

MEDIA RELEASE

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Sally Riley to leave Screen Australia

Friday 12 March 2010: Sally Riley, the Head of Screen Australia's Indigenous Department will take up a newly created position as Head of ABC TV's Indigenous Department in May.

Sally has been the Head of the Indigenous Department since 2000, when it was the Australian Film Commission's (AFC) Indigenous Branch. Under Sally's leadership, the Department's new initiatives have provided professional development opportunities for Indigenous filmmakers, creating enormous growth and a distinctive body of work.

"Sally has played an extraordinary role in the development of Indigenous Australian filmmaking during her decade as Head of the Indigenous Department," said **Ruth Harley**, Screen Australia Chief Executive. "Some of Australia's most acclaimed and unique screen stories have been developed and produced through the Indigenous Department largely as a result of Sally's passion, tenacity and vision. We wish Sally every success with the next stage of her career and look forward to a continuing relationship with her in her new role to create quality Indigenous programming."

"I have been truly privileged in my time at Screen Australia and the AFC to work with amazing and talented filmmakers," said Sally Riley. "It's been joy to watch them succeed and challenge the norms of filmmaking and people's expectations of them. I have also been honoured to work with an excellent team of women in the Indigenous Department. This team has been crucial to the achievement of the Department and I look forward to working with them in my new role as we continue to expand the range of opportunities for Indigenous filmmakers."

The first feature funded for production by the Indigenous Department *Samson & Delilah* has taken over \$3.1 million at the Australian box office and has screened in more than 100 locations. **Warwick Thornton's** award-winning hit film was awarded the prestigious *Caméra d'Or* at last year's Cannes International Film Festival and was one of nine films shortlisted for the 2009 Foreign Language Film Oscar®. *Samson & Delilah* was developed through the Long Black initiative which encourages and supports Indigenous filmmakers to work in the feature format. Nine other films are currently being developed through the Long Black program.

The Indigenous Department's short film programs have received international acclaim and helped launched a new generation of Indigenous filmmakers including **Wayne Blair** (*The Djarn Djarns*), **Beck Cole** (*Plains Empty*) and **Darlene Johnson** (*Crocodile Dreaming*). **Rachel Perkins** and **Darren Dale's** television series *First Australians*, which received development support through the Indigenous Department, has been awarded numerous accolades including Best TV Documentary UN Peace Awards. In addition, the National Indigenous Documentary Fund (NIDF) has supported new work by celebrated Indigenous filmmakers including **Ivan Sen**, **Adrian Wills** and **Lawrence Johnston**.

Sally Riley was also one of the key drivers in Screen Australia's industry handbook, *Pathways & Protocols – a filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts*. She was awarded the Queen's Birthday Public Service Medal in June 2008 for her work in

developing initiatives that have increased the participation of Indigenous Australians in the film and television industries. Prior to heading up the Indigenous Department, Sally directed films. Her film *Confessions of a Headhunter* won the AFI for Best Short Film in 2000.

Erica Glynn (Investment and Development Manager) will take over the role of Head of Indigenous in an acting capacity following Sally's departure. Erica, who has worked alongside Sally in the Indigenous Department for the last six years, is a highly accomplished filmmaker (*Ngangkari, My Bed Your Bed*) and has played a major role in the professional development of Indigenous filmmakers in her current position.