

Media Release – Strictly embargoed until Thursday 4 July, 2013

AACTA reinstates documentary craft Awards with industry support

The Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts has reinstated four AACTA Awards recognising documentary screen craft excellence, to be presented at the 3rd AACTA Awards in January 2014.

The announcement comes following ongoing discussions with screen industry guilds and associations, and a collaboration between AACTA and OzDox which will see Australia's documentary community support AACTA through a range of initiatives to reinstate the Awards.

The four Documentary Craft Awards which will be reinstated for the 3rd AACTA Awards are:

- **Best Direction in a Documentary**
- **Best Cinematography in a Documentary**
- **Best Editing in a Documentary**
- **Best Sound in a Documentary**

These will be judged across Feature Length Documentary and Documentary Television Program entries.

Following an industry review of all AACTA Awards - which took into account longstanding demand for recognition of television screen craft excellence, and input via screen industry guilds and associations - AACTA announced in May that these dedicated documentary Awards categories were to be placed on hold for 2014, and that documentary crafts would instead be assessed within more general television screen craft categories.

However, due to substantial industry demand to reinstate the documentary screen craft Awards, including a statement of support by 200 industry members within the OzDox community, and a commitment from OzDox to support AACTA via a membership drive, ticket sales promotions for AACTA's Awards events, and lobbying the screen sector for further funding, AACTA has reinstated the four Awards.

In addition to reinstating these Awards, the following changes have been announced for the television direction Awards, which will no longer also encompass documentaries:

- The Best Direction in Television (Drama) will be renamed Best Direction in a Television Drama or Comedy. This Award will be judged across all Television Drama (Drama Series, Mini Series and Telefeature), Children's Television and Television Comedy (narrative comedy / sitcom) entries.
- The Best Direction in Television (Non-Drama) will be renamed Best Direction in a Television Light Entertainment or Reality Series. This Award will be judged across all Light Entertainment and Reality Television Series entries. Should any sketch comedy series be entered into the 3rd AACTA Awards, they will also be judged in this category. Documentary Television Programs will no longer be eligible for this Award.

AACTA also confirms that the six new television screen craft Awards announced in May, which were created due to industry demand and support, will remain for the 3rd AACTA Awards.

AFI | AACTA CEO, Damian Trehwella, said:

"It is very encouraging to see such great demand and support for AACTA Awards recognising documentary screen craft excellence. This support, led by OzDox, confirms AACTA's research which shows the value the industry places on winning an AACTA Award, and the tangible results created by the Awards, such as new job and funding opportunities for winners and nominees.

“AFI | AACTA has always considered documentary an important genre; it is responsive, creative and critical in capturing real Australian stories, and we are pleased to reinstate these Awards with the industry’s support.

“A total of 187 documentary projects were undertaken in the last year in Australia, with a total budget of \$145 million¹. It is therefore vital that we have a peer-assessed measure in place via the AACTA Awards in order to assess the health of this industry, and to provide a platform for further collaboration by bringing together our nation’s best documentary makers.

“The Australian screen industry is among our most important sectors, however useful measures of success are often limited to quantitative measures such as box office and ratings which, although important, can be overly reductionist as stand-alone measures, and omit consideration of the collaborative process. Quality peer assessment remains a fundamental complement to these measures, and the demand for such has been greater than ever since the AFI introduced its Academy model and AACTA Awards,” Trewhella said.

Trewhella also said AACTA plans to formalise the existing AACTA/industry working group with guild representatives to continue to raise funding and support for the maintenance and sustainability of the AACTA Awards. He said AACTA is working with other industry segments, such as the Visual Effects community, to further represent screen craft excellence in Australia.

“We have been very clear that our ability to sustain and grow the AACTA Awards is dependent on increased industry support. The commitment from OzDox to support AACTA through a membership drive, ticket sales to our events, and lobbying industry for better support is a great example of how we can work together to ensure the Awards are representative of and relevant to the industry’s needs.

“We know there is a demand for more AACTA Awards, and we would love to see crafts currently under represented, or not represented at all, recognised as they should be.

“The reality of this is dependent on an adequate financial commitment from the industry, and we are working with a cross section of the industry - from distributors through to guild representatives - to try to achieve this,” Trewhella said.

STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR THE RE-INSTATEMENT OF DOCUMENTARY CRAFT AWARDS

“The documentary community is a valuable, dynamic, creative and craft-driven part of the industry. Our work and that of our professional and talented crews is vital to the cultural landscape of Australia and the world. The decision to reinstate the documentary craft categories for the 3rd AACTA Awards is an acknowledgement of our community’s significant contribution to the industry.”

OzDox

“ABC TV is delighted that AACTA has found a way to reinstate the documentary craft awards. It is fitting acknowledgment of the factual form and provides an important opportunity to recognise the extraordinary work so many in our industry contribute to telling some of our most important stories.”

Richard Finlayson, Director of ABC TV

“AACTA’s decision to reinstate the documentary craft categories will be received very positively by the entire documentary community, and we are pleased that Australia’s documentary makers via OzDox are now working with AACTA to determine policies and pathways which have a positive impact on our industry.”

Tom Zubrycki, Producer, Director, Cinematographer, and AFI Award-winning Documentary Maker

¹ ‘Facts on Factual – Latest Australian Documentary Production Data 2011/12,’ Screen Australia

CHANGES TO DOCUMENTARY SCREEN CRAFT AWARDS FOR 3RD AACTA AWARDS

The four Documentary Craft Awards which will be reinstated for the 3rd AACTA Awards are:

- Best Direction in a Documentary
- Best Cinematography in a Documentary
- Best Editing in a Documentary
- Best Sound in a Documentary

Changes to deadlines:

- Feature Length Documentary – Friday July 5, 2013
- Documentary Television Program – Friday July 19, 2013

Changes to voting:

- To assist with the substantial resource implications of reinstating these four Awards, the AACTA Award for Best Feature Length Documentary will be determined by a jury this year. Juries will also determine the four reinstated documentary screen craft awards (as usual).

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 year-long review and industry consultation. The inaugural AACTA Awards were held in Sydney in January 2012 and the 2nd AACTA Awards were held in Sydney in January 2013. 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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