



MEDIA RELEASE

Strictly embargoed until 12.01am Thursday 13 July 2017

Australian Academy announces first nominees for the 7th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel

The Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) has today revealed the first nominees for the 7th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel. Nominees were announced in two categories: **Best Short Fiction Film** and **Best Short Animation**.

Further nominees will be announced later this year, with winners across all categories to be announced at AACTA's two major events, the **Industry Luncheon** and the **Ceremony and Official After Party**, in Sydney this December.

AACTA AWARD FOR SHORT FICTION FILM NOMINEES

- **THE ELEVEN O'CLOCK** Derin Seale, Josh Lawson, Karen Bryson
- **MIRO** Victoria Wharfe McIntyre, Fran Dobbie, Amadeo Marquez-Perez
- **MRS MCCUTCHEON** John Sheedy, Andre Lima, Jenny Vila
- **SLAPPER** Luci Shroder, Jason Byrne, Michael Latham, Stephanie Westwood

Marking a strong year for Australian short film, all of this year's Best Short Fiction Film nominees have received critical acclaim following screenings at a host of Australian and international film festivals.

Written, produced and starring internationally acclaimed Australian actor **Josh Lawson** (HOUSE OF LIES, THE LITTLE DEATH, HOGES), **THE ELEVEN O'CLOCK** follows the delusional patient of a psychiatrist who believes he is actually the psychiatrist. **THE ELEVEN O'CLOCK**, directed by Derin Seale, was awarded Best Comedy at LA Shorts Festival 2016, Best Narrative Short at Cinequest 2017, Best Screenplay at FlickerFest 2017 and Audience Choice for Best Comedy Short Film at Cleveland International Film Festival 2017.

A WWII Aboriginal Western, **MIRO** stars AACTA Award-nominated actor **Mark Coles Smith** (LAST CAB TO DARWIN, PAWNO) and **Aaron McGrath** (JASPER JONES, GLITCH, THE CODE). The film's nomination follows sell out screenings at GI Film Festival in Washington DC, and is writer and director **Victoria Wharfe McIntyre's** second nomination in the category, having previously been nominated at the inaugural AACTA Awards for THE TELEGRAM MAN.

MRS MCCUTCHEON marks multiple Helpmann, Sydney Theatre Critics and WA Equity Award-winning theatre director **John Sheedy's** film debut. The short film, which aims to give a voice to the thousands of trans and gender diverse children, has received acclaim at international film festivals including the 33rd Hamburg International Short Film Festival and the 63rd Oberhausen International Film Festival in Germany, where it received a special mention in the International Children's Competition Award.

Directed by **Luci Shroder**, **SLAPPER** follows a rebellious and broke teen in Australian suburbia. **SLAPPER** has received critical acclaim on the festival circuit, picking up a number of awards, including: Best Short Film at the 2016 Australian Directors' Guild Awards, Best Short Fiction Film at Sydney Film Festival 2016, the Emerging Australian Filmmaker Award at Melbourne International Film Festival 2016, and a nomination for the Short Film Grand Jury Prize at Sundance Film Festival 2017.

AACTA AWARD FOR SHORT ANIMATION NOMINEES

- **AFTER ALL** Michael Cusack, Richard Chataway
- **BARBARA** Larissa Behrendt, Marieka Walsh, Kiki Dillon, Michaela Perske
- **LOST PROPERTY OFFICE** Daniel Agdag, Liz Kearney
- **THE WALL** Nick Baker, Tristan Klein

A strong presence at festivals also precede AACTA nominations for three of the Short Animation nominees and their filmmakers.

Michael Cusack receives his third nomination in the Best Short Animation category for **AFTER ALL**, having previously won in 2006 for GARGOYLE as well as receiving a nomination in 2013 for SLIGHT OF HAND, for which **AFTER ALL** producer **Richard Chataway** was also nominated. **AFTER ALL** is a poignant stop motion film about a middle-aged man coming to terms with the loss of his mother.

AACTA Award winner **Marieka Walsh** receives her second consecutive nomination in the category for **BARBARA**, which follows the story of Noongar woman Barbara, whose granddaughter was taken from school by welfare workers in 2013. Walsh is nominated alongside **Larissa Behrendt**, the award-winning author and director of the Walkley Award nominated documentary INNOCENCE BETRAYED, **Michaela Perske**, an award-winning journalist and producer, who worked alongside fellow nominee **Kiki Dillon**, on DREAM BABY, last year's winner of the AACTA Award for Best Short Fiction Film.

Daniel Adgag's LOST PROPERTY OFFICE, which follows the sole custodian of a lost property office who has to move on from his post, swept the Sydney Film Festival 2017 short film awards, picking up both the Robert Mamoulian Award for Best Director and the Yoram Gross Animation Award.

Narrated by AFI Award winner **David Wenham** and sparked by Donald Trump's plan to build a wall on the Mexican border, **THE WALL** won Best Visual Effects at Tropfest 2017 and was a finalist for the Yoram Gross Animation Award at Sydney Film Festival 2017. **THE WALL** marks four time Tropfest finalists **Nick Baker** and **Tristan Klein's** first AACTA nominations.

"We are excited to see Australian short films getting such recognition at film festivals both here and internationally, further cementing Australia's international reputation for excellence in our industry," said **AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trehwella**. "On behalf of AACTA, I congratulate all our short film nominees and wish them the very best for the 7th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel."

The Short Fiction Film and Short Animation nominated films will screen during AACTA's Festival of Australian Film – For Your Consideration screenings (formerly the Official Screenings Program), alongside the Feature Length Documentary nominees and feature films in competition, which will be announced in early August. The program will screen in cinemas throughout August and September and online via AACTA TV. Further details to be announced.

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

– ENDS –

SHORT FILM SYNOPSES

Please find the synopses of the nominated Short Fiction Film and Short Animation productions on the following pages.

NOTES REGARDING SHORT FILM CATEGORY NOMINEES

Juries of respected industry professionals representing a diverse selection of Australian screen crafts determined the nominees in these categories. AFI and AACTA members will vote to determine the winners of each category following the Festival of Australian Film – For Your Consideration screenings.

AACTA'S FESTIVAL OF AUSTRALIAN FILM – FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

The Feature Films in Competition and Feature Length Documentary nominees will be announced in August 2017, when the program for AACTA's Festival of Australian Film – For Your Consideration (formerly the Official Screenings Program) will also be announced. The Festival will take place during August and September, and will be available for AFI and AACTA members in cinemas and online via AACTA TV.

You can become a member today from as little as \$70 a year at www.aacta.org/membership. AFI membership is open to and encouraged for all. AACTA membership is granted to screen professionals through an accreditation process.

7TH AACTA AWARDS PRESENTED BY FOXTEL

AACTA's two major Awards events will both be held this December at The Star Event Centre in Sydney – the home of the AACTA Awards.

- The **7th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel | Industry Luncheon** will be held on Monday 4 December; and
- The **7th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel | Ceremony & Official After Party** will be held on Wednesday 6 December, televised on Channel Seven with encore screenings on Foxtel.

Tickets for both events will go on sale in early October 2017.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

NIXCo

P: 02 8399 0626

E: info@nixco.com.au

AFI | AACTA

Michelle Berg

P: +61 (03) 9695 7222

E: mberg@afi.org.au

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Official hashtag: #AACTAs

Facebook: /AACTAawards

Twitter: @aacta

Instagram: @aacta

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

Thanks to the generous support of our partners and sponsors:



– SHORT FICTION FILM NOMINEE SYNOPSES –

THE ELEVEN O’CLOCK

The delusional patient of a psychiatrist believes he is actually the psychiatrist. As they each attempt to treat each other, the session gets increasingly out of control.

Director: Derin Seale

Producers: Derin Seale, Josh Lawson, Karen Bryson

MIRO

When Miro returns home at the end of WWII, he finds his land taken, his daughter stolen, his people relocated and his service record treated with contempt. But the New Guinea battlefield taught him how to fight, and he sets out to reunite his family waging his own form of justice.

Director: Victoria Wharfe McIntyre

Producers: Fran Dobbie, Amadeo Marquez-Perez

MRS MCCUTCHEON

Having always felt he was born in the wrong body, ten year old Tom chooses the name Mrs McCutcheon rather than the name he was given at birth; he also prefers the flow of a dress over the cut of a pant. Now at his third school Tom is having trouble settling in and finding acceptance from his newfound peers – except for Trevor, a tough little charmer who also suffers prejudice due to his Aboriginal heritage. With the school dance only days away, Tom is thrust on a journey to find his own place in the world.

Director: John Sheedy

Producers: Andre Lima, Jenny Vila

SLAPPER

Taylah is a rebellious and destitute teen from Australian suburbia. After a brief sexual encounter, Taylah must scrape together money for the morning after pill before it’s too late. As she hustles for the cash, Taylah is also stuck babysitting a wild and uncooperative five year old, Vegas. Taylah’s wits are tested as she navigates a suburban wasteland, determined to not let poverty strip her of her bodily autonomy.

Director: Luci Schroder

Producers: Luci Schroder, Jason Byrne, Michael Latham, Stephanie Westwood

– SHORT ANIMATION NOMINEE SYNOPSES –

AFTER ALL

After all is said and done...all that is left are memories. A man cleans out his childhood home remembering past conversations.

Director: Michael Cusack

Producer: Richard Chataway

BARBARA

Since Kevin Rudd's apology to the Stolen Generation in 2008, the number of indigenous children in out of home care has risen from 9,000 to over 16,000. Noongar woman Barbara was caring for her grandchildren when in 2013 her granddaughter Tiara was taken from school by welfare workers and returned to Queensland. At no time did FAC's alert Barbara to any issues regarding Tiara's welfare. Barbara fought for the next seven months to have Tiara returned to her care. With the help of Grandmothers Against Removal (GMAR), Barbara won her case but knows there are possible long term consequences.

Directors: Larissa Behrendt, Marieka Walsh

Producers: Kiki Dillon, Michaela Perske

LOST PROPERTY OFFICE

Ed is the sole custodian of the Lost Property Office. In many ways he's as lost at the items he is tasked to look after. Alone and days away from losing his beloved job, Ed decides he's not leaving without taking his life with him.

Director: Daniel Agdag

Producer: Liz Kearney

THE WALL

A grandmother and her grandson flee their city when, one night, the darkness arrives. Through fire, over waves, they escape only to reach a tall, endless wall. The grandmother decides to sell everything she has to help the pair get over and away.

Directors: Nick Baker, Tristan Klein

Producers: Nick Baker, Tristan Klein