

## Damian Trehwella

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**From:** Damian Trehwella  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 November 2017 5:48 PM  
**To:** AFI Board  
**Subject:** Confidential  
**Attachments:** Some feedback from yesterday's email

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Dear all,

Thanks again for all contributions over the weekend.

As agreed at the end our call on Sunday I've set out below chronologically what happened and when over the weekend in relation to the GR Issue.

To discuss can we teleconference at 2.30pm on Monday?

Regards,

Damian

### Events over the weekend as they happened

Two issues became very entwined and complex over the weekend. The first issue is resolved. The second matter requires further consideration.

### Issue 1: HW award matter

Friday afternoon – we fielded enquiries from the Australian via our publicist (not direct). These enquiries were singularly around HW award issue. No mention of Geoffrey, the STC or any claim or complaint was mentioned.

The matter of the award and cancelled event to present the award with CIFF had already been dealt with variously in the media – for example:

<http://www.news.com.au/entertainment/celebrity-life/the-disgraced-hollywood-producer-was-to-have-been-treated-as-a-hero-here/news-story/a2d7592cde20d34d3abdefea0d3b8fc5>

Hence we didn't believe any confusion remained – particularly as it was never presented.

The story that ran in the Australian was essentially a contrivance that relied heavily on a statement in our 2013 Year n Review document.

Ironically this old document became easier to find and access as we implemented our new website in October.

At the same time someone still had to look for this information to find it.

The article in the Australian was driven by WIFT NSW. This is the same group who undertook the sausage party stunt on our red carpet last year. Even though we actually did a lot early this year with WIFT NSW (including taking on opening our eligibility to include more micro films with female directors which saw us end up with a massive 35 films in competition) they still very much see us (& others) as opportunities for them to leverage their profile. Deb Verhoeven who was quoted was a past AFI CEO (I understand first acting then appointed for about 18 months around 2000-2002) may not have been satisfied with how things finished up (it's all well before my time so don't know much more).

The Australian article has generated little further discussion. We heard nothing from our constituents. The Australian received one odd comment only to their online story and when they put it on social media there was very little interest either. Responses that have come in from our members to our statement have been positive – see attached.

There has been no further media other than two international trade articles which occurred overnight are both fine:

<http://variety.com/2017/film/asia/australian-academy-rescinds-harvey-weinstein-award-1202613289/#article-comments>

<http://deadline.com/2017/11/harvey-weinstein-aacta-australian-film-academy-revokes-fellowship-award-1202206809/>

Deadline had one query as why the postponed event never eventuated and we've responded as follows:

*The event at which the International Fellowship was to be presented, the 'Body of Work' Canberra International Film Festival event, was a collaboration between a number of organisations. The event was postponed as Weinstein was unable to attend and, ultimately, the various parties involved and elements required weren't able to be lined up again for the event to take place. The endeavour simply fizzled out and was never revived.*

*One of the foundations of the event and the International Fellowship was to celebrate Weinstein's contribution to the Australian film industry in person, in Australia. Therefore, the Academy did not move forward with the Award when the event wasn't able to proceed.*

Note also I understand the Brits have not yet revoked HW's CBE. Per Rolf Harris scenario they may well be allowing and awaiting legal process to run its course on the basis that a person is innocent until proven guilty. We didn't even have a chance to discuss this dimension over the weekend – the pressure was to run with the crowd.

## Issue 2: Confidential matter

Early Friday evening GR rang me to give heads up that he'd been contacted by media for a response to the HW award situation outlined above. I said thanks and mentioned that we'd responded also. In some general chat that followed we both discussed our general frustration with the current state of media/society (not an unusual chat thread) where items such as the HW award issue is made into a "story" in this way. In passing and in circumstances of confidence he mentioned, by way of example, on his side he'd been baited on some issue involving him which in his view was bullshit and a symptom of current climate. The only issue he could think of was when he was LEAR at STC involving a scene (in front of 900 people) in which he carried his dead daughter. He said it was a difficult scene and whilst he thought the carry position was right for all, there was allegedly some discomfort.

Shortly after I spoke with Anita. I'd reached out to Anita earlier in the afternoon as the HW matter arose as I hadn't had a chance to connect with Anita since discussion at the last Board meeting and wanted to get Anita's view on the state of media in the new HW climate.

When we connected I talked through the HW award enquiry we'd received and we discussed the general media environment with Anita reiterating the level of resources media are now applying to investigations in our industry. I then perhaps errantly volunteered information to Anita that was shared with me in circumstances of confidence by GR. At the time I wasn't fully cognisant of the confidentiality around the information that GR had shared with me and I shared this information with Anita, as a Board member.

This information concerned Anita and these concerns started to lead me to think that the article the Australian were working on re the HW award contrivance may have been more broad ranging and problematic. However these were just my thoughts and there was nothing concrete behind this.

As it was Friday night and that media can storm quickly these days I decided to then share my growing concerns following the discussion with Anita with the Board on Friday evening. In my email on Friday night I said that I had learnt that Rosemary had found and seemed to be linking a situation relating to Geoffrey at STC and had identified a complaint of 'inappropriate behaviour' against Geoffrey. However I had no discussion with Rosemary. She had only spoken to our publicist and she made no mention of Geoffrey, the STC or any complaint to our publicist. My email was only expressing my fears in light of my recent discussions with Geoffrey followed by a call with Anita. Therefore I proposed a teleconference on the Saturday in case the article in the Australian was ultimately problematic.

On Saturday morning Anita sent an email to Board members saying she was concerned about the complaint of 'inappropriate behaviour' levelled at Geoffrey when at the STC and suggested that it was worth us considering involving a crisis media expert. I also thought it could be helpful at the time to have the best advice to hand that we could. However it seems Anita picked up from the wording of my email and our discussions that there had been an actual complaint of inappropriate behaviour against Geoffrey. However we have received no information that this is the case. On reflection, I can see how Anita and other Board members were led to believe there was more to this from the way I expressed it in my email.

Our Board call at 2pm Saturday, Anita, Margaret and Brian and I discussed our response to the article in the Australian and that it could be good to have an external expert assist us with this.

Hence we engaged Anthony McClellan on Saturday afternoon and he and I worked on our response to the HW award matter.

Anthony was also very interested in the scuttlebutt that GR had shared with me and reached the conclusion himself that this was a very big issue. This all happened extremely quickly on Saturday amid what's already our busiest period of the year.

I understand Anthony and Anita spoke again, Anita and I spoke again, and then Anita suggested that the Board convene for a discussion around this second potential matter.

As Anthony and I continued work on the response to the HW award matter he continued to energise around the second matter compelling me to accelerate it further. Anita wasn't across all the communications as she was out of mobile range much of the weekend.

Anthony's energy compelled me to do something that I now have question over, most particularly trying to find out more information around the scuttlebutt GR has confidentially mentioned to me in passing.

I understand now I should not have been doing this but at his behest and in the seeming hysteria of the moment it seemed hard not to do (I was being told very clearly by Anthony that we had both legal and moral duties to find out more information and act on this urgently).

The email I sent to the Board on Saturday night set out information for the further Board call that Anita suggested we discuss. Anthony McClellan was involved in drafting this email based on the information he understood we had. However to clarify, we do not know of any actual complaint to the STC about Geoffrey or that the Australian is aware of anything regarding Geoffrey, the STC or any complaint.

Anthony McClellan joined the call on Sunday at 11am (with Alan, Anita, George, Margaret, Noni, Jennifer and I).

Anthony explained his concerns/advice on the call. However it became apparent during the call that there was a lot of confusion regarding the facts of the GR issue. Thus the call on Sunday went round and round as there was uncertainty on a number of matters.

What I can see now that we'd failed to do at that point (as it was the weekend and wasn't really possible in advance) was to clearly set out the information we had and undertake proper situational analysis.

The call ended with a request by Jennifer to me to clearly set out in writing the information I had received regarding the GR issues and where the information had come from so we could disentangle the various elements of the situation and properly assess and consider it before we agree on a forward plan.

Damian Trehwella  
Chief Executive Officer

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