

HOT DOCS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CO-PRESIDENT HEATHER CONWAY TO TRANSITION TO NEW ADVISORY ROLE

Erin Lau and Paul Lewis Named Interim Co-executive Directors

April 14, 2022. Toronto, Canada – Hot Docs has announced that **Heather Conway** will be transitioning from her position as co-president and executive director as of May 13, 2022, to a new advisory role on strategic planning for the rapidly growing organization. Long-time president **Chris McDonald** will assume sole leadership of the organization. Hot Docs employees **Erin Lau**, managing director, and **Paul Lewis**, conference director of World Congress of Science and Factual Producers, have been named as interim co-executive directors and will be supporting Chris as part of the leadership team.

“We are extremely grateful for Heather’s tremendous contributions during her tenure and look forward to her ongoing involvement in Hot Docs’ future planning,” said **Robin Mirsky** co-chair of Hot Docs Board of Directors. “Her decision to transition from her current role comes after much thoughtful reflection on how best to restructure the organization for greater success and how she could best contribute her considerable talents. We thank her for her valuable insight and commitment to Hot Docs.”

“I love Hot Docs and have immense respect for the hard work and dedication of its talented team,” said **Heather Conway**. “There is a strong mission in place for the organization and very capable people already there to realize it. I remain a passionate member of the community and look forward to working with Chris to advise on strategic planning and contribute to the ongoing success of Hot Docs.”

Ms. Conway joined Hot Docs in November 2021. In her time as co-president and executive director, she made significant improvements to the organization’s structure to increase effectiveness and further solidify its foundation for future growth, including centralizing its development and sponsorship activities under one department and hiring Hot Docs’ first director of finance. She furthered the organization’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) efforts by transitioning its EDI working group into an Employee Resource Group and helping bring onboard a senior consultant for EDI training. Ms. Conway also made significant contributions to fundraising efforts, including securing Cineplex as a new presenting partner for the 2022 Festival. As an advisor on strategic planning, she will provide input and insight into Hot Docs’ upcoming five-year strategic plan being developed in summer 2022.

Most recently a managing director at Hot Docs, **Erin Lau** oversees the organization's strategic planning projects, community partnerships, Festival development, and overall risk assessment and mitigation. She comes from a strong project management background within the arts and non-profit sector and joined Hot Docs in 2008 where she has led planning for World Congress of Science and Factual Producers and programs and initiatives, including Hot Docs' provincial showcase and Food & Film, DocX and free community screenings during the Festival. As a member of the executive management team, she has led on staff engagement and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives, including developing the newly established role of senior consultant for EDI and training, and hiring and

onboarding for that position. Prior to Hot Docs, Erin has held roles at TIFF, BMO, and has provided support and training to several different organizations as a communications consultant. In 2020, she was recognized as one of Canada's top 250 event professionals by BizBash.

Conference director for World Congress of Science and Factual Producers (WCSFP) since 2018, **Paul Lewis** is a television executive and consultant with more than three decades of broadcasting and production experience. As president and general manager of the Discovery business in Canada, Paul created, developed and commissioned some of the world's most ambitious and successful factual television and digital content. He launched the world's first daily science program, Daily Planet, executive produced documentary series and live specials and partnered with international broadcasters during Discovery Canada's most significant period of growth and expansion—leading it to become the most watched factual channel in the country. Mr. Lewis oversaw the launch of five television networks and was also responsible for their related websites and social media platforms, an in-house production company and a distribution business. Prior to his role with WCSFP, he was president of Strategic Growth at Great Pacific Media—an award-winning production company with a strong reputation for storytelling and ratings success. Mr. Lewis will continue in his role as WCSFP conference director while assuming new responsibilities as interim co-executive director of Hot Docs.

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Hot Docs (www.hotdocs.ca), North America's largest documentary festival, conference and market, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing and celebrating the art of documentary and to creating production opportunities for documentary filmmakers. Hot Docs will present its 29th annual edition from April 28 to May 8, 2022 in cinemas across Toronto as well as offering selection of Festival films online to audiences throughout Canada. A full roster of industry conference sessions, market programs and networking events will be held for Canadian and international delegates, including the renowned Hot Docs Forum, Hot Docs Deal Maker, Distribution Rendezvous and The Doc Shop. Year-round, Hot Docs supports the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar production fund portfolio, and fosters education through documentaries with its popular free program Docs For Schools. Hot Docs owns and programs the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, a century-old landmark located in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood and the world's first and largest documentary cinema, and operates Hot Docs at Home streaming platform.

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