

## Unique opportunity for Australian filmmakers to attend the AFI Conservatory

**Thursday 28 June 2018:** Screen industry veteran and Village Roadshow Entertainment Group CEO Greg Basser and his wife Kiera O'Neill have today announced that they will join with Screen Australia and G'Day USA to provide the first ever dedicated scholarships for Australians to attend the American Film Institute (AFI) Conservatory - the AFI's world-renowned, graduate-level film training program.

The two-year AFI Conservatory program offers Fellows a Master of Fine Arts degree in six disciplines: Cinematography, Directing, Editing, Producing, Production Design and Screenwriting. The AFI Conservatory uses hands-on collaboration to prepare Fellows for the real-world professional filmmaking environment. Upon graduation, 81% of alumni report that they are working, and at top creative levels in their field.

The scholarships will be presented in collaboration with G'Day USA, Australia's premier public and economic diplomacy program in the United States. The initial scholarships will be awarded to two Australian Fellows entering the AFI Conservatory, the first entering in August 2019 and a second entering in August 2020. The scholarships will cover 100% of tuition, plus a stipend towards living expenses. Applicants will apply and enter the AFI Conservatory in one of the six filmmaking disciplines offered. Applications for the first Fellowship are due on 15 October 2018. The first recipient will be announced at the G'Day USA Gala in January 2019. The application process for the second scholarship will be announced in mid-2019.

Melbourne-born and LA-based Basser has been a long-time supporter of the Australian screen industry, and has been instrumental in building opportunities for Australians wishing to pursue US or bi-coastal careers in entertainment. He is a G'Day USA Champion, an inaugural CEO member of the American Australian Business Council, a Qantas Orry-Kelly International Award recipient and is on the board and executive committee for Australians in Film (USA). The new scholarships add to Basser and O'Neill's over 20 years of support for the Australian creative industries, including the Active Minds program at Melbourne Museum and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra education program.

"By establishing the Screen Australia-Onbass Fellowships, we are seeking to open another door for Aussies wanting to hone their US-market skill set, with the benefit of learning quite literally in Hollywood's backyard," said Basser.

"Getting into the AFI Conservatory will not be easy, and studying there will be even more taxing, but the reputation of the course is such that graduates are highly likely to have a sustainable career. I wish all applicants luck in pursuing this extraordinary opportunity."

**Richard N. Gladstein**, Dean, AFI Conservatory added, "Aussie Fellows will join a diverse and international community of talented filmmakers at AFI. Each year, approximately 40% of the Fellows admitted to the AFI Conservatory arrive from outside of the United States – coming together to make movies for two years. We are very pleased that these new scholarships will ensure even more Aussie filmmakers will be a part of our creative community."

### SHARE THE OPPORTUNITY

Brad Falchuk is an AFI Conservatory graduate and a writer, producer, director and co-creator of projects including *Glee*, *American Horror Story*, *Nip/Tuck* and *Posh*. [Here](#), he discusses why the collaborative approach to education at the Conservatory is one of the key opportunities that awaits the successful Screen Australia-Onbass Fellowships applicants.

### ABOUT THE AFI CONSERVATORY

The AFI Conservatory has been named the #1 film school in the world. In 1969, the AFI Conservatory opened its doors to an inaugural class that included Terrence Malick, Caleb Deschanel and Paul Schrader. Today, the AFI Conservatory offers a two-year MFA degree in six filmmaking disciplines: Cinematography, Directing, Editing, Producing, Production Design and Screenwriting. Aspiring artists learn from the masters in a collaborative, hands-on production environment with an emphasis on storytelling. Alumni of this elite

program include Andrea Arnold, Darren Aronofsky, Julie Dash, Steve Golin, Patty Jenkins, Janusz Kamiński, David Lynch, Melina Matsoukas and Robert Richardson, among others.

The AFI admits 140 Fellows per year, with 28 cinematographers, 28 directors, 14 editors, 28 producers, 14 production designers and 28 screenwriters.

### APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants must be Australian citizens, preferably aged over 21 (but at least 18 years of age).
- As this is a Master's course, applicants will preferably have an undergraduate degree from a U.S. - accredited academic institution or a bachelor's degree equivalency document from Australia or other country to receive a Master of Fine Arts degree.
- Applicants who have studied at Australian film schools such as AFTRS and VCA will be highly regarded. The AFI Conservatory will still consider applicants who have no tertiary qualifications. However, if successful, these applicants would graduate as an 'Associate Fellow.'
- Applicants must meet the AFI Conservatory's [Admission Criteria](#).

### APPLICATION PROCESS

If prospective Fellows plan to apply for October 2019 academic year:

- Applications must be received by the AFI Conservatory by 5pm AEDT 15 October 2018 (Midnight 15 October PDT/LA). Apply at [www.AFI.edu](http://www.AFI.edu) and look for "Screen Australia-Onbass Fellowships".
- Applicants will be required to submit several documents including a narrative statement, two letters of recommendation, academic history, a scholarship application and discipline-specific supporting materials. People considering an application should read the AFI Conservatory's [Application Tips](#) and [FAQs](#) well in advance of the due date to ensure they can complete their application in time.
- Applicants who are shortlisted will be required to submit a police check from their Australian state of residence and proof of citizenship.
- The chosen applicant will be notified in December 2018 and will be publicly announced in Los Angeles in January 2019.
- Applicants not selected will still be considered for admission, but will be rolled into the regular application process and receive their admissions decision by March 15, 2019. Their general AFI Conservatory scholarship application will be considered during the regular review period.
- **Please note, only applications for the 2019 academic year are being accepted at this time.** Applicants interested in the 2020 academic year should [subscribe to Screen Australia's newsletter](#) to be notified of when applications open next year.

### SCHOLARSHIP INCLUSIONS

- The Screen Australia-Onbass Fellowships will provide all AFI Conservatory tuition and fees of attending the AFI Conservatory.
- As part of the Fellowship, the Screen Australia-Onbass Fellows will also receive a stipend of approximately USD\$4000 per semester to assist with the cost of living in LA and in recognition that the course is so intensive (often 7-days a week), students cannot work.
- The value of the Fellowship award is greater than USD\$130,000, including the living stipend.
- In addition, successful applicants will be eligible for one return economy flight from an Australia capital city to Los Angeles provided by Qantas Airlines as part of the G'Day USA program to enable them to travel to Los Angeles for the announcement of the scholarship in late January. The Fellows will also be entitled to one return economy flight from Australia to Los Angeles provided by Qantas Airlines as part of the G'Day USA program to enable them to take up their studies in August.
- The scholarship does not cover accommodation in the US or [VISA fees](#).