
MEDIA RELEASE

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Screen Australia funds 11 new projects including a new film by Stephan Elliott and *Underbelly TV Movies*

Wednesday 28 April 2010: Screen Australia today announced investment of almost \$8 million in two feature films, four TV drama series and five documentaries. Screen Australia's support will trigger production worth over \$42 million.

Screen Australia committed funds to *A Few Best Men* which teams acclaimed Australian director **Stephan Elliott** (*The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert; Easy Virtue*) with successful comedy writer **Dean Craig** (*Death at a Funeral*) to explore mayhem at an Australian wedding. An English groom asks his best friends to be his groomsmen, but the motley trio, combined with his fiancée's bourgeois family, make for a wedding that is as funny as it is disastrous. **Todd Fellman** (*Daybreakers*), **Gary Hamilton** (*Wolf Creek*), **Share Stallings** (*Death at a Funeral*) and **Laurence Malkin** (*Death at a Funeral*) will produce the film.

Wasted on the Young, the debut feature by writer/director **Ben C Lucas** and producers **Janelle Landers** and **Aidan O'Bryan** will receive post-production funding. Set in the socially conscious and disaffected society of an elite high school, the film explores a chain of events and two brothers who must place their lives at the mercy of popular opinion.

"It is very exciting to invest in both a new film from an internationally successful comedy team and a project from an exciting new filmmaking talent," said **Ruth Harley**, Screen Australia Chief Executive. "*A Few Best Men* is a very Australian take on the classic fish out of water tale led by a highly talented comedic team with a strong track record. *Wasted on the Young* showcases genuine new filmmaking talent and uniformly impressive performances from a virtually unknown young cast to create an emotionally sophisticated and resonant, contemporary thriller."

The hugely successful *Underbelly* team were supported to produce *Underbelly TV Movies*, three telemovies looking at Russell 'Mad Dog' Cox, Australia's most successful armed robber; the Silk & Miller murders and the Lorimer Taskforce; and Victorian policeman Colin McLaren's infiltration of the Calabrian Mafia. The projects will be produced by **Peter Gawler** and **Elisa Argenzio**, written by Peter Gawler, **Graeme Koetsveld** and **Kris Mrksa**, and directed by **Shawn Seet**, **Grant Brown** and **Cherie Nowlan**.

The team behind *R.A.N* received support for *The Straits*, an exotic, darkly humorous crime drama that follows the fortunes of a family who happen to be on the wrong side of the law – 'Australian Sopranos in Thongs'. **Helen Panckhurst** and **Penny Chapman** will produce the series with episodes written by **Blake Ayshford**, **Nick Parsons**, **Jaime Browne** and **Louis Nowra** (based on an idea by **Aaron Fa'aoso**), and directors will include **Peter Andrikidis**. Helen and Penny last year received support through Screen Australia's Enterprise program for their work with Matchbox Pictures.

Two National Documentary Programs (NDP) were among the documentaries to receive support. *Charles Bean's Great War* (producer **John Moore**, director **Wain Fimeri**) explores the legacy of WWI correspondent, historian and reluctant ANZAC mythmaker Charles Bean. *Second Australians (Working Title)* (producers **Alex West** and **Lucy Maclaren**, series producer **Jacob Hickey** and series director **Ben Shackelford**) is a major new series that tells the story of the birth of modern 'migrant Australia'.

Features**A FEW BEST MEN****A Few Best Men Pty Ltd****Producers** Todd Fellman, Gary Hamilton, Share Stallings, Laurence Malkin**Writer** Dean Craig**Director** Stephan Elliott**Sales & Distribution** Arclight, Icon**Synopsis** When an English groom travels to the outback to marry his Australian bride, the combination of his three outrageous best men and his fiancée's bourgeois family make for a wedding that is as funny as it is disastrous.**WASTED ON THE YOUNG (Post-production/completion funds)****Party Upstairs Pty Ltd****Producers** Janelle Landers, Aidan O'Bryan**Writer/Director** Ben C Lucas**Sales & Distribution** Fortissimo**Synopsis** An incident at a high school party sets off a chain of events and two brothers must place their lives at the mercy of popular opinion.**TV series****OUTLAND****Princess Pictures****Producers** Andrea Denholm, Laura Waters**Writers** Adam Richard, John Richards**Director** Kevin Carlin**Broadcaster & Sales** ABC TV, ABC Commercial, Princess Publishing and Distribution**Synopsis** *Outland* is a comedy about a gay science fiction fan club, and the lives, loves and never-ending dramas of its members.**PANIC AT ROCK ISLAND****Goalpost Pictures****Producers** Rosemary Blight, Dave Gibson**Writer** Matt Ford**Director/Co-producer** Tony Tilse**Broadcaster & Sales** ITV Global, Nine Network**Synopsis** An island on spectacular Sydney Harbour. Summer sun. Top international artists. Tens of thousands of music fans from across the world. Idyllic... until unimaginable disaster strikes.**THE STRAITS****Pixa House Limited****Producers** Helen Panckhurst, Penny Chapman**Writers** Blake Ayshford, Nick Parsons, Jaime Browne and Louis Nowra (based on an idea by Aaron Fa'aoso)**Directors** Peter Andrikidis, TBC**Broadcaster & Sales** ABC TV, ABC Commercial, DCD Rights**Synopsis** Set in the wild frontier of the Torres Strait and Far North Queensland, *The Straits* is an exotic, darkly humorous crime drama that follows the fortunes of a family who run a smuggling operation.**UNDERBELLY TV MOVIES****Screentime****Producers** Peter Gawler, Elisa Argenzio**Writers** Peter Gawler, Graeme Koetsveld, Kris Mrksa**Directors** Shawn Seet, Grant Brown, Cherie Nowlan**Broadcaster & Sales** Nine Network, Portmans

Synopsis Three telemovies: Russell 'Mad Dog' Cox, Australia's most successful armed robber; the Silk & Miller murders and the Lorimer Taskforce; and Victorian policeman Colin McLaren's infiltration of the Calabrian Mafia.

National Documentary Program (NDP)

CHARLES BEAN'S GREAT WAR

360 Degree Films Pty Ltd

Producers John Moore, Lisa Horler

Director Wain Fimeri

Sales & Distribution NGTI & SBS

Synopsis In this dramatised documentary, Charles Bean, war correspondent, obsessive historian and reluctant mythmaker, tells us all about his remarkable life. From the playing fields of England via the Australian outback, to the maelstrom of the Great War. Charles Bean wrote the truth yet everyone thought he created a myth. He loved Australia the way most people love another person and, as so often happens in love, Australia let him down.

SECOND AUSTRALIANS (WORKING TITLE)

Renegade Films Pty Ltd

Producers Alex West, Lucy Maclaren

Series Producer Jacob Hickey

Series Director Ben Shackelford

Sales & Distribution SBS Content Sales

Synopsis This major new series tells the story of the birth of modern 'migrant Australia' and uncovers the secret history of who we are – the end result of a remarkable and unique 'social experiment'. This is the story of how the world came to Australia – and helped Australia reshape what was humanly possible in the world

Special Documentary Fund (SDF)

BALLAD OF A LOCUST HUNTING MAN

Looking Glass Pictures

Producer Mitzi Goldman

Director Robert Nugent

Sales & Distribution NGTI

Synopsis A personal journey into the myth of the locust and a portrait of a war that can never be won.

THEN THE WIND CHANGED

Rebel Films Pty Ltd

Producer Jeni McMahon

Writer/Director Celeste Geer

Sales & Distribution Rebel Films

Synopsis The small rural hamlet of Strathewen was devastated by Victoria's Black Saturday fires in February 2009. But after the shock of survival, just as the adrenalin is finally depleted, the real work starts. How will the community of Strathewen reclaim their bush paradise?

TRIANGLE WARS

Circe Films

Executive Producer Guillaume Catala

Producers Lizzette Atkins, Peter George

Director Rosie Jones

Sales & Distribution Melimedias Asia Pacific

Synopsis The battle being waged between local government, big business and the community over the development of Melbourne's beachfront 'St Kilda Triangle' site – and the story of how far one man is prepared to go to stop it.