

Dear Madam/Sir,

I have been actively working in the Australia film and television industry since 1988. Within that time I have seen the industry move from a thriving business into the cottage industry that it is today. I still managed to make a living but what is scarce on the ground and I have to supplement my income with casual teaching work. In real terms I have seen my income drop by 50% over that time and have seen production schedules also halve. Half the pay and half the time to do the work. This is revealed a significant erosion of conditions and quality. I started my career at the Commonwealth Unit aka Film Australia (now screen Australia) in Sydney's Lynnfield in 1988. I studied and graduated from the Australian film television and radio school in 1993. At the time the film school was an elite institution receiving thousands of applications but taking less than 40 students per year. Over the past six years I have frequently taught at the film school in its new location at Fox Studios in Sydney, at last count the school had more than 500 students.

Over the past few years the industry has been flooded by young graduates from the many private and public film schools within Australia. The over supply of students means that production companies and networks easy access to an unlimited amount of hungry young workers, many of them in unpaid positions, internships, and lowly paid jobs. The film schools now turn out students with little or no skills sorry these jack of all trade workers I made to do any number of different roles within their work. This has led to a massive shortage in specialized technicians within the industry which is why film crews and television networks have an aging staff in these technical and professional roles.

In my 6 years working full-time as a teacher at the Australian Film and television and radio school I witnessed a drastic change in the teaching model and day to day today running of the institution. Senior management is now made up of Korea bureaucrats rather than filmmakers who have driven numbers skyhigh with more than 100 students in classes. The school is now run more like a TAFE college with hundreds of students and seriously impoverished teaching staff. Overcrowded classrooms, lack of studio space and facilities, poor equipment standards, lack of technical support staff and qualified teachers has turned the once elite institution into an industry joke. It is common knowledge within the school and within the industry that students do not even need to turn up in order to pass subjects at a degree level. I left because I was ethically unable to deal with what I was being ordered to do which was *"teach less"*.

In the mid 90s when I was a student the film school had an impeccable reputation it's Films winning awards and traveling internationally. Now the accountants are running the school the imperative is student numbers and enrollments, there's no focus on teaching or quality of student work. I regret to say that now the Institute is no more then a finishing school for well-heeled students, whose parents can afford to support their children in a degree with no career options at the end. As such it is a very white middle-class institution, lacking diversity in both staff and students.

My suggestion is to restore the school to its former glory. Move some of the staff and a limited amount of students back to the MacQuarrie university campus where it started.

The University still has the old facilities that are now largely unused. The university would I only need a small amount of stuff to run the courses as there is a massive duplication in the huge bureaucracy at the Fox Studio I campus. The campus itself costing millions of dollars to rent each year. Over the years the bureaucracy at the school has swelled to a ridiculous size with support staff outnumber teaching staff by 5 to 1. This would save literally tens of millions of dollars which can be put into state-of-the-art facilities and in hiring the highest caliber of staff.

Thanks

Andrew Belletty