

Eight Australian projects selected to screen at Berlinale

Tuesday 28 January 2020: Eight Australian projects have been selected to screen at the 2020 Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) including two features, two television series and four short films.

Screen Australia CEO Graeme Mason said, "To have eight Australian projects showcasing the immense talent of our local screen industry at this distinguished international festival is a huge achievement."

"As an industry we are really punching above our weight when it comes to creating premium television drama and to have powerful new series *Stateless* and the second series of *Mystery Road* making their World Premieres at Berlinale is testament to that success."

"Berlinale has a strong history of celebrating distinctive Australian films and helping to launch the international careers of some of our best filmmakers, so it's fantastic to have debut feature director John Sheedy's *H is for Happiness* in competition in Generation Kplus and Stephen Maxwell Johnson's *High Ground* having its World Premiere."

[H is for Happiness](#) also has the honour of opening the Generation Kplus program.

Director of [H is for Happiness](#), John Sheedy said, "We are incredibly thrilled that *H is for Happiness* will be having its International Premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival but also to be honoured with the opening slot for Generation Kplus. We are all very excited to be a part of this world class festival and humbled to be amongst such exceptional filmmakers. *Happiness* is a little film with a giant heart beating inside of it and we look forward to sharing it with audiences at the Berlinale and the opportunities that may arise from being a part of such a prestigious event."

[High Ground](#) producer and cast member, Witiyana Marika said, "I loved making *High Ground* and being in my first film role, I'm hoping it will make our old people proud. For me it's dedicated to all Australian First Nations people, paying respect to those who have gone before."

[Stateless](#) co-creator, executive producer and actor, Cate Blanchett said, "It is an extraordinary honour to be launching *Stateless* at Berlinale as part of their series programme. This project has been a labour of love for many years and we are enormously grateful to Screen Australia, the ABC, NBC Universal and South Australian Film Corporation for their vital and unwavering support. Our hope is that the series will generate a non-fear based conversation around the effectiveness of the systems we are all labouring under and how our humanity has been affected by them."

Co-director of [Mystery Road](#) series two, Wayne Blair said, "We worked on a story with a crew and cast that supported us two hundred percent. Jobs like this don't come up all that often where you're allowed to work with your family. I hope people are proud of it as much as we are."

Four Australian short films will screen at this year's festival including [Elders](#) directed by Tony Briggs which will make its European Premiere in the Generation Kplus program. The short received development and production funding through Screen Australia's Indigenous Department initiative Short Blacks, which focuses on the professional development of emerging Indigenous filmmakers.

Screen Australia funded short film [Girl and Body](#) from writer/director Charlotte Mars will make its International Premiere at Berlinale Shorts. Short films *The Flame* and *Grevillea* will have World Premieres in the Generation 14plus program.

Two Australian directors [Michael Leonard](#) and Hannah Dougherty have been selected to participate in the Berlinale Talents program, as well as film critic and journalist Debbie Zhou.

[Goalpost Pictures](#) will take a new series in development *Dark Victory* to Co Pro Series, an exclusive pitching event that is part of the Berlinale Series Market to seek international partners. The series is written and directed by Matthew Saville whose credits include [Please Like Me](#) and [Upright](#).

Australia has a history of success at the [Berlin International Film Festival](#) with previous Crystal Bear winners including Sophie Hyde's [52 Tuesdays](#) (2014), Tilda Cobham-Hervey's short film [A Field Guide to Becoming a 12-Year-Old Girl](#) (2018), and Kim Mordaunt's [The Rocket](#) (2013). Recent Australian Berlin selections have included [Buoyancy](#) and [2040](#) in 2019, [Picnic at Hanging Rock](#) in 2018 and [Cleverman](#) in 2016.

The Berlin International Film Festival runs from 20 February to 1 March 2020.

High resolution images of the selected films [here](#).

AUSTRALIAN PRODUCTIONS AT BERLINALE 2020

Elders

1 x 10 minutes

Typecast Entertainment

Director: Tony Briggs

Writer: Tracey Rigney

Producer: Damien Pradier

Executive Producer: Charlotte Seymour

Cast: Muraany Andy-Harrison, Uncle Wayne Atkinson, Uncle Rod Briggs

Synopsis: Two Elders feel that their grandson is old enough to start learning vitally important lessons that will equip him with the necessary tools to maintain the future survival of his culture. His classroom is the expansive country of his ancestors. But is he ready for the challenge that is placed before him, and will he know what to do when the time comes?

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Girl and Body

1 x 18mins

Boobook Media

Director: Charlotte Mars

Writer: Charlotte Mars

Producer: Ella Millard

Cast: Adele Perovic, Nancy Denis, Ling Cooper Tang, Sri Sacdpraseuth

Synopsis: After collapsing during rehearsals, a young dancer struggles to make sense of her mysterious medical condition and her even more enigmatic hospital roommate... A meditation on the relationship between mind, body and identity.

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Grevillea

1 x 13mins

Director: Jordan Giusti

Writer: Jordan Giusti

Producers: Chris Luscri, Hayley Surgenor, Melanie Millado, Jordan Giusti

Cast: Reuvi Kramer, Lucas Pittaway, Chanan Stollard, Gabriel Carrubba, Jack Bates

Synopsis: An imprisoned Jewish teen risks taboo by marking his skin with a tattoo design. Events take a darker turn after an encounter with a mysterious tattooist, whose true intentions are unclear.

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Australian Government



MEDIA RELEASE

H is for Happiness

1 x 102mins

Cyan Films & The Koop

Director: John Sheedy

Writer: Lisa Hoppe

Producers: Julie Ryan, Tenille Kennedy, Lisa Hoppe,

Executive Producers: Richard East, Jonathan Page, Bryce Menzies, Avriil Stark, Grady Habib, Roger Savage

Cast: Richard Roxburgh, Emma Booth, Joel Jackson, Deborah Mailman, introducing Daisy Axon and Wesley Patten, with Miriam Margolyes

Australian Distributor: Universal Pictures

Australian release date: 6 February 2020

International Sales: LevelK

Synopsis: 12-year-old with boundless optimism and a unique view of the world, is inspired by the strange new boy at school and sets out to mend her broken family - whatever it takes.

Australian Media Contact: Gabby Kwok - Liquid Ideas E: GabriellaKwok@liquidideas.com.au

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High Ground

1 x 100mins

Maxo Studios, Bunya Productions and Savage Films

Director: Stephen Maxwell Johnson

Writer: Chris Anastasiades

Producers: David Jowsey, Maggie Miles, Witiyana Marika, Greer Simpkin, Stephen Maxwell Johnson

Executive Producers: Jonathan Nadji, Alfred Nayinggul, Adrian Gumurdul, Ryan Barrowei, Bessie Coleman, Michael Bangalang, Paul Wiegard, Silvio Salom, Vasili Papanicolou, Jack Thompson

Cast: Simon Baker, Jacob Jr. Nayinggul, Jack Thompson, Callan Mulvey, Witiyana Marika, Aaron Pedersen, Sean Mununggurr, Caren Pistorius, Ryan Corr, Esmerelda Marimowa, Maximillian Johnson

Australian Distributor: Madman Entertainment

International Sales: Playtime Group

Synopsis: 1919. WW1 sniper Travis, now a policeman in the vast and remote landscape of Northern Australia, loses control of an operation resulting in the massacre of an Indigenous tribe. With his superior officer intent on burying the truth Travis leaves disgusted before being forced back twelve years later in the hunt for outlaw Baywarra, an Aboriginal warrior attacking new-settlers. Recruiting mission-raised Gutjuk as his Tracker, Travis realises the young man is the only known massacre-survivor. When the truth of Travis' past is suddenly revealed to Gutjuk, it is Travis who becomes the hunted..

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Mystery Road series 2

6 x 52mins

Bunya Productions

Directors: Wayne Blair, Warwick Thornton

Writers: Blake Ayshford, Steven McGregor, Tim Lee, Kodie Bedford, Danielle MacLean

Producers: David Jowsey, Greer Simpkin

Executive Producer: Ivan Sen

Cast: Aaron Pedersen, Sofia Helen, Tasma Walton, Tasia Zalar, Rhimi Johnson

Australian Broadcaster: ABC

International Sales: all3Media International

Synopsis: A mangrove swamp. An endless sky. A headless body. Detective Jay Swan takes on a grisly case in order to be closer to his family, but has he left it too late? Set in a small coastal community where the desert meets the ocean, secrets past and present run deep and dark.

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MEDIA RELEASE

Stateless

6 x 55mins

Matchbox Productions and Dirty Films

Directors: Emma Freeman, Jocelyn Moorhouse

Writers: Elise McCredie, Belinda Chayko

Producers: Sheila Jayadev, Paul Ranford, Kirsty Stark (Co-Producer), Georgie Pym (Associate Producer)

Executive Producers: Tony Ayres, Cate Blanchett, Elise McCredie, Liz Watts, Andrew Upton

Cast: Yvonne Strahovski, Jai Courtney, Asher Keddie, Fayssal Bazzi, Marta Dusseldorp, with Dominic West and Cate Blanchett

Australian Broadcaster: ABC

Australian air date: 1 March, 2020

International Sales: NBC Universal International

Synopsis: *Stateless* is a powerful and timely series about four strangers whose lives collide at an immigration detention centre in the middle of the Australian desert.

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The Flame

1 x 12mins

Beyond Empathy/Fallingwater Films

Director: Nick Waterman

Writers: Dayannah Baker Barlow, Tyrese Fernando, Paul Spearim, Connie Taylor, Lance Whitton Jr, Megan Washington, Nick Waterman

Producers: Raphaela Rosella, Nick Waterman,

Executive Producer: Kim McConville

Cast: Dayannah Baker Barlow, Tyrese Fernando, Lance Whitton Jr.

Synopsis: A young girl and boy in a remote town remember a time before a cold wind first swept across the land. It was when fire meant something different; when the fire was a warm, safe and familiar place for families to sit together; where stories were passed down, where culture was kept alive.

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