

**MEDIA RELEASE – STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01AM WEDNESDAY 15 APRIL, 2015**

## **New Channel Seven Telecast, New Date Announced for AACTA Awards**

The Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) has secured a new partnership with Channel Seven, telecasting Australia's most prestigious screen Awards on the nation's top rating television network.

In line with the new telecast strategy, AACTA also today announced a new date for the 5th AACTA Awards Ceremony, which will be held in Sydney on 9 December 2015 at The Star. Capitalising on a primetime telecast in a key viewing period ahead of the summer break, the new date also aims to drive sales for Australia's top film and television productions awarded at the AACTA Awards ahead of the Christmas and holiday period.

Celebrated as one of Australia's most glamorous red carpet events, the AACTA Awards see the "who's who" of Australian screen head to Sydney each year to honour excellence across film, television, documentary and short film, with hosts and key presenters to date including Russell Crowe, Cate Blanchett, Nicole Kidman and AACTA President Geoffrey Rush. Work is already underway to create an innovative new show format, and both AACTA and Channel Seven look forward to capitalising on Seven's strong audiences to attract new viewers.

AACTA also today called for entries and jurors for the 5th AACTA Awards, which will see more than 40 peer-assessed Awards celebrate Australian stories, culture and creativity captured on the big and small screens.

Building on AACTA's strategy of bolstering industry and audience attendance, AACTA will continue to hold two major annual Awards events in Sydney; the public-facing televised AACTA Awards Ceremony, and the industry-focussed AACTA Awards Luncheon. Both events have become calendar highlights for the screen industry, fashionistas and film and television fans since launching in 2011 by the Australian Film Institute (AFI), which has been awarding Australian screen excellence since 1958.

In line with the success of AACTA's international engagement strategy, the AACTA International Awards will continue to be presented in Los Angeles each January and telecast on Foxtel, adding an Australian perspective to the global international screen awards conversation ahead of the BAFTAs and the Oscars.

AACTA Awards events are complemented by AFI | AACTA's robust and expanding year-round members' events program, with more than 80 screen culture and industry development events held in 2014 in Sydney and Melbourne, and a full events schedule already rolling out for 2015. Open to the public and industry, the membership program includes exclusive and complimentary screenings supported by cast and crew panel discussions and Q&As, and a comprehensive Meet the Makers program.

**AACTA President Geoffrey Rush** said, "Five years ago we had the vision of creating an internationally recognised Australian counterpart to the BAFTAs and the Oscars, increasing the profile of the Australian screen industry. Already our achievements have surpassed our expectations.

“Our Awards events attract as hosts, presenters and ambassadors Australia’s best and most diverse practitioners in film and TV, including Russell Crowe, Cate Blanchett, Dr George Miller, Deb Mailman – and beyond - not forgetting the more than 2,500 fans and all arenas of the creative community who convene each year for the AACTA Awards Ceremony.

“Our achievements come as a result of industry, public and media support, and we are more than delighted with Channel Seven’s endorsement of AACTA by partnering with us for the next major Awards telecast. We thrive on such unwavering support from the media in tandem with that from our industry, the public, and our crucial sponsors. This outstanding and enthusiastic support from Australia’s top rating network ensures this will be our best show yet,” Mr Rush said.

**AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trehwella** said, “With a new show format and new audiences on Channel Seven, we hope to raise the bar for the AACTA Awards telecast, and further spotlight our nation’s best film and television performers, productions and practitioners.

“Channel Seven has consistently earned AACTA Award nominations across drama and reality television in recent years, including for its reality juggernaut **My Kitchen Rules**, Australia’s highest rating show. AACTA Award winning productions for Seven include **Packed to the Rafters** and **The Amazing Race**, and we again look forward to healthy competition from Seven and all networks for the 5th AACTA Awards.

“From a film perspective, 2015 is looking very strong, particularly if the success of **Paper Planes** is any indication, with the family favourite taking nearly \$10m at the box office. Some of Australia’s biggest names in filmmaking are set to compete for the 5th AACTA Awards, with a number of films starring Australian and international icons, adding anticipation around our telecast on Seven. These include Dr George Miller’s **Mad Max: Fury Road** (Tom Hardy, Charlize Theron) and Jocelyn Moorhouse’s **The Dressmaker** (Kate Winslet, Judy Davis, Liam Hemsworth), as well as a number of first-time feature film directors including Kim Farrant (**Strangerland**, starring Nicole Kidman and Hugo Weaving), Michael Petroni (**Backtrack**, starring Adrien Brody, Sam Neil) and Ariel Kleiman (**Partisan**, starring Vincent Cassell, Nigel Barber).

“We are delighted to partner with Channel Seven, and look forward to bringing new ideas, a new format and new artists to the telecast of our outstanding event held at The Star in stunning Sydney this summer,” Mr Trehwella said.

**Brad Lyons, Director of Production, Channel Seven** said, "Channel Seven is thrilled to be forming this partnership with the AACTA Awards.

"We share the same ambitions and commitment to excellence on the screen, regardless of the size of that screen. The annual Awards presentation is a highlight for our industry and we are looking forward to beginning the planning and pre-production with AACTA," Mr Lyons said.

**Destination NSW Chief Executive Officer Sandra Chipchase** congratulated AACTA and said, “Bringing the AACTA Awards forward to December and working with the nation’s highest rating broadcaster is an exciting opportunity to engage and showcase AACTA to new audiences.

“Destination NSW has been a strategic partner of the AACTA Awards since its inception and we’re proud to continue this relationship, ensuring Sydney remains the home of the AACTA Awards through to 2017,” Ms Chipchase said.

**ENDS**

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### CALL FOR ENTRIES & JURORS

**Call for Entries:** Entries across all AACTA Awards categories - Feature Film, Television, Documentary, Short Animation and Short Fiction Film - open at 9am Wednesday 15 April 2015. Entry eligibility and closing dates vary per category and have changed from the 4th AACTA Awards in line with the new dates for the 5th AACTA Awards events. The first entry deadlines are for Short Fiction Film and Short Animation on 8 May 2015. Please note a change in the criteria for Feature Film direct eligibility into the 5th AACTA Awards; eligible Feature Films must be publicly exhibited during the release period for paid admission in a commercial cinema, for a run of at least seven consecutive days, in a minimum of **four** Australian Capital Cities - including Sydney and Melbourne – as opposed to five capital cities as was previously stipulated. All dates and information regarding how to apply for the 5th AACTA Awards can be found on the AFI | AACTA website from 9am Wednesday 15 April 2015.

**Call for Jurors:** AACTA Awards jurors determine the nominees and winners for a number of AACTA Awards categories across Film, Television, Documentary and Short Film. Jury positions are open to accredited members of AACTA only, and jury applications close 6 May 2015.

To enter the 5th AACTA Awards or to apply to become a juror, visit the AACTA website from 9am Wednesday 15 April 2015: [www.aacta.org](http://www.aacta.org).

### About AFI | AACTA

This year marks the fifth Awards of the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA), which was established by the Australian Film Institute (AFI) in 2011. The AACTA Awards are a continuum of the AFI Awards, which commenced in Australia in 1958, and have seen some of Australia's biggest names in film awarded, including Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe, Dr. George Miller (AFI | AACTA Patron), Cate Blanchett (AFI | AACTA Ambassador) and Geoffrey Rush (AACTA President). AACTA Award recipients have included Hugo Weaving, Judy Davis and Jessica Mauboy, and AACTA International Award recipients have included Meryl Streep, Quentin Tarantino, Michael Keaton and Julianne Moore, to name a few. The AACTA Awards are determined by accredited members and juries, whom vote to determine more than 40 awards across film and television. Feature Film voting is via a two-step preferential voting system, as is standard across internationally recognised screen academies.

### CONTACT

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### CONNECT

Official hashtag: #AACTAs Facebook: /AACTAawards Twitter: @aacta Instagram: @aacta

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

Thanks to the generous support of our partners and sponsors

