

Screen Australia announces participants in Access Coordinator Training Program

Tuesday 31 October 2023: Screen Australia has announced the 12 participants in the Access Coordinator Training program, delivered by UK inclusion consultancy Bridge06 in partnership with the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC), Screen Canberra, Screen NSW, Screen Queensland, Screen Tasmania, Screen Territory, Screenwest, the South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC), VicScreen and the Australian Film Television Radio School (AFTRS).

[Launched in July 2023](#), the Access Coordinator Training Program aims to provide additional support to implement Access Coordinators on film and television productions. Becoming more standardised worldwide, the Access Coordinator role works to bring necessary expertise and experience in facilitating required adjustments and access provisions for Deaf/Disabled or Neurodivergent (DDN) talent in front of and behind the camera - playing a vital role in increasing the inclusion of DDN talent and crew in the screen industry.

This week, nine participants from Australia and three from New Zealand are taking part in a five-day immersive training program at AFTRS, where they will receive best practice training from world leading experts. Participants will undertake a variety of activities to learn how an Access Coordinator supports a production and learn risk mitigation techniques. The participants will then have the opportunity to put into practice their new skills on the set of *Play School* at the ABC, where they will assess the set and production offices for accessibility.

Screen Australia's Head of Industry Development, **Ken Crouch** said, "It is fantastic to welcome this talented and experienced cohort of participants on the ground in Sydney, as they gain the knowledge, tools and best practice techniques required for becoming an Access Coordinator. I am excited for this group from both Australia and New Zealand to help facilitate the necessary change to bridge the gap in the screen industry, so we can better accommodate the DDN community on our film and television sets. I look forward to seeing the hard work of the participants pay off and helping our industry become more inclusive for all."

Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga The New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) CEO **Annie Murray** said, "The participants selected to take part in the Access Coordinator training program are extremely talented screen practitioners who will play a vital role in increasing and sustaining disability representation in our screen industries. The NZFC looks forward to supporting the New Zealand cohort as they help support the Aotearoa screen sector in becoming more inclusive and accessible for our deaf, disabled and neurodivergent talent in front of and behind the camera. I can't wait to see the impact this will have on our filmmakers and stories to come."

Bridge06 founder/course facilitator **Sara Johnson** said, "Our creative industries play a significant part in reflecting and shaping our societies, and they can only do that if we have inclusive and representative practitioners working together to tell the best stories for screens of all sizes. We are delighted to be working with Screen Australia and NZFC to bring the power and importance of the Access Coordinator role to this production sector, as we continue to collaborate with partners across the globe." Johnson will be joined by local award-winning filmmaker and Access Coordinator Sofya Gollan who has helped to bring the training to Australia, as well as guest participant/seasoned UK Access Coordinator Julie Fernandez.

Selected participants from Australia:

- **Bridie McKim:** McKim graduated from NIDA in 2018 to become one of the first actors with disability to play a lead role on Australian television in [The Heights](#), produced by Matchbox Pictures for the ABC, also airing on BBC1. Her other screen credits include Stan's original series [Bump](#) and original film [Christmas Ransom](#), Hulu's *Joe Vs. Carole*, and Netflix's series [Dive Club](#) and [Irreverent](#). McKim's theatre credits include Downstairs Belvoir's production of *Tuesday*, and Black Swan State Theatre Company's production of *The Cherry Orchard*. McKim has cerebral palsy and uses her lived experience to advocate for people with disability within the arts and wider community.



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- **Brooke Scobie:** A queer, Goorie AuDHD multi-disciplinary creative, passionate about equity for neurodivergent communities. Scobie has over 15 years in community services and five years in the arts. They hold qualifications in Creative and Indigenous Writing, Applied Social Science, and Management. With a diverse background in community work, Scobie has experience in the mediation, counselling, youth work, housing, out-of-home care and education sectors. Scobie's experience in the arts lies in writing, producing and artist management, while their writing has earned them second place in the 2020 Judith Wright Poetry Prize and a finalist spot for the 2023 David Unaipon Award.
- **Chanel Bowen:** Bowen is a member of the disability and hard-of-hearing communities and advocates for disability stories on screen. She has partnered with A2K Media for Disability Justice Lens, Bus Stop Films as Producer's Attachment on *Babycat*, and serves on the Minister's Advisory Committee for Disability in Western Australia. Bowen received the Regional to Global Screenworks and Australians in Film Internship for 2022 allowing her to expand her producing experience with Animal Logic Entertainment and Truant Pictures in the USA. Bowen has been recognised as a SPA Ones to Watch in 2023 and is mentored by Rosemary Blight.
- **Declan Caruso:** An award-winning director, producer and writer from regional QLD, now Sydney-based. Having started his career in hybrid children's and television commercial direction and production, Caruso was selected for Screen NSW's Emerging Producer Placement in 2022 and continued at the agency as Acting Screen Investment Manager - before returning to the industry as Executive Assistant and Production Coordinator at Lingo Pictures. Caruso worked on the recently-released Lingo series *After The Party* and *Erotic Stories*, and upcoming series *Prosper*; and continues to develop and produce for his scripted production label Psychedelia Films.
- **Liz Cooper:** An award-winning writer/director with 20+ years' experience. Cooper creates an intimacy that is realised across her work in drama, documentary and online content. Her 2016 short film *Wolf*, financed by Screen NSW Emerging Filmmakers Fund, was preselected for Cannes Critics Week and Official Competition. Cooper has produced over 30 hours of engaging content for the Raising Children Network and Accessible Arts NSW. As a proud disabled artist, Cooper has been part of leadership initiatives including Sync Twilight Leadership Program and Front and Centre program. She is dedicated to advancing disabled leaders in film and the arts.
- **Michèle Saint-Yves:** Saint-Yves primarily writes for performance - stage, screen and poetry - and has directed and produced plays, social impact documentaries and short films. Her ground-breaking access-embedded, neurodivergent and dementia friendly play *Clock for No Time* won the SA RUBY AWARD 2022 for "Outstanding Work: Collaboration". Saint-Yves has been selected for multiple screen industry development initiatives such as with Matchbox Pictures, AFTRS Talent Camp, Mercury CX Springboard Plus, many in partnership with the South Australian Film Corporation. Recently her screen projects have been shortlisted for Adelaide Festival Film Lab, Mercury CX Quicksilver grant and SBS-SAFC Full Tilt initiative.
- **Phoebe Neilson:** A passionate advocate for disability equity and inclusion. In 2020, Neilson joined A2K Media, a Disabled-led production company. A2K Media's pioneering work earned them the Screen Australia 2021 Enterprise Business & Ideas funding - facilitating the upcoming launch of their Disability Justice Lens initiative. Neilson was a core member of the research team behind the award-winning 'Disability and Screen Work in Australia: Report for Industry 2023'. With a Postgraduate Degree in Psychology, a working knowledge of Auslan and lived experience of chronic illness, she is excited about creating accessible, authentic portrayals of Deaf and Disabled lives in Australian screen content.
- **Sarah Carroll:** An award-winning Pasifika, queer and neurodiverse writer, performer and theatre producer working on Dharug Land. Carroll (she/they) has two successful one woman shows under her belt, *Cherry* (Sydney Fringe Award Winners and Hollywood Fringe Nominee) and *Unkissed* (Shopfront - ArtsLab). They have participated in the AFTRS Talent Camp, Midsumma Pathways, Brand X Ground Zero, Accessible Arts NSW, Antipodes Theatre Winter Lab and Q Theatre Lab. Carroll's writing work

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has been published with ACON (*Stories Out West*) and *The Writing Zone* as part of the Western Sydney University Writing and Society Research Centre. Carroll strives to champion for underrepresented voices to be heard and create works that uplift and engage audiences in new and exciting ways.

- **Stephanie Dower:** A Brisbane-based screen producer, writer and consultant. In 2021, Dower produced and edited a short film, [Sunshine](#), a project funded through Screen Queensland's RIDE Shorts program. She is currently developing an exciting slate through her production company Dower Productions with notable projects including travel series *Carry On*, and feature film *Seeing Scout*. An advocate for disability inclusion, Dower was appointed to Screen Queensland's Equity and Diversity Taskforce and is a current member of the SPAA Council through their Leadership Diversity Mentorship. She also co-hosts Attitude Foundation's ReFramed Podcast, is an Associate at Get Skilled Access and can regularly be found on panels at Screen Forever, Film Festivals and other industry events.

Selected participants from New Zealand:

- **Chelsea Bridges:** A curious and determined wahine Māori with a deep commitment to fostering positive change in her community. She is a Freelance Creative Coordinator and Producer across the arts, music, and events industries and has recently ventured into Aotearoa's film and TV scene. Growing up in a low socio-economic environment has fuelled her tenacious drive to address societal discrepancies. As the eldest of four siblings, she possesses a natural caring and nurturing disposition - exemplifying manaakitanga in all facets of her life. With Ngāpuhi roots and diverse heritage, she champions diversity, especially with BIPOC/LGBTQIA+ artists, and is excited to extend this tautoko to the DDN community. Bridges envisions the Access Coordinator role as a kaitiaki, ensuring that everyone has their mana and access needs upheld during production, thereby driving the evolution and improvement of societal well-being.
- **Felicity Hamill:** Born and raised in Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington, New Zealand), Hamill is a freelance performer and crew member for film, television, theatre, and live events. Bitten by the film bug in 2000, career highlights include leaping off rocks as a child ape, charging into battle as a goblin, and being humbled on location by breathtaking views atop South Island's Flock Hill. Passionate about removing barriers to the arts, Hamill is honoured to be selected for the Access Coordinator Training program. She is looking forward to enabling access pathways reflecting real life diversity on screen and in our talented crews.
- **Jared Flitcroft:** Flitcroft is a Deaf and Indigenous film director located in Aotearoa, New Zealand. With Ngāti Maniapoto heritage, he honed his craft at the NZ Film and Television School in 2012, sparking a lifelong commitment to filmmaking. From the outset, Flitcroft's determination has propelled him in the world of cinema. His debut short film, *Tama*, earned acclaim at renowned global film festivals and he has also worked on the TVNZ+ series *The Kids of Kōrero Lane*. He's contributed to projects like *Being Me*, showcasing stories from the disabled community and has a passion for sharing indigenous stories from his unique perspective - blending his dual heritage to craft narratives that resonate with cultural authenticity. Also a cultural advocate, Flitcroft ultimately aims to use his directorial skills to bridge gaps and share stories - demonstrating the transformative power of storytelling and connecting different worlds through the universal language of film.

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INFORMATION WEBINAR

Anyone interested in learning more about the Access Coordinator role and the training program are encouraged to attend the information webinar. The webinar will be led by Bridge06 founder and course facilitator Sara Johnson. The session will cover specific details about the role and its genesis, how it works on the ground and offers insight into existing barriers, and how the role of the Access Coordinator can provide the necessary solutions to guide the sector to become more inclusive and confident in providing access for people with disabilities.

- **Date:** Thursday 2 November 2023
- **Time:** 3 - 4:30pm AEDT
- **Register:** Click [here](#)
- **Accessibility:** An Auslan interpreter will be available for the webinar. If you would like to discuss this or other accessibility requirements, please contact industrydevelopment@screenaustralia.gov.au
- A recording of this session will be made available on the Screen Australia website afterwards.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE

If you require this information in an accessible format such as:

- Word Document Version
- Audio and closed captioning

Or if you require this information in another language or format, you can contact Screen Australia's Industry Development team on +61 2 8113 5800 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

ABOUT BRIDGE06

Bridge06 is an Agency for Access Coordinators and Inclusion consultancy committed to joining the work being done to increase Disability Representation in the Film, Media and Entertainment Industries and beyond. Bridge06 are focussed on encouraging an Access First approach and believe strongly that the rollout of the Access Coordinator as a paid and valued position, is the entry point towards achieving this. Bridge06 is committed to working with and alongside disabled-led organisations and individuals, advocacy groups and companies, bringing purpose, intent, commercial savvy and creativity together for long-term sustainable change. <http://www.bridge06.com/>

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