



Australian Government

SCREEN  
AUSTRALIA

---

## MEDIA RELEASE

**Media enquiries** Victoria Buchan, The Lantern Group  
Tel +61 2 9383 4033 | Mobile 0408 114 864 | victoria@lanterngroup.com.au

[www.screenaustralia.gov.au](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au)

---

### Berlin International Film Festival to screen six Australian films

**Wednesday 14 January 2009:** *Mary and Max* will screen alongside five Australian shorts at the 59th Berlin International Film Festival in February.

*Mary and Max*, the animated feature by the Oscar® winning team of writer/director **Adam Elliot** and producer **Melanie Coombs** will screen as part of the *14plus* Competition program of *Generation*. The film features the voices of internationally acclaimed actors **Toni Collette** as Mary and **Philip Seymour Hoffman** as Max. *Mary and Max* is to open the 2009 Sundance Film Festival on 15 January 2009.

Two short films are also featuring as part of the *Generation 14plus* program, *Tomorrow* (d: **Simon Portus**) and *Summer Breaks* (d: **Sean Kruck**).

*Tomorrow* explores the story of Kristen and Laura as they discover a connection that runs deeper than their differences.

*Summer Breaks* won the Rouben Mamoulian Award at the 20th annual Dendy Awards for Australian short films in 2008. It was recently selected for the 2009 Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival.

The *Generation Kplus* section, a competition for feature and short films aimed at children from the age of four years and over, will screen *Ali & the Ball* (d: **Alex Holmes**), *Netherland Dwarf* (d: **David Michôd**) and *Jerrycan* (d: **Julius Avery**).

*Ali & the Ball* is the story about life behind razor wire, told through the eyes of a child. The film has had much success domestically winning the 2008 Dendy Award for Best Short Fiction and was also selected for the 2008 Melbourne International Film Festival.

*Netherland Dwarf* will screen in Berlin following its outing in the shorts competition at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival.

*Jerrycan* screens in Berlin following the film's official selection at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival, where it was awarded the Jury Prize – Short Film.

Films selected for the *Generation* section will compete for the Crystal Bear Awards, which are awarded to the best feature and short film in the *Kplus* and *14plus* sections.

The Berlin International Film Festival runs 5 – 15 February 2009. The complete program will be finalised by 27 January 2009.

## FEATURE

**Mary and Max**

(92 mins)

Production Company: Melodrama Pictures Pty Ltd

Executive Producers: Mark Gooder, Paul Hardart, Tom Hardart, Bryce Menzies and Jonathan Page

Writer/Director: Adam Elliot

Producer: Melanie Coombs

Co-Executive Producers: Iain Canning, Andrew Mackie, Richard Payten, Associate Producer: Pauline Piechota

Distributor: Icon Films

International Sale: Icon Entertainment International

Australian Broadcaster: SBS Independent

Finance: Screen Australia, Adirondack Pictures, Film Victoria, SBS

Cast: Voices of Toni Collette (Mary), Philip Seymour Hoffman (Max), Eric Bana (Damien) and Barry Humphries (The Narrator)

Synopsis: *Mary and Max* is a claymated feature film from the creators of the Academy Award® winning short animation *Harvie Krumpet*. It is a simple tale of pen-friendship between two very different people: Mary Dinkle, a chubby, lonely eight-year-old girl living in the suburbs of Melbourne, and Max Horowitz, a 44-year-old, severely obese, Jewish man with Asperger's Syndrome living in the chaos of New York.

Spanning 20 years and two continents, Mary and Max's friendship survives much more than the average diet of life's ups and downs. Like *Harvie Krumpet*, *Mary and Max* is innocent but not naïve, as it takes us on a journey that explores friendship, autism, taxidermy, psychiatry, alcoholism, where babies come from, obesity, kleptomania, sexual difference, trust, copulating dogs, religious difference, agoraphobia and much, much more.

## SHORTS

**Ali & the Ball**

(15 mins)

Production Company: Panckhurst Productions Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Alex Holmes

Producer: Helen Panckhurst

Cast: Camilla Ah Kin, Ali Soummaka, Luci Hughes, Rayan El-Saghir

Synopsis: Eight-year-old Ali lives in a refugee detention centre with his mother and little sister Fatima. When his mother's precious knitting needles are confiscated, Ali is forced to take action. Desperate to save his family, he hatches a plan using a ball and the help of a girl on the other side of the razor-wire fence.

**Jerrycan**

(13.5 mins)

Production Company: Avery &amp; Parkyn

Writer/Director: Julius Avery

Producer: Stuart Parkyn

Co-producer: Matt Downey

Cast: Tristan Burke, Walter Currie, Kyle Taylor, Nick Tomas and Dylan Thomas

Synopsis: Five bored kids with nothing to do decide to blow something up. Paper, scissors, rock seals the fate of Nathan, who risks everything after he is bullied into making a life and death decision.

**Netherland Dwarf**

(15 mins)

Presented by Aquarius Films and Qoob

Writer/Director: David Michôd

Producers: Angie Fielder, Polly Staniford

Cast: Jack Egan, Ewen Leslie, Mirrah Foulkes, Justin Rosniak

Synopsis: Harry really wants a rabbit. Harry's dad really wants his wife back. And somehow in the middle of all this wanting, they've forgotten that they already have each other.

**Summer Breaks**

(12 mins)

Production Company: Colour In Pictures

Writer/Director: Sean Kruck

Producer: Caroline Barry

Cast: Mia Wasikowska, Emily Wheaton, Jake Allen, Cash Weijers, Richard Wilson

Synopsis: A day in the life of two teenage boys hanging out in the suburbs on a summer day.

**Tomorrow**

(15 mins)

Production Company: Swing Wing Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Simon Portus

Producer: David Curzon

Cast: Laura Davies, Leah Purcell

Synopsis: Kirsten is a young teenager from a small country town. Laura is a businesswoman on her way to Brisbane. When their journeys coincide, Kirsten and Laura make a connection that runs deeper than their differences.