

# real2reel

FILM AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER **OCTOBER 2001** VOLUME 14 ISSUE 1 ISSN 0819-6306

## Increased funding for Film Australia in industry package

The Federal Government has announced increased financial support to Australia's local film industry, including a funding increase to Film Australia of \$2.7 million a year (indexed and ongoing).

The additional funding—an increase of almost 40 percent per annum—is specifically to allow Film Australia to upgrade access to and preservation of its unique film and television archives, which provide an extraordinary visual record of Australian life over the past 100 years.

"The funding will ensure that this historic collection is preserved and made available to Australians now and in the future," said Film Australia Chairman, Rob Fisher.

It will also enable the company to continue providing affordable facilities to the production sector.

In addition, the Government has committed to a further five-year contract with Film Australia starting 2003–2004 for the National Interest Program (NIP).

Under the NIP agreement, the company commissions, produces and distributes programs that deal with matters of national interest to Australia or illustrate and interpret aspects of Australian life.

The package also included funding for the Australian Film Commission, SBS Independent, the Australian Film Finance Corporation, the Australian Film, Television and Radio School, AusFILM and FIBRE, and a new refundable tax offset for qualifying large film productions.

## New Executive Producer Board appointments

Anna Grieve, one of Australia's most experienced documentary filmmakers, has joined Film Australia. She will work alongside Mark Hamlyn and Franco di Chiera as a member of the team of executive producers responsible for the commissioning and management of documentaries made under the National Interest Program.

Anna's association with the company dates back to 1987 when she won the inaugural Young Filmmakers Award which gave her a year's contract with Film Australia. Since then she has produced, directed and written documentaries such as **Federation, Myths of Childhood, Boys and Balls and Getting Even.**

Anna has served on Film Australia's Board, the Councils of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School and the Screen Producers' Association of Australia, and on the Documentary Committee of the Australian Screen Directors' Association.

She has been appointed to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Stefan Moore. In his time with the company, Stefan executive produced such landmark projects as **The Diplomat, Cunnamulla and Facing the Music.**

Independent marketing consultant Sue Murray has been appointed to the Film Australia Board.

Sue has almost 25 years experience in the film and television industry, successfully promoting Australian productions and program makers to key markets around the world.

For three years, she was the Australian-based Acquisitions Consultant to US distributor, Fine Line Features. Previously, she held various positions in marketing and policy with the Australian Film Commission.

Sue's appointment was announced in September, following the August re-appointment of Film Australia Chairman Rob Fisher and Deputy Chair Eve Mahlab AO for a further three years to 2004.

Ron Brent, director of ScreenSound Australia, departed the Board at the end of June. "Ron has made a valuable contribution to Film Australia during his three-year term," said Rob Fisher. "His advice and experience have greatly assisted the Board and management to position Film Australia for the future and encouraged greater co-operation between Film Australia and ScreenSound."



Anna Grieve



Sue Murray

Photo by Corrie Ancoore



# Ordinary people

People who have never made a film before don't realise what they are getting themselves into. If they did, they'd probably never begin. Fortunately for **Ordinary People**, Sydney academic Dr Jennifer Rutherford didn't give it a second thought. It seemed clear to her, as she was researching Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party for her new book, that someone ought to be filming what she saw and that someone might as well be her.

In June and October 1998, Rutherford and her friends used non-professional camera gear to film inside homes, meetings and events in the party's heartland—Ipswich, Queensland. They filmed people and places that were closed to the hostile professional media.

As Rutherford told the One Nation people, she merely wanted to listen rather than rush to judgment, to let them speak for themselves, in their own way. She wanted to find out why this movement had erupted so suddenly and unexpectedly in Australia, and what it shared with other such movements that were appearing in Europe and the United States. She shot reel after reel of video material, both of One Nation supporters and of the local Ipswich groups who were opposing them.

Later, back in Sydney with a mass of videotapes, Rutherford discovered how difficult it could be to obtain documentary

finance. Then she met filmmaker Kit Guyatt, himself an ex-Queenslander, and together they made a showreel.

It soon became obvious that some of the One Nation members Rutherford had filmed were extraordinary characters in their own right. So Rutherford and Guyatt decided to film some more and, in early 1999, followed Colene Hughes to the One Nation annual general meeting in Sydney, capturing her disagreements with the leadership of One Nation and her growing disenchantment with the movement.

Using this material, they finally found a producer in Martha Ansara, Guyatt's long-time colleague. Disturbed by the simplistic nature of the debate on One Nation, Ansara welcomed Rutherford's more thoughtful approach. The three set out to raise money to complete the program and to find or create more footage. As the film developed, it became clear that **Ordinary People** would revolve around Colene Hughes and her journey through One Nation.

In early 2001, the filmmakers decided to approach Film Australia to see if **Ordinary People** could be completed under its National Interest Program. Executive Producer Stefan Moore realised that the film offered a chronicle of grassroots politics and people who rarely figure in Australian social documentary. Film Australia agreed to take executive responsibility for completing the film. At the end of June, producer/editor Denise Haslem joined the team in a supervisory position. Within a few months the program was ready for broadcast.

**Ordinary People** will screen on ABC-TV.

*A Film Australia National Interest Program produced with the assistance of the Australian Film Commission, the New South Wales Film and Television Office and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.*

## SIX AFI NOMINATIONS

Film Australia National Interest Program productions have received a total of six nominations in the Australian Film Institute Awards, to be held in November 2001. This is one more nomination than the five received in 2000.

**Cunnamulla** and **Facing the Music** were both nominated for Best Documentary.

**Facing the Music**, produced and directed by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson, also received nominations for Best Achievement in Direction in a Documentary and Best Achievement in Sound in a Non-Feature Film for the sound team of Anderson, Andrew Plain and Robert Sullivan.

**Cunnamulla**, produced and directed by Dennis O'Rourke, was also nominated for Best Achievement in Direction in a Documentary.

Cinematographer Andre Fleuren received a nomination for Best Achievement in Cinematography in a Non-Feature Film for his work on **City of Dreams**, which explores the remarkable personal and professional marriage of architects Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony.

The nominations are the latest in a growing list of awards for all three films.

In August Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson received the Chauvel Award at the Brisbane International Film Festival for their contribution to Australian filmmaking. It is the first time the award has gone to documentary makers—previous recipients include Fred Schepisi, Gillian Armstrong and George Miller.

Both Brisbane and Sydney Film Festival audiences voted **Facing the Music** most popular film. **Cunnamulla** won the Outstanding Documentary Award at the Hollywood Film Festival in August.

In June **City of Dreams** writer/producer Gaby Mason and writer/director Belinda Mason received the Clem Cummings award from the Royal Australian Institute of Architects in Canberra for contributions made by non-architects to architecture and the public interest.



**THOMSON OF ARNHEM LAND** won this year's NSW Premier's History Award Audio/Visual History Prize for contributions to historical research and presentation. (*City of Dreams* was shortlisted.) Pictured above is Premier Bob Carr with Michael Cummins. The program was written by Cummins, directed by John Moore, and produced by Moore and Michael McMahon with archival research by Michael Thiele. It tells the story of Donald Thomson, visionary Australian anthropologist and passionate campaigner for Aboriginal justice.

# In brief

**Mabo—The Native Title Revolution CD-ROM** has been nominated for a British Academy Award in the Factual Category at the 2001 BAFTA Interactive Entertainment Awards. It was recently awarded Best Secondary Teacher Reference in *The Australian Awards for Excellence in Educational Publishing*—the premier event in the educational publishing calendar.

Two recent Film Australia series have attracted strong ratings on ABC-TV. **Selling Australia**, which went behind the scenes of Australia's tourism industry, was watched by an average of three-quarters of a million viewers each week from 14 August to 4 September. **Bush Mechanics**, which began screening on Tuesday 11 September, achieved ratings as high as 20 in some states.

**Facing the Music** has taken over \$198,000 at the box office in the first 13 weeks of its theatrical release. Showing on single screens in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, it has now opened in Canberra, Adelaide and Perth. The film has been selected to screen in competition at the International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam and will launch the travelling film festival Big Screen 2001 in Hobart in October. It recently screened at the Toronto and Vancouver International Film Festivals.

Both **Facing the Music** (produced and directed by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson) and **Cunnamulla** (produced and directed by Dennis O'Rourke) have been invited to screen at the Margaret Mead Film & Video Festival in New York in November. Retrospectives of the filmmakers' work will be presented. **The Diplomat** will screen in a focus on Indonesia.

**Cunnamulla** will also screen in the Hawaii International Film Festival along with another National Interest Program

## RECENT SALES

**Facing the Music** has been licensed for retail video distribution by ABC Video and by Qantas for in-flight entertainment. It's also been taken up by YLE, Finland's largest broadcaster, for their new digital channel.

**Mystique of the Pearl** has been licensed by ITV6 Darwin for narrowcast broadcast.

For Australian pay-tv, **Auto Stories** has been licensed to the Lifestyle Channel and a package of documentaries (including **Federation**, **Young Tree Green**, **Our Century**, **Lies**, **Spies & Olympics**, **The Snowy**, **In The Desert We Have Written Our Names**, **The Battle of Long Tan**, **Colonist for a Day** and **Big Brother of Christmas Island**) has been licensed to the History Channel. Foxkids has licensed **Escape From Jupiter** and **Return to Jupiter**, and the Premium Movie Partnership has licensed **Cass** for Encore. The National Geographic Channel will screen **The Fifth Set** in Australia and New Zealand.

In Canada, National Geographic has licensed **A Calcutta Christmas**; the Issues Channel has licensed **Where Angels Fear to Tread**, **Emily's Eyes** and **Spinning Out**; the History Channel has licensed **Thomson of Arnhem Land**; the Women's Television Network has **City of Dreams**; and Vision TV has **New Horizons** and **Teachers of the World**. PrideVision TV, likely to be the world's first national network aimed at the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community, has licensed **China Dolls** and **Sadness**.

**Ten Million Wildcats**, **Reunion**, **Dreamhouse**, **Flowers and the Wide Sea** and **Small Island Big Fight** have been licensed for pay and free-to-air television in China; Prime Television has licensed **Cunnamulla** for free-to-air television in New Zealand, and UK pay television service Artsworld has licensed **City of Dreams**, **Tosca—A Tale of Love and Torture** and **The Edge of the World**. Ireland's TG4 has licensed **Holy Rollers**, **Our Brother James** and **A Compassionate Rage**, and UPC Europe has licensed **In Search of the Tiger**, **Real Man's Porsche**, **The Scheyville Experience**, **Shellshocked** and **Wear Them With Pride**. Multicanal Portugal has licensed **Spellbinder I & II** for Portugal

In the USA, the Filmmakers Library has licensed **No Sex No Violence No News** for non-theatrical sales. DCL has licensed **Cunnamulla**, and **Nice Guys Finish Last** has been licensed for non-theatrical sales by Insight Media. American Public Television has licensed **Aeroplane Dance** for three of its free-to-air stations in the US: KLET Los Angeles, KRMA Denver & Hawaii.

On the domestic front, strong sales to the educational sector have been achieved for **Mabo—The Native Title Revolution** CD-ROM, the **Federation** series, **Thomson of Arnhem Land** and **City of Dreams**. Top-selling retail titles include **The Fifth Set** and **Buried Country** along with perennial favourites **Back of Beyond** and **Exile and the Kingdom**.

**Saltwater Bluesman—Uncle Kiddo Taylor** (from the **Everyday Brave** series) and a Film Australia distribution title, **Mr Strehlow's Films**.

Canada's Global Visions Film Festival has invited **Saltwater Bluesman**, **A Compassionate Rage** and the distribution title **Shellshocked** to screen at the festival.

**Tosca—A Tale of Love and Torture** has been invited to screen in competition at the St Louis International Film Festival.

Several titles from Film Australia's catalogue of indigenous programs have been invited to screen in festivals focusing on indigenous Australian culture, including the Regards Comparés festival at the Musée de l'Homme in Paris and the Tracking Kultja indigenous festival in Canberra.

Real2Reel is published quarterly by Film Australia.

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