

# Film Australia making history

## Film Australia Making History Workshop

A half-day workshop on Thursday 18 August hosted by new executive producer, Alex West, will introduce the **Making History** initiative to filmmakers.

Alex will talk about his editorial, creative and stylistic plans for the three year scheme.

It's also a chance to share information and outlooks about history and the status of history on TV. It will help producers who see opportunities to work with Film Australia's **Making History** project develop proposals with the closest fit to its editorial goals.

Another aim of the workshop is to create a forum for producers to hear from historians about the research they are working on and how producers might translate that research into TV programming.

The workshop will feature presentations, discussions and screenings, aimed at inspiring creative approaches to historical subjects.

Programs developed and produced under **Making History** may be political, social, character-led or topographical histories spanning the broad chronology and geography of human experience on the Australian continent. They will be films that inspire, surprise and enthuse viewers and show that Australian history is rich, exciting and deserving of significant attention on television by connecting viewers with the past.

History is a strong force in international factual TV programming and **Making History** seeks to draw on current forms for telling historical narratives and, through co-productions, create a body of work that adds Australian stories to the broader mix of high-quality historical programming.

A special guest at the workshop will be UK producer, Liz Hartford, who will discuss the fusion between drama and documentary in a one-hour masterclass entitled *There's No History Without Drama*. In another session, Film Australia Board member and LaTrobe University historian John Hirst will give his view on the inter-relationships between academic history and popular representations of the past. Macquarie University history and film lecturer Dr Michelle Arrow will talk about the state of history on Australian television and present some ideas for its future in light of recent developments in Australian history research. University of Sydney's Richard White will tease out some of the tensions that arise when Australian history turns up on television, in particular the competing demands that the product be both entertaining and instructive.

Film Australia Sydney Office  
101 Eton Road, Lindfield NSW 2070  
PO Box 46 Lindfield NSW 2070  
Tel +61 2 9413 8777 Fax +61 2 9416 5672

Film Australia Melbourne Office  
3rd Floor, 145 Smith St, Fitzroy VIC 3065  
PO Box 1220 Collingwood VIC 3066  
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# Making History Workshop and Masterclass

Thursday 18 August, Film Australia Roxy Theatre, 101 Eton Road, Lindfield NSW

## Session 1

### Making History

- 11:00 – 11:05am Welcome: Daryl Karp, Film Australia Chief Executive
- 11:05 – 11:10am Introduction: Mark Hamlyn, Film Australia Head of Production
- 11:10 – 12:10pm *There's No History Without Drama Masterclass*: Liz Hartford.  
UK documentary producer
- 12:10 – 12:30 Open discussion and Q&A

12:30 – 1:20pm

### Lunch

## Session 2

### History and TV

- 1:20 – 1:30pm *Current Trends in Historical Research*: John Hirst, La Trobe University  
historian and Film Australia Board director
- 1:30 – 1:40pm *Is Australian History Good for You?* Richard White, University of Sydney
- 1:40 – 1:50pm *Talking Heads in Black and White: History on Australian Television*: Dr  
Michelle Arrow, Macquarie University
- 1:50 – 2:10pm Open discussion and Q&A
- 2:10 – 2:40pm *The Making History Initiative*: Alex West, Film Australia Executive Producer,  
History. Hot historical docs, stories, styles, and stockshots.
- 2:40pm Conclusion

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## About the speakers

### Liz Hartford, UK documentary producer

Liz Hartford has produced and directed history and arts programs at the BBC and in the independent sector for over 12 years, joining World Of Wonder UK as Head of Arts in April of this year.

Her most recent films, *Princes In The Tower* for Channel 4 and *A Most Mysterious Murder* for BBC1, made while Executive Producer, History at RDF Television, were high-profile, mould-breaking factual dramas. Prior to that, Liz worked on a string of major drama/doc series including Channel 4's *The Story of The Novel* and *Georgian Underworld*.

Before joining the independent sector, Liz spent more than 15 years at the BBC, producing and directing, culminating in the award-winning landmark series *Simon Schama's A History of Britain* on which she worked as both a director and series producer. Liz is also developing a number of factual drama ideas for the RDF-backed drama producers, Touchpaper Productions.

### John Hirst, Film Australia Board Director

John Hirst is an historian at La Trobe University and author of several books including *Convict Society and its Enemies* (1983) and *Strange Birth of Colonial Democracy* (1988). He appeared in Film Australia's *Federation* series and is the author of a history of federation, *The Sentimental Nation* (2000). He is also on the Council of the National Museum of Australia. John joined the Film Australia Board in May 1999.

### Richard White, University of Sydney Department of History

Richard White teaches History at the University of Sydney. He is the author of the influential *Inventing Australia* (1981) and co-editor of *Memories and Dreams* (1996), *The Oxford Book of Australian Travel Writing* (1996) and *Cultural History in Australia* (2003). His latest book is *On Holidays: A History of Getting Away in Australia* (Pluto 2005) and he is currently writing a history of the cooee (*Cooee: Its Rise and Fall*, to be published by MUP in 2006).

He has published widely on war, nationalism, Americanisation, popular culture, travel, tourism and Australian identity. He was instrumental in establishing the History Council of NSW, has been a consultant for ABCTV and has been involved in Open Learning programs. He has served on HSC Examination and Syllabus Committees, Arts Advisory Council committees and judging panels for the State Literary Awards.

### Dr Michelle Arrow, Macquarie University Department of Modern History

Dr Michelle Arrow lectures in Australian history and history on film at Macquarie University. She also appeared as a presenter on the ABC TV series *Rewind* in 2004.

Her first book, *Upstaged: Australian Women Dramatists in the Limelight at Last* was published in 2002 and was short-listed for five national prizes. Michelle is currently writing a history of Australian post-war pop culture for UNSW Press entitled *Blue Hills to Big Brother: Australian Popular culture and its Audiences from the Fifties to the Noughties* due for release this year.

Michelle's work has appeared in *Good Weekend*, *Overland*, and various academic journals. She has worked as an academic, researcher, website reviewer, oral history interviewer, radio commentator, and historic tour guide.

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### **Alex West, Film Australia Executive Producer, History**

Alex West was most recently Executive Producer at Wall to Wall in the UK where he was responsible for the BBC hit of 2004, the genealogy series *Who Do You Think You Are?* - winner of the 2005 INDIE Award and nominated for 2005 BAFTA Award for best historical series.

With an emphasis on history and factual credits ranging from formatted series to docudrama, and international co-productions including history series *Inside the Mafia* (Five/National Geographic Channel), science/history format *Salvage Squad* (Channel 4, Discovery Channel UK) and docudrama *Ice Age Columbus* (Discovery Channel, NDR, France5 and Telefilm Canada), Alex joined Film Australia in 2005.

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