

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title:	Head of Industry and Guest Relations
Reporting to:	Festival Director
Position Details:	Permanent full-time, based in Festival offices in The Rocks, Sydney 5 days per week, Monday to Friday 9am–5pm. In busy periods, evening or weekend work will be required
Remuneration:	Salary range \$100,000–\$120,000 (commensurate with experience) + superannuation
Commencing:	Early January 2027

The Sydney Film Festival (SFF) is one of the longest running events of its kind in the world. Each year the festival brings the best new films from around the world to audiences in Sydney in June. SFF screens features, documentaries, shorts, and retrospective titles at venues across central Sydney, from around 60 countries, including Australian productions. The festival hosts several awards to recognise excellence in filmmaking, including the Official Competition, First Nations, Sustainable Future and Documentary Australia Awards and the Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films.

OVERVIEW OF THE POSITION

The Head of Industry and Guest Relations drives the festival's guest and industry strategy, building relationships that bring the industry's key voices to the Festival and ensuring every guest has an exceptional experience from invitation through attendance, travel, accommodation, screenings, dinners, parties and other guest events.

Leading a dedicated guest team, the role works with programming to deliver high-profile industry events, the talks program, and networking opportunities that connect people across the industry, while also convening our five competition juries.

Beyond the Festival period, the role champions the Travelling Film Festival, steering its direction and cultivating the industry relationships that sustain and grow it. The role also identifies additional funding opportunities to support guest attendance and works with industry bodies to identify key networking opportunities.

Reporting directly to the Festival Director, this is a relationship-driven role. It carries no film selection or programming responsibilities.

Key Responsibilities:

Industry Events Management

- Lead the strategy, planning, and execution of all industry-related events during the Sydney Film Festival, ensuring valuable networking opportunities for both local and international filmmakers.
- Organise key networking events, including the annual Filmmaker Party and targeted gatherings for groups such as Oz Docs, Screen Vixens and Guild meetups.

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- Curate specialised industry events, including interactive sessions with international guests and initiatives that connect filmmakers and creators with industry leaders.
- Oversee the Festival's major events guest list including the Opening and Closing Night Galas.

Talks Program Development

- Curate, manage, and expand the Festival's talks program, offering a platform for filmmakers to engage with both industry peers and the public.
- Collaborate with industry organisations to provide speaking opportunities and festival events.
- Program special masterclass sessions featuring the Festival's high-profile guests.
- Develop panel discussions and Q&A sessions on contemporary film industry issues, featuring high-profile filmmakers and industry thought leaders.
- Ensure a diverse and insightful lineup of talks addressing current trends and challenges in the film industry, with the aim of inspiring and educating both professionals and festival attendees.

Jury and Festival Competitions

- Collaborate with the Festival Director to devise and appoint jurors for the Festival's five competitions - the Sydney Film Prize, Documentary Australia Award, Dendy Awards (inclusive of other awards), Sustainable Future Award, and the First Nations Film Award.
- Manage the entire jury process including invitations, logistics and jury meetings, ensuring a smooth, efficient and fair awards process.

Guest Attendance and Logistics

- Manage guest attendance, from initial invitation to Festival participation, including any contract negotiations, all travel logistics, visa arrangements and accommodation needs.
- Provide a seamless, high-quality experience for all attending filmmakers and industry guests, supporting both local and international participants.
- Engage appropriate interpreters when needed for both professional and networking engagements.
- Oversee on-ground logistics to ensure smooth coordination of all guest-related activities, including festival events and transportation.
- Manage moderator schedules, ensuring all screenings have appropriate Festival representation for filmmaker introductions and Q&A sessions.

Festival Initiatives

- Oversee the planning and delivery of new Festival initiatives, including fellowships and competitions aimed at supporting filmmakers and attracting support from sponsors and donors.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with partners and stakeholders to ensure the successful delivery of innovative projects.

Team and Stakeholder Management

- Lead and manage a team of coordinators, including Guest Coordinators, Event Coordinators, Industry Coordinators, Transport Coordinators, drivers and interns.

- Collaborate with the sponsorship and philanthropy teams to meet stakeholder expectations and deliver tailored benefits to sponsors and partners.
- Foster a positive, inclusive team culture, ensuring clear communication and successful execution of all festival components.

Grant Application and Management

- Identify and apply for cultural and industry grants that support talent attendance and augment the Festival's travel and guest budget.
- Oversee the execution of grant-funded projects, ensuring compliance with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and successful project delivery.
- Manage project grant reporting, ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the project lifecycle.

Travelling Film Festival

- Oversee the Travelling Film Festival (TFF) team to deliver the TFF across regional Australia, identifying opportunities and strategic partnerships to elevate its profile with both industry and audiences.
- Support TFF operations as needed, including attending regional locations to manage on-the-ground delivery.
- Facilitate team and guest attendance where required.

Additional Responsibilities

- Contribute to all SFF and TFF acquittals and coordinate contributions from relevant departments.
- Oversee the additional requirements of distributors for high-profile events such as the Opening, Closing, and Gala events.
- Manage the programming department travel budget.
- Assist with travel bookings for the Festival Director and other programming team members as required.
- Serve as the point of contact for all guest-related Development and Philanthropy department requirements during and outside the Festival period.

Selection Criteria

Essential Selection Criteria

- At least five years' experience in the film, screen, arts or entertainment industry.
- Proven experience managing relationships with talent, filmmakers, industry representatives and other high-profile stakeholders.
- A strong network of film and screen industry contacts, with demonstrated ability to establish and sustain productive partnerships.
- Demonstrated experience managing complex budgets in a high-pressure environment with multiple competing priorities.
- Demonstrated experience leading and managing teams, including seasonal staff, contractors and volunteers.
- Experience identifying and securing funding opportunities, including familiarity with government and cultural funding bodies, grant applications, compliance and acquittal processes.

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- Excellent organisational and project management skills, with the ability to manage concurrent deadlines and deliver complex events and programs.
- Highly developed communication, negotiation, relationship-building and diplomacy skills.
- Demonstrated ability to work autonomously and exercise independent judgement in a high-pressure environment

Desirable Selection Criteria

- Experience managing high-profile guests, international delegations and VIP experiences.
- Previous experience in a film festival environment.
- Experience developing and delivering industry events, talks, panels, masterclasses or networking programs.
- Knowledge of film festival operations, including guest travel, visas, accommodation, screening schedules and event logistic
- Experience in working with the international film industry and film festivals.
- Experience working with sponsors, donors, government agencies, cultural organisations or industry bodies.
- Willingness and ability to travel and work flexible hours, including evenings and weekends during peak festival periods.

SFF is an inclusive workplace and encourages applicants of all abilities and backgrounds

All candidates must address the selection criteria in their cover letter (no more than two pages) and provide a current Curriculum Vitae.

Applications close COB Friday 30th October 2026 and should be sent to lisa@sff.org.au with the position title as the subject. Applications should not be sent via any online portals. Interviews are to be held on the 11 and 12 November in person at SFF Offices. All enquires to Lisa Kitching lisa@sff.org.au