

## **Making Muriel - adapting the cult Australian film into a modern day musical**

**Monday 8 May 2017:** ABC and Screen Australia will fund documentary *Making Muriel*, taking audiences behind the scenes as P.J. Hogan (*My Best Friend's Wedding*, *Peter Pan*) adapts his iconic 1994 film *Muriel's Wedding* into a musical, produced by Sydney Theatre Company (STC) and Global Creatures (*Strictly Ballroom The Musical*, *King Kong The Musical*).

*Making Muriel* will examine the enduring popularity of *Muriel's Wedding*, the origins of the story and characters and how - 23 years after becoming a surprise box office hit - the uniquely Australian female protagonist Muriel Heslop will be reinterpreted for the stage.

Directed and produced by Nel Minchin (*Matilda and Me*), produced by Ivan O'Mahoney (*Hitting Home*, *Caged*), and executive produced by Nial Fulton (*Hitting Home*, *Matilda and Me*) from In Films Pty Ltd., *Making Muriel* will chronicle the full creative process up to the world premiere of *Muriel's Wedding The Musical* at the Roslyn Packer Theatre (Sydney) in early November 2017.

"*Muriel's Wedding* is a quintessentially Australian story that launched the careers of Toni Collette, Rachel Griffiths, P.J. Hogan and Jocelyn Moorhouse, and gifted us with countless one-liners that have become embedded in our cultural lexicon," said Liz Stevens, Senior Manager Documentary at Screen Australia. "Supporting Nel Minchin to make her solo-directing debut was a no-brainer for us and we know audiences will cherish the opportunity to reconnect with this classic story all over again."

With unprecedented access to the STC production process, archival footage will be pieced together with interviews from Hogan, the film's producers Jocelyn Moorhouse (*The Dressmaker*) and Lynda House, musical cast and a few surprise guests, giving audiences an exclusive look at the journey from screen to stage.

"We are following up Nel Minchin's wonderful documentary debut, *Matilda and Me*, with another musical theatre documentary about the making of a musical based on the hit film, *Muriel's Wedding*," said Mandy Chang, Head of ABC Arts said. "Nel and In Films have amazing access to the behind-the-scenes casting and rehearsals process and already the story promises to make exciting viewing, not only for audiences who grew up loving *Muriel's Wedding* but for anyone who enjoys watching the creative process unfold."

Hogan has penned the script for the musical, which marks his theatrical debut, and it will be complemented by original music and lyrics from award-winning singer-songwriter Kate Miller Heidke and Keir Nuttal alongside the classic ABBA songs that feature prominently in the film. The musical is being directed by esteemed stage director Simon Phillips (*Ladies in Black*, *Priscilla Queen of the Desert The Musical*).

With the starring role immortalised by Toni Collette, the question is: who will play Australia's next Muriel?

*Making Muriel* will be broadcast on the ABC later in 2017.