



Unusual film lures Geena Davis Down Under

Posted Fri Apr 16, 2010 10:12am AEST

Geena Davis admits she's "kinda fussy" about the films she takes on these days.

But a little Australian film called *Accidents Happen*, featuring a young and relatively unknown local cast, intrigued the Oscar-winner so much she flew to the other side of the world to film.

"I think it was how unusual it was," Davis said.

"It's a very interesting kind of movie. It's a little hard to even pigeonhole - it's a comedy, it's a tragedy - it's kind of a mix of a few things.

"But also the character was very appealing. Some of the things she says alone make it worth doing."

Davis plays Gloria Conway, a wise-cracking, tough-as-nails single mother coping with the break-up of her marriage and the death of one child in an accident that leaves another child severely brain-damaged.

As she struggles to raise her remaining children, much of the responsibility falls on the shoulders of 15-year-old Billy, played by Adelaide newcomer Harrison Gilbertson.

Davis, a mother of three in real life, said Gloria was a fun character to play but she did not think much of her parenting skills.

"I wouldn't want that mother [and] I wouldn't wish it on anybody," she said.

"She's an example of something that I really think is unfortunate - when the parent forces the child to be the parent. They're the needy one that needs to be taken care of.

"Part of what happens in the movie through the incidents is that she becomes the mother again, she's able to take on that role again."

Shot in Sydney in 2008, the film was made by first-time feature director Andrew Lancaster, with mostly Australian cast including Erik Thomson, Sebastian Gregory, Harry Cook and Morgan Griffin.

Davis likens her role as mentor for the younger cast to Hollywood veteran Dustin Hoffman's mentorship on her first film, *Tootsie*, in 1982.

"My first part was with Dustin Hoffman, who was very mentory [sic] and wonderful, and he's still more or less my mentor," Davis said.

"And I thought, I wonder if this is at all like that for these kids, that they think I'm this grown-up who knows things."

Davis, 54, still remembers how she felt on her making her first feature film debut.

"I just loved it. But I knew nothing about how you shoot a movie or anything," she said.

"I didn't know that you're only supposed to come when you're shooting, and nobody really explained it to me. So I came every day at 6am, even if I wasn't shooting.

"I didn't notice if people were looking at me strangely or anything."

Accidents Happen opens on April 22.