

NOVA Employment puts the Focus on Ability film makers



The winners of the Focus on Ability Short Film Festival were announced at a red-carpet ceremony in Sydney. This unique film event, that puts the spotlight on people with disability, attracts submissions from around the world.

Opening the awards presentation, ambassador Paula Duncan said the film festival has entered the hearts and minds of people in small villages and remote areas across the world. There were 281 film submissions this year with 50,000 people voting. "Festival founder, Martin Wren has achieved the unachievable, and created the unimaginable," she said.

Among the guests was singer Rachael Leahcar who wrote a song about disability *Can Do*, that she performed for the first time at the awards. Also, Sunshine Coast rap artist MC Wheels wowed the audience when he opened and closed the show.

In his speech to 370 guests Martin Wren compared disability services to rowing in a wide river, where imperceptibly at first the boat will move faster then go backwards to where it started from, because the current

was against it. "And at times so is the attitude of people towards disability, it ebbs and flows."

Wren said it was necessary to change the attitude to people with disability to achieve a truly inclusive society. "I wanted to do more to give people with disability equal opportunities and I chose school students to start me off. Students, particularly those in years 10, 11 and 12 have a great deal of insight and fresh new ideas, so we invited 12 schools to make 12, 5-minute films. They were all exceptional because each of them has ability to move people," he said.

The festival has grown exponentially. The SBS will screen a special program in December and films will be shown on the Aurora channel.

"At NOVA Employment we are desperate for more people to come on board. If you have a disability and you want to work, have not worked, lost your job or are looking for a career change we have heaps of vacancies. We want people who are kind, empathetic and committed to making a difference to people's lives," Wren said.

For more information on employment opportunities **go to:**
www.novaemployment.com.au

To view the Winners of the 2022 Focus On Ability Short Film Festival **visit:**
<https://youtu.be/u7-lzW3XRn8>

Search the 2400 film catalogue **at:**
www.focusonability.com/au/search

Among the winners were:

- International Documentary**
- Zoran Djordjevic - Self-portrait with Marcos Santos
- International Short Film** - Rachel Handler - Andy & Kaliopé
- International Most Votes** - Meghanath Kuzhalmannam - Where is my Freedom
- School Documentary** - East Hills Boys High School - Resilience
- School Short Film** - Bonnet Bay Public School - The Marrakesh Treaty
- School Most Votes** - St John Vianney's Primary School - About Me
- Open Documentary** - Lenny Seberry - A Day in the Life of
- Open Short Film** - Peter Renzullo - Note To Self
- Open Most Votes** - Satara Uthayakumaran - A Heavenly Piece of Art
- NOVA Employment Choice Award**
- Nichia Trask - Rylan's Story - Autism is not a choice.

Prizes included cash, gift vouchers, mentorships and a Toyota car.

The Focus on Ability Film Festival will be back in 2023, so be sure to start thinking of your film ideas. Full details **at** www.focusonability.com.au ●

