



Australian Government



MEDIA RELEASE

## TANNA IS AUSTRALIA'S SUBMISSION FOR BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM AT THE 89<sup>th</sup> ACADEMY AWARDS®

Sydney, Tuesday 23 August 2016. Just ahead of its U.S. theatrical release, Screen Australia-supported feature *Tanna* has been endorsed as Australia's official submission for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 2017 Academy Awards®. The film will compete with the other entrants from around the world to be shortlisted for nomination.

Based on a true story, Navvhal language film *Tanna* takes the audience into the way of life of the people of Tanna in Vanuatu. The cast is comprised of people from the village of Yakel and the film is a cinematic translation of a song about two lovers who dared to defy the ancient laws of arranged marriage. The young lovers' story changed the course of Kastom (culture) on the island.

Australian Co-directors **Bentley Dean** and **Martin Butler** said, "We, and the cast from *Tanna*, are absolutely thrilled to be Australia's official submission for the Best Foreign Language Academy Award®. Working so closely with the people of Yakel has been one of the most rewarding experiences of our creative lives. Together we have opened a rare window into a rapidly vanishing world full of hope and dynamism. We are so proud to bring their story to the world."

Graeme Mason, CEO of Screen Australia said: "*Tanna* does what all great films aspire to do: transport you out of your seat and keep you completely riveted as you dive into another world. It's a simple and universal story told with such impressive nuance and looks extraordinary on screen. It's a great privilege to submit *Tanna* to the Academy on behalf of Australia, the filmmakers and the people of Yakel."

The *Tanna* cast did not have any acting experience nor are they literate. The Chief of Yakel plays Chief Charlie; the Yakel medicine man plays the Medicine Man and Mungau, who plays the male protagonist Dain, was chosen by consensus because he was identified as the most handsome man. The story and dialogue were developed over the course of the six month shoot through workshopping, improvisation on location and close consultation with JJ Nako, the translator, cultural interpreter, guide and advisor.

*Tanna* has been welcomed into the hearts of audiences and critics around the world, and has received multiple awards including: Best Film (Audience Award) at Venice Critics' Week, Venice International Film Festival; Best Cinematographer, Venice Critics' Week, Venice International Film Festival; Best Direction, Feature Film, Australian Director's Guild and; Jury Commendation, BFI London Film Festival.

Australia has submitted films into the Best Foreign Language Film category at the Academy Awards® since 1996. The films are chosen by a committee of industry professionals selected by Screen Australia. As of 2015, nine Australian films have been submitted for the Academy Award® for Best Foreign Language Film. Previous films submitted to the Academy include the Yolngu Matha and Gunwinggu language film *Ten Canoes* (2006); Warlpiri language film *Samson and Delilah* (2009) and Lao language film *The Rocket* (2013).

### Media materials & U.S. contacts

<http://tannamovie.tumblr.com/press>

### USA screenings

<http://tannamovie.tumblr.com/theaters>

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