



MEDIA RELEASE

Screen Australia announces Indigenous Australian screen luminaries headed for LA

Embargoed until 6am AEDT Thursday, 18 October 2018: The Hollywood Foreign Press Association, Screen Australia and Australians in Film Foundation today announced that seven Australian Indigenous screen practitioners will travel to Los Angeles next month for a series of high level networking opportunities. The delegation includes Caméra d'Or-winning director Warwick Thornton ([Sweet Country](#), [Samson & Delilah](#)), powerhouse actor, writer and director Leah Purcell ([Wentworth](#), [Cleverman](#)), and acclaimed writer and director Steven McGregor ([Sweet Country](#), [Mystery Road TV Series](#)).

This extension of Screen Australia's [Talent USA](#) initiative coincides with the Australian Federal Government screen agency celebrating [25 years of Indigenous screen stories](#).

The week-long (5-10 November) program will focus on setting up business connections for the delegates with US film and television industry stakeholders, as well as providing opportunities to learn from established LA-based creators and decisions makers.

Participants were selected based on considerable international success and/or having established interest in the US.

"It is fantastic to be able to offer this incredible opportunity to luminaries of our industry, which will assist in opening new doors to expand their already successful careers in the US market," said Penny Smallacombe, Head of the Indigenous Department at Screen Australia.

"This program is about fostering new relationships to ensure that our Indigenous stories can continue to find international audiences and possible financing beyond Australia. As we've seen recently with the Mystery Road series on Acorn TV, there is definitely an appetite for our stories in the US and interest in what our creators can deliver."

This program has been supported with a grant from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association to Australians in Film Foundation.

President of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, Meher Tatna said, "The Hollywood Foreign Press Association is proud to support the first delegation of Australian Indigenous story-tellers coming to Los Angeles. We are thrilled to be able to enable a diverse group of filmmakers to meet the people who will help them tell those stories around the world."

"The Australians in Film Foundation was established to provide opportunities for Australian screen creators to develop their craft in the US market, and we are excited to be working with Screen Australia's highly-acclaimed Indigenous Department in bringing some of the top Indigenous Australian filmmakers to Los Angeles, along with the incredible support of the Hollywood Foreign Press Foundation," said President of Australians in Film Foundation, Kate Marks.

TALENT USA: INDIGENOUS CONTINGENT:

Erica Glynn: An [AFTRS](#) graduate, Glynn's story-telling career spans over 20 years. Erica developed her skills working for the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) in Alice Springs before directing the award-winning short film [My Bed Your Bed](#), which screened at over 14 film festivals around the world. Along with directing short film and documentary, Glynn's television works include working as an executive producer on the [AACTA](#) Award winning TV series [Redfern Now](#), and the ground-breaking Indigenous-led drama series [Gods of Wheat Street](#) and [8MMM Aboriginal Radio](#). Erica also headed up the Indigenous Department at Screen Australia, in which she developed numerous feature films, and Indigenous film makers. Her credits also include writing for the Logie winning animated series [Little J & Big Cuz](#) and directing the ABC Comedy series [Black Comedy](#). Erica is currently developing a feature film, and new drama series.

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David Jowsey*: A former Executive Producer with the [ABC](#), Jowsey has extensive experience in the Australian television industry. In 2009, he transitioned into film as he formed the production company [BUNYA Productions](#) alongside acclaimed director Ivan Sen. Jowsey has since gone on to produce a range of award-winning films, notably [Toomelah](#), which was selected for the Cannes Film Festival in 2011, and [Sweet Country](#), which won the Special Jury Prize at the 2017 Venice Film Festival and the Platform Prize at the 2017 Toronto Film Festival. Jowsey also worked as a producer on [Mystery Road](#) and its sequel [Goldstone](#) along with the ABC series of the same name ([Mystery Road TV Series](#)), which has received international acclaim as it has become available on the BBC in the UK and Acorn TV in the US.

Danielle MacLean: MacLean is an award winning writer, director and producer with an extensive range of credits across film, television and documentary. She wrote and directed the drama [Queen of Hearts](#), winning the [AFI Award](#) for best non-feature screenplay. MacLean also won an [AWGIE](#) for her writing on the children’s TV series [Double Trouble](#), and wrote two episodes of the Logie winning animated series [Little J & Big Cuz](#), as well as writing for NITV’s children’s series [Grace Beside Me](#). Her 2014 ABC documentary to coincide with the 40th anniversary of Cyclone Tracy, [Blown Away](#), was also nominated for an [ADG Award](#). Danielle is a director of Tamarind Tree Productions along with Steven McGregor.

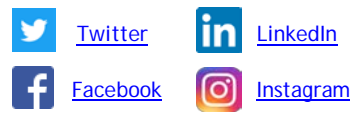
Steven McGregor: An award-winning writer and director, McGregor co-wrote [Sweet Country](#), which was selected to screen at numerous international film festivals, taking home the Special Jury Prize at the 2017 Venice Film Festival and the Platform Prize at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival. McGregor also worked as a writer on [Redfern Now](#), [Ready for This](#), and the [Mystery Road TV Series](#), which ranks as the most watched non-children’s series of all time on the ABC’s iView platform. The series was also selected as a New York Times Critic’s Pick in August of 2018. Steven also directed the third series of [Black Comedy](#), and the drama series [The Warriors](#). He is based in the Northern Territory and is a director of Tamarind Tree Productions along with Danielle MacLean and Anna Grieve.

Leah Purcell: Purcell is one of Australia’s most respected and admired actors, writers, producers and directors, most well known for her role in the international hit TV drama [Wentworth](#). She is an [ACTA](#), [Helpmann](#), [ADG](#), [AWGIE](#), Logie award-winning and nominated artist for her outstanding work in various roles on iconic feature film and TV including Cate Shortland’s [Somersault](#), John Hillcoat’s [The Proposition](#), [Last Cab to Darwin](#), [Redfern Now](#), [Cleverman](#) and [The Secret Daughter](#). In 2017, Purcell was placed in the [Australian Financial Review’s 10 most culturally influential Australians](#). In 2017, Purcell was awarded with the Book of the Year at the NSW Premier’s Literary Awards for her stage play of [The Drover’s Wife](#). Recently, she signed the publishing deal to deliver [The Drover’s Wife: The Legend of Molly Johnson](#) novel, and will soon begin filming [The Drover’s Wife: The Legend of Molly Johnson](#) feature film where she will write, direct and star. Purcell is also currently developing a TV series of the same name.

Ivan Sen: An [AFTRS](#) filmmaking graduate, Sen is one of Australia’s leading filmmakers having written, directed and composed all of his works. A recipient of the Best Director Award at the [AFI Awards](#), Sen’s first feature film [Beneath Clouds](#) screened at Sundance Film Festival and won the Premiere First Movie Award at Berlin Film Festival. His second feature [Toomelah](#) was selected for the 2011 Cannes Film Festival - Un Certain Regard. In 2013, Sen wrote, directed and composed the feature film [Mystery Road](#), which had its international premiere with a special presentation at the Toronto Film Festival. He has also received the prestigious [Byron Kennedy Award](#) at the AACTA Awards in 2011 for his unique artistic vision and multidisciplinary filmmaking.

Charlotte Seymour*: A recipient of the Kenneth Myer Fellowship for Producing, Seymour boasts over 20 years of screen industry experience. Having worked as an Executive Producer at the [ABC](#), her producing credits now span across documentary and TV drama, including a feature film currently in development with writer/director Erica Glynn. Seymour was the producer on the [AFI](#)-winning short feature [Queen of Hearts](#) for SBS and recently produced the dramedy web series [Other People’s Problems](#) for ABC TV, which was invited to screen at the 2018 Berlin Film Festival. Seymour and Glynn have a keen interest in developing works with strong Indigenous female characters.

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Greer Simpkin*: With extensive experience working in production in both Australia and the UK with the likes of ABC and Channel 4, Simpkin joined [BUNYA Productions](#) as Producer and Head of Television in March 2015 after 12 years of working at the ABC. Since joining BUNYA, Simpkin produced the [Mystery Road TV Series](#), which is currently the highest ranking non-children’s show in ABC iview history. She has also produced award winning films [Goldstone](#) and [Sweet Country](#), which was awarded the Special Jury Prize at the 2017 Venice Film Festival. She also worked as an executive producer on the [AWGIE](#) winning feature film [Jasper Jones](#).

Bain Stewart: An arts producer working in the areas of film, TV, theatre, visual arts and publishing, Stewart is a seasoned storyteller. Along with Leah Purcell, Stewart founded Oombarra Productions, an Australian independent production company in 2011. He is the originating producer of the highly anticipated film *The Drover’s Wife*, which he recently [received funding for](#) to go towards building a business plan for the film. His other production credits include award-winning short films [Aunty Maggie and the Womba Wakgun](#) and [She. Say.](#), as well as the documentary [Black Chicks Talking](#), which was selected for the Tribeca Film Festival and won the audience award at the [Brisbane International Film Festival](#).

Warwick Thornton: Thornton is an internationally-recognised director, screenwriter and cinematographer. One of Australia’s most acclaimed directors, he was named on the [Australian Financial Review’s 10 most culturally influential Australians](#) for 2018 for his work in projecting the story of Australian culture on the international stage. Thornton quickly gained international success, with his short [Nana](#) winning the Crystal Bear for Best Short Film at Berlinale. Thornton then went on to make his first feature [Samson and Delilah](#), which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival and won the prestigious Caméra d’Or. His most recent feature, [Sweet Country](#), gained Thornton further international success as it was awarded the Special Jury Prize at the 2017 Venice Film Festival along with the Platform Prize at the 2017 Toronto Film Festival.

*Non-Indigenous creative partner

ABOUT SCREEN AUSTRALIA:

Screen Australia is the Australian Federal Government agency charged with supporting Australian screen content through development, production and promotion across television, film, documentary and digital originals. The agency administers Australia’s official co-production program, in addition to the Producer Offset tax rebate which assists eligible television, film and online works to be made. Screen Australia provides a range of resources and opportunities to the industry including access to research, market intelligence plus special initiatives such as its highly success Gender Matters program. For more information visit screenaustralia.gov.au

ABOUT THE HOLLYWOOD FOREIGN PRESS ASSOCIATION:

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) was founded in 1943 as the Hollywood Foreign Correspondents Association (HFCA) by a group of entertainment journalists representing world media in Hollywood, who realized the need to unite and organize to gain the recognition and access to studios and talent accorded to the domestic press. All qualified journalists were accepted, with the bold goal of “Unity Without Discrimination of Religion or Race.” A year later, the HFCA created the Golden Globe Awards which, to this day, the entire membership selects, votes on and awards every year for outstanding achievements in motion pictures and television. This year marked the 75th anniversary of the Golden Globe Awards. Members of the HFPA represent 56 countries with a combined readership of 250 million in some of the world’s most respected publications. Each year, the organization holds the third most watched awards show on television, the Golden Globe® Awards, which has enabled the organization to donate more than \$33 million to 80 entertainment-related charities, scholarship programs and humanitarian efforts over the last 25 years. For more information, please visit www.GoldenGlobes.com.

ABOUT AUSTRALIANS IN FILM:

Founded in 2001, Australians in Film is a Los Angeles based non-profit screen organization that supports its members with career development and education programs include the prestigious Heath Ledger Scholarship,

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Mentor LA, Village Roadshow/Animal Logic Entertainment Internship, Greg Coote Fellowship, Gateway LA and The Writers Room. AiF is based at Charlie's, a shared workspace at the historic Raleigh Studios in Hollywood. Charlie's is a bespoke hub for business, collaboration and networking for the Australian screen community in Los Angeles and it is where AiF holds its industry education programs. For more information about joining AiF, <http://www.australiansinfilmm.org/JoinAiF>.

ACRONYMS:

- ABC - Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Public broadcaster.
- ADG Award - The annual Australian Directors Guild Awards are Australia's only peer-judged awards for directors with a wide range of categories including feature film, television and documentary.
- AFTRS - Australian Film, Television and Radio School. Australia's federally-funded tertiary education facility for screen professionals.
- AFI/AACTA - Previously known as the AFI Awards, the AACTA Awards recognise excellence in film, television and documentary.
- AWGIES - Presented by the Australian Writers' Guild, the AWGIES are an annual award ceremony that celebrates Australia's best screen storytellers.
- Logie - the TV Week Logie awards are an annual celebration of Australian television.
- SBS - Special Broadcasting Service. Public broadcaster.

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