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Cate Blanchett to receive Australia's highest screen Award

Watch on Channel Seven, 8:30pm Wednesday 9 December, at the 5th AACTA Awards presented by Presto in Sydney

One of the world's most respected and admired performers, **Cate Blanchett**, was today announced as this year's recipient of Australia's highest screen Award; the AACTA Longford Lyell Award.

First presented in 1968, the AACTA Longford Lyell Award is the highest honour that the Australian Academy can bestow upon an individual in recognition of a person who has made a truly outstanding contribution to the enrichment of Australia's screen environment and culture.

Originally known as the AFI | AACTA Raymond Longford Award, in honour of the great Australian film pioneer, Raymond Longford, the name of the Award was changed earlier in 2015 following industry consultation, in recognition of Raymond Longford's partner in filmmaking and in life, Lottie Lyell.

The AACTA Longford Lyell Award will be presented to **Cate Blanchett** by **Richard Roxburgh** and **Hugo Weaving** at the 5th AACTA Awards presented by Presto in Sydney, televised on Channel Seven at 8:30pm, Wednesday 9 December. The presentation will also include a tribute from **Gillian Armstrong**, and filmed tributes from **Martin Scorsese**, **Robert Redford**, **Ridley Scott** and **Ron Howard**, to name a few.

HONOURING CATE BLANCHETT

After graduating from NIDA in 1992, Cate started her acting career in theatre, where she received instant critical acclaim and industry recognition for her performances in **Timothy Daly's KAFKA DANCES** and won Best Actress for her performance in David Mamet's **OLEANNA**, opposite **Geoffrey Rush**, before making her way onto the screen.

After a brief appearance in the ABC crime drama **POLICE RESCUE**, Cate landed her first lead screen role in 1994 as Elizabeth Ashton in the Australian drama mini-series, **HEARTLAND**, opposite **Ernie Dingo**, followed by **BORDERTOWN** with **Hugo Weaving** in 1995.

Cate made a strong, significant start in feature films, with her first three releasing within one year of each other in 1997, two of which - **Gillian Armstrong's OSCAR AND LUCINDA** with **Ralph Fiennes**, and **THANK GOD HE MET LIZZIE** with **Richard Roxburgh** and **Frances O'Connor** - scored Cate her first Australian Film Institute (AFI) Award nomination and win, respectively.

Off the back of her BAFTA and Golden Globe Award-winning performance in **ELIZABETH** in 1998, for which she also received her first Oscar nomination, Cate quickly became an in-demand performer within the global film industry.

Another career breakthrough came in 2001 when Cate began to rise as one of Hollywood's leading women and a household name after the release of **Peter Jackson's** Oscar-winning blockbuster trilogy, **THE LORD OF THE RINGS**, in which she played the role of Galadriel.

Taking on the portrayal of **Katharine Hepburn** in **Martin Scorsese's THE AVIATOR** in 2005, Cate became the first actor to win an Oscar for playing an Oscar-winning actor.

Her performance in **BLUE JASMINE** earned her more than 40 global industry and critics' awards including the AACTA International Award for Best Actress in 2014 in addition to an Oscar, BAFTA and Golden Globe Award.

Cate has now won a total of six awards from the AFI or AACTA, three BAFTAs, three Golden Globes and two Oscars – the most acting Oscars won by an Australian to date.

Other notable work includes her performances in **I'M NOT THERE**, **NOTES ON A SCANDAL** and **VERONICA GUERIN**.

Cate continues her portrayal of strong, determined and passionate women in her recent films, **TRUTH** (which she brought to Australia to film) and **CAROL**, which has created Awards buzz between national and international film critics alike.

Cate was appointed to the role of AFI Ambassador (now AFI | AACTA Ambassador) in 2001.

AACTA President, Geoffrey Rush, said:

"Cate Blanchett will be celebrated for generations to come as one of the finest performers of our times.

"She is in the company of but a few performers in this world whose ownership of their craft has redefined it for the rest; taking performance to new levels of excellence to which many aspire.

"But as much as Cate is the master of her craft through classical training, she has that rare thing of innate talent. She has intuition and intelligence in spades, and a willingness and ability to be raw and vulnerable in performance, through to fierce and challenging.

"From the very first time I saw Cate perform as an undergraduate student at NIDA, to today when I have had the honour of working with this exceptional talent, I along with so many others have tracked her bright star rising. Today it is a pleasure to see Cate honoured as one of our best, alongside so many of Australia's great men and women of screen. I couldn't be more proud of, or more pleased for, this exceptional woman and performer."

Cate Blanchett said:

"When I look at the outstanding men and women who have received this prestigious award before me, I am truly honoured to be considered among venerable practitioners and performers; creative spirits who have had a strong and lasting influence, not only on my work, but on what I thought creatively possible in this country.

"I applaud AACTA for expanding this award to acknowledge Lottie Lyell's rich creative legacy. The paths we forge in this great film industry of ours are rarely linear and Lyell's astonishing achievements as an actress of stage and screen, as a writer, producer and director stand as an inspiration for us all."

CATE BLANCHETT - MAJOR SCREEN AWARDS

2014

AACTA International Award for Best Actress, **BLUE JASMINE**

Oscar for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role, **BLUE JASMINE**

Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture – Drama, **BLUE JASMINE**

BAFTA Film Award for Best Leading Actress, **BLUE JASMINE**

2008

AFI International Award for Best Actress, **ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE**

Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture, **I'M NOT THERE**

2005

Oscar for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role, **THE AVIATOR**

BAFTA Film Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role, **THE AVIATOR**

News Limited Readers' Choice Award (AFI Award), **LITTLE FISH**

AFI Award for Best Lead Actress, **LITTLE FISH**

1999

Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture - Drama, **ELIZABETH**

BAFTA Film Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role, **ELIZABETH**

1997

AFI Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role, **THANK GOD HE MET LIZZIE**

NOTES TO EDITORS

The AACTA Longford Lyell Award

The first AFI Raymond Longford Award was awarded to Ian Dunlop (director) in 1968.

Since then, many icons of the Australian screen industry have been bestowed the AFI Raymond Longford Award, including **Peter Weir**, **Geoffrey Rush**, **Fred Schepisi**, **Ken G. Hall**, **Tim Burstall**, **Jack Thompson**, **Jan Chapman**, **David Stratton** and many more.

Following the launch of AACTA in 2011, three AACTA Raymond Longford Awards have been presented: cinematographer **Don McAlpine** was awarded in 2012; Producer **Al Clark** was awarded in 2013; and actress **Jacki Weaver** was awarded in 2014. Writer and Producer **Andrew Knight** was the first recipient of the AACTA Longford Lyell Award at the 4th AACTA Awards in January 2015.

For a list of all past Raymond Longford Award recipients, [click here](#).

5th AACTA Awards presented by Presto | The Star Event Centre, Sydney

The 5th AACTA Awards Ceremony presented by Presto will be held at The Star Event Centre Sydney on Wednesday 9 December 2015, and televised on Channel Seven at 8:30pm, with an encore on Foxtel Movies Masterpiece channel on Friday 11 December at 10.15pm.

Final general public and industry tickets to the Ceremony are available now: www.aacta.org/events

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

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Nikstar | Niki White T: +61 (0) 403 176 988 E: niki@nikstar.com.au

AFI | AACTA | Brooke Daly T: +61 (0) 449 900 466 E: bdaly@afi.org.au

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

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