

DOCUMENTARY  
CONFERENCE

● AUSTRALIAN  
● INTERNATIONAL  
● DOCUMENTARY  
CONFERENCE

● AUSTRALIAN  
● INTERNATIONAL

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AIDC  
BUSINESS PLAN  
2009 – 2012

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## PURPOSE

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Foster industry development and sustainability by providing a forum for ideas, networking and deal-making.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Australian International Documentary Conference ( AIDC ) has been held since 1987. The Conference is a well-established event on the international calendar. A home has been found in Adelaide and funding has been secured until 2012. The organisation is now financially stable and the Board commissioned the creation of a Business Plan to take the organisation through the next 3 years.

A draft Business Plan was developed by the Director, Joost den Hartog, assisted by Lee-Anne Donnelly from Arts Projects Australia and Sam Scammell, a consultant engaged for the exercise. The draft Plan was reviewed by the Board at a two day planning meeting and has now been adopted by the Board.

The Business Plan confirms AIDC's purpose as being to foster industry development by providing a forum for ideas, networking and deal-making.

The annual conference is seen as the primary means by which AIDC will fulfil its purpose. Further strategies and initiatives have been identified that will strengthen the conference and in turn strengthen industry development.

The size of the conference (in terms of number of delegates ) is deemed to be optimal at a maximum of 600. This is large enough to generate a surplus, but at the same time ensure that attendees do not become lost in a very large conference.

The emphasis is to be on quality, rather than quantity, of speakers and attendees and there will be a clear plan and strategy to identify and attract the preferred people.

There will be an increased international focus, along the theme of taking Australia to the world and bringing the world to Australia. Specific initiatives in this area include upgrading the web-site to facilitate international contacts at both AIDC and individual member level; and the hosting of visits to international events for members.

Specific goals, strategies and key performance indicators have been set. These will be used to guide the key activities during the planning period and to monitor performance along the way.

For the first time a formal marketing and communications plan has been prepared, concerned with maintaining the current client base while attacking the international market with increased vigour. There will be an increased focus on obtaining and disseminating "market intelligence" to improve the effectiveness of the Conference and improve members' opportunities in the international marketplace.

Succession plans and risk management have also been addressed in the plan.

The business plan and progress in achieving the objectives will be reviewed by the Board annually.

# CONTEXT

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## History

The first Australian International Documentary Conference was held in 1987. The next conference was held 4 years later in 1991 and subsequent conferences were held bi-annually until 2003, when the conference moved to become an annual event.

AIDC was formed as a public company limited by guarantee in 2001 with the then National Steering Committee being replaced by a Board under a new national structure with revised management and financial structures established at the same time.

Previously the conference was held in a different location each time. From 2005 the conference was held in Adelaide every second year, and will remain in Adelaide from 2009 through to 2012 as triennial funding has been secured from Arts South Australia.

The conference is now established as the sole Australian documentary conference and has been successful in attracting a national profile, and is now a prominent documentary event on the international calendar, consistently attracting key figures from the international documentary industry.

## Internal situation

AIDC is now an established, well regarded industry organisation with a solid record of achievement behind it.

As a result of an ongoing event management relationship with Arts Projects Australia, proper corporate, management, financial structures and procedures have been established.

AIDC has moved from being a one-off conference organiser to a well oiled machine capable of planning and running a highly professional annual conference. It no longer needs to re-invent itself each year.

The organisation's corporate knowledge now enables it to plan strategically for the future.

AIDC has secured funding from its host state for the triennial period 2010-2012 which affords the organisation stability and a capacity to plan into the near future. Surpluses generated at the 2008 and 2009 conferences have allowed a risk management account to be established and this will allow the organisation to extend its reach without compromising its ongoing financial security.

Having stabilised its position, AIDC wishes to consider its long term vision and objectives and move to the next level, building on its current expertise, knowledge and experience.

### External situation

The documentary film industry has a strong tradition of making quality films and getting them to the domestic and world markets. The industry is made up of a large number of film makers, ranging from single operators to larger more established production groups, and ranging in experience from young and emerging to long-established producers.

The industry operates in a complex eco-system made up of producers, funders, buyers, distributors, audience and other interested or involved individuals.

The industry is in transition with major changes occurring in markets, technology and financing. This creates as many opportunities as challenges.

AIDC's objective is to support both individual and industry development and sustainability, so that the quality, range and quantity of output can be significantly increased and a degree of continuity and certainty introduced into the broader industry.

The perennial problem is the small size of the Australian industry and its output, combined with its distance from major markets. This makes it more difficult to attract the major international players essential to the success of the Conference.

Around the world the current economic climate has limited the program budgets broadcasters have at their disposal. Although expenditure in content investment is being reduced, there will doubtless be no corresponding reduction in expectations of quality of delivery.

One way broadcasters can sustain program quality and quantity, is to acquire content through international co-production, pre-buys or acquisitions.

For the Australian sector to grow they will need to find ways to take Australia to the World and bring the World to Australia.

AIDC has a clear role to play here by providing a forum for ideas, networking and deal-making.

An influx of international investment (export) will help grow the domestic industry.

Additionally, recent changes to federal and state screen funding policies have increased Australia's appeal as an international co-production partner.

However the discrepancy between content requirements imposed by Australian public broadcasters and the new government funding structures geared towards international co-production may present hurdles for producers accessing international markets.

Around the world industry conferences and markets are experiencing lower numbers of delegates. Markets are quiet. Although the last AIDC maintained its registration levels it may eventuate that AIDC will experience the impact of the economic downturn in the lead up to 2010 event.

### Markets

The immediate target market for AIDC are potential conference attendees. These will come from the targeted audience of documentary content creators, broadcasters, funding organisations, screen educators, distributors and marketers.

It is believed that the conference is now at about an optimum size (around 550 - 600 attendees) and the issue is more about attracting the right mix of attendees and key figures in the industry.

Key industry statistics (Screen Australia) are set out below:

Documentary makes up 2-3% of audio-visual production in Australia (11% in N.Z. and 21% in Canada)

Documentary production in Australia reached an 11 year high in 2006/07. A total of 408 hours ( 196 titles) were produced. Production budgets totaled 97 million (compared to previous averages of 306 hours and \$65 million)

Around 200 producers, 170 directors and 130 writers have made 2 or more documentaries in the last 5 years. However the majority of documentary filmmakers (66% of producers, 67% of directors and 74% of writers) have made only one.

Government sources provide 50% of annual funding with broadcasters providing 23% and foreign finance 14%.

In 2006-07 there were 67 Australian businesses involved in TV documentary production (down from 98 in 2002/03) and 48 involved in documentaries for other than TV ( up from 21 in 2002/03).

# GOALS AND KPIS

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## Goals

*Achievement of the goals set out in Figure 1 leads to achievement of AIDC's overall objective picture of fostering industry development.*

### **1. Foster industry development and sustainability by providing a forum for ideas, networking and deal-making,**

This recognises AIDC's primary focus and reason for being, namely to stage an annual conference to provide the networking and deal making forum. The other goals are there to support and further this primary goal.

### **2. Increase international market reach**

This goal recognises the critical importance of the international market to the Australian film maker. By increasing international market reach AIDC increases the value of the conference and makes it easier to attract to the conference the international marketers and deal makers.

It has a subsidiary goal of increasing the international reach of the Australian industry by providing heightened awareness and opportunities to build relationships with the international community.

### **3. Professional development**

The goal is to provide opportunities for documentary content creators to develop their craft and business capabilities.

This goal is based on the view that there is a very small group of successful, established film makers sitting atop a very large group of emerging and/or developing producers. The industry is characterised by easy entry, but with very little opportunity for progression through to the established and successful producer level. The great majority drift in and out of the industry or give up after one or two efforts. The goal is to provide a surer path up to and through this development phase.

### **4. Financially stable and sustainable**

This is an enabling goal. Unless AIDC is financially stable none of the other goals can be met.

## Key Performance Indicators

*A number of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) have been set for each goal. The KPIs will be used to measure achievement of the goals.*

# STRATEGIES AND KEY ACTIVITIES

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## Strategies

*A number of key strategies have been identified to achieve the goals. Each strategy contributes to the achievement of more than one goal and the strategies are inter-related and support each other.*

*For each strategy a number of key activities have also been identified.*

The strategies and key activities are set out in Figure 3.

### 1. Stage Annual Conference

This is the main activity of AIDC. Staging of a successful conference is essential to achieving all goals.

Success of the conference is measured in a number of factors:

#### **Quality and relevance of the program**

Essential to attracting the number and quality of delegates and providing the value for their attendance.

#### **Quality of attendees**

Particularly from overseas. Critical to providing useful contacts for the industry.

#### **Balance of attendees**

AIDC needs to achieve a relevant blend of Australian and international attendees including documentary content creators, broadcasters, funding organisations, screen educators, distributors and marketers.

#### **Financially successful**

Financial success is dependent on tight budgeting, and attendance of a minimum number of delegates. Break-even is relatively high and even a small drop-off in numbers would result in a deficit. At the same time there is no desire to aim for an increase in the number of attendees. It is felt that the conference has reached an optimum size, both in terms of ability to stage the event and for delegates to maximise the benefits of their attendance.

**Key Activity** is to develop the conference concept and program and then stage the conference, while meeting the conference purpose. This is the primary responsibility of the director with the support of Arts Projects Australia.

### 2. Review and implement marketing and communication strategy

The review and putting in place of a plan is critical to achieving the goals. Marketing is to both the Australian and the international markets. It is also the marketing of AIDC and the conference, as well as raising the awareness (mainly internationally) of the Australian industry and its capabilities.

Communication is to support the marketing activities and to support the members of AIDC.

**Key Activity** is to develop, cost, finance and implement a marketing and communication plan.

### 3. Develop international relations

This is to support the conference and help it achieve its goals of balanced attendance, attendance numbers and quality of attendees.

At the same time relations developed both at the AIDC level and at the level of the Director will be made available for members and leveraged to increase opportunities for members.

**Key Activity** The director to attend key international events and facilitate groups of Australian content creators to attend international markets and to provide targeted support and benefits to those attendees. This will develop relationships at the AIDC Director level and also the individual filmmaker level.

"Market intelligence" is currently made available to members on an annual basis through the conference website, program guide and themed sessions. It is AIDC's ambition to establish an ongoing relationship with our members by providing regular industry updates through an improved web-site with a community site and blog, together with a directory and details of key players, nationally and internationally. The community site will be used as a communication tool for members to continue networking and relationship building.

A forum will be established for sharing of information on the markets generally and key trends and opportunities.

### 4. Maintain and strengthen relationships with key players

This recognises the value of the key Australian supporters of the industry in providing a stable and sustainable environment for AIDC and the conference.

The relationships need to be strengthened both to ensure stable funding, and to increase cooperation between AIDC and the key players, so that the whole industry develops.

**Key Activities** Increased collaborative activities to secure and maintain funding commitments as well as other support from the key players.

## PROGRAM DIRECTION

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In general terms, AIDC's success is measured against the program, guest line up, mix of delegates, networking facilities and overall organisation. On a more individual level success is measured on the basis of individual satisfaction, measured by the annual survey.

### **The AIDC program is made up out of 4 elements:**

- Examples of excellence
- Providing facilitated network opportunities
- Introduce and debate innovation
- Celebrate the Australian documentary and factual content creation industry

Keeping the conference program relevant and cutting edge is the main effort. Catering for a segmented audience with different needs forms a challenge and requires a clear insight into the expectations of the delegates.

AIDC's main asset is the sum of its delegates (critical mass). AIDC invites guests to complement the delegate community. These invited guests function as catalysts for creative and business processes.

Facilitating networking and providing access to key industry players is AIDC's core business

## MARKETING PLAN

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AIDC is the overarching body identifying and providing opportunities for its members on a national and international level.

AIDC serves a segmented market. Broadly speaking these are the national and international markets. Within these broad segments there are many sub-divisions that require customised marketing communications.

The attached marketing plan is concerned with maintaining and growing the current client and sponsorship base while attacking the international market with increased vigour in the next three to five years.

## FINANCIAL PLAN

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### **Context**

The financial forecast presented is for the core activity, the annual conference. The organisation will be funded by the conference, and other support as shown in the forecast.

These budgets will be presented to the Board for approval.

Based on current performance and the forecast the financial stability of AIDC is assured for the next three years. This is supported by the surplus generated to date.

The risks to AIDC have been identified and strategies to deal with them are set out in the business plan.

### **Financial Goals**

Support for additional out of conference projects as set out in this business plan will be sourced separately by management.

Additional activities will be costed, budgeted and presented to the Board for approval before commencement.

The conference is budgeted on a breakeven basis.

Any surplus will be fed back into the conference to further the aims of the organisation.

## MANAGEMENT

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### **Organisational Structure and Role of the Board and Governance**

The Board currently meets monthly, but the suggestion is that the Board could meet less frequently. This can be decided at the next Board meeting when the schedule of meetings for the year can be set.

A Treasurer and Company Secretary have been appointed and the appropriate governance procedures and committees have been established.

The Board is responsible for setting the overall strategy and approach of AIDC, approving the Business Plan and monitoring performance against the Business Plan and objectives set by the Board.

Management is responsible for proposing the Business Plan, managing the business to achieve the objectives set by the Board and set out in the Business Plan. The Business Plan will be reviewed annually and re-developed at the end of year two of the Business Plan.

The Board and management have the requisite breadth and depth of skills and industry experience and knowledge.

The list of position descriptions show there has been a proper allocation of resources. Resources are generally sourced as part-time, contract positions so that flexibility is retained. Extra resources will be sought as required and subject to AIDC being able to afford them. At this stage it is envisaged that a marketplace manager resource will be required.

### **Succession Plan**

The key person is the Director. His long term position is secured with a two year and one year option contract.

There is currently no obvious successor within the organisation. In the event of his departure, a replacement would be sourced externally. During any interim period before the appointment of a successor, sufficient corporate and organisational knowledge would be retained within the Board members and the staff of Arts Projects Australia.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

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### **Internal**

Being a small organisation, with so much dependent on the Director, the greatest internal risk is the unexpected departure of the Director. This risk has been addressed by the succession plan outlined above. Not much more can be done about putting a successor in place and the Board needs to be aware of the risk and be ready to act quickly if it eventuates.

The other major risk is fraud or misappropriation of funds. This has been addressed by adoption of appropriate financial structures, procedures and governance requirements.

### **External**

The greatest external risks are decreases in income - loss of government funding, corporate sponsorships and registrations.

It is recognised that while funding has been secured on a 3 year basis, steps should be taken to ensure this funding is renewed or replaced in a timely fashion.

Strategies have been put in place to address these risks.

# FIGURE 1 – GOALS AND STRATEGIES MATRIX

Strategies	Goals			
	Industry Development through networking and dealmaking	Increase international market reach	Professional Development	Financially stable and sustainable
Stage annual Conference	✓	✓	✓	✓
Review and implement marketing and communication strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Develop international relations	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintain and strengthen relationships with key partners	✓	✓	✓	✓

## FIGURE 2 – GOALS AND KPI SET

Goals	KPI
<b>Industry development through networking and dealmaking opportunities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain Registrations</li> <li>2. Survey Confirms majority delegates satisfied with networking and dealmaking opportunities.</li> <li>3. Maintain calibre/balance of international guests &amp; key dealmakers in attendance at conference</li> </ol>
<b>Increase international market reach</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain calibre and balance of international guests at Conference</li> <li>2. Number of Australian delegations internationally</li> <li>3. Director attends international markets and festivals</li> </ol>
<b>Professional Development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Survey confirms delegates expectations completely met or exceeded</li> <li>2. Survey confirms Conference a key factor in beginning, progressing or completing a project</li> <li>3. Survey confirms AIDC assists delegates make new business contacts</li> </ol>
<b>Financial Stability</b>	Conference meets financial targets

**A** Each year there will be a report on:

1. Registration numbers
2. Registration by State or Territory
3. Registrations by Country

**B** An analysis statement of survey results

## FIGURE 3 – STRATEGIES

Strategy	Key Activity	Responsibility
Stage annual Conference	Develop and implement conference concept and program	Director
	Develop and implement target guest list and secure funding	Director/Management
	Develop and implement marketing and promotion plans	Director/Management
	Organise and stage conference within budget	Director/Management
	Conduct post conference survey and review of conference	Management
Review and implement marketing and communication strategy	Develop and implement marketing and communication plan	Director/Management
Develop international relations	Develop and implement "market intelligence"	Director
	Australian delegations abroad and export "AIDC MeetMarket"	Director/Management
	International delegations to conference	Director
	Director attends international conferences and festivals	Director
Maintain and strengthen relationships with key partners	Secure future funding at same or increased level	Director/Management
	Secure sponsorship at same or increased level	Director/Management