

Byron Bay Film Fest receives top state recognition at Inaugural Vivid Awards

In the same week that Northern Rivers arts initiatives scooped six awards at Local Government Arts and Culture Awards, the Byron Bay International Film Festival (BBFF) received one of only two special commendations from the NSW government as a NSW Emerging Creative Talent, as judged by an all star panel.

At the inaugural Vivid Awards event on 28 May 2014, the Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner announced the winners of the new NSW Creative Laureate and NSW Emerging Creative Talent Awards. The awards celebrate and reward outstanding achievements that help raise the global profile of NSW Creative Industries.

The Judging Panel, which included **Edwina McCann, Editor-in-Chief of Vogue Australia, Actor, Director and Producer, Bryan Brown, and Elizabeth Ann Macgregor, Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art**, determined that BBFF's nomination deserved one of only two special commendations.

It recognised BBFF as a high achiever emerging in their sector **demonstrating leadership in originality and innovation and positively impacting on raising the global profile of NSW creative industries.** The commendation was awarded to signal **appreciation of their business success to date and to encourage their further development and growth.**

In their statement, the panel noted that the Byron Bay International Film Festival has innovatively capitalised on the location and the heavy concentration of filmmakers in the Northern Rivers region and, since its foundation in 2005, is steadily increasing the global profile of NSW creative industries through a regional area.

BBFF Festival Director, J'aimee Skippon-Volke and Technical Director, Osvaldo Alfaro, attended the Vivid Awards while in town to collaborate with Vivid Sydney, Australia's largest festival, on a special presentation as part of the Vivid Ideas Exchange.

J'aimee Skippon-Volke said, "We are so thrilled to see Byron Bay Film Festival receive this level of recognition at these prestigious awards."

"A lot of hard work has gone into building this festival in the past eight years by a

lot of people. This commendation inspires us to keep creating an outstanding cultural event that celebrates our unique identity as we heads towards our tenth anniversary in 2016.”

She adds, “It’s great to see the NSW government understands the importance of fostering creative industries in regional NSW and recognises the achievements we have made becoming Australia’s largest regional film festival.”

The special presentation titled 'Strategies For A Successful Sea Change' was held on Monday 26 May at the Vivid Ideas Exchange on the top floor of the Museum of Contemporary Art in the heart of the Rocks. It encouraged top creative talent to move to the area to build a sustainable economic creative industry.

The presentation included a large Byron 'Creative Contingency' making the journey to Sydney, including Emmy Award-winning *Dirtgirlworld*'s Cate McQuillen, local Visual Effects Artist Will Gammon, Arts Northern Rivers' CEO Peter Wood, Byron Theatre's Mouche Phillips, Illustrator Alex Mankiewicz, Arts Programmer Jemima Dunlop, IMAX Producer John Weiley and many of the BBFF Team.

Boomerang Festival Director Rhoda Roberts kicked the presentation with an acknowledgement of country and Byron's Mayor Simon Richardson extended a warm welcome to creative professionals while sharing the region's unique opportunities.

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Notes to editors:

About The Awards: The inaugural NSW Creative Laureate & NSW Emerging Creative Talent Awards

There are two categories under the Awards program:

- The prestigious **NSW Creative Laureate** recognises an individual, team or organisation that has demonstrated significant leadership and made a significant contribution to increasing the global profile of NSW Creative Industries. The Award celebrates the very best of the State's creative talent.
- The **NSW Emerging Creative Talent Award** recognises an individual, team or organisation considered emerging in their sector and where they have demonstrated leadership in originality and innovation, and contributed to raising the global profile of NSW Creative Industries. This Award offers support for future development with **a cash prize of \$15,000.**