



MEDIA RELEASE

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4th AACTA AWARDS SCREENINGS PROGRAM LAUNCHED

25 Feature Films in Competition Announced *Son of A Gun* Announced as Opening Night Film

SYDNEY, 17 September 2014 - The Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) today launched the program for the 4th AACTA Awards Screenings, showcasing the finest contemporary films competing in the nation's top screen Awards, the AACTAs.

The AACTA Awards Screenings bring Australia's leading screen professionals together with screen enthusiasts to discuss and judge the Feature Films, Short Films and Feature Length Documentaries competing for an Award.

AACTA today announced that a total of 25 Feature Films will compete for an AACTA Award this year, six of which will preview at the AACTA Awards Screenings - *My Mistress*, *THE MULE*, *Son Of A Gun*, *Turkey Shoot*, *William Kelly's War*, and *The Water Diviner*.

The 25 Feature Films In Competition for the 4th AACTA Awards are: *52 Tuesdays*; *AROUND THE BLOCK*; *The Babadook*; *Backyard Ashes*; *Canopy*; *Charlie's Country*; *Fell*; *Felony*; *Galore*; *Healing*; *I, FRANKENSTEIN*; *The Infinite Man*; *The Little Death*; *My Mistress*; *THE MULE*; *Predestination*; *The Railway Man*; *The Rover*; *Son Of A Gun*; *These Final Hours*; *Tracks*; *Turkey Shoot*; *The Water Diviner*; *William Kelly's War*; *Wolf Creek 2*.

The 4th AACTA Awards Screenings will open in Sydney with *Son Of A Gun*, a taut psychological thriller starring **Ewan McGregor** and newcomer **Brenton Thwaites**. **Director Julius Avery** and **Producer Timothy White** will introduce the film, which marks an exciting Feature Film directorial debut for **Avery**, following his AFI Award for Best Short Fiction Film in 2008 for *Jerrycan*.

The 4th AACTA Awards Screenings will be held between 6 – 23 October 2014 in Sydney (Event Cinemas, Bondi Junction) and Melbourne (Palace Cinema Como and Backlot Studios), and online via AACTA TV, accessible anytime, anywhere. Screenings are exclusive and complimentary to members of the AFI (open to all) and AACTA (accredited screen professionals). The Screenings Program, included in the 4th AACTA Awards Judges' Handbook, will be available on the AACTA website from 9am Wednesday 17 September 2014.

FEATURE FILMS IN COMPETITION MARK A STRONG YEAR FOR AUSTRALIAN FILM

The Feature Films in Competition announced today for the 4th AACTA Awards, to be held in Sydney in January 2015, demonstrate a strong year in Australian filmmaking.

In addition to the number of films competing, up from 15 last year, eight filmmakers are former Award winners/nominees, including veteran filmmaker **Rolf de Heer**, who holds six AFI Awards.

Attesting to the strength of Australian filmmaking globally, at least 10 Feature Films in Competition have already received critical acclaim at the world's top film festivals, including Cannes Film Festival, and a record number of Australian films have, or will have had, a US release this year.

Adding to Awards anticipation, this year's Feature Films in Competition see top international talent - **Colin Firth, Ewan McGregor, Robert Pattinson** and **Christina Ricci** - pitted alongside award-winning local talent, including **Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe, Guy Pearce** and **Joel Edgerton**, to name a few.

Indigenous films are also strong contenders for this year's Awards, with three Feature Films in Competition featuring indigenous themes, including **Charlie's Country**, which saw David Gulpilil awarded Best Actor at Cannes.

AFI | AACTA CEO, Damian Trehwella, said that this year's competition sees a number of new trends for the Australian film industry.

"One of the most exciting shifts in this year's AACTA Awards is the level and breadth of competition, meaning anticipation around the Awards will be greater than ever.

"The Academy is thrilled to see that almost half of this year's films were made by first-time filmmakers, confirming what our President, Geoffrey Rush, has noted in recent years; the vibrancy and dynamism across the Australian screen industry is producing an exciting new generation of artistically and technically talented filmmakers.

"In an interesting emerging trend, a number of films have leveraged new avenues beyond traditional theatrical releases, such as Festivals, social media and online platforms, to increase audience numbers and engagement. These include **The Babadook**, which not only took Sundance Film Festival by storm, resulting in greater awareness and distribution potential, but also helped fuel the trend towards crowdfunding following its success as one of Australia's first mainstream crowdfunding campaigns for a Feature Film, raising \$30,000 via Kickstarter," Trehwella said.

Trehwella said that this year marks a strong year for women in Australian film, with nine Feature Films in Competition either having female leads, including **Tracks (Mia Wasikowska)**, or female-led storylines, including **52 Tuesdays** (which also featured a female as the lead role, and was directed by a female filmmaker, three-time AACTA Award nominee, **Sophie Hyde**).

"That many of the female talent involved with this year's Feature Films in Competition, both behind and in front of the camera, are AFI and AACTA Award winners and nominees reinforces the importance of the Awards in securing new productions as well as new opportunities for our industry.

"Our research shows that, as Australia's highest screen accolade, an AACTA Award win creates new opportunities for our talented industry both here and abroad. Coupled with the fact that some of this year's Feature Films in Competition have already achieved substantial global Box Office takings (with **The Railway Man** on \$22million, and **I, Frankenstein** with \$71million), and a number have already received international acclaim, I look forward to this year's AACTA Awards further connecting our best films with audiences at home and around the world," Trehwella said.

A clip showcasing the Feature Films in Competition will be available on the AACTA website from 9am Wednesday 17 September 2014. Visit www.aacta.org

The AACTA Awards are supported by the NSW Government, through Destination NSW, and are a key creative industries event on the NSW Events Calendar.

NOTES TO EDITORS

NOTES REGARDING FEATURE FILMS

The Feature Films in Competition mark the long list of eligible Feature Films to be narrowed down to a list of nominees via voting. These are the Feature Films deemed eligible to compete, either automatically (having achieved a five capital city cinema release), or through jury pre-selection (two to four capital city release or alternative distribution pathway). The Academy notes an amendment to theatrical release dates for Feature Films in Competition applicable to the 4th and future AACTA Awards (unless stated otherwise) as follows. Following consultation with the industry, to be eligible for competition Feature Films will now need to have had a theatrical release in Australia for the first time during the calendar year (1 January to 31 December), as opposed to November through to November as was previously the policy. As this amendment had not been implemented at the time of calling for Feature Film entries in May 2014, Feature Films which had a release date between 7 November 2013 (as was stated at the time of calling for entries) and 31 December 2014 will be eligible for competition for the 4th AACTA Awards. Feature Film nominations will be announced later in 2014, and winners will be announced at the 4th AACTA Awards in Sydney in January 2015.

VOTING

For the 4th AACTA Awards, AFI members (film and television enthusiast members of the public) have the opportunity to vote within the categories of Best Short Animation and Best Short Fiction Film, and AACTA members (accredited screen professionals) can vote across all Award categories. For more information about voting, [click here](#).

NOMINATIONS ANNOUNCEMENT

Feature Film nominees will be announced with all Television nominees and remaining Documentary nominees in Sydney later in 2014. [Short Film nominees](#) and [Feature Length Documentary nominees](#) were recently announced for the 4th AACTA Awards.

COUNTDOWN TO THE AACTA AWARDS | SYDNEY 2015

Winners will be announced at the 4th AACTA Awards in Sydney, home of the AACTA Awards, in January 2015. The Australian Academy celebrates screen excellence throughout the year culminating in three major events during January. The AACTA Awards Luncheon presented by Deluxe and the AACTA Awards Ceremony and Official After Party are held in Sydney and are proudly supported by the NSW Government, through its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW, and are a key creative industries event on the NSW Events Calendar.

The 4th AACTA Awards follow three highly successful Awards seasons since the launch of AACTA by the Australian Film Institute (AFI) in 2011.

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

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