Showbiz hopefuls
get a big hand

BY LAURA CENCIGH-ALBULARIO

If you watch a lot of reality television, it may seem that making it in show business is as simple as getting Delta Goodrem to turn her chair around for you. However, even the most talented performers soon discover that being successful requires a whole lot more than hitting the right notes.

A new Associate Degree in Creative Industries, through the University of Western Sydney and UWS College, will give creative people the chance to develop essential business skills tailored to the creative industries.

Accepting its first cohort for the mid-year enrolment, the course includes business, law and communications units, as well as professional development, aimed at artists, musicians, filmmakers, actors, writers, and other creative types.

Dr Kerry Hudson, UWS College CEO, says the principles for conducting business may be similar across all industries, but those working in creative industries are often freelancers who must go it alone when negotiating rights and licensing agreements, navigating tax rules, OH&S laws and other employer responsibilities.

“We went directly to leading creative industry organisations and professionals in Sydney and beyond to ask them what skills they valued and what they believed was essential for success,” says Dr Hudson.

“The Associate Degree in Creative Industries provides tuition which is directly relevant to students’ creative working lives providing them with strong management, project planning and business skills.”

One performer who knows the value of a pragmatic approach to her craft is singer Natalie Carboni. The 28-year-old, from Penrith, has applied to study the creative industries degree, and hopes it will help in her own performing career, as well as the people she coaches as a singing teacher.

“In this industry especially, you constantly have people trying to undermine you, wanting the easiest and cheapest way out,” she says.

“You have to be smart enough to know how to play the game back and understand business as well as the music industry.” Carboni has worked in musical theatre, does regular gigs at Penrith RSL and Campbelltown Catholic Club, as well as voiceover work for commercials.

As a singing teacher, along with time-tune students’ voices, she helps them get work - from television appearances to roles in musicals. “So far, I’ve been going on intuition and common sense, but to have the knowledge to back that up would be fantastic,” she says.

Carboni often gets asked why she hasn’t auditioned for The X Factor or The Voice, but says she “understands a bit too much” about the industry to believe winning a competition would bring instant success: “Some people think that if they win a show and get a record deal, they’ll be famous and their life will be perfect forever”.

Rather than pinning all her hopes on a shot at instant stardom, Carboni has chosen to focus on ways that she can immediately make a living in the music industry.

“There are so many different areas of this industry that are just as exciting (as being a recording artist),” she says.

“If you can sing a couple of nights every week, even if sometimes it’s only to 20 people, if those 20 people enjoy what you’re doing, you have a 90 per cent success rate, and you’ve made an income from doing what you love.”
Singer Natalie Carl-Joni: it helps to know how to 'play the game'.

SNAPSHOT
What: The Associate Degree in Creative Industries is for creative professionals who seek a higher education qualification to support their career development. Applicants must have at least three years of industry experience in either interactive and digital design; music and performing arts; film, television and radio; writing and publishing; advertising and marketing; media and communications or visual arts.

Where: The University of Western Sydney's UWSCollege.

When: Classes for the mid-year intake start on Monday, June 25.

Apply: Through UAC by Friday, June 1.

More: www.iamcreative.com.au