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Screen Australia, Warp X and Madman call for applications for *Keep Your Wits About You*

Tuesday 12 August 2008: Screen Australia, Warp X and Madman today announced *Keep Your Wits About You*, an exciting two-day workshop to develop feature film concepts that steer two well known genres – comedy and thriller – in new and original directions.

Applications are sought from writers or writer/directors who understand that a thriller should be thrilling and a comedy should be funny, but can push the genres in unexpected, innovative and inspired ways for a 21st century marketplace. When developing either, you'll need to *keep your wits about you* – and so will your audience. Ideas must have the potential to communicate to a local and an international audience, and be made within low-budget parameters of contained cast and locations. Submissions will be in the form of a one-page outline of the film concept.

The two-day workshop will be held in Melbourne on 17 and 18 November 2008. Representatives of the partners, as well as industry players with proven comedy and thriller talent, will mentor at the workshop during one-on-one and group sessions. Successful applicants will, where required, have their travel and accommodation costs covered to attend the workshop.

Screen Australia is a newly established Australian Government agency bringing together the functions of the Film Finance Corporation, Film Australia and the Australian Film Commission (AFC). The Industry and Enterprise Development (IED) branch of Screen Australia continues the work of the AFC's Film Development division in promoting and supporting the development of distinctive Australian scripts and practitioners. Director of IED Lori Flekser said, "We are thrilled to assist in providing this opportunity to writers to develop low-budget genre films guided by such skilled and experienced international and local practitioners."

Warp X is a pioneering venture backed by UK Film Council's New Cinema Fund and Film4 to revitalise the low-budget sector of the British film industry. Harnessing cutting edge digital technology and low-budget production methods, they make high-value movies that can reach cinema audiences across the world. Warp MD and Producer Mark Herbert will visit Australia from the UK to attend the workshop. Warp Films Australia's MD Anna McLeish said, "Mark and I are looking forward to this workshop making the imminent launch of Warp Films Australia go off with a bang. There's great filmmaking talent in Australia and we can't wait to engage with them."

Madman is a leading independent entertainment distribution and rights management company, including theatrical, DVD, TV and VOD. Niche in focus and broad in taste, Madman has a diverse theatrical and DVD release slate. Director Paul Wiegard said "We're passionate about the potential of Australian film to connect with an audience, and looking forward to the opportunity to bring a market and audience perspective to the development of some promising feature film ideas by talented writers."

Applications close Friday, 5 September 2008. Guidelines with detailed information can be obtained from the Screen Australia website www.screenaustralia.gov.au/keepyourwits

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