



MEDIA RELEASE

Frontier action-thriller *High Ground* green-lit for production

Wednesday 25 October 2017: Screen Australia, in association with Screen Territory and Film Victoria, have announced production investment funding for *High Ground*, a high-stakes frontier Western to be filmed in the Northern Territory.

High Ground reunites director [Stephen Johnson](#) and writer [Chris Anastassiades](#), the creative team behind the award-winning feature [Yolngu Boy](#). Johnson is also renowned for his work on Yothu Yindi's music videos.

The film is to be produced by [David Jowsey](#) (*Sweet Country*, *Goldstone*), [Maggie Miles](#) (*Paper Planes*, *The Turning*), Yothu Yindi co-founder Witiyana Marika, who is a senior elder of the Rirratjinu Clan, and [Greer Simpkin](#) (*Sweet Country*, *Mystery Road*). Australian distribution will be handled by Madman Entertainment and international sales by Bankside.

High Ground is set in the 1930s in Northern Australia and is inspired by true events. In a remote corner of a wild country a bloody war rages. Travis is a bounty hunter with one last hope of redemption. Djumbatj is a young Indigenous man trying to save the last of his family. Together they embark on a manhunt, which unravels a secret that ultimately pits them against each other.

"*High Ground* was conceived as a story that would challenge accepted notions of the settlement of Australia. Faced with the myth of *terra nullius* our aim with the film is to present a different perspective on how this country was made. The approach was always to make a genre film, a rollercoaster action thriller that delivers as an entertaining story first and foremost," said director Stephen Johnson.

The script has been developed over the past decade in consultation with the Arnhem Land and Kakadu communities. Mr Johnson added, "I grew up in the Northern Territory and I am delighted to be returning to Arnhem Land and Kakadu to shoot *High Ground*. I love this country and its people. The epic stone escarpments and vast floodplains provide a stunning backdrop to our tale that goes to the heart of the Australia story."

Producer David Jowsey said: "We are incredibly excited to be filming *High Ground* in Kakadu and Arnhem Land. The landscape is incredible and the Traditional Owners have embraced the story. *High Ground* will be an action adventure and a powerful creation story for Australia."

Sally Caplan, Screen Australia's Head of Production said: "Director Stephen Johnson and the strong producing team have the passion, vision and experience to deliver a film of this scale. *High Ground* is an impeccably researched, powerful story that will both challenge and entertain audiences around the world."

Cast will include top-tier Australian acting talent to be announced later in 2017. Filming is set to commence in 2018 in Western Arnhem Land and Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory, and post-production will take place in Victoria.

Sally Ingleton, Director of Screen Territory said: "We're pleased Stephen is returning to the Territory to continue his long history of creative collaboration with the Yolgnu people. He and the producing team have been working on this project for some time and we look forward to seeing the final film."

Film Victoria CEO Jenni Tosi, said: "Film Victoria has supported Chris and Stephen's vision for this story to be told from its inception. We're delighted that *High Ground* is moving into production, having attached a terrific team. We look forward to this evocative and powerful film coming to cinemas."

Production Credit: A High Ground Pictures feature with principal production investment from Screen Australia, in association with Screen Territory and Film Victoria.

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