.93%
		<i>Number of respondents</i> 29
		<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question</i> 16

CAREER PROSPECTS FOR AUSTRALIAN FEATURE FILM DIRECTORS

<b>13.</b>		% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
<b>Have you had any formal training in screenwriting?</b>			
Yes		61.76%	21
No		38.24%	13
			<b>Number of respondents</b> 34
			<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b> 11
<b>14.</b>		% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
<b>What type of formal training in screen writing have you had?</b>			
Short course (duration under three months)		32.00%	8
Medium course (duration under twelve months)		12.00%	3
Long course (duration over twelve months)		44.00%	11
Other (Specify)		12.00%	3
			<b>Number of respondents</b> 25
			<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b> 20
<b>15.</b>		% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
<b>Did the course offer a qualification?</b>			
Yes		61.54%	16
No		38.46%	10
			<b>Number of respondents</b> 26
			<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b> 19
<b>16.</b>		% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
<b>What qualification did the course offer:</b>			
Certificate of participation?		10.00%	2
Diploma?		10.00%	2
Bachelor degree?		25.00%	5
Masters degree?		20.00%	4
Other (Specify)		35.00%	7
			<b>Number of respondents</b> 20
			<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b> 25
<b>17. Have you undertaken any formal training in acting?</b>		% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Yes		57.14%	20
No		42.86%	15
			<b>Number of respondents</b> 34
			<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b> 11

CAREER PROSPECTS FOR AUSTRALIAN FEATURE FILM DIRECTORS

18. What type of formal training in acting have you had?	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
0 to three months?	44.12%	15
Four months to one year?	11.76%	4
Up to two years?	8.82%	3
Three years?	11.76%	4
Other (Specify)	23.53%	8
<b>Number of respondents</b>		<b>34</b>
<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b>		<b>11</b>

19.	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Did the course offer a qualification?		
Yes	23.08%	6
No	76.92%	20
<b>Number of respondents</b>		<b>26</b>
<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b>		<b>19</b>

20.	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
What qualification did the course offer :		
Certificate of participation?	22.22%	4
Diploma?	11.11%	2
Bachelor degree?	5.56%	1
Masters degree?	5.56%	1
Other (Specify)	55.56%	10
<b>Number of respondents</b>		<b>18</b>
<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b>		<b>27</b>

Page 4. Some skills and competencies for directors



CAREER PROSPECTS FOR AUSTRALIAN FEATURE FILM DIRECTORS

21.

On a scale ranging from 1 (not important) to 4 (very important), how would you rate the following skills and knowledge?

	Not important	Neutral	Important	Very Important	Number of Respondents
Understanding of performance skills to work with actors	0% (0)	0% (0)	18% (6)	81% (27)	33
Understanding of postproduction technology	3% (1)	9% (3)	48% (16)	39% (13)	33
Understanding of cinematography and camera lenses	0% (0)	3% (1)	45% (15)	51% (17)	33
Understanding of interpersonal psychology	3% (1)	0% (0)	24% (8)	72% (24)	33
Understanding of business management practice	3% (1)	24% (8)	54% (18)	18% (6)	33
Knowledge of the history of cinema	3% (1)	15% (5)	50% (16)	31% (10)	32
Understanding of marketing and promotional activities	3% (1)	15% (5)	54% (18)	27% (9)	33
A practical understanding of scriptwriting	0% (0)	0% (0)	23% (8)	76% (26)	33
A practical understanding of dramatic narrative structure	0% (0)	3% (1)	0% (0)	96% (32)	33
Understanding and an appreciation of music	0% (0)	3% (1)	39% (13)	57% (19)	33
Understanding and an appreciation of production design	0% (0)	0% (0)	43% (14)	56% (18)	32
				<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>33</b>
				<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b>	<b>12</b>

22.






Thinking about working as a director, on a scale ranging from 1 (not important) to 4 (very important), how would you rate the following factors?

	Not Important	Neutral	Important	Very important	Number of Respondents
Your ability as a writer?	0% (0)	30% (10)	30% (10)	39% (13)	33
Your ability as a director of actors?	0% (0)	0% (0)	9% (3)	90% (30)	33
Your ability as a team leader?	0% (0)	0% (0)	18% (6)	81% (26)	32
Your knowledge of film history?	9% (3)	24% (8)	54% (18)	12% (4)	33
Your knowledge of Australian film history?	12% (4)	45% (15)	33% (11)	9% (3)	33
Your knowledge of film technology?	0% (0)	14% (5)	47% (16)	38% (13)	33
The director's role in the marketing of the film?	3% (1)	21% (7)	48% (16)	27% (9)	33
The importance of other member's of the collaborative team in the success of the film?	0% (0)	0% (0)	9% (3)	90% (30)	33
				<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>33</b>
				<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b>	<b>12</b>

23. Please tick the appropriate box, indicating your sex.

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Male <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	66.67%	22
Female <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	33.33%	11
	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>33</b>
	<b>Number of respondents who skipped this question</b>	<b>12</b>

CAREER PROSPECTS FOR AUSTRALIAN FEATURE FILM DIRECTORS

24. Please indicate your age:		% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
20-30		12.12%	4
31-40		39.39%	13
41-50		36.36%	12
51-60		9.09%	3
61-70		3.03%	1
<i>Number of respondents</i>			<b>33</b>
<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question</i>			<b>12</b>

Page 5. Optional Question

25. Would you be interested in participating in a longer interview about your experiences? If so, please provide your name and contact details. Alternatively, email me at: Paul.J.Healy@student.uts.edu.au.

*Number of Respondents* 24

*Number of respondents who skipped this question* 21

## APPENDIX 4 - SPSS CODE BOOK

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### SPSS CODE BOOK\_INVENTION WITHOUT A FUTURE

Variable	Coding Instruction	Variable name
<b>1 (A)</b>	Number from excel	Identification (ID)
<b>2 (I)</b>	1=Yes 2=No	Crew role (Oz)
<b>3 (J)</b>	1=Yes 2=No	Crew role (INT)
<b>4 (K)</b>	1=Yes 2=No	Head of department (HOD)
<b>5 (L-S)</b>	1=Short Film 2=Low Budget Feature Film 3=A Television Drama 4=Reality 5=Documentary 6=Commercial 7=Other	Kind of (experience)
<b>6 (T-AC)</b>	1=Art department 2=Design department 3=Production office 4=Camera department 5=Editing department 6=Marketing department 7=Set construction 8=Casting 9=Other	(Crew) department
<b>7 (AD-AE)</b>	1=1-5 years 2=6-10 years 3=11-15 years 4=16-20 years 5=more than 20 6=other	(Years) in the industry

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coding Instruction</b>	<b>Variable name</b>
<b>8 (AF-AG)</b>	1=None 2=Short course 3=Medium course 4=Long course 5=other	(Formal) training Filmmaking
<b>9 (AH)</b>	1=AFTRS 2=VCA 3=UTS 4=TAFE 5=Edith Cowan 6=UCLA 7=KVB 8=Macquarie 9=Other	Name of Institution (School)
<b>10 (AI)</b>	1=Yes 2=No	Formal training Screen (direction)
<b>11 (AJ-AK)</b>	1=Short 2=Medium 3=Long 4=None 5=Other	Course duration Direction (length)
<b>12 (AL-AM)</b>	1=Certificate 2=Diploma 3=Bachelor 4=Master 5=Other	Qualification (level)
<b>13 (AN)</b>	1=Yes 2=No	(Specify) Training screen direction
<b>14 (AO)</b>	1=Yes 2=No	Formal training Screen writing

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coding Instruction</b>	<b>Variable name</b>
<b>15 (AP-AQ)</b>	1=Short 2=Medium 3=Long	Screenwriting course length
<b>16 (AR)</b>	1=Yes 2=No	Screenwriting Course qualification
<b>17 (AS-AT)</b>	1=Certificate 2=Diploma 3=Bachelor 4=Master 5=Other	Screenwriting Course Qualification type
<b>18 (AU-AV)</b>	1=Yes 2=No	Formal Training acting
<b>19 (AW-BB)</b>	1=0-3 months 2=4months-1year 3=up to 2 years 4=3years 5=other	Acting course length
<b>20 (BC)</b>	1=Yes 2=No	Acting Course qualification
<b>21 (BD-BE)</b>	1=Certificate 2=Diploma 3=Bachelor 4=Master 5=Other	Acting Course qualification type

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coding Instruction</b>	<b>Variable name</b>
<b>22 (BF-BI)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Understanding of performance skills
<b>23 (BJ-BM)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Understanding Post
<b>24 (BL-BQ)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Understanding Cinematography
<b>25 (BR-BU)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Understanding Interpersonal Psychology
<b>26 (BV-BY)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Understanding Business management Practice
<b>27 (BZ-CC)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Knowledge of the History of Cinema
<b>28 (CD-CG)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Understanding of Marketing

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coding Instruction</b>	<b>Variable name</b>
<b>29 (CH-CK)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Understanding Script writing
<b>30 (CL-CO)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Understanding Dramatic Narrative Structure
<b>31 (CP-CS)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Understanding Music
<b>32 (CT-CW)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Understanding Production Design
<b>33 (CX-DA)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Your ability as a writer
<b>34 (DA-DE)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Your ability as a director of actors

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coding Instruction</b>	<b>Variable name</b>
<b>35 (DF-DI)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Your ability as a team leader
<b>36 (DJ-DM)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Your knowledge of film history
<b>37 (DN-DQ)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Your knowledge of Australian film history
<b>38 (DR-DU)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	Your knowledge of film technology
<b>39 (DV-DY)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	The director's role in the marketing of the film
<b>40(DZ-EC)</b>	1=Not important 2=Neutral 3=Important 4=Very Important	The importance of the collaborative team
<b>41 (ED)</b>	1=Male 2=Female	Gender
<b>42 (EE)</b>	1=21-30 2=31-40 3=41-50 4=51-60 5=61-70	Age



**Note:**

Columns B to E in the Excel spreadsheet export made from the .csv file obtained from the online survey software contained the start and end dates for each survey response, the IP address for each of the respondents, and blank columns (F, G, & H) for email address, first name, and last name, which I did not collect automatically.

Instead, each respondent was given the opportunity to provide this information, if they were prepared to take part in an interview. Eighteen respondents to the survey indicated that they would be prepared to take part in an interview and supplied their name and contact details.

## List of non-respondents

(Skipped all questions)

## Initial ASDG notice

11039988 (13/02/2014)

11077323 (24/02/2014)

11745109 (01/07/2014)

2<sup>nd</sup> ASDG notice

11922058 (14/08/2014)

11923171 (14/08/2014)

11936530 (18/08/2014)

11968490 (27/08/2014)

12278830 (22/10/2014)

## List of failure-to-completes

11929354 (answered first six questions)

11937637 (answered first six questions)

11969374 (answered first six questions)

11970865 (answered first six questions)

## **APPENDIX 5 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

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### **Questions for directors**

(Semi-structured interview)

1. How did you begin your career in the film industry?
2. How did you decide to pursue a career as a film director?
3. How did you choose your first feature film project?
4. When you made your first feature, what were the main lessons that you learned?
5. What films influenced your interest and career development?
6. Which directors do you admire?
7. Do you think of yourself as an Australian feature film director?
8. Do you think Australian films have a recognisable look?
9. What are the qualities about Australian cinema that you like?
10. What is it about Australia that you are interested in expressing?
11. Is there an identifiable Australian character that interests you?
12. Can you think of any examples where a distinctive Australian character is evident?
13. Do you have a plan for how you can develop and sustain your own career as a feature film director?
14. How do you go about researching a film? How do you develop your ideas of the look and the feel of things and people in your film?
15. Do you consciously set out to make a film that has some distinctive characteristic?
16. Have you seen many other films with similar themes to yours?
17. How do you see the role of the director working within the creative team?

18. What do you think are the craft skills that are essential to the director's role?
19. Where do you think you learnt the craft skills that are essential to the director's role?
20. Do you feel that making a feature film is the right place to develop your craft?
21. It has been said that now more than ever there is greater access to professional quality image making equipment and an easier access to the distribution and exhibition of feature films. Have these two aspects had any impact on your career? Do you think that this has any significance in terms of who is making feature films?
22. What do you think about the current belief that Television has surpassed and supplanted cinema as the vehicle for powerful fictional narrative storytelling?
23. Looking at cinema in the rest of the world, we can see lots of examples of feature film directors working well past their seventieth birthday. Why is it that in the Australian industry we see only a handful of directors still working beyond their sixtieth year? Is there any place for older directors in the Australian feature film industry?
24. Film critics have a crucial role in a film's success. Have you experienced any effects on your career that you may have felt originated with a film reviewer?
25. Do you see yourself as an artist?
26. It has been said that great filmmakers are obsessed. Do you feel that filmmaking is an obsession?

## **APPENDIX 6 INTRODUCTION TO THE SURVEY**

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I am a postgraduate student at the University of Technology, Sydney and I am looking for volunteers for a research project. The project involves an examination of the career prospects for first time feature film directors in the Australian feature film industry.

The volunteers I am expressly looking for will come from the specific group of people who have directed a feature film, as well as anybody who is intending to direct a feature film. There are no caveats about distribution methods and outcomes or critical or commercial success; I want to gather my data from amongst the widest cross section of the feature film director population as possible. I am interested in hearing from those who have made many features, as well as those who are preparing for their first one and anybody in between.

The data collection consists of two phases. The first phase is an online survey. This survey takes roughly seven minutes to complete, is anonymous, and is primarily concerned with collecting some statistical information relating to formal training. The survey is currently open and will remain active for the next six months. Willing participants need to do nothing more than go to this link:

(<http://www.eSurveysPro.com/s/146886/directors>)

Completing the survey is entirely separate to the second phase and is in no way a commitment to any ongoing involvement in the research project. Volunteers can complete the survey and end their involvement at that point. You may provide contact details if you want to participate in the interview or you may just contact me at the email address below. Alternatively, you can just omit the last question of the survey.

The second phase of the data collection is an interview of up to two hours duration. I have a series of questions, which I would like the participant to answer, and I am quiet happy for anybody to see the questions before making a commitment to the interview. I am prepared to negotiate with the interviewee as to the time and place of the interview. I would also be prepared to travel anywhere in Australia to interview a willing participant. Ideally, I would like to schedule all of the interviews over the next nine months. The data (in the form of an audio recording) gathered from the interviews will be made into a composite analysis and all personally identifiable information will be removed.

For anybody who might be interested in participating, or for those who are just plain curious and would like some more information about this project, please feel free to contact me at <Paul.J.Healy@student.uts.edu.au>

## **APPENDIX 7 INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

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### **INFORMATION SHEET**

*Cinema: An Invention Without A Future?*

*Career prospects for first time Feature Film Directors in Australia.*

UTS HREC reference number 2013000368

#### **WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?**

My name is Paul Healy and I am a student at the University of Technology, Sydney. My supervisor is Associate professor Gillian Leahy.

#### **WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH ABOUT?**

This research involves a study on the career prospects for first time feature film directors. I hope to learn what factors drive and inhibit the careers of people working as film directors in the Australian feature film industry.

#### **IF I SAY YES, WHAT WILL IT INVOLVE?**

I am inviting you to take part in an interview, which I will conduct at a place and time of your choosing. The interview is expected to take approximately 2 hours. Please note that I will be making an audio recording of the interview.

#### **ARE THERE ANY RISKS/INCONVENIENCE?**

There are no physical or psychological risks to this study. This study may provide the benefits of increasing your understanding of successful career strategies in the feature film industry. However, I cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this study.

#### **WHY HAVE I BEEN ASKED?**

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are working as a feature film director.

#### **DO I HAVE TO SAY YES?**

Participation is voluntary.

#### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I SAY NO?**

Nothing. I will thank you for your time so far and won't contact you about this research again.

#### **IF I SAY YES, CAN I CHANGE MY MIND LATER?**

If you say yes, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

#### WHAT IF I HAVE CONCERNS OR A COMPLAINT?

If you have any questions or concerns following your participation, either Paul Healy (0403835380, [Paul.J.Healy@student.uts.edu.au](mailto:Paul.J.Healy@student.uts.edu.au)) or Associate professor Gillian Leahy (9514 2323, [gillian.leahy@uts.edu.au](mailto:gillian.leahy@uts.edu.au)) will be happy to address them.

If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research, which you cannot resolve with the researcher, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (ph: +61 2 9514 9772 [Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au](mailto:Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au)) and quote the UTS HREC reference number 2013000368. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

## **APPENDIX 8 The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases**

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### **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases - 001**

The first respondent 001 started work in the mid-1970s. He received a post-school university education in the liberal arts and then worked in a television station for some time until he decided to enroll at the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS). He has made more than two feature films and has both local and international success.

Case 001 began working in an area unrelated to directing within the television industry before beginning work as a director. 001 reported that he first gained an understanding of wanting to be a director only after entering the AFTRS director stream. He not only started his directorial career late, after having worked for some time, but he was also in his late twenties when he began his director training. 001 began to think that he wanted to make his own films but was limited by the career opportunities within the television industry and this was the deciding factor for going to AFTRS.

001 thought at first that he lacked the essential characteristics that were the demarcations of a filmmaker: 001 thought that he lacked any political skill or ability to negotiate cliques but he soon discovered that he had these skills after all and was more than able to negotiate this sort of environment that was a crucial factor for success. Reports from 001 and others say that the AFTRS was a politicised environment at the time and all manner of personal and general politics were in operation among the student body and the staff in that period.

The school at the time offered no career's advice for the aspiring director; after the school it was really crash or crash through as far as making a career was concerned. When 001 first graduated, it took three years to launch his first production. Much of the time was spent looking for investment funding,



and after a series of financial misadventures his first film was financed through Division 10BA investment money. 001 had an option on a documentary script that was owned by a third party. He managed to buy the rights to the project and adapted it into a successful feature film. 001 reported doing unaccredited work as a producer on his first feature and learning to distrust people who called themselves producers. His first feature wasn't the result of a deliberate choice on his part but rather it was byproduct of a set of events that led indirectly to that particular project. He acknowledges however that it was astuteness and control that placed him in a position where he could take advantage of the set of circumstances that resulted in his first feature.

### **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases - 002**

The second respondent 002 started work in the late-1960s. He received a post-school university education in the liberal arts and then worked in a television station for some time until circumstances led him to direct his first feature film. He has made more than two feature films and has both local and international success.

002 always wanted to be a film director and he acquired a 16 mm movie camera when he was at university and started making little films and not completing them. Peter Hannan and Mike Molloy, both of who had worked for Stanley Kubrick, shot his films. Another collaborator was Howard Rubie, who became an eminent Director and teacher of film. After leaving university, 002 went to the U.K. where he got a job at the BBC in Current Affairs.

During this period he started to write film scripts; first for Peter Thompson who's now a film critic, and then for Gil Brierley who would later run Film Australia and the South Australian Film Corporation. He returned to Australia at the start of 1970 and wrote a number of successful scripts that were produced as successful films, and was also a film critic for a successful Australian National newspaper. He wrote a highly successful feature film

script in collaboration with several other people and about ten years later 002 was asked to write and direct a film.

He chose his first project on the basis of his wide experience. He knew that it could be shot very economically and he knew the finished duration would suit the investment model. The film was shot in his house over nine days, produced by a first-time producer with money from Division 10BA.

002 admits that his first feature was received with only mild acclaim and no commercial success but that it led directly to another film which was produced by a more experienced producer and was a much more devastating personal experience.

One of the main lessons 002 learnt from his second filmmaking experience was not to work with a producer from Melbourne. 002 reported also that as far as both projects were concerned he learnt to expect unbelievably bad luck.

### **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases – 003**

The third respondent 003 started work in the late-1960s. He attended AFTRS coming straight out of high school, which was highly exceptional at that time. After leaving AFTRS, he had to wait for ten years' before he directed his first feature film. He has made more than two feature films and has had widespread local success.

003 started as a teenager, shooting Super-8 film. He started by producing short animations. He was interested in film from a pretty young age and was always interested in telling stories in any way, shape or form. At the start the fascination was with being able to actually shoot moving pictures. 003 had done quite a lot of stills photography at high school. 003 attended an alternative school in Melbourne, which produced a lot of people who went into the film industry. Scott Murray, who went on to produce Cinema Papers, was

a Science and Math's teacher at the school. Scott showed some of the early output of the inaugural AFTRS productions to the alternative school students.

003 then progressed to longer form scripted dramas. 003 reported that he felt very fortunate at a young age to be able to "get quite a lot of that shit out of your system". 003 also said that part of this early experimentation revolved around sound and music. The Super-8 camera had a cassette player built into the back of it and with this primitive recording equipment he learnt the basic principles of editing pictures together with sound.

He was encouraged in his pursuit of filmmaking by a film teacher, who was also an independent filmmaker at his alternative school. This teacher was associated with the Melbourne filmmakers Co-op, and he introduced 003 to the Experimental Film and TV Fund where he was able to win two grants, which enabled him to make three short films. The Melbourne filmmakers Co-op and other venues such as the cinematheque at RMIT provided 003 with an exposure to a wide cultural range of films.

When he was 18, he applied to the AFTRS. He simultaneously applied to Swinburne because he would have preferred to do the one-year postgraduate diploma course at Swinburne rather than the three-year fulltime course at AFTRS but John Byrd, a lecturer at Swinburne, encouraged him to go to the AFTRS.

003 left school early and moved to Sydney to attend AFTRS in 1977. Having already made films, 003 at this stage thought of himself more as a filmmaker than as a director, because he'd begun shooting and editing, and often doing sound, as well. 003 reports that in the first year at the school, he thought of himself as the token co-op person, and saw other students similarly fulfilling what he saw as token representations but he overcame whatever initial reservations he had and realised that he wanted to learn everything he

possibly could. 003 suggested that the reason behind the student selection in his year was because of what had taken place in the previous two intakes.

003's theory about the school and its entrant selection criteria centred on what had taken place in the previous two intakes, before his. The inaugural year selection is excluded from his theory. 003 said that the AFTRS bureaucracy was always struggling with the students and, as a consequence, changing their selection criteria to try to find the best outcome, for both the school and the student. One intake with particularly demanding students was followed by an intake that concentrated on people with technical skills. In 003's opinion it was these sorts of policy changes surrounding student selection criteria that resulted in gender imbalances within the cohorts. 003's cohort comprised of a range of people who had prior work experience across the commercial and non-commercial film and television industry. 003 says that in some ways the cohort was mismatched in skill levels and this created some initial problems amongst the cohort, which was later overcome, mainly by the students resolving any conflicts themselves. 003 thought that the idea that the AFTRS had at the time of trying to corral students into specializations was antithetical to an idea of allowing the students to develop fully. 003 also reports that he had many opportunities to work with his previous contacts on film productions while he was enrolled at the school but that this was discouraged on the grounds that the AFTRS didn't countenance the productions as being valid industry experiences.

While attending AFTRS, 003 kept writing and produced one short drama on 35mm black and white film stock. 003 reports that the AFTRS did not like the way he worked because he preferred to work with small crews and chose his crew on the basis of enthusiasm rather than specialization. He thought this ran contrary to their espoused practice, which was centred on encouraging students to work as professional crews based on the current industry model.

003 reports that at the end of that second year, they then changed the rules and then said "Oh okay, now we're going to choose directors". At that point, 003 bowed out of that whole fight, because as he says it became much more about ambition. He thought that he was never going to get a position anyway, because he felt that he wasn't a favorite student. 003 reported that because he had come into the film school with camera work and editing skills, a lot of the students would go, "Oh, he knows what he's doing", so they would get him to shoot films and edit films for them. The students in his AFTRS cohort didn't want somebody who was just learning; "they're being very selfish about it really, they just wanted to get out of the student body the people who they felt had the most expertise".

After three years of working 60 hours a week, shooting and editing, 003 thought that he was graduating with a fair amount of practical experience. 003 began working with a close friend, who had also been at the film school with him. He entered a producing partnership with his friend and together they started a production company. Because he had continued to develop his own area of craft expertise while enrolled at the school, he had no difficulty in going straight back into paid employment.

003 reported that there was a ten-year period between when he left film school and when he got to direct his first feature. And in between that time, as a director, he produced and directed a self-financed short. The screen funding agencies knocked him back repeatedly. Because of his wide work experience he was readily able to work all of the time and in the first year out of AFTRS he worked for about a year and a half at the ABC in the editing department. From the wages earned on this job he was able to buy his first camera after about two years. Even though freelance wages were quiet low at that time, 003 was able to sustain himself because he could charge an additional fee for the camera equipment he owned and provided to the various productions he worked on at this time. 003 also reported that this was the era in the '80's when music videos were happening and in the intervening time between

leaving the AFTRS and directing his first feature he worked on around 40 music videos. Both musicians and/or record companies financed these videos and they were totally outside of screen industry financing. This work meant that he was fully self-sustainable during that whole period.

003 reported that he also worked on 8-10 feature films as a DOP, and edited 3 feature films. 003 says that shooting and editing provided perfect preparation for going out and shooting his own film:

Because in terms of coverage, it just gave you so many lessons...conservative matching close-ups, and what works...particularly in terms of what do you need, and what don't you need, when are you wasting your time, when are you going to use wide shots, when are you going to...how often do you really need to use tracks, do you need to empty the grip truck and the gaffers' truck every single time for every shot, you'll waste a lot of time. So you learned how to be very economical and resourceful, because again, most of these films were pretty low budget movies.

### **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases – 004**

The fourth respondent 004 started work in the late-1970s. He worked as an actor for some years in the local film industry before attending AFTRS. After leaving AFTRS, he was given the opportunity to make a telemovie. He has made one feature film and has had widespread local success.

004 encountered film for the first time while at school. At the boarding school he attended the school would screen a film once a week. He says that he was very taken with the 16 mm prints that would show up and be screened against the wall. He took over as the projectionist and later discovered films on television.

He also was very interested in animation - particularly the Disney animations - and made an effort, even at a quite young age, to discover how that worked. He read magazines that described how each frame was put together and how they were combined to produce motion. He was influenced also by reading Jacque Cousteau's book *The Silent World*. It was based on the film that he made, which talked about the making of that film. 004 reports that he got a feel for the fact that a camera photographed something, and then it was edited. At this point he realised he had become a serious film buff - from quite an early age.

004 lived in the country and had to go to the city a lot to visit his sick father at the hospital. On these visits, his mother would drop him off at the movies. In this way he saw quite a lot of films at a reasonably early age.

004 was of the opinion that if animation had been as well thought of in the seventies as it is now, he may well have gone in that direction. Instead, he started acting in high school, first working backstage but after realizing that the actors had a better time of it than the backstage crew, he switched to acting; first in amateur productions at high school, and by the time he was 16 or 17, he was working in professional productions. 004 could see there was a possible career path there. "Not that there was much of a business in that in the early 70s". 004 thinks that culturally, in Australia, the early 70s was pretty much the 60s (compared to the USA). It was a time when youth culture was at a peak. The traditional career paths were no longer considered as important as they once were. He felt strongly that he didn't want to go down a traditional path, and eventually he formed an ambition quite early on to try and become an actor and be in a film.

He says that he thinks his timing was excellent. He is very grateful for the historical accident that has the film business in Australia starting up as he is entering the workforce. He says that everybody who was involved in the film

industry at that time was an enthusiast, they weren't actually doing it because they thought it was a career path; they were doing it because they suddenly could. He says:

That made for...There's a hint of the rose-tinted spectacles [inaudible] - but there was definitely a camaraderie in those days that does not exist any more and probably won't ever again. It was a very exciting time to be here. I was lucky.

He first appeared in a Fred Schepisi film and was impressed both by the size of the set and by working with a director he admired. He had been a big fan of Fred's first film, *The Devil's Playground*, and had been very impressed by it, particularly because it was set in a boarding school. He identified strongly with Tom - the character played by Simon Burke and even though the film portrayed a Catholic school and he had attended a Presbyterian school, there were a lot of similarities.

After 004 had been acting for a while, he became interested in the idea of directing. Then he got an opportunity to go to the AFTRS, which he took.

In those days, the AFTRS ran a three-year course that was not a degree. 004 received his opportunity to enter the school because two people dropped out of second year. AFTRS opened up two places in the second year of that three-year course for people who had done something else in the business. 004 was one of those two. 004 remembers attending the AFTRS when it was at Ryde and he remembers that it seemed small. He says that TV people ran the course and that there weren't a lot of feature film people there. The students in his cohort were asked in the second year to basically just make five minutes pieces: Some were multicam TV; some were single camera television; and some were single film camera productions. He thinks that where he got the most ideas was through doing documentaries. He was doing documentaries 'where you shoot films from the hip and then make it up back



in the cutting room'. This was exciting for him because it showed him that even if you thought you had a fixed idea, other things would emerge during the filmmaking process. 004 referred to this as 'the happy accident thing' about drama. He reports though that it didn't start to happen for him until he had a better grasp of the basics. He says that his early work in drama was more rigid but as his experience grew, he became more accepting of allowing good people to bring good ideas to the work. He starts with a theory about what he is going to do, but knows that he doesn't have to stick to it. He thinks inexperience makes you rigid.

He did the single year at AFTRS at Ryde and ended up with a diploma in screen direction. He says that without the qualification from the AFTRS, he wouldn't have been able to become a director. By the end of the course 004 had worked on nine short films, all in one year. They consisted of three documentaries, three little dramas, and three other 'things'. 004 confesses that at this point he didn't know very much, but he knew a bit. He says that he also had an opportunity to edit which "gave me a bit of an insight into that side of it". He left the school with a show reel and a qualification that led him to his first directing job.

004 reports that he was friends with a well-known producer who offered him his first job on leaving the school. He says that his friend was having trouble getting a director for what turned out to be a telemovie. 004 says his friend was someone who has always been interested in first timers, so he asked 004 if he wanted to do it, and he said yes. "It was as simple as that".

This was in the mid-1980s and Division 10BA funding was in full swing. 004 acknowledges that consequently, "There was a lot of work out there". The telemovie was produced by PBL Productions (Pavel Brian Lindner Productions), which fell under the aegis of Kerry Packer's Publishing and Broadcasting Limited. PBL had already completed one telemovie with a well-known theatre director as the film's director. 004's telemovie was the second

one, and PBL went on to make 14 productions in all, comprising a mixture of miniseries, telemovies, and feature films.

When asked, 004 explained that a telemovie was different from a feature film inasmuch as it was intended only for small screen distribution. He recounts that he had previously worked as an actor on a telemovie that gained a theatrical release, "...because it was felt it merited it, but it's pretty unusual". His telemovie was only released on television, so as far as he is concerned it is a telemovie.

After directing this telemovie he was still determined to be a director but admits that he wasn't quiet sure how to go about it. For the first eight years after leaving the AFTRS he took acting and directing jobs until eventually the directing became the main job. Because of his experience in the filmmaking business his determination to ensure that he made a living was stronger than his ambition to be a feature film director. The next job he took was as the director of an episode of the series called 'Willesee's Australians'. Again, this was a Division 10Ba funded co-production between Film Australia, Trans Media (Michael Willesee's production company), and Roadshow, Coote & Carroll. 'Willesee's Australians' was a drama series, which consisted of dramatic recreations of the lives of famous Australians. It was commissioned to coincide with Australia's Bicentennial year.

He also directed many corporate videos. 004 reports that the corporate video sector in the mid-to-late 80s was booming. 004 did about maybe six or seven corporate videos and reports that they were his real training ground:

I think I picked up more doing those corporate videos than anything else. They were quite big corporate videos, quite complicated. They gave me an opportunity to experiment with action - not so much with character and plot - but certainly with action - which I liked. I've always had eclectic taste in films. I've never considered action films to be less

than art films - if you like. I was a big admirer of George Miller's Mad Max first two films in particular. When I started to do action, I did definitely take ideas from the way he did it. I worked out how he did it by screening those films frame by frame. Seeing how he made things appear to happen that had not actually taking place. For me, it was part of the magic of it.

### **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases – 005**

The fifth respondent 005 started work in the mid-1980s. He left school, enrolled in a TAFE media course and almost immediately began working in entry-level jobs in the feature film industry. He has made seven feature films and has had widespread local and international success.

005 began the interview by describing himself as 'a child of the movies'. He grew up in the 1970s, which he says was the decade of the shopping mall. His mother liked to shop a lot and meet her friends at the mall. He reports that his childhood consisted of being dragged to a shopping centre and left alone in a cinema while his mother wandered around the shops.

He says that for his mother it was a perfect arrangement. 'If there were double features or the bigger one - the long movies - then the more time she had on her own'. He reported feeling that the visual images from those first films were still deeply impressed on him as is the music from those films He says that by about seven or eight he had a very firm grasp of the medium and had made up his mind at that point that 'that's what I wanted to do'.

When he was eight his parents bought him a 8mm film camera and from then through to his early teens he started making small films. When he was 13 his parents bought him a professional video recorder and camera and he began shooting weddings for a fee. He says that it was through videotaping

weddings that he learnt about coverage. He saw this as the start of his directing career. He says he is certain that at this time:

I didn't want to do anything else. I didn't want to act, I didn't want to be a cameraman, I didn't want to do anything. I wanted to be a Director.

When he was 17 he enrolled at what was then called North Sydney Technical College at Gore hill (now the Northern Sydney Institute). He says that because of his earlier research into Fritz Lang and Alfred Hitchcock that he knew he had to learn about editing. He reports that at that time (late 70s) everybody wanted to learn about camera and there were very few people in his student cohort who were interested in editing.

005 reports that he was extremely ambitious and was prepared to do anything to get where he wanted to get. While he was studying he was still making wedding videos on the side to make money, which he says was quite a successful business. At the same time he was, in his estimation, pestering all and every production company he could find to give him a job:

I just door-knocked endlessly and I just wouldn't give in. I just kept going. I turned up at every production office and in the end I bugged so many people.

005 reports that he was after any job he could get in the film industry. He would get contact details wherever he could and he remembers getting production office details out of the back of Cinema Papers. Eventually a production manager offered him a dishwashing job in the catering truck on a feature film called 'Silver City'. He approached the head teacher at North Sydney Tech who urged him to abandon the course and take the job. He started washing dishes and took any opportunity he could get to go on the set. Eventually, an opportunity came up when the director needed somebody to lie in the bottom of a sheep truck, being trodden on by sheep, and throw hay out

of the back of the truck on cue. 005 was the only person amongst the crew who was prepared to do it and he reports that that started his career because from that moment on he left the catering truck and started working for the Assistant Director.

Importantly, 005 reports that he wasn't afraid of starting at the bottom because:

I don't care. I have absolutely zero pride, that's the big thing about it. I actually don't care on so many levels and I don't know where I got that from but it was very, very early. I actually don't care what people think of me. In fact there's a fuel that comes out of that upper-middle class upbringing that came from my background. ... I don't know if it's a spoilt child thing, but basically you put something on the top shelf, I want it.

He progressed rapidly from 3<sup>rd</sup>, to 2<sup>nd</sup>, and finally to 1<sup>st</sup> assistant director. He reports that he worked constantly and acknowledges that his entry to the workforce coincided with the Division 10BA funding years. He says that he worked on a lot of films, as a 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Director but some of them were so bad that they weren't even completed or released. He reports that the films were really only made for the generous tax concessions that Division 10Ba afforded the film investors:

I made a lot of films. I'm not even credited with the amount of films I worked on as an AD that were just so bad, literally people were writing scripts on table napkins and getting 150% tax benefit on it. I did some sci-fi ones that were not even released, that's why they're not even on IMDb because a lot of these films weren't ever made or completed; they were just done for a tax write-off. But, what a learning curve!

At that point, 005 made the decision that in order to control his career he had to learn how to write a script. He didn't want to be a Director-for-hire. In his

estimation 005 wrote 8-10 scripts before he wrote the scripts for his first two features that were finally realised as productions.

005 says that he had both of his first two feature film scripts written and ready for production simultaneously. His first directing opportunity arose when he took over as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Director on a film where he met his future production partners. They were so impressed by his demonstrated capability that they proposed that they would produce his debut feature film. He was 24 years old at this point. The ambition of his three production partners matched his own and their first strategy was to produce two short films to demonstrate 005's director-capability. 005 crewed these films through his work contacts and by calling in a lot of favours he was able to make two very professional looking short films.

These films were used in a feature film funding submission to the Australian Film Corporation (AFC) who categorically rejected the submission. 005 and his producing partners then took these two short films and 005's two scripts to the Cannes Film Festival to search out financial backers. At Cannes they found an influential producer who championed 005's scripts and director potential. He and his producers found an International sales agent and enough foreign funding to convince the AFC to provide matching funds. Through an American distribution company 005 was able to secure a lucrative U.S. presale and at that point 005 started to lose control of his own film.

The American distributors allowed 005 to direct the film without interference but on showing them the rough cut they fired him. 005 reports that he was destroyed by the experience and had to suffer the humiliation of having to represent the finished film at Cannes, even though it bore no resemblance to the film he set out to make. This version of the film met an extremely hostile reception, which further traumatised 005.

He says that he was fortunate to finally discover a producer who knew how to protect him from the surrounding hostilities and he eventually recovered and went on to eventual local and International success. Eventually, the biggest lesson he learnt from that first experience was how to compromise. 005 reports that the only time he felt unrestricted freedom in his choices was in the first draft of the script and the first cut of the film. He says that he learnt the trick of including obviously redundant material in the edit to allow other people working on the film to have a voice:

On my first cut I'll always have 35 minutes of fat in it that's rubbish that I'll let people cutout. I will direct them towards it and say, "What about that scene, that's not very good, is it?" and they say, "I'd like to take that scene out" and you say, "What a good idea." That's just learning the mechanics of how to give people a voice ... although I am an artist and I definitely see it, I also realise that compromise gets you a long way, but you've got to manipulate the compromise.

### **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases – 006**

The sixth respondent 006 started work in the mid-2000s. He was University trained and worked as a teacher in the U.K. until he was in his late 20s. He returned to Australia when he was presented with the opportunity to make a feature film. He has made one feature film and has had local and international success with long form documentaries.

006 came to film quiet late, compared to others. He had been a teacher in the U.K. but had been dissatisfied and had an idea that he wanted to do something connected to the Arts. He was accepted into a highly competitive acting school when he was 27 and it was while doing this course that he was introduced to cinema:

...They just open you up to a whole world of cinema that you suddenly didn't realise. You're sitting there in critical analysis and the lady that taught that, she's introducing you to Truffaut films and you're sitting there going, "400 Blows, this film's amazing". I didn't even know this film existed.

The course employed English directors of the calibre of Mike Leigh and Stephen Frears to give tutorials to the students and so 006 convinced the course coordinator to allow him and another student to use this opportunity to learn about screen directing as an additional workload in their acting course. It was while he was enrolled in this course that he made a short film and then a documentary.

006 is involved in a church community and it was through this community that he was given a number of directing opportunities. His first short film, although not particularly religious, was funded by a couple in London who went to the same church. The second film he made was a feature length documentary funded by the same two people. Both films didn't have any connection with the church other than the two wealthy philanthropists attended the same church. 006 had a €90,000 budget, and a lot of good will. Both the London Metropolitan Orchestra and Abbey Road studios came to the aid of the production. 006 had a 40-piece orchestra in the main studio at Abbey road:

You're sitting there going; "No this is not...You're not supposed to be able to have those experiences when you've got no idea about what you're doing. To me it's just been like I've been very blessed to have gotten to work with some really amazingly talented people that, yes they make you look very good, but they also make your story telling better.

006 says that for him as a young director, visual story telling is about learning from people who have been doing it for a long time because that way they'll



save you from yourself. Your job as a director is to synthesise all of that information and advice from experienced workers. 006 says that the director has enough to worry about without the additional worry of whether or not you're getting the shots properly. The work process then becomes a conversation so that they can then offer you a frame. And you can look at it together and you can go:

Yes that frame, the way that we've lit it, that is what we need to be able to tell that story". So when I put the actors in front of camera now, everything in that frame is all working together to tell the story.

006 says that in using experienced crew it means that the director is relieved of what he sees as the terrible expectation that the director knows everything. You don't have to know everything. He says that that expectation is the one thing that makes it very difficult for a young filmmaker to actually be able to get money to do anything.

He was then fortunate enough in the mid-2000s to be headhunted to take up the role as the Creative Director of Film and TV for his church. This role covers Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific Islands. At this point he and his wife made the decision to move back to Australia.

His first film in this new role was a \$2,600,000 documentary series. This was the main attraction at the point 006 took the job:

Someone goes, "The budget's already sitting there", like it's financed, and you've got complete carte blanche with the producer to basically steer it any direction you want. And I went, "All right that sounds like a good deal to me, I'll be a part of that", so yeah I think it was that.

006 also acknowledges that this was a pretty unique opportunity and that such opportunities for inexperienced directors in Australia are rare. 006 says

that it is a Christian-themed documentary series but that it has an American distributor in LA who is putting it onto the shelves in Wal-Mart's across the U.S. He says that it has been broadcast all over the world, and he acknowledges that although this isn't mainstream content creation it's a growing feature of contemporary film production.

His next project was a large budget feature film, also financed by his church. It's based on the true story of the founders of the church and was written by a Hollywood screenwriter who worked with 006 on developing the characters, and making them relatable to a contemporary audience.

The biggest lesson that he learnt from that first feature film shoot after sitting in editorial for the last five and half months is concerned with coverage. The whole time he is sitting in on the editing process he is questioning the lack of coverage he has provided for the editor. He knows there is a wealth of reasons why the process of filmmaking makes it practically impossible to get all of the footage that is required to make for a painless editing experience. The schedules, the long working days, all of the things that can possibly go wrong do go wrong. 006 reports that sometimes its just because you didn't get it right. He says that the more detailed you can be in your shot lists, the closer you will come to achieving the film that is in your mind.

### **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases – 007**

The seventh respondent 007 started work in the early 1970s. He trained as a cinematographer with the Australian Broadcasting Commission (as it was then) but left to work as an independent filmmaker. A combination of a favourable funding policy and an influential producer saw him make his first feature film. To date, he has made one feature film and has had local and international success with long form documentaries.

007's career began when he managed to get a job at the ABC, in staging. He then moved from staging to the cinematography department around 1970. 007 felt that the ABC at that stage was very authoritarian. He also didn't like the fact that there was no formal training; it was more of an apprenticeship. He tried to initiate more interactivity between the different production departments and invited independent filmmakers in to speak to the camera assistants in the evenings about what life was like outside. The independent filmmaker Giorgio Mangiamele was among the guest speakers, but this was considered very unwelcome. Working in the ABC news department 007 could also see how much direct government interference there was in editorial policy.

He left the ABC with the idea that one ought to be making work independently because of the experience that he had had with the ABC. He reports that at this stage he started transitioning from freelancing as a cinematographer and a camera assistant to making independent work. At around the time that the Interim Council and the Experimental Film Fund were coming into being.

007 says that when he started working independently he saw himself as a filmmaker rather than as a director. He was happy with the idea of something called a filmmaker where you work collaboratively and which means that whenever there was a project everybody would get paid the same. At this stage he thought that the idea of the film director was the last bastion of the tyrant. At this stage he preferred to think of himself as a media activist, than as something called a director. He continued to work in a fairly individualistic way. He liked the idea that organised citizens could use media to articulate their views of the world in a way that was both structurally and ideologically alternative to the mass media that one was otherwise engaged with as a worker. This led him to become involved in the community video movement in the early 70s.

His first feature film came about because he was working as a University lecturer when he read a novella that fitted his context and ‘had echoes’ of the particular institution he was working in. He knew the author and contacted him with the view to taking a film option on the novella. 007 says that he recognised a filmic quality about the writing:

This is fantastic, a beautiful piece of work. It was just so rich. And it had this fabulous critique of academic culture, in the middle of it. And it was also a very strong critique of masculinity. It was a very interesting piece of work. It raised all sorts of interesting questions about pornography. And I thought: This is wonderful: What a wonderful project. But the only way it could be realised was as a feature drama.

007 and the author began to discuss a treatment for the film. One of the first problems in the adaptation process was to consider how the book-within-a-book structure could be accommodated in the film. 007 drew on his understanding of film history to find a complementary visual style that would assist the film adaptation of a high literary style in the original writing.

At the time that 007 was looking for feature film funding, the historical funding context was that the Australian Film Commission (AFC) was financing low-budget drama. A well-known film producer from the U.K. had been brought into the AFC in an attempt to bring a more entrepreneurial practice to the decision making process.

007 says that the AFC at that stage wasn’t necessarily in the business of making commercial films, rather it was in the business of making films with impact and they were looking to finance low budget films with new writer/directors attached. In 007’s case he was approaching the AFC as a team because the novella’s writer was attached as the screenplay writer. 007 says that at the time he approached the AFC the U.K. film producer had left the organization but that the people who remained after he left were very

imbued with the values and approaches that he had brought to the organization.

Before 007 made his initial approach to the AFC, he contacted the U.K. film producer to ask him if he would be interested in taking up a producer-role on his production. He says he did this in anticipation that the AFC's response to his initial funding request would be negative, on the basis that he was a first-time director:

So that's what happened. I just went into that competitive environment with a fully developed screenplay. I commissioned (The writer) to write the screenplay. So I was really the creative producer of the project. So it was produced through (007's personal production company), and (the U.K. producer) was the producer and I was the other producer.

The finished film had a festival release; it won some awards; it travelled, it was invited to festivals, including the Berlin International Film Festival. 007 admits that his film was an "Arthouse piece of work"; "It's not a 'wide-as-possible' audience". In Australia it was distributed on limited screens but the local and international distributors received a return on their investment. 007 says that in the main the critical reviews were "generous". The television and mainstream press reviewers were interested in supporting the film. The worst review it got was from a person who was a novelist who was reviewing for the Sydney Morning Herald.

007 admits that he was mistaken in not making a suggested edit that would have improved the film's censorship rating. His film received an R rating and he says that he thinks that as a consequence of this the AFC hasn't been prepared to offer him continuing support and distribution. He also suspects that the AFC is more inclined towards popularity than critical engagement and this may have affected what he perceives as the organisation's ongoing support of his film.

## **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases – 008**

The eighth respondent 008 started work in the mid-1980s. He was University trained and later attended AFTRS. He then worked as a scriptwriter and theater director for ten years until he made the opportunity direct his first feature film. He has made one feature film, which met with local success.

008 reports that he had always had an interest in film from childhood. As a teenager, 008 was a huge fan particularly of the American New Wave, the Coppola's and the Scorsese's, as well as the European directors. He says that when he learnt that there was an Australian Film and Television School, he immediately made the decision to go there. While he was at university he made three applications to the AFTRS over the space of four years, until he was finally accepted. He graduated from the AFTRS in the mid 80s. He feels that this was a piece of historical bad luck because he graduated into "a sort of financing vacuum". He says that while he was at film school, his ambition was to make feature films. He thinks that this was the most common ambition amongst most of his student cohort.

The year that he graduated from the AFTRS was the year that the Federal Government decided it was going to modify the Division 10BA tax concessions; effectively disallowing the massive investment incentives that had been fuelling the film industry since 1981. He says that he graduated into that gap where there was just no financing for anything at all:

No matter where I went with any project that I might have, there was no interest because nobody was making anything and the whole industry was just in complete...people's lives had stopped for a couple of years and by the time that financing eventually...the new system was eventually set up, came forward and so on, there was a new generation of filmmakers was coming through and so on, so I slipped

into that gap, into that small cohort of people who missed out, as it were, on the opportunities.

008 then reports that it took him about ten years after leaving the AFTRS to finally make his first feature. He says that two members of his student cohort started shooting their first features around the same time.

When he graduated from the film school he thought of himself as being a writer and a director. He directed for the stage, and worked with other writers to develop scripts that he would like to direct. He says that he fell into writing because one of his perceptions of the people that he wanted to be like was that they were writer-directors. While he understood that the auteur mystique permeated the film industry he started thinking that writing was a way of giving him something to direct. He says that as a consequence people read the 'stuff' and they say: "Okay, well, we don't you want you to direct something but I would like you to write something for me," and so he says he fell into writing even though he says most of his training was as a director.

008 says that at the time he was graduating from the AFTRS, the head of the school told him about how an independent producer had approached the school about recommending a writer/director for a feature film project. He says that there was an existing screenplay, written by a prominent novelist but there had been an acrimonious falling out and there was an opportunity to start again from scratch, really, and wrote the screenplay for him. 008 agreed to join the project, but then he says nothing happened really for a very long time.

In the mean time 008 attended the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) to further his training. He felt he needed to hone his skills working with actors. His thinking at the time was If he trained himself as a theatre director as well then he would stand a better chance of getting a job. He attended the director's course at NIDA and wound up forming a really good relationship

with the director, who employed him after he'd graduated, as a director in residence then as a writer in residence.

While 008 was at NIDA, he wrote one play that didn't do particularly well but led to another NIDA commission. While working on this second play he felt dissatisfied and so he showed the Director of NIDA his film script synopsis and asked him if he could work on that instead, with the idea of adapting it as a stage play. His boss agreed with him on the likely prospect of it being successfully adapted for the stage and so gave him permission and funding to go to the Northern Territory to further the necessary research for the script.

008 says that it was while he was on this research trip in the middle of nowhere that he received a 'phone call from the famous actor:

It was a totally surreal conversation because I'm standing in a phone booth in the middle of Alice Springs, staying in a backpackers' lodge, and I was talking to a movie star on the phone who was saying, "I really like this script that you've written. I think we should make it."

There was a two year hiatus between that phone call and the time 008 and the actor sat down to actually work on the screenplay. The stage play that had come out of 008's field trip had been enormously successful and had launched two hugely successful productions for two separate theatre companies. When the screenplay was finally finished, 008 then put it into a special fund for first time directors which was described by 008 as:

I've forgotten what the official title was. Everybody referred to it as the chook raffle. (008's movie) was one of the movies that got picked. We got two and a half million to make it, which was a ludicrously small amount of money to make a film on that scale but we had a really good producer on board. We got the...the whole thing was managed pretty efficiently and I was an extremely efficient director. I mean, I think we



shot over 700...I've forgotten how many slates it was. It was over 700 slates in a course of six weeks and we used all but 20 of them so I didn't...I really didn't waste a cent.

008 says that as a consequence of making this first feature, he gained the confidence to think:

Okay, that actually works as a narrative like that. Those shot choices work, my work with the actors is pretty okay. There's always stuff that you would change, that you go back and think, "Why didn't I think of that right thing to say in that moment? Then I could have got...that performance would have been absolutely right," or, "Why didn't I get that pick-up, that shot?" or what-have-you. "I was talked out of doing that and I really needed that in the edit." All that stuff goes through your head but in the end, the narrative holds together and I stand by most of the artistic choices that I made.

008 says that one artistic choice that he made, while being good for the movie may have been bad for him. He decided very early on that he didn't want people to notice the director's style. This was because he thought that the strength of the story was that it had great authenticity:

...even though it's kind of a genre pic in the sense that there's a murder mystery to be solved, there's a cop, there's guns and all that sort of stuff. It has that. It's a bit of a cross between a western and a detective movie but it had enormous authenticity, which was based on the fact that pretty much everything in the movie in one form or another was something real that had happened to somebody at some point.

So he directed it in a way that he thought, "I want the audience to just feel like they're there. I want them to feel like this is real. I don't want them to notice

anything about how it's directed." 008 says that as a result of taking this approach, that there was very little interest in him as a director.

When the movie was released 008 thought that the local distributor really didn't have a clear idea of how they wanted to sell the movie. The distributor knocked back the opportunity to have the film open the Sydney Film Festival because they felt it was too far away from the release of the film and they were worried that because of the politics of the movie there might be some negative publicity. The distributors eventually released the movie in the second week of November, which is two weeks before the Christmas movies came in, and it did two weeks in the multiplexes and then just disappeared. They had some success on the film festival circuit but 008 says that the film's real success came when the film was next released at an art house cinema and managed to hang onto its cinema spot over the Christmas period and into New Year. At this point 008 says that the famous actor did a television and newspaper interview with a sympathetic critic and suddenly, their film which had only been taking \$1,000 a week and was about to be taken off, went up to \$10,000 the following week. It then stayed in the Arthouse cinema for seven months. It turned out to be the highest grossing Australian film they (the Arthouse cinema) had ever had and the second highest grossing film they'd had overall, internationally.

008 thinks from that experience that if the distribution of the movie is not handled extremely well and cleverly then your movie just disappears, and if the movie disappears then it's very hard for the filmmaker to get the next movie up because the perception is:

If you've made a movie and it doesn't get the Palme d'Or or something then you don't deserve to make another film. I think that's probably the reason why the...why so many first time directors don't get that second go, is because they...we're too...our expectations are just too high.

008 says that although his first feature was ultimately successful and has earned a reputation over time it didn't get the heat behind it that would've propelled 008 into making the next film. He acknowledges that his second mistake was that he had the opportunity to go to the States and he didn't take it.

I've never had any particular interest in working in the States. I've always wanted to work here and make films here for this...for an Australian audience. At the time, I just felt like...because I'd had this...I'd been on this incredible roll for the last four or five years and I just felt like, "Okay, I'll just go back to Australia and I'll make another film."

What he didn't realise at the time was just how impossibly difficult further Australian success was going to be:

I should have just...when I was approached by really a good lawyer and a good manager who said, "Look, we can get you a movie of the week if you want to come over here and do it," I should have absolutely snapped that up and gone and done that. Had I just done that for a couple of years, I could've come back to Australia and then...and would have stood a better chance of making movies here. But you don't understand these things at the time.

### **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases – 009**

The ninth respondent 009 started working in commercial filmmaking in the late 1960s. He attended a general arts undergraduate course and left Australia where he made experimental films and documentaries in Europe. He then returned to Australia and made his first feature film. He has since gone on to make over five features to varying degrees of local and international success.

009 began making 8mm and 16mm films from an early age, and then just started finding anyway he could to keep making them. He says that for as long as he can remember he loved movies and everything about them.

After finishing a liberal arts education in Australia, he moved to the U.K. in the late 1960s and there he made his first commercial cinema-released film, a long form narrative documentary that was inspired by his family history.

He moved back to Australia and was given the opportunity in the mid-1970s to make a feature film with a mix of International funding and money from the Australian Film Corporation. The film was a local and international success and allowed him to move to the U.S.A. where he continued to make films for the international market.

He says his first feature taught him the importance of coordinating all the aspects into one stream, from acting to cinematography. He also added that his first feature taught him the importance, and what he described as the art, of distribution and marketing.

### **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases – 010**

The tenth respondent 010 started work around 2012. She attended an undergraduate university course and did an Honours year. 010 later attended AFTRS. While still enrolled in the AFTRS course she started a long form narrative film. She is still trying to finish and release this film.

010 knew that she wanted to be a filmmaker when she was in high school. She was encouraged by her Media teacher in Year 10 to try video. She remembers making “a really bad romantic short film”, and then in Year 12 she

wanted to try something different, and so she attempted to make a documentary. In her final year of school she made a 10-minute documentary about three aboriginal women that happened to be family friends. She says that the making of this film provided her with more learning than any other activity in her entire Year 12 studies:

It was also my first experience, when I was editing it, that I got completely lost, and the cleaners had to kick me out of the editing suites, and go, "You've got to get home." I realised I just fell into it, and I just thought, "This is the best feeling."

So after leaving school, O10 won the Vice-Chancellor's Scholarship to go to Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne for three years. She says that this course was difficult for her as there were 100 people in her year and she "got completely lost in the mix of it; and there was no training that specifically targeted my passions, so I got lost". To counteract these feelings O10 reports that she stuck to an identity of a 'documentary maker' because she felt that she needed to differentiate herself in order to stand out. The facilities were great; she says though that she just didn't get the documentary training that she craved. There were documentary classes, but because they were non-elective classes the subject content was heavily diluted.

In her second year, Australian Volunteers International approached her because they'd heard that she was a documentary filmmaker and asked her if she would be interested in making a documentary in India for them. She then went to India for 10 days and made this half an hour film, which ended up screening on National Indigenous Television (NITV), three years later. She then attended the Northern Film School in the United Kingdom on an exchange programme from Swinburne, which she says was even worse than Swinburne:

I was only there for six months and the English students I was with were even less enthused by making a career out of film. Not sure why they were in the course, but I got completely lost there as well, and then came back to Swinburne after six months. I was now halfway through my third year. I pretty much didn't attend the rest of my degree.

101 says that the final year of her three year Bachelor's course she just kept editing the India film for Australian Volunteers International, and submitted that as her course work. Following on from that 010 did an Honours year:

...because I thought, I don't have that short that can help me transition into the industry, so I did an Honours, and then I made a 10 minute film about Uncle Bob Randall in the desert, and it was...Honours was amazing, because it was the first time it was about research what you want, make the film that you want. We're not going to put stupid impractical, restrictions on you.

010 graduated with a Bachelor of Film and Television with Honours, from Swinburne University in Melbourne. With the 10-minute film she made in that final year she entered a number of niche, cultural, indigenous festivals, and short film festivals like Flickerfest in St Kilda. Her film was well received.

010 then studied at a private Registered Training Organization (RTO) and obtained a Graduate Certificate in Transformative and Integrative Studies in Hawthorn. 101 says that she did that because:

I wanted the mushy bit, what am I going to make a documentary about? I know the skill, I know how to operate a camera, but I had no understanding of...I didn't have the life experience because I was still quite young, and I was wanting to fast track that by doing this course.

By this stage 010 estimates that she had made probably roughly seven short films, and one half-hour film, and even though she had by now studied for five years, she still didn't think that she had enough training.

My boyfriend at the time was desperate to come to AFTRS, and I wanted to just spontaneously apply and perhaps follow him, and we both got in, and we just thought, "Great, let's road trip it to Sydney, and let's study film." Because actually I went to the AFTRS open day and I didn't think that...I was just supporting him, and then I met the documentary lecturers, and Dr. Rachel Landers was just sitting at a table, and I sat down and just said, "Hey I just want to chat" and she just looked at me and she says, "You are doing this course, this course is made for you, and you're doing it, and you're applying, and I'm not taking no for an answer.

010 says that she thinks she was so readily accepted by the school because of her previous experience. She enrolled in the Graduate Diploma in Documentary, which she describes as being like a:

...nurtured boot camp, they just whip you into line and break you down and build you back up and break you down again, and that was exactly what I was craving that entire time.

010 says that the course was all about industry and bringing the industry to the students, and because there was only seven students she felt as though she got a really personal connection with the industry. Industries people revisited the school throughout the year she was attending and heard their pitches and helped them develop their ideas. 010 says that by the time she graduated, she had the feature film that she is currently making. AFTRS was really a year that allowed her to concentrate on developing her idea within an encouraging and nurturing environment. She knew that what she made next

had to be a feature film because she understood that it was impossible to make money from short form films:

Everybody thinks that you can make a short film, and everyone will recognise it as enough merit, and then support you to make a feature, and that's absolute bollocks. It doesn't work like that at all, and I've seen friends of mine who are beautiful directors make successful short films that have done Palm Springs, Sheffield, really international festivals, and nothing has tangibly come out of it for them.

010 says her feature film is set in Papua New Guinea. She says that it was the first country she ever visited and it that first visit made such a huge impact on her. She started off with an entirely different subject for the project but this project was overtaken by local events in PNG and she found herself as an advocate for a PNG group who were under attack:

It's really just about bearing witness to a community before they might be lost, and having an archive of this community, and documenting the illegality so that you have an entire picture of what happened. Because I'm sure this happens all around the world, and there's not a filmmaker there to capture it. But if I could film one settlement, one community, and why they either succeeded or why they lost, then it would sort of be a capsule to represent all those other communities that are hidden.

010 reports that the main lesson that she has learnt through making her film is not to wait for funding. She says that she started her project because she was able to grab a free camera, and quickly go to PNG off the back of a \$3000 ABC Initial Research Grant. At that stage the ABC were hoping to commission it, but then the Head of Documentary resigned before any decisions were made. This was when she realised that the best strategy was:



Grab any money you can and start, and we'll probably never stop fundraising, so there's never going to be a point of, "Now I can start production."

Production was started before she started development, and one of the first things she did was to bring in an editor only twelve hours after having the initial idea for the film and edit a trailer. The editor and most of her collaborators on this project come from her time at AFTRS:

I've got Screen Australia money and Screen NSW money and everything, but none of the money comes with requirements, like the broadcasters. I don't have a broadcaster, so I feel like it's an opportunity to get my lateral collaborators to come onboard this film, because I need to be able to grow with them, where I know other directors who have got ABC docos up, and they're AFTRS graduates in the same year as I am, but they're not able to get their lateral collaborators on. They have to get higher, and that's a real restriction then for the crew, so I'm trying to get my film to be a bit of a hub for graduates.

010 thinks that one of the main problems is that a lot of the time people won't come on board until rough-cut:

I think people are watching it, and said they'll watch it all the way through the development, they're waiting three years before they press go, waiting for me to test the narrative arc in the rough cut.

Through her experience of pitching at conferences 010 says that lots of people offer support but aren't prepared to commit to a contract. She feels that people aren't prepared to make the necessary leap of faith and need to see the finished form before they commit to investment funding.

Yeah, I think I'm still trying to figure out the sustainable business model that allows me to keep going, and I haven't found it. The start-up capital needed to be able to cash flow a project is, I mean that's ridiculous. It can be \$50000 sometimes, and as a young person that's now been studying for seven years, and living on tuna cans, it doesn't...that's not a possibility for me. Some people have been able to do it with inheritance or property, or have some other income stream, which I'm looking into, but...and I'm sure I can, out of this feature film, I can make profit off it, because, although I'm not the producer, I'm the director. All of the investment has been grants, it's not...only a few of them have been equity investors. So it begins to make profit straight away almost, but at the same time, it then has to fund the distribution and the outreach impact strategy, which is going to take the next five years after the film is completed. So all of a sudden I'm working on a feature film for 10 years, and I'll only get paid maybe three months out of that 10 years, and how is that possible that I could then have multiple things happening at the same time.

### **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases – 011**

The eleventh respondent 011 started work around the early 2000's. She studied acting at Diploma level after finishing school and then started working as an actor. 011 has made several internationally recognised short films and is working on trying to raise funding for her first feature film.

011 always felt a drive to tell stories, but when she was young, the only way she could see how to do that was through acting. She says that she didn't have an artistic family, so she really had no idea how to get into the industry. She started a Diploma in acting as soon as she left high school. It was a three-year course at the Toowoomba campus of the University of Southern Queensland. After she graduated, 011 worked in a theatre for 20 years:

So I did a lot of hospitality and occasional acting work. I found, as I was getting older, and I met a lot of older actors who were quite successful who were very broke. And I was thinking, "Well, I'm not particularly successful and I'm getting older." I found that when I was getting acting work, and that I should have been happy, that often I wasn't particularly happy with the production or the directing or the role.

011 decided to make a short film. She realised that it suited her better to tell stories; she felt that she could control her own work. She admits that with her first short film that she had no idea what she was doing. 011 describes it as "like a little Tropfest film". She enjoyed the experience and had written a short play, which she chose as her next short film. She reports that at this stage she would have been 30 years of age. 011 admits she that was 'crazy' in the sense that she didn't really understand how difficult it was, but that ignorance she claims gave her the freedom and the 'chutzpah' to really make it happen. She found 200 sponsors and tracked down someone who shared the producer's role with her. She slipped letters in people's letterboxes and said, "This is what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to tell a lovely story." She managed to attract great actors. She managed to convince the actor's agents to accept that there would be no money. She approached the Australian army who gave her a free location. 011 says that her attitude was: "I just aim for the top and then see what happens. I've always approached things like that. My God, I had so much chutzpah." She says that she was waitressing, just living week to week.

I ended up of course getting...and I worked with all these chefs, so I asked the chefs to help me out with food. I went to fruit and veg shops and I went to taxi companies, so I had lots of groundwork going on. But I was managing it all myself, so it was pretty overwhelming.

In the end she had to borrow \$10,000 from her partner. A post-production grant from Screen Australia helped her finish the film. She says that Screen

Australia saw the merit in what she had achieved and granted her a further \$64,000 to help finish the film.

It was a ten-day shoot. The Director of Photography was an experienced professional and the actors were professional. The film's composer has since gone on to work on features but at the time she was a new composer. The first assistant director was someone who worked professionally as a second assistant director:

My whole outlook was to try and be the most inexperienced person on set. That's what I tried to do so that I would be surrounded by people who at least knew what they were doing and could support what was happening. So I did have good people on. It's got a rawness about it, but it has got...I look back on it now, and if I was directing it now it would have more finesse and I'd be more careful. But there's something wonderful about it, more freer than any work that I've done since.

011 admits to the precarious nature of the filmmaking process that arose partly out of her ignorance of the process and partly out of the lack of proper investment funding. 011 had shot on film negative and one day she received a phone call from the laboratory informing her that there had been a fire at the laboratory. At first she was devastated because she hadn't been able to afford insurance and her first thought was that all of her efforts had been for nothing. She had some print tests run on the negative and everything proved to be okay:

I shouldn't laugh about it, but there were just so many instances where fate helped us out. There was like a magic in the making of this film.

011 demonstrated persistence and an unassailable optimism about her film, which seems to be a requisite for all filmmakers. After a debut screening at

the State theater in Sydney that was presented by Kim Williams (the then head of Screen Australia) 011's film didn't get any support in Australia in terms of further screening opportunities.

...and it took me a year to get into any festivals really. So I didn't do what a lot of young filmmakers, I think, do, which is enter 10, 15, not getting into any and give up. I kept entering them and spending more money entering them.

Her strategy became one of making multiple applications for inclusion into film festivals worldwide. She estimates that she made over 40 film festival applications before her film was accepted into its first festival competition. The first acceptance came from the Rhode Island International Film Festival, which has been running for twenty years and has over 5,000 submissions each year. Almost immediately after receiving confirmation of acceptance in that festival 011 received confirmation that her film had been accepted into the prestigious Palm Springs International Film Festival. Her short film won the prize for Best Short Film in both Festivals' competitions. From that point on her festival submissions were always successful with the exception of Australian competitions. She estimates that she made between 80 and 100 submissions in all. While it was generally accepted in international film festival competitions after that initial acceptance, it still wasn't accepted into any Australian film festivals.

001 thinks that it might have had something to do with the duration of her short film that made festivals reluctant to accept it in short competition:

Look, I think nowadays, it would almost be impossible because it was 36 or 38 minutes, depending on the cut, how they judged it. But I think it would just be thrown on the pile of, "No thanks," because it would be too long. Mine would be the only long film in the program, because it's very long for a short film program, of course.

001 thinks that it was due to the success of her short films that led to her acceptance as a mature age student into the AFTRS program. 011 was aged 34 when she was accepted into the school. It was a big decision for her to attend because of her concerns for her financial support. With the help of her partner and a stipend from the AFTRS, which 011 says was the equivalent of 'the dole', she was able to enter the three-year program at AFTRS. Even after her international success with her short films 011 expressed a feeling that at the time she needed to attend the AFTRS because of a feeling that somehow she 'had fluked it'. She was looking for a sense of legitimacy for her claim to be a director that she thought attendance at the school would lend her.

The directing course at this stage (early 2000's) only accepted four students, so it was very competitive to get in:

I remember thinking, "Well, let's apply, and see what happens." It was a huge amount of work just to apply. Then I thought, "If I don't get in, there's part of me that'll be relieved," because going back to school at that time was tricky, "and if I do get in, well then great. It's a good opportunity.

011 expressed doubt that she would have been a filmmaker if she hadn't been accepted into the school, because:

To make those four films, three films, or whatever that I ended up graduating with as well, another three, four, really gave me confidence. And it gives people a tick that you've studied.

For a short period after graduating from the AFTRS, 011 felt that she was considered to be "a hot young thing"; but with five short films, a direction qualification, and a list of influential contacts, she realised two things: Her age was going to be an obstacle in terms of getting a job; she was now 36 and

she felt that she was too old to start at the bottom. Nobody was going to ask her to direct their film and nor was she going to be offered any television drama work at the director level. She had a reasonable amount of confidence in her writing ability and so she embarked on writing a feature film script.

Her other dilemma was that she wanted to have children. In the mean time, she worked in the advertising industry and as a freelance scriptwriter while being on an In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) program. She applied for script development funding from Screen New South Wales and received sufficient funding to develop her script to second draft stage. Her second draft received negative feedback and, as she says:

And then I sort of couldn't face it. I knew it was a mess. I couldn't give it to another writer, and I just couldn't face it. I don't know why I thought I had to do it all on my own.

011 says that after the second draft she received no more funding support from any Government sources. She says that in her naivety she approached other producers with that script. She says that at that stage she felt very alone which was hard for her because she likes to work with other people. What she came to realise was that most producers don't want to develop the script; they just want a finished product.

Since those early endeavors at trying to mount a feature film production 011 says she has only had five years of employment in the advertising sector. She says that this is because she chose to spend some time away from employment raising her children. She also reports that of the four directors that she went to film school with, there were two males and two females. While all four have had babies, the men's careers weren't affected, but for both of the women, they felt as if their careers had stopped and further to that she says: "I think it's very hard to climb back up that ladder."

## **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases – 012**

The twelfth respondent 012 went to a TAFE media course in Western Australia in the early 2000's and studied at a Diploma level. While studying and working, he made two long form community service messages which enjoyed considerable viral success. He started working as a 2nd assistant director on local productions. He attracted enough international online attention to be offered a feature film project with international funding.

012 reports that he was never a big reader as a kid. He says that he always "kind of rebelled against reading in school". He says that in his English literature classes he could "read really quick and I like to get into all these books." But that while he had read all the classics he had hated them so much that after a while he realised that if he read the first chapter and the 'back blurb' and then watched three different movie versions of it, that he had a sufficient idea for any essay writing that he had to do. He says that he started writing a feature film when he was about 15 years old and that the first *Star Wars* film inspired the script. He wrote five pages every night until he had about 90 pages, but at the end of that process He realised that it wasn't very good. He said he knew a little about the formal layout for a script because he was doing drama at school. For him in that instance the script ideas came from other movies that he saw.

012 was interested in theatre at school. His school theatre group performed *Cosi* and *Black Rock* as well as Beckett and Shakespeare plays. 012 noticed that it was always the teacher who was in charge of doing the blocking:

And so I was like, "What? I wouldn't go there - that's ridiculous and this feels so weird of performing and shouting to that person in the back room.



It occurred to 012 that he wanted to be the one who decided on the blocking of the actors and the staging of the performance. He also says that he was always certain whenever he was performing that his preference was to be offstage or behind the camera because he found performing terrifying and he acknowledges that performance skills are skills he doesn't possess.

He convinced his father to get him a video camera and he started making movies in school. He would use his video equipment to copy movies from the video store and eventually he built up a large reference library from this source. When he left high school he enrolled in a film and television course at TAFE Western Australia. He says that the course was very practical, and compared to his friends who attended media courses at University he reports feeling more advanced in technical skills than they were. The practical emphasis and the deemphasizing of theory in his course also suited him. He finished his course having written and directed three short films. In his first year he learnt about editing which he enjoyed, but at the same time he was also working on his own films. In his second year the focus was on camera, and in third year he says he jumped into directing. He thinks that it was probably a mistake to specialise because it became an obstacle to employment when he finished the course.

He graduated from the course in 2003. He says that when he finished his studies, there was not much local production. 012 reports that there was work in Children's Television but that it had no appeal for him. His ambition was to work as a Director, but this proved impossible so he started working in the local Western Australian film industry as a second Assistant Director, and for the past 13 years he has worked as an Assistant Director (AD). 012 says that working as an AD it was very hard because there were quite a few workers who were all competing for very few jobs: "Especially in Western Australia there's a lot of commercial work, and there's a lot of documentary work. And there's not much in between when it comes to long form." 012 then started working in the advertising industry:

And you find that a lot of crew. We get sucked into this advertising thing and I got sucked into the advertising thing as well. You get paid what you get paid in a week... But if you want to earn a bit of cash really quick - ads are great. And advertising keeps a lot of us working. ... But it is thankless work for a Director.

012 made two commercials that 'went viral' online. One has received around 20 million views and the other has four million unique views. 012 thinks that this is ironic given that the intended thrust of his approach was to reject advertising in all of its manifestations. He said that advertising agencies began approaching him and saying:

I want you to direct an ad like that, but here's the script and we want it done like this and we'll decide on the cast and...And you kind of go - okay; the reason why these are good is because I don't care about your opinion. And I'll get to cast it based on who I feel's right for it. Not who you feel is right for it. And I will decide the colours and the staging and the quality of the image...and I'll make the cut. And once I've done the cut and I'm happy with the cut. However long it is. Because like, one of them's like a minute 20 and the other's like, a minute 15. And it's like, that's it - that's the ad. And it doesn't have to fit into whatever you're "30 second's, la, la. That's it." And then you get this, "Oh, well we don't want to work that way."

He believes that he is seeing some advertising starting to break free of the constraints of rigid durations and formulaic, assembly line approaches but he agrees that it is the way the industry currently works and for a Director working in commercials there is very little opportunity to make a personal contribution or work beyond the brief.

As an antidote to this 012 started writing scripts and because of the attention that he had attracted from the Internet community a U.S. talent approached him. The U.S. agent has sent him a number of prospective scripts, which up until now he has been rejecting, on quality grounds. This seems to be a precarious position for him as he describes a number of instances where an offer to direct a film project seems close to finalization but then the offer is withdrawn at the last moment. He reports that he had finally received a script that he could personally respond to:

There's something in this - it could be good and I could make it good." And then I said, "Yes." And then the producers were kind of like, "That's great to have you on board because you've done all these Internet things that are fantastic." And I was like, "Yeah, great." And then, I just realised that it was... the way that cookie cutter sort of, making the Big Mac's sort of, make it fit. And I feel that it's like, I need that project that the producer and me work together. And we worked to make the right film. Based on the writing for the right audience.

He says that the main reason he took up script writing was because of the experience he had working with other people's scripts: "Well, I'm kind of struggling with being a writer now. I've always written and I've only ever enjoyed directed things I've written. I directed two things that someone else wrote. And I hated the experience." He reports that he is currently working with a writing partner and finishing off a script after a two-year development process. He says that the long delay in finishing the script means that the script has lost its original appeal for him.

012 expresses a yearning for a world where a director can make 4 films a year: "and just like, pump them all out. Just keep pumping but we just don't have that type of economy". He describes the Australian governments' funding model as 'centre link type funding... of get in line - fill out the paperwork and maybe you'll get your funding.' He expresses admiration for

the Division 10BA investment model and for the genre films that followed the Anthony Ginnane model. He sees Chinese film investment as the main hope for an independent cinema but he insists any funding model is only acceptable if:

As long as you can retain creative control. And have a story that isn't influenced by the people who are putting the money in. You know, people should buy into something because they like the story. You shouldn't have to sell out to get the money.

He points out that amidst trying to make room for writing while trying to make a living that he is still working on developing his skills as a Director:

But then there's so many...like, when you get behind the camera there's so many external circumstances. And it's like, "We've got to move on in five minutes." and it's like, "That is fine, it's good, let's move on." And I've learnt that through the years. And you still keep learning that. "Because I think you never stop learning new ways to do things. You just kind of, learn new ways to deal with repressing your anger at not being able to get your own way. It's a form of narcissism. That's why I got into directing [laughter]."

### **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases – 013**

The thirteenth respondent 013 attended the UTS media arts course in the early 2000's and studied at an undergraduate level. She later attended AFTRS and then left and made one feature film, which is still to get a release.

013 reports that at high school she did media studies where she made a short film:

Up until that point I was into drama and then I found like, Wow, there's this whole other art form where I have this control. I'm a bit of a control freak.

Once she had realised the level of her interest in directing films, she spent the rest of her school years working her way towards getting into UTS media arts degree. She says that she just managed to scrape in to the three-year course where she learnt the basics of filmmaking. She thought at the time that the UAR requirement made little sense for an arts course. She says that she thought the three years provided her with a really solid base, and while she didn't feel as though she had been given any director training specifically, she says the value was in the real information about the industry and the film theory. By her third year she noticed that a lot of people who were in the years above me, were still hanging around campus; they weren't working in the industry. 013's mother has American citizenship and so 013 had a U.S. passport and decided to go to the U.S. to seek work in the Hollywood industry. She didn't have any direct industry contacts but she volunteered for a production assistant role on a low budget feature and within two weeks she was receiving a wage and after that job ended she continued to find work for the rest of the year. During this time she worked on about seven low budget features in roles ranging from production assistant to second, second AD as well as working in the Props Department as a set dresser. While she worked really hard she appreciated the fact that it enabled her to gain a large amount of information about filmmaking in a relatively short time. She started to feel homesick for Australia after a year living and working in the U.S. She was only 21 at the time and she also felt that she was missing out on making her own films. When she returned to Australia she reports that she found it incredibly difficult to get a job in Australian film industry. She felt disheartened because while she had a degree in filmmaking, and had worked on seven low budget features she couldn't even get an internship at the ABC.

In the meantime she worked in waitressing jobs and started making shorts and writing feature film scripts. She says that 2004 – 2009 was a particularly frustrating period for her. She worked on lots of short films and eventually started to get regular work as a standby-props person. 013 reports that the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) hit her sector particularly hard and at this point all of her work dried up:

I probably had about five different companies that I would work for on their different jobs. A couple of them closed up shop, another one was like, Okay we're not hiring people anymore we're going to do everything in house because of not enough work. I went on the dole...because there was no work.

013 says that for six months after that she was unsure about what she should do next. She had made a short film that year and applied for the AFTRS Graduate Certificate in Screenwriting and that Graduate Diploma in Directing courses. She was accepted into the Graduate Certificate in Screenwriting, which was a six-month part time course that started mid-year. To pay the bills she found a part time Government job with flexible hours which had nothing to do with film but which she enjoyed because it gave her a break from thinking about film. She graduated from the part time course and then applied for the full time directing course the following year and was accepted. She then moved home to her parents' house because she says that the Austudy support was insufficient.

013 left AFTRS with a short film that “wasn't super successful but I'm proud of it and it was really interesting”. She'd followed the advice of one of her teachers who had encouraged them to make their goal to make a really challenging film that will push you to be a better director. The teachers question to her was: “How can you become a better director if you don't challenge yourself and where is a better place to challenge yourself than in the safety of a school?”

She admits that she chose an incredibly ambitious project:

It was a period piece, gangster crime, set in the thirties so the budget to cover the period pieces, there was sex scenes, fight scenes, special effects, crowd scenes, there was a lot going on. I think overall I'm proud of the film. There are things that I could have done better but I learnt so much from it and I don't regret choosing that film.

013 left the school with that film but also left after what she sees as the school giving her having a very hard time over the film that she made. She says that it took her the best part of four months to get over the traumatic feedback process that they subjected her to.

She had been out of the AFTRS for a couple of months when she started contacting advertising agencies. She was prepared to shadow the working directors or work as an assistant director in order to demonstrate her capability. While most people responded, no one was prepared to hire her.

She persisted with trying to find assistant director work but had no success. Producers would write back and say things such as:

Thanks for the email, I'm really sorry we've already got a waiting list of four or five people." Or "Sorry we haven't got the insurance for you." Or "Sorry, It's our first season and the directors don't want anyone on board, maybe on our second season."

013 was beginning to feel at this stage that the local industry was very much a closed shop particularly after having several experiences where she could see that despite her broader experience, she was being passed over for jobs that were being awarded to people on the basis of friendship rather than merit.

She decided that she should stop asking for attachments and began to make another short film, mainly because she felt the need to keep working as a director. Her short film did well on the niche, horror market. 013 took the film to a little film festival in Tasmania called *Stranger With My Face International Film Festival*, which describes itself as “it (The festival) explores the idea of ‘the horror within’ and promotes discussion around genre and gender, from ghost stories to gore, from art house to exploitation.” Here she says she met a lot of female, horror film makers who:

...have been a really strong support and they're the kinds of people - horror specifically -are the kind so of people who are just like, Don't wait for funding, just go out and do it, really supportive.

As a result of the support 013 received at this festival she went on to make a feature film. The feature was self-funded and 013 says that the way they did that was through a profit share arrangement. They paid the cast and crew a per diem of \$100, which 013 says was more than American crews get working on similar sized budget films. In return the cast and crew were awarded points in the films' profit.

She began the project by sharing producing duties with the lead actress and then brought on a third producer to take over from them when the shoot began. She said that eventually the other two weren't prepared to put in the hours and the effort required and so she resumed sole responsibility for the production. At the end of the shoot 013 hired an Associate Producer who immediately started talking about copyright and final cut. 013 resisted this claim on the basis that she had self-funded the production, she had written and directed the film, and was chiefly responsible for attracting any make-up funding.

013 offered the new producer a role as post production supervisor to start with on the basis that she claimed she could win funding from Screen New South



Wales. The new producer didn't want any payment. She was happy to take the producer's credit. 013 thinks this is because Screen Australia will only give money to people calling themselves producers if they have previously produced something screened at a certain number of cinemas. 013 says she made it clear to the new producer at the start that she couldn't have final cut or share in the intellectual property. She also told her that she wouldn't lock her out of the editing process because what she wanted most of all was constructive feedback. 013 says that the new producer waited further down the track to see a cut and then she put the same things on the table again. Despite 013 reminding her of their original agreement, the new producer kept insisting on creative control:

Some of her suggestions were just like: What the fuck? Are we reading the same script, am I not communicating clear enough? She was like: You know what, I think you should change the end...What is your agenda because it's not the same as this film's agenda.

013 questions this misunderstanding was partly an America thing as well as an Australian thing. The new producer had done an internship with a big foreign production company and, according to 013:

She was bringing up these things and it's institutionalised rules that don't exist. She was like; 'I think you need to sign the copyright over to me, even if it's only just for a temporary assignment because otherwise I can't apply to Screen New South Wales for this money.' And I was like, 'Why can't I apply to screen New South Wales and you just prepare it?'

In the main, and she has said that she has felt this before; that there is a lack of respect for the director and the producer knows more than the director. In fact, the producer is in the same position as 013:

She hasn't done anything more than me, she's never produced a feature film, we're all doing this together, she's using rules based on a film that's 20 million dollars and the director is a hired gun. You can't bring those rules in. There's this disconnect between those producers who have been trained in the traditional way but there's not the budget in order to justify it. I think it's the wrong protocol for that model.

### **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases – 014**

The fourteenth respondent 014 attended Flinders University in the early 1990's and studied at an undergraduate level. He later participated in the Graduate Diploma film course at Swinburne. He worked as an actor before completing his doctoral studies. He continued to make films and has just completed his first feature film.

014 began his entry into the film industry by training as an actor at Flinders University in South Australia. His acting course had a cinema studies component. His first experience with filmmaking at the age of 17 when he made films in lieu of essays for the cinema studies course, which he continued for three years; he says that it introduced him to great filmmakers such as Bertolucci, Godard, Fellini and Fassbinder. He says that he spent his 20s working as a theatre director, and occasionally would experiment on Super 8 or even on Hi8 and "those various formats that came out during the 90s."

In the late 90s, 014 moved to Melbourne and completed a Graduate Diploma in Film and Television at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA, previously Swinburne). He estimates that he made five films in that one year. His main short was accepted into film festivals and won an Australian Cinematographers Society Award. He thinks however that the film met resistance because he says it was:

...experimental in its nature, and to be honest with you, I think because I had those influences of Bergman and Godard and Bertolucci that...I don't know whether they were old fashioned but people weren't experimenting with film form in the way that they were in the 60s and 70s. Of course, the period of auteurism was well and truly dead.

The reception of his short film gave him some pause for thought and he thinks he may have lost a bit of faith in himself, but he took heart because he knew how to use cameras and knew how to direct actors.

After graduating from VCA, 014 worked as a director on a couple of low-budget commercials and then got a huge break in getting a \$300,000 series on SBS. For someone who was only one year out of film school, this made him pretty happy. He says that because he'd done that and because that series won awards overseas - and that included San Francisco Film Festival where he won a best director award - it drew enough attention to him so that he could go to companies like Crawford's and Grundy's, and he could say:

"This is my film. This is what I do." And I also had done a number of director's attachments after I did that series, which meant that people were recommending me. So I got into television there. I felt always like a fish out of water in television, but what...if you look at the statistics...if you don't mind I go down this direction. If you look at the statistics of how many younger or emerging filmmakers are funded by the government systems to do a director's attachment and then don't go on to work in television, it actually looks pretty bleak.

014 kept acting because there was a lot of available acting work at that time. He says that the acting also presented him with lots of opportunities to observe directors working:

Nobody knew that when I was an actor, I was actually learning as a director. And no one knew as a director that I was actually learning as an actor. I'm just doing my job as an actor, but I was hanging around the director's shoulder. So I got a lot of training from being an actor.

He reports that at this stage he received funding from Film Victoria and the AFC. He says that the funding covered his work as a director's attachments and that he also received funding to write films. With his acting work to supplement his income from the various funding bodies he says that he could concentrate on his main ambition, which was to make a feature film before he was 40.

014 says that while directing television series such as Neighbours, provided no opportunity to discuss semiotics, it did provide him with the skill to work at an accelerated pace and in that way it provided him with what he describes as cultural capital:

Because I had capital: I knew how to direct a film better having done my work on Neighbours. Schedules. Shooting at ten times the speed that I was when I was directing for SBS was a huge learning curve and I would say that that was of more value in getting to my first feature film than actually going to film school because it was about the reality of shooting film.

He does concede however that he doesn't like television. He says while he loves acting in television, the stress that he was getting from directing TV "was not only not helping me along the path toward directing feature film; it was actively destroying it." He says that was due to the fact the rules and the production house style of Neighbours meant that it was becoming second nature to just do the generic directing thing.

It was these realisations that lead him to become a tertiary teacher. He gained a Ph.D. and is training filmmakers, which he says he loves. In addition he says that it is a better way of training you as a film director than actually directing television, "Because I'm working on their edits, or I'm just talking through their ideas, or I'm editing their scripts. I'm still making films."

014 says that the genesis of his first feature film project was connected to his Ph.D. While conducting research for his degree he realised that the actor John Cassavetes presented a filmmaking model that could be teased out into a very strict methodology as far as the intellectual process was concerned.

This led 014 to improvise with a series of top-notch actors to improvise characters and create a scenario. He raised a budget using in-kind support. While the overall budget figure was \$200,000, there was very little of that amount that was cash.

I took all of my improvisations under a ridiculously short amount of time, and I rejigged and made a feature film. Screenwriting was something I had to really work on. I think because I'm dyslexic; I've a much more fractured mind. Okay. So in a very short time, I created this feature film script, and I had a date that that gear would be released from the store at the VCA, and all of my other gear that I'd managed to snaffle or beg, borrow, and steal, and it had to be shot at that time, so I had no choice.

014 admits that this first film isn't a great film but through making it he says he has gone a long way to making sure that the next feature film script he has written and is currently pitching will be successful.

I look at the film now and I go, "Well, of course the script wasn't entirely ready." ... The main lesson is the reason why I've spent so many years perfecting this 2<sup>nd</sup> script because my 1<sup>st</sup> film was an interesting

experiment and interested people enough, but was not earth shattering. ... the film didn't have any money left in the budget for publicity, but I knew it wasn't a great film and I still know it's not a great film.

He says that realization for him that was the biggest realization. He thinks that Australian filmmakers should stop complaining about government funding and be grateful that there are any opportunities at all to direct feature films He says, "I'm really happy to be making my career through teaching film and to be raising what money I can. I still make films and that's important."

### **The Emerging Filmmaker: The cases – 015**

The fifteenth respondent 015 attended an undergraduate university course and then started work as a graphic designer. 015 later participated in the Graduate Diploma film course at Swinburne. He graduated and made a very successful television series before making a prize-winning short film. The short film's international success provided him with the opportunity to make his first feature film. This film has been successful locally and internationally.

015 first studied graphic design and worked as a designer for about six years, until he was about 26. He says that he really wanted to be a filmmaker, but had no idea how to go about it. Around this time he became friends with someone who was at the VCA in Melbourne doing the one-year documentary post-graduate diploma and he says that he was even more interested in doing documentary film. Film school was "a bit of a dream" and he could see that a year at a film school would give him access to equipment and people, but more importantly time. For a whole year, he could just think about making film and not have to worry "about design or jobs or make money or anything like that". He had some savings and he lived on that, so he didn't have to work. He still has the opinion that it was one of the best years of his life.

In that graduate diploma course he made a short documentary about bicycle couriers and the Peter Pan syndrome of not growing up. The short was successful in the sense it got shown around and was accepted into film festivals. He says that he doesn't think you have to go to film school to be a good filmmaker, but he thinks that in some ways the film he made at film school was the easiest because there was someone there saying, "You have to make a film, and you've got to make it by this date. And you've got the edit suite for this period of time in October." He thinks that if you're an independent filmmaker, it's very hard to be motivated in that way. "Once you've got a film up, all that happens, but without going through that long process of funding, film school is the easiest way to make a film, I felt at that time. It probably still is."

015 talks about a seminal moment at the school that was sparked by a comment that his lecturer made:

At that time when it was purely a documentary course, you could—in fact, if anything, what was encouraged by the lecturer who we had at the time, he said—and this is probably why I've crossed over into drama, is that he was really interested in that grey area from where something stopped being a documentary and it became something else. And if anything, if I could pinpoint one moment at film school, which has been the bedrock or the cornerstone of my career, it's that I remember him saying that, and it all just clicked. Because it wasn't about being—it was like, even if you shoot drama, it has to feel like it's on that line that it could be real. And that's even the preface of how you shape the scene or how it's written and your approach to the make-up and everything. It's all about trying to find where that needle sits in the middle; never really crossing over into doco, because I think it becomes a different sort of project. But it's sort of become a director barometer for me, about how I make decisions.

There were only eight people in the class, and 015 is still in contact with half of them regularly. He says it is one of the most important things that came out of his time at the VCA because he feels they were “like-minds that you can call on”. He says he isn’t interested in the “alumni thing”.

015 graduated in the late 90s and his original idea was that he would go off and make long-form documentaries. Instead he found himself back in his old design job. He was beginning to think that he was never going to be a filmmaker and he could see that film funding from the government investment agencies was changing. At this time, he received a call from the VCA who put him in contact with an advertising agency who was looking for documentary students to make these little mini docs:

And I was really against it. I just thought the idea of making an ad or making a television commercial in the form of a documentary was blasphemy, and I was pretty pure about what I thought and still feel about documentary film.

But he admits that he needed the money, “and they dangled the right sized carrot in front of me, and I just went for it” This made him rethink his attitude to commercial filmmaking and he started looking for commercial work:

What I realised in going through this process of making these little ads, was once I got my head around the moral, ethical, selling out issues – which I still struggle with today – but I could see that the greater value for me as a filmmaker was that doing those ads provided me with an opportunity to go—I had to find a camera person, a sound recordist, subjects, an editor, go through the post process and make—it made me do something as oppose to sitting around and wondering how I was going to make a film...They gave me some money and I bought a camera, I bought a computer, and I sort of set myself up to do the next



project. And I kind of did a couple of commercials in a row then and just sort of—I went on a bit of a roll.

015 says that he then became a commercials director. It was during that time that he had an idea for a short film. He applied for government funding and was rejected and then a producer that he worked on commercials with suggested that they go ahead and self-fund. The Cannes Film Festival picked up the short film, and 015 won the Palme d'Or that year for that short film, which opened all the doors to make a feature. After the short went to Cannes, there were a lot of scripts that came in. He got a talent agent and he and his wife had their first child. He says that although he had won a Palme d'Or nobody gave him any money and he felt that he needed to keep working to establish his family. He feels at the time that his focus was split between being domestic and knowing that he had a gold pass to the industry. His agent sent him the script for what became his first feature:

So I got the script, rang the agent and said, “Yes, I’m interested in this.” We then went through the process of getting the film up from then on. Nobody said no, ever. It was like, “We want 015 to be the director.” “Yes.” “Can we have another round of script funding?” “Yes, you can do that.” So, yes, yes, yes, all the way up until the final funding round, where we sit in front of a desk like this and it’s like, “We want to make this film. Can we have the money?” It goes through the process and, “Yes, you can do it.” It was roughly three-and-a-half to four years of everything going as smoothly as it can, and that’s how long it took to get the film up. And I’m still flabbergasted by that.

015 thinks his film is probably seen as one of those dark, horrible, depressing, violent films that Australians make, “and no wonder no one goes to the cinema [laughter].” He says though that he wished they had opened up the input from external sources a little bit more:

I remember someone from the AFC came and looked at a cut and they just kind of sat back and they went, “Yes, that’s really good. I really like the film.” And I think they could see that it was a competently made film; the entire story made sense, it was well edited. All those sort of things worked, but we didn’t have—I think I would have loved for someone to say at one point, “Are you sure about this?” Or, “Why are doing this?” Or asked harder questions.

He is not certain whether that would have made him argue harder and still make the same film:

I just was like, “Man, I just wanted to sit there with my editor and make the film. I don’t care what everyone else thinks. It’s what we want to do.” And I think now, I ride that line where I really value difference of opinion, where someone’s going to come in and say, “That doesn’t work because X, Y, Z,” or, “Here’s ten reasons why it doesn’t work,” and I will take five of the reasons and make it better. And the other five, I’ll go, “Because it’s not that film. We don’t have the footage.” There’s that sort of feeling where you’ll lose your sense of authorship, but I think there are people out there who have a difference of opinion that can make your film more universally appealing.

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