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Expanded Board to Bolster Strategic Development of AFI | AACTA

The Australian Film Institute | Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts has announced four new AFI board members following its recently held AGM.

AFI | AACTA Chair, Alan Finney said, “I’m delighted to welcome new Board members; Geoff Brown, Russel Howcroft, Alaric McAusland and Ian Sutherland.”

Ian Sutherland was successful in AFI’s February board election and replaces elected director Amanda Higgs who chose not stand again after two terms. Whilst recently there have been seven directors, the AFI Board has the ability, at its discretion, to extend to a maximum of nine directors. With Morry Schwartz stepping down after seven years as an appointed director (including five years as Chairman) the appointments this month restore the AFI Board to its full capacity.

“The new members further compliment the extensive industry knowledge and experience brought to the table by existing members Mike Baard, Jennifer Huby, Robert Sessions and Sigrid Thornton along with myself as ongoing Chair,” says Finney.

Geoff Brown recently retired from a 16 year appointment as the Executive Director of the Screen Producers Association of Australia (SPAA).

Russel Howcroft is presently Executive General Manager at Network Ten, panellist on the Gruen Transfer and formerly national CEO of advertising agency George Patterson Y&R.

Alaric McAusland is Managing Director of Deluxe Australia, former Chair of Ausfilm and a member of The SPAA Council.

Ian Sutherland, AHL (Event Cinemas) General Manager Alternate Content and Moonlight Cinemas, has worked extensively within the studio system both in Los Angeles and Sydney, and is also a Board member of L.A. based Australians in Film.

Newly appointed Director Russel Howcroft said, “AFI | AACTA has the opportunity to assist in the growth and expertise of Australia’s global creative community. AFI membership assists in personal creative development and the AACTA’s celebrate achievement. Network TEN is engaged in this process via the AACTA Awards Broadcast and I hope to personally assist via my previous experience in industry bodies.”

Alaric McAusland said, “I look forward to contributing to the AFI Board during a critical time in the institute's lifespan. We will reflect on recent challenges, and reach out to our membership and the broader industry to ensure they have a voice in helping us continue to shape and strengthen the activities of this critically important organisation both locally and globally, and for the benefit of all Australians.”

Alan Finney concluded, “The AFI board has contributed greatly to the significant change undertaken by the organisation in recent times, particularly the establishment of the Australian Academy which has seen many successes since launching 19 months ago. Morry’s leadership was tremendous as former chair, and he has continued to bring business acumen and sound counsel to the Board as a general member. Amanda’s contribution was also great, and the board benefited from her outstanding industry achievements and knowledge. I now look forward to working with our renewed Board towards the Academy’s long term aims.”

For board member bios, visit the AFI | AACTA [website](#).



NOTE TO EDITORS

About AFI | AACTA

The Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) was established by the Australian Film Institute (AFI) in August 2011 following a yearlong review and industry consultation, with the inaugural AACTA Awards held in Sydney in January 2012 and the 2nd AACTA Awards in January 2103. The AACTA Awards are a continuum of the AFI Awards which have recognised screen excellence in Australia since 1958. The AACTA Awards are proudly supported by the NSW Government, through its tourism and major events agency Destination New South Wales.

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