

MEDIA RELEASE – AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF CINEMA AND TELEVISION ARTS

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Stars Shine at 2nd AACTA Awards

Watch the show tonight hosted by Russell Crowe on Network Ten, 9:30pm

Host **Russell Crowe** and Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) President, **Geoffrey Rush**, were tonight joined on stage by internationally acclaimed Australian actors including **Cate Blanchett** and **Nicole Kidman** to honour the year's best achievements in Australian film and television at the **2nd AACTA Awards Ceremony**, held at the brand new The Star Event Centre in Sydney.

It was a golden night for ***The Sapphires***, crowning a year already filled with sparkling success. Since premiering in Cannes in May 2012, the toe-tapping musical drama about four Aboriginal girls who formed a singing group in the 1960s has garnered audience awards all over the world and box office triumph at home. Tonight saw ***The Sapphires*** take home six AACTA Awards - Best Film (**Rosemary Blight, Kylie du Fresne**), Best Director (**Wayne Blair**), Best Lead Actress (**Deborah Mailman**), Best Lead Actor (**Chris O'Dowd**), Best Supporting Actress (**Jessica Mauboy**) and Best Adapted Screenplay (**Keith Thompson, Tony Briggs**) - bringing the film's tally to a total of 11 AACTA Awards, including those previously announced at the **2nd AACTA Awards Luncheon, presented by Deluxe**, on Monday 28 January.

The dramatic thriller ***Wish You Were Here***, shot and set partly in Cambodia, won the AACTA Award for **Best Original Screenplay** for husband and wife creative team writer/director **Kieran Darcy-Smith** and writer/actress **Felicity Price**. **Antony Starr** also won **Best Supporting Actor** for his enigmatic performance in ***Wish You Were Here***.

The luminous young German actress, **Saskia Rosendahl**, received the AACTA Award for **Best Young Actor** for her lead performance in the stunning German language film ***Lore***, directed by **Cate Shortland**. Just 17 years old at the time of filming, this was Rosendahl's first feature film role.

A special highlight of tonight's AACTA Awards Ceremony was the presentation of the **Byron Kennedy Award** to the late filmmaker, animator and artist **Sarah Watt** (1958 – 2011), accepted on her behalf by her son, **Clem McInnes**. A moving video tribute reminded audiences of the consummate skill, elegance and humour Watt brought to the screen in works like ***Look Both Ways***, ***Small Treasures*** and ***My Year Without Sex***. Presented by **Matt Day**, **Watt** was chosen as this year's Byron Kennedy Award recipient "for her brave, innovative filmmaking" and because "without pretension, her work broke all the rules, yet her singular view connected to a wide audience by its profound emotional honesty."

Marking another brilliant year for Australian television, the 2nd AACTA Awards Ceremony celebrated seven television programs across four networks. John Edwards and Southern Star Productions confirmed their reputation for top-notch drama, with Channel Ten's ***Puberty Blues*** winning Best Television Drama Series and Channel Nine's ***Howzat! Kerry Packer's War*** winning Best Telefeature or Mini Series. **Mandy McElhinney**, loved by millions as 'Rhonda' in an Australian Bali-based advertising campaign, also won Best Guest or Supporting Actress in a Television Drama for her endearing performance as Kerry Packer's longsuffering secretary, Rose Mitchell.

The ABC was a big winner at tonight's AACTA Awards, with the groundbreaking Indigenous drama **Redfern Now** winning Best Screenplay in Television (**Steven McGregor** for Episode 6) and **Leah Purcell** winning Best Lead Actress in a Television Drama for her performance in Episode 1. Also at the ABC, **Rake** co-creator and star, **Richard Roxburgh** took home the AACTA Award for Best Lead Actor for his performance as the lovable rogue, Cleaver Greene. **Jeffrey Walker** won Best Direction in Television for **Jack Irish: Bad Debts**, also for the ABC.

Aaron Jeffery won the AACTA award for Best Guest or Supporting Actor in a Television Drama for his performance as bikie-turned-police-informant Frank O'Rourke in the Nine Network's **Underbelly Badness**.

In 2012 the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts introduced the new AACTA Award for Best Reality Television Series, and the first recipient of this award was announced tonight, with the exciting adventure-based contest of **The Amazing Race Australia** (Channel Seven) taking home the golden statuette.

The news.com.au Audience Choice Award for Most Memorable Screen Moment was also announced on the night, with a win by **The Sapphires** confirming the public's love of the film, along with the industry's.

In addition to Award presentations by some of Australia's most successful performers and practitioners, the 2nd AACTA Awards Ceremony featured some of the most popular names in Australian entertainment, including show-stopping performances by **Jessica Mauboy** and the cast of **The Sapphires**, accompanied by original members of the Indigenous girl group, and **Dragon**, who performed the theme song from **Puberty Blues**, "Are You Old Enough?".

Speaking of the **2nd AACTA Awards Ceremony**, AFI | AACTA CEO, **Damian Trehwella**, said:

"Tonight's celebrations are the culmination of an extraordinarily exciting year in Australian film and television, and on behalf of the Australian Academy, I congratulate all winners of the 2nd AACTA Awards announced here in Sydney over two major events this week.

"In this, our second year of the new Australian Academy, we have built on the foundations laid by the stunningly successful inaugural AACTA Awards, and this has been achieved with the help of many, including our esteemed President, Geoffrey Rush, who works hardest of all for the Academy.

"I'm also delighted to see so many of Australia's screen icons return home to support to our Australian Academy, including tonight's host Russell Crowe, as we celebrate Australia's international stamp of screen success, the AACTA Awards.

"I also acknowledge the support of our partners and sponsors, in particular the New South Wales government through its tourism and major events agency Destination New South Wales, whose support and commitment has been critical to the AACTA Awards."

NSW Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Arts, George Souris, congratulated winners of the AACTA Awards.

"The AACTA Awards consolidates Australia's position as a powerhouse of creative talent, and I am pleased to see Sydney and NSW once again excel as leaders in film and television production. The AACTA Awards are a key creative industries event on the NSW Events Calendar, proudly produced and hosted in Sydney, the creative capital of Australia. The NSW Government is pleased to support the AACTA Awards, through its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW," Mr Souris said.

The 2nd AACTA Awards Ceremony will be broadcast tonight on Network Ten at 9:30pm.

The complete list of winners announced at the 2ND AACTA Awards Ceremony is as follows:

BYRON KENNEDY AWARD

- Sarah Watt

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST YOUNG ACTOR

- Saskia Rosendahl. *Lore.*

TELEVISION

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST TELEVISION DRAMA SERIES

- *Puberty Blues.* John Edwards, Imogen Banks. *Network Ten*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST TELEFEATURE OR MINI SERIES

- *Howzat! Kerry Packer's War.* John Edwards, Mimi Butler. *Nine Network*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST DIRECTION IN TELEVISION

- *Jack Irish: Bad Debts.* Jeffrey Walker. *ABC1*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST SCREENPLAY IN TELEVISION

- *Redfern Now* – Episode 6 'Pretty Boy Blue'. Steven McGregor. *ABC1*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST LEAD ACTOR IN A TELEVISION DRAMA

- Richard Roxburgh. *Rake* – Season 2. *ABC1*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST LEAD ACTRESS IN A TELEVISION DRAMA

- Leah Purcell. *Redfern Now.* *ABC1*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST GUEST OR SUPPORTING ACTOR IN A TELEVISION DRAMA

- Aaron Jeffery. *Underbelly Badness* – Episode 3 'The Loaded Dog'. *Nine Network.*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST GUEST OR SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN A TELEVISION DRAMA

- Mandy McElhinney. *Howzat! Kerry Packer's War* – Part 2. *Nine Network.*

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST REALITY TELEVISION SERIES

- *The Amazing Race Australia.* Michael McKay, Trent Chapman, David Gardner, Matt Kowald. *Seven Network.*

NEWS.COM.AU AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD FOR MOST MEMORABLE SCREEN MOMENT

- *The Sapphires.*

FEATURE FILM

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST FILM

- **The Sapphires.** Rosemary Blight, Kylie du Fresne.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST DIRECTION

- **The Sapphires.** Wayne Blair.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

- **Wish You Were Here.** Kieran Darcy-Smith, Felicity Price.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

- **The Sapphires.** Keith Thompson, Tony Briggs.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST LEAD ACTOR

- **Chris O'Dowd.** The Sapphires.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST LEAD ACTRESS

- **Deborah Mailman.** The Sapphires.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

- **Antony Starr.** Wish You Were Here.

AACTA AWARD FOR BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

- **Jessica Mauboy.** The Sapphires.

MEDIA RESOURCES: LISTS OF WINNERS, IMAGES & VIDEO CLIPS

The following can be accessed by clicking on the below dropbox link: full list of winners announced today; breakdown by production; breakdown by network; images of awarded productions; and select clips of awarded film and television productions: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/v3di47oo1koodjz/kNUhhQtw0T>

For further information about AFI | AACTA, visit: www.aacta.org

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NOTES TO EDITORS

This year marks the second Awards season of the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts, which was established in August 2011 by the Australian Film Institute (AFI).

The AACTA Awards are proudly supported by the NSW Government, through its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW.

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