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Filmmaker wins two awards

Benalla Ensign, Benalla

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By **Simon Ruppert**

A limited budget, a global pandemic, no crew and actors cancelling on short notice.

Faced with some big hurdles Benalla filmmaker Charlie Williams could not have been blamed for giving up and taking the year off.

However, film is Charlie's passion and it was going to take a lot more than that to stop him.

And his dedication, and cunning ability to convince friends to become actors, led to him not only completing his film *One love*, but also picking up two awards at the Benalla Short Film Festival.

One Love is a story about George, 70, who lost his wife 37 years ago.

"It's a feel-good movie that uses music to help tell the story," Charlie said.

"It's about an old man who spends most of his time looking at his old car.

"The car represents George's wife. He bought it the day he met her."

The car was wasting away in the yard and losing it felt, to George, like losing the only link he had left to his wife.

"A social worker who visits George helps him fix it up," Charlie said.

"The film uses flashbacks and music to help tell the story.

"And for a short film it has lots of emotion, it is almost like a music video."

Charlie said he was not expecting to win one award and was blown away when he picked up two.

Those being the Local Encouragement award and the People's Choice award.

"This is my first short film since I graduated from film school, and the first time it was shown in Australia," he said.

"So it was pretty cool to win. Especially the people's choice award.

"Knowing people had voted for it was nice."

In the months prior to the Benalla Short Film Festival it had been shown in venues across America, including Hollywood,

New York and Boston - as well as Russia.

Charlie grew up in Benalla and headed to Melbourne where he studied audio as well as film.

"My wife (Rhiannon Langeberg) is an actor, she's been acting for more than 10 years," he said.

"She is actually in this film as well, she played a young version of George's wife.

"So as my wife was involved in acting, and I've always been into music and films, it inspired me to do a diploma before studying filmmaking at SAE.

"I was back in Benalla and working at Woolies a couple of years ago and a few people knew I made films and would come up to me and tell me about the Benalla Short Film Festival.

"They put me onto Anna Smith and she recommended I submitted a film."

Charlie said he was pleased the festival could go ahead in an online format, but said he was disappointed to not be able to see his film on the big screen with an audience.

"It felt a little bit like I didn't get the full film festival experience," he said.

"However, the prize money for the two awards was \$450 all up, so I am using that to fund my next production and I plan to enter again next year.

"Hopefully by then the festival will be back to normal."

Charlie said there were a few different avenues to get into filmmaking if anyone in Benalla would like to give it a try.

"I wish someone had said to me to create content with what I already had," Charlie said.

"You can learn a lot about filmmaking by simply watching movies and breaking down what is going on.

"Then, of course, there is film school, which is great for meeting people and creating a network."

Charlie said there were almost too many people to thank.

"Many things went wrong in the production of the movie," he said.

"One issue is I had a few actors cancel on short notice.

"The person cast to play young

George could not make it and my friend Ash Scorch stepped in and did a great job.

"I also need to thank Laura Gundril who also acted in the movie.

"And a big thank you to the sponsors Bendigo Bank and Benalla Gliding Club.

"Thank you to my wife Rhiannon, who not only acted in the film but helped out in a lot of ways.

"Thank you to my nephews who helped out as crew and to Anna and the judges at Benalla Shorts."

If you would like to watch *One Love* it is available to stream at filmfreeway.com

Festival organiser Anna Smith also announced that Film Victoria had confirmed funding for next year's event.



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Proud: Charlie Williams' film *One Love* took out two categories at the Benalla Short Film Festival.



Well deserved: Bendigo Bank manager Brett Moloney and Heather Edgar present a cheque for \$200 to Charlie Williams.