



AFI ANNOUNCES EXCITING NEW CHANGES Introduces the idea of an 'Australian Academy'

Now in its 53rd year, the Australian Film Institute (AFI) is announcing a **period of consultation** with its constituents and the wider community as it prepares to embark on a period of significant development.

Building constructively on more than half a century of AFI heritage, achievement and acknowledging the growing success of our talented creative community, the Australian Film Institute is reviewing its strategic aims and programs with a view to building a refined and more inclusive professional structure, which will result in the **establishment of an 'Australian Academy'**.

AFI Patron Dr George Miller says in support of the AFI proposed changes,

"The importance of community, screen culture and the pursuit of excellence, driving forces of the AFI for over 50 years, cannot be underestimated. These factors were pivotal to our industry's acceleration from the late 60's and are certainly no less important today. The 21st Century offers immense opportunities and the AFI's proposed development of an "Australian Academy" cleverly adapts successful elements of the world's leading screen organizations to local traditions. This unifying of common purpose and effort makes such good sense. It's a very exciting proposal".

A significant step in the change will be the move after a decade of the awards held in Melbourne, to Sydney. In a landmark three year deal with the NSW Government, the move coincides with what is shaping up to be an exciting new decade for the Australian screen industry, AFI sponsors and partners.

For the 2011 calendar year, the first significant change is to **move the awards ceremony from December 2011 to late January 2012**. This allows the industry to include many more projects from 2011 in the awards and brings the Australian film and television awards in line with the international system and buzz around the Golden Globes® Awards, Academy Awards® and BAFTA Awards.

AFI Advisor Greg Coote who has been instrumental in developing the proposed vision says, "Since the 1970's renaissance the Australian screen community has grown exponentially and its potential is undoubtedly immense. More than ever it's critical that a national and international Australian screen community is nurtured. With a long and rich tradition, the AFI Professional Membership is well placed to be developed into a more universally recognizable and understood model, an Australian Academy. The establishment of an 'Australian Academy' is not just overdue, but eminently possible and extremely useful".

At this important time the AFI is delighted to announce two new board members. **Sigrid Thornton**, one of Australia's leading and best loved actresses, and **Jennifer Huby**, partner at TressCox Lawyers. They replace retiring members Peter Thompson and Todd Sampson.

“As the AFI undertakes this substantial and promising review we welcome the arrival of Jennifer Huby and are delighted Sigrid Thornton has returned to the AFI. Peter Thompson made many fantastic contributions over four years and whilst a director for a briefer period Todd Sampson’s support was also invaluable. I sincerely thank them both. We are determined to make the AFI relevant to all sectors of our very broad Industry and we are looking forward to working to achieve this” says
AFI Chair, Alan Finney

Renato Rispoli has been appointed as AFI Awards Event Director reporting directly to AFI CEO, Damian Trehwella. Renato was formerly with Events NSW and played an integral role in the return of the AFI Awards to Sydney.

AFI CEO Damian Trehwella comments “While audiences for Australian television continue to grow en masse, among many achievements, we have been delighted to see the 2010 AFI Best Film *Animal Kingdom* go on to an Oscar nomination for Jacki Weaver, and 2010 AFI Best Short Animation *The Lost Thing* go on to win an Oscar. Alongside such great achievements, the return of the AFI Awards Ceremony to Sydney after a decade provides the chance for a very special celebration of excellence in January 2012. Renato Rispoli’s recent decision to join the team at this time is most welcome.”

2011 presents an opportunity to further elevate the AFI and the awards to a new level of leadership and support of our film and television industry.

To review the proposed changes, and contribute to the AFI industry consultation please visit www.afi.org.au/consultation . The AFI Consultation shall remain open until 5pm Thursday 30th June, 2011.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

The Lantern Group

Victoria Buchan T. (02) 9383 4033 E. victoria@lanterngroup.com.au

Niki White T. (02) 9383 4038 E. niki@lanterngroup.com.au

The AFI gratefully acknowledges the support of the following sponsors:

NAMING RIGHTS SPONSOR



STRATEGIC PARTNERS



MAJOR GOVERNMENT SPONSOR



SUPPORT STATEMENTS FROM THE INDUSTRY

The importance of community, screen culture and the pursuit of excellence, driving forces of the AFI for over 50 years, cannot be underestimated. These factors were pivotal to our industry's acceleration from the late 60's and are certainly no less important today. The 21st Century offers immense opportunities and the AFI's proposed development of an 'Australian Academy' cleverly adapts successful elements of the world's leading screen organizations to local traditions. This unifying of common purpose and effort makes such good sense. It's a very exciting proposal.

Dr George Miller
AFI Patron

Since the 1970's renaissance the Australian screen community has grown exponentially and its potential is undoubtedly immense. More than ever it's critical that a national and international Australian screen community is nurtured. With a long and rich tradition, the AFI Professional Membership is well placed to be developed into a more universally recognizable and understood model, an Australian Academy. The establishment of an 'Australian Academy' is not just overdue, but eminently possible and extremely useful.

Greg Coote
AFI Advisor

The AFI and the AFI awards are an important part of the Australian film industry, providing support in connecting films with audiences and in recognising their achievements. We support their initiative to review and evolve the AFI into a more inclusive professional structure. I encourage all interested members of the industry to participate in this valuable consultation process.

Ruth Harley
CEO
Screen Australia

SPAA endorses the proposed 'Australian Academy' and its draft constitution and will assist in the further development of this important initiative.

Geoff Brown
Executive Director
Screen Producers Association of Australia

The ADG supports the initiatives and new directions proposed by the AFI. In particular we commend the AFI's commitment to raise the public profile of our screen industry with the Australian public and to honour and celebrate our rich cinema and television history. We look forward to working collectively with our industry colleagues towards the goals the AFI are proposing

Ray Argall
President
Australian Directors Guild

The Australian Writers' Guild is pleased to support the Australian Film Institute's new initiatives, in particular the great potential of their proposal for an 'Australian Academy' to harness the collective talent and experience of screen practitioners in celebration of their craft.

Jacqueline Woodman
Executive Director
AWG

For more than seven decades Actors Equity Australia has been committed to ensuring the excellence that abounds in Australia's arts and entertainment industries is adequately recognised and rewarded. As such, we support the Australian Film Institute's (AFI) efforts to encourage diversity, creativity and quality in the screen industry via a new and more professionally-focused structure, such as the AFI's proposed 'Australian Academy'.

We welcome the AFI's attempts to raise the profile of our industry and the performers who play such a pivotal role in it.

Simon Whipp

Director - Actors Equity Australia

Assistant Federal Secretary - Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance

The Australian Screen Sound Guild is greatly in support of the AFI's intent to establish an 'Australian Academy'. An excellent idea to bring all the Guilds and others together with the formation of an HONARARY COUNCIL and the ASSG will be the first to offer member names for consideration.

Trevor Harrison

President

Australian Screen Sound Guild

It is with great delight that on behalf of the National Executive of the Australian Cinematographers Society, I endorse in principle, the proposed changes the AFI are suggesting as part of their internal structural review. The objective to establish an Australian Academy, for us all to share in, is a challenging one indeed, but one the ACS would be in support of.

Any organisation that has the collective capacity to unite us all, for the right reasons, has to be a good thing. We at the ACS look forward to further collaboration with all concerned.

Ron Johanson ACS

National President

Australian Cinematographers Society

The ASE wholeheartedly supports the AFI's endeavours to formulate an Industry Council. Not only will this help to bring the craft Guilds together, it will offer more relevance and therefore appreciation from our local audiences.

President

Australian Screen Editors Guild.

Jason Ballantine ASE

The AFI plays a pivotal role in the Australian film industry by acknowledging excellence and those who contribute to making Australian film and television.

Clive Harrison

President

Australian Guild of Screen Composers