

Gender Matters launch
Graeme Mason
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Sydney

Firstly, I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and pay my respects to the Elders both past and present.

Screen Australis is thrilled to welcome you here today, to announce a five point, \$5 million plan over three years for *Gender Matters* - a suite of initiatives that will address the gender imbalance within the Australian screen industry.

Issues of gender bias have been approached in various ways, by Screen Australia, our predecessor agencies, state agencies and industry guilds over the years. Despite this, the level of women's participation in this industry continues to track along at the low percentages we saw in the 1970s. And a lot of us are asking why.

We see really strong levels of representation in the emerging end of the sector, and have seen huge success of female-led projects, such as *The Dressmaker*, which has made a strong commercial case for more female-driven content. So, if we know all of this, and we know women have talent, what's happening?

Analysis of Screen Australia figures, back in May, shows that the imbalance is most notable in traditional film with 32% of women working as producers, 23% as writers and only 16% as directors. Our film production funding is provided to producers, writers and directors in direct proportion to applications received, suggesting that initiatives to stimulate projects led by women is key in addressing this issue front on.

It's for these reasons, and through the advocacy of many here in this room today, that Screen Australia, together with our Board, decided that to make a meaningful difference to women's participation in the industry, we needed to adopt a holistic, integrated approach to people, projects and business infrastructure. We want to create sustainable and self-generating careers, which is why we have invested real money – without eroding other programs - that will be used to support women to build a range and breadth of skills in this industry for the long-term.

Our \$5million, 5-point plan, will be refined and further developed by an experienced *Gender Matters* Taskforce, headed by Screen Australia's outgoing Deputy Chair **Deanne Weir**, and will include some of the industry's leading advocates for female representation.

I am pleased to announced that the members of this expert taskforce, many of whom are here with us today, are:

- **Deanne Weir** – Outgoing Deputy Chair of Screen Australia and Head of the *Gender Matters* Taskforce

- **Imogen Banks** – Screenwriter and producer (*The Beautiful Lie, Offspring, Puberty Blues, Tangle, Paper Giants: The Birth of Cleo*),
- **Corrie Chen** – Screenwriter and director (*Short films – Bloomers, Reg Makes Contact*)
- **Sandi Don** – Head of Distribution, Hopscotch/eOne (ANZ)
- **Sophie Hyde** – Director and producer (*52 Tuesdays, My Last Ten Hours with You, Shut Up Little Man!*)
- **Emma Jensen** – Writer (*A Storm in the Stars, Sex on the First Date*)
- **Samantha Lang** – Writer and director (*The Killing Field, Packed to the Rafters, My Place*) and President of the Australian Directors Guild
- **Sue Maslin** – Producer (*The Dressmaker, Japanese Story, Road to Nhill*)
- **Miranda Tapsell** – Actor (*Love Child, Redfern Now, Cleverman, Secret City*)
- **Natalie Tran** – Vlogger, actor and writer (*communitychannel*)

We want to see meaningful change that will create new opportunities for women in this industry.

We have the research, and have laid some groundwork, so now it's time for further action.

I'd now like to introduce the Chair of *Gender Matters* Taskforce, Deanne Weir, who has been an outstanding advocate on the issue of female representation, both at a Board level, and in the industry, to talk through some of the proposed initiatives we have asked the taskforce to work through.