

***The Dry* takes over \$10 million at the Australian box office, ahead of standout line up of Australian films this summer**

Tuesday 19 January 2021: Screen Australia today celebrates an outstanding result for *The Dry* as it takes over \$10 million at the Australian box office after almost three weeks in release.

Screen Australia is inviting all Australians to rediscover the wonder of the big screen this summer with the [Our Summer of Cinema](#) campaign highlighting the exciting line up of Australian films releasing in cinemas during January and February. *The Dry* is the first of a number of high-profile titles releasing theatrically, with [Penguin Bloom](#) (21 January), [High Ground](#) (28 January) and [Firestarter](#) (18 February) to follow over the rest of the summer.

In collaboration with each of the films' distributors Screen Australia has created a suite of marketing assets for cinema, broadcast, digital and social media channels. The campaign will be amplified by PR and exhibition support and complement the distributors' comprehensive marketing campaigns.

The Dry, which received major production investment from Screen Australia, released in cinemas on 1 January and had the fifth highest opening day for an Australian film at the local box office, a historic result which places the film in the company of all-time successes such as *Happy Feet* and *Mad Max: Fury Road*.

Following its opening weekend *The Dry* reached an impressive \$3.2 million and for the second weekend in a row was number one at the local box office, overtaking competition from blockbuster *Wonder Woman 1984* and family animation *The Croods: A New Age*. The film crossed the \$10 million mark this week as audiences return to cinemas around the country.

Adapted from Jane Harper's best-selling novel of the same name, *The Dry* has been lauded by critics who have described the film as "gripping" (The Guardian), "the best work yet from director Robert Connolly" (The Australian) and "a wonderful addition to the canon of Australian cinema" (ABC Radio Brisbane).

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts the **Hon Paul Fletcher** MP said, "The success of *The Dry* shows that the interest in local content is stronger than ever before. We look forward to supporting more local screen jobs and celebrating Australian stories during the recovery from COVID-19 and beyond."

Screen Australia Chief Executive Office **Graeme Mason** said, "We are thrilled with the result for *The Dry*, it is such a great way to start the year for Australian films and also for our great local cinemas. We had high expectations for the film which have been truly met. Made Up Stories' producers Bruna Papandrea, Jodi Matterson and Steve Hutensky, director Robert Connolly, and the incredible on screen cast, led by Eric Bana, have delivered an instant Australian Classic. Congratulations to Roadshow Films on delivering a first-class theatrical campaign with anticipation for the film high from cinemagoers as we headed in to the holiday period. The support Australian audiences have shown by going to the cinemas to see *The Dry* shows audiences are ready to embrace these powerful films, and once again immerse themselves in the big screen experience."

Mason continued, "*The Dry* is just the first of a standout slate of Australian films releasing this summer, which we are celebrating with the Our Summer of Cinema campaign. In Australia we are incredibly fortunate that we are able to go to the cinemas this summer and see some of our biggest stars including Eric Bana, Naomi Watts and Simon Baker, plus discover a new crop of incredible talent. This campaign is made with the industry for industry to collectively get behind these films and remind everyone of the unique wonder of the cinema experience."

The Our Summer of Cinema campaign is a creative collaboration between Screen Australia and distributors Roadshow Films, Madman Entertainment and Icon Films. The campaign's agency partners are Trace House (creative), OMD (media), NIXCo (publicity) and Assemble.me (web design).

To view and share the trailer, please visit [here](#).

For more information, please visit: www.oursummerofcinema.com.au

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For tickets and session times on all now showing and upcoming films, please visit your local cinema website.

The release dates for the four films featured in the Our Summer of Cinema campaign and synopsis details are below:

***The Dry*: in cinemas now**

When Federal Agent Aaron Falk returns to his home town after an absence of over twenty years to attend the funeral of his childhood friend, Luke, who allegedly killed his wife and child before taking his own life - a victim of the madness that has ravaged this community after more than a decade of drought. When Falk reluctantly agrees to stay and investigate the crime, he opens up an old wound - the death of 17-year-old Ellie Deacon. Falk begins to suspect these two crimes, separated by decades, are connected. As he struggles to prove not only Luke's innocence but also his own, Falk finds himself pitted against the prejudice towards him and pent-up rage of a terrified community. Based on the best selling debut novel by Jane Harper, *The Dry* is written for the screen by Harry Cripps and Robert Connolly, directed by Robert Connolly (*Balibo*, *Paper Planes*, *Deep State*) and stars Eric Bana. *The Dry* has received major production investment from Screen Australia in association with Film Victoria. It is distributed by Roadshow Films in Australia and New Zealand.

For more information and to buy tickets please visit: <https://thedry.roadshow.com.au/#>

***Penguin Bloom*: in cinemas 21 January, 2021**

Penguin Bloom tells the true story of Sam Bloom (Academy Award® nominated Naomi Watts) a young mother whose world is turned upside down after a near-fatal accident leaves her paralyzed. Sam's husband, (Andrew Lincoln), her three young boys and her mother (Academy Award® nominated Jacki Weaver), are struggling to adjust to their new situation when an unlikely ally enters their world in the form of an injured baby magpie they name Penguin. The bird's arrival is a welcome distraction for the Bloom family, eventually making a profound difference in the family's life. Based on the book by Cameron Bloom, *Penguin Bloom* is written for the screen by Shaun Grant and Harry Cripps, and directed by Glendyn Ivin. *Penguin Bloom* has received major production investment from Screen Australia in association with Screen NSW.

For more information and to buy tickets please visit: <https://penguinbloom.roadshow.com.au/#>

***High Ground*: in cinemas 28 January, 2021**

Set against the stunning landscapes of 1930s Arnhem Land, *High Ground* chronicles young Aboriginal man Gutjuk, who in a bid to save the last of his family teams up with ex-soldier Travis to track down Baywara—the most dangerous warrior in the Territory, who is also his uncle. As Travis and Gutjuk journey through the outback they begin to earn each other's trust, but when the truths of Travis' past actions are suddenly revealed, it is he who becomes the hunted. Selected to screen at the Berlin International Film Festival 2020, *High Ground* is directed by Stephen Maxwell Johnson, written by Chris Anastassiades and stars Jacob Junior Nayinggul, Simon Baker, Jack Thompson, Aaron Pedersen, Ryan Corr and Witiyana Marika. A High Ground Pictures feature with major production investment from Screen Australia, in association with Screen Territory and Film Victoria.

For more information and to buy tickets please visit: www.highgroundfilm.com

***Firestarter*: in cinemas 18 February, 2021**

AACTA Award winning documentary *Firestarter* marks Bangarra Dance Theatre's 30th anniversary. Taking us through Bangarra's birth and spectacular growth, the film recognises Bangarra's founders and tells the story of how three young Aboriginal brothers – Stephen, David and Russell Page – turned the newly born dance group into a First Nations cultural powerhouse. Through the eyes of the brothers and company alumni, *Firestarter* explores the loss and reclaiming of culture, the burden of intergenerational trauma, and - crucially - the power of art as a messenger for social change and healing. Directed by Wayne Blair and Nel Minchin. *Firestarter* received principal production investment from Screen Australia in association with Screen NSW.

For more information please visit: <https://www.iconmovies.com.au/movies/firestarter>