

WINE VVS

Mortal Kombat leads milestone moment for South Australia amid film, TV and games industry boom

By Matthew Smith

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PHOTO: Asher Keddie on set of SBS TV show The Hunting. (Nat Rogers)

South Australia's entertainment sector is booming and that means jobs for the state's next generation.

The movie version of popular video game Mortal Kombat will be shot in the state later in the year, creating an estimated 580 jobs and roles for 1,500 extras.

It is a milestone moment for South Australian Film Corporation chief executive Courtney Gibson.

"[We're] very buoyant — it feels like we've never been busier and we've got a great mix of productions happening, including Mortal Kombat," she said.

As well as the epic action film, a TV show called Stateless starring Cate Blanchett has been shooting around South Australia.

Stateless will go to air on the ABC, while filming on The Hunting featuring Asher Keddie runs on SBS later in the year.

They are the headline acts in a packed schedule.

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Key points:

- Several films and TV shows are going into production in South Australia
 - State and federal rebates have helped spur a jobs boom
 - Gaming industry getting less support than other sectors, developer says
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PHOTO: Shabana Azeez, Kavitha Anandasivam and Sophie Hyde on the set of *The Hunting*. (Nat Rogers)

Rebates helping spur industry

Much of it is thanks to the Post Production, Digital and Visual Effects (PDV) Rebate in which the SA Film Corporation rebates 10 per cent of the cost of all work done once filming has finished.

"It's got a lot of work over the line and it has delivered a significant amount of spend into the state already," Ms Gibson revealed.

In the first six months of the rebate, the SA Film Corporation says it brought \$14 million into the state.

Ms Gibson predicts that is only the tip of the iceberg.

"I think the medium to long-term impacts will see the South Australian PDV sector become a hub of PDV for the southern hemisphere," she said.

The 10 per cent PDV rebate comes on top of a 30 per cent rebate from the federal level.

The SA Film Corporation's plan is expand from having two full-time film crews having constant work year-round to four.

"What we are aiming for as the agency that supports screen production in this state is to get our industry to a point of a four-deep bench, so that we can handle four productions at any time," Ms Gibson said.



PHOTO: Courtney Gibson took over as head of the SA Film Corporation last year. (ABC Radio Adelaide: Malcolm Sutton)



PHOTO: Adelaide actor Tilda Cobham-Hervey on the set of Hotel Mumbai. (Supplied)

Jobs boom extends to special effects

The jobs boom extends throughout the sector, with world-leading special effects company Rising Sun Pictures expanding.

"There's more of a buzz in the air now, with more work coming in and obviously jobs," spokeswoman Anna Hodge said.

"We want to hire as much as we possibly can locally, we promote internally, and as soon as there's a promotion internally, we can start filling our junior roles more with our graduates we have here."

Rising Sun has combined with the University of South Australia to offer a graduate certificate which is proving a magnet for students locally and interstate, including 19-year-old local Sam Maiolo.

"It's exciting to think of the potential and see the growth in the industry and where that can go," she said.

Sebastian Benn, 20, shares similar optimism.

"With the rebate and all the companies coming to Adelaide, there's a lot of opportunities coming and so definitely right now, something I want to pursue," he said.



PHOTO: A scene from a movie showcasing special effects created by Rising Sun Pictures. (Supplied)

Gaming growing but less support

Another part of the entertainment sector that is thriving is the gaming industry.

Adelaide-based Mighty Kingdom has gone from being a humble start-up of two staff nine years ago to having just hired its 65th employee.

It advertised for 16 positions and got a staggering 480 applications, proof this is an employer of the future, in what was traditionally a manufacturing-based state.

"Domestically, the video game market in one year in Australia grew \$800 million," Mighty Kingdom business development director Dan Thorsland said.

"It went from \$3.2 billion to \$4 billion in one year, that's just in Australia."



PHOTO: Employees at Adelaide gaming company Mighty Kingdom. (Supplied: Mighty Kingdom)

The company's recruits have been attracted from local ranks and from interstate.

Now in a leadership role with Mighty Kingdom, Kirsty Tschirpig from Brisbane says the nation's younger generations are descending on the gaming industry.

"There's always a huge amount of people that are trying to get jobs in the industry and wanting the different opportunities and even creating opportunities for themselves by making their own games and trying to develop their own businesses," she said.

Thorsland has overseen a gaming explosion in the city, with several other gaming companies now based in the same city building.

Mighty Kingdom has just stitched up a lucrative international deal for its game Conan Chop Chop, which will be released on several sites, including PlayStation 4 and Xbox One.

The only negative is a lack of similar rebate discount support from the Federal Government that the film industry receives.

Thorsland claims Canberra is not interested in supporting the gaming industry.

"Doesn't like us, doesn't want to work with us, doesn't understand us, doesn't want to invest in us at all," he claimed.

In a statement from the office of new Arts Minister Paul Fletcher, a spokesman says the Government supports innovative Australian businesses, including game developers, through measures such as tax incentives and incubator support.

Topics: film-movies, film, industry, games-industry, games, business-economics-and-finance, government-and-politics, federal-government, non-governmental-organisations, states-and-territories, arts-and-entertainment, computers-and-technology, animation, actor, australia, adelaide-5000, sa, glenside-5065, port-augusta-5700, whyalla-5600



PHOTO: A scene from a Marvel film with special effects created by Rising Sun Pictures. (Supplied: Rising Sun Pictures)