

# LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

For the fifth consecutive year, NOVA Employment is running its Focus on Ability short film competition, writes chief executive Martin Wren.

As CEO of Nova Employment, I see daily evidence of how my staff guide people with disability into meaningful, award-wage employment of their own choosing. Our clients thrive in the stable, caring environment that we provide, often surprising themselves with their achievements.

NOVA focuses on each person's abilities and interests and works on pushing barriers aside. It never ceases to amaze me how focusing on people's ability develops confidence and inspires growth.

Yet, constantly on my mind is how to convey the strengths of our work to the general public, potential clients and funding bodies. Of course, without this trifecta, there is no NOVA. So I cooked up the idea of a short film competition dedicated specifically to ability as opposed to disability. And the thing's grown like topsy!

In the first year, I think we had about a dozen entries and our first prize was \$5000. We wanted to make the prizes sweet. We didn't want it to be the 'disabled' competition. Everyone is welcome to submit a film.

Now in our fifth year, the prize pool is more than \$70,000 with first prize being flights to Los Angeles, accommodation in Hollywood and a 10-week course run by The Australian Film and Television Academy (TAFTA) – all wrapped up with \$3000 spending money.

Last year's winners would stand up in any short film competition. Working Hands by Davo Hardy is brilliant and begins with Helen Keller's beautiful quote, 'I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do'.

Marble by Realm Choong is strong and emotionally engaging. Another film involves a woman creating the most beautiful art despite a skin condition that's led

NOVA EMPLOYMENT  
SHORT FILM COMPETITION

# FOCUS ON ABILITY

## 2013

Produce a video (5 minutes maximum length) which will raise awareness of the ability of people who have a disability. The underlying theme of your entry should be Focus on disAbility.

**OVER \$70,000**  
worth of cash and prizes to be won.

For more information contact NOVA  
on (02) 9833 2500  
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www.FocusOnAbility.com.au

Sony Education Australia, WILD LOATS, smeg, HAWKMAN, TAFTA, sugarLove, MARNIE, MAPLE, WILSON, SONY, DIRECTOR

to her losing her fingers. She makes my own dabbling in art look like I'm using a box of crayons. One of the documentary films is about Georgia – a woman with the most amazing smile and attitude. She's been offered a part in another film based on being herself in Georgia by Sophie Weldon.

Occasionally, I flirt with 'employability' being the competition focus. But every year I'm reminded that highlighting the abilities of people with disability keenly reflects their value as citizens and workers. To satiate our employment focus, NOVA has a staff category that judges the films based on how they reflect people's abilities in the workforce.

Some might say that Focus on Ability could take away from our core business as providers of strong employment options for people with disability. However, I believe the return outweighs the cost. NOVA operates a Disability Employment Service, but the entity that is NOVA is a charity with the constitutional aim of 'improving the welfare of people with disability'.

As an organisational leader, I have to decide where to place our efforts. Focus on Ability so strongly promotes the ability of people with disability that the cost, time and resources become a secondary consideration. Both our core business and our sideline projects empower people with disability. [focusonability.com.au](http://focusonability.com.au)