

## **Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) & European Film Market (EFM) 6–14 February 2014**

**Report by Screen Australia staff Dale Fairbairn (Marketing), Mark Lazarus (Production Investment), Nerida Moore (Development) and Gillian Moody (Indigenous)**



<http://australiaatberlin.com>

In February 2014, staff members Dale Fairbairn (Marketing), Mark Lazarus (Production Investment), Nerida Moore (Development) and Gillian Moody (Indigenous) attended the Berlin International Film Festival and the accompanying European Film Market (EFM). We were there to support the Australian films in the festival; to support the producers presenting projects to

the market; to meet with sales agents, government agencies, festival selectors and programmers for latest market intelligence and ongoing negotiations relating to Australian titles and talent; to increase networks and to generally represent the Australian sector.

Berlin International Film Festival is one the world's major film festivals, where films are launched internationally. The accompanying European Film Market (EFM) is the first major market of the year where films are bought, sold and deals done.

In 2014 330,000 festival film tickets were sold, a new record in the 64-year history of the festival, and more than 400 films screened. At the EFM, there were 8,396 registered participants from 107 countries and 784 new films screened (separate to the festival).

This year 75 Australians registered for the market, and approximately another 35 registered for the festival. Screen Australia provided business facilitation services via a stand in the market, marketing collateral, a first-time attendee producers' breakfast, a function in conjunction with the Australian embassy and other business facilitation support including for the first time, visitor places at the Co-Production market, plus ongoing advice and assistance to Australians attending.

Four Australian features and two short films screened in the festival – ***The Turning***, ***52 Tuesdays***, ***The Darkside*** and ***Galore***, plus shorts ***Emo (the Musical)*** and ***Snowblind***. Additionally four films screened in the market. The films in the festival screened to capacity audiences. ***52 Tuesdays*** won two awards – The Crystal Bear for Best Film in Generation 14Plus from the Youth Jury and the Else-Siegessaule Readers Jury Award. Short film ***Emo (the Musical)*** received a Special Mention from Generation 14plus Youth Jury. ***The Darkside*** had its international premiere in the International Forum of New Cinema. ***The Turning*** also was an international premiere in a red carpet screening in Berlinale Special, attended by a number of its directors and some key cast.

Participation in the Berlinale NATIVE program and the Sami Indigenous Film Circle provided a key opportunity to Screen Australia's Indigenous Department to foster ongoing associations and build new relationships. Panel discussions hosted by the Canadian Embassy and the Sami Indigenous Film Circle created an avenue for dialogue as filmmakers from Canada, New Zealand, Norway and Australia joined in discussions with audiences around development, financing and protocols.

Discussions in Berlin indicate continued interest and excitement about the Australian industry and the talent that emanates from it. By way of illustration, the Australian films played to full cinemas. The recent success of our films at Sundance and the industry buzz around upcoming titles is translating into exceptionally strong international sales. These films highlight sales agents' continued hunger for elevated genre projects. There is still a place for drama with a heart but these projects need a bona fide commercial element, usually cast or a director that a sales agent can sell. In summary, great Australian talent, the Producer Offset and other PDV and location incentives, continue to provide the Australian film industry with a significant advantage in a difficult global landscape. Financial challenges, falling cinema attendance and evolving viewing habits mean that it's more important than ever for Screen Australia to maintain its presence at festivals like Berlin.