

# Film pulled from festival

A DOCUMENTARY containing disturbing images of drug addiction and abuse on the streets of Melbourne has been axed from the Melbourne International Film Festival.

Concerns were also raised over the welfare of four young drug addicts featured in *High and Dry* because of its graphic scenes, including one of heroin being injected.

Frank Randle, a lawyer acting for the four young people, said they had won their battle against drug addiction since the film was shot last year and their lives could be ruined if it was screened.

The film was pulled yesterday after inquiries by the *Herald Sun*.

*High and Dry*, directed by Brodie Higgs, is described as an arresting documentary depicting the self-destructive addictions of middle-class heroin user Mark and his three friends.

One of the girls in the film, Rebecca, said she was devastated to learn one of

## Tanya Giles

the hardest times of her life was to be made public.

Rebecca, who asked that her real name not be used, said she was assured by Mr Higgs that the film would not be shown publicly when she signed a consent form.

"I feel betrayed. This person came into my life, I was lonely and thought he was my friend," Rebecca said. "He promised me this would never be shown publicly."

Mr Randle said he received a letter from Mr Higgs' lawyer late yesterday that said the film would be withdrawn for ethical reasons.

Marshall and Dent's Shaun Miller, acting for Mr Higgs said the film was withdrawn because of "particular circumstances of the participants".

A spokeswoman for MIFF, Annette Smith, said Mr Higgs had asked for the film to be withdrawn for personal reasons.

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