



Australian Government



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## Screen Australia invests \$11 million in new feature films and TV drama

**Thursday 5 December 2013:** Screen Australia today announced \$11 million investment in four feature films, four adult drama productions and one children's series, triggering \$70 million in production.

Among the features to receive investment is the warm-hearted family film ***Oddball***, from the team that made *Kenny*. Directed by **Clayton Jacobson** and starring **Shane Jacobson**, *Oddball* is about an eccentric chicken farmer who saves a colony of penguins by putting his sheepdog on their island. The film is produced by **Richard Keddie**, **Steve Kearney** and **Sheila Hanahan Taylor**, and written by **Peter Ivan**.

German/Canadian/Australian co-production ***Life***, from Australian writer **Luke Davies** (*Candy*) and Australian producer **Emile Sherman**, tells the story of a freelance photographer on assignment for *Life Magazine*, and his unlikely friendship with a soon-to-be-immortal actor. Starring **Dane DeHaan** and **Robert Pattinson**, the film is directed by **Anton Corbijn** (*The American*, *Control*) and is also produced by **Iain Canning**, **Christina Piovesan**, **Benito Mueller** and **Wolfgang Mueller**.

Two theatrical documentaries were approved for investment, including ***Only the Dead***, which explores the extraordinary career of Australian war correspondent **Michael Ware**, and is directed by both Ware and two-time Oscar® winner **Bill Guttentag**. The film is produced by **Patrick McDonald** and is written by both Ware and McDonald.

Documentary filmmaker **Jennifer Peedom's *Sherpa: In the Shadow of the Mountain*** will look at the dangerous tensions and drama of a high altitude Everest expedition from the point of view of the Sherpas, and is produced by **Bridget Ikin**, **John Smithson** (*127 Hours*, *Touching the Void*) and **John Maynard**.

Screen Australia's Chief Executive Officer, **Graeme Mason**, said, "This is a strong line-up of character-driven feature projects coming from an incredibly talented mix of filmmakers.

"It's great to see the Jacobson brothers back together again after *Kenny* with a new feature. *Oddball* is a film with enormous potential that will appeal to a broad mainstream audience and comes from both an experienced and passionate team.

"Australian producer Emile Sherman and Australian writer Luke Davies' co-production *Life* is a beautifully written biopic and a great international collaboration that we're thrilled to be involved with.

"I'm delighted to be able to announce significant and continued investment in theatrical documentaries. Both *Sherpa* and *Only the Dead* are outstanding feature documentary projects. *Sherpa* promises to be a work of great beauty and emotional subtlety, and *Only the Dead* promises to be gripping and compelling viewing," said Mr Mason.

Adult television drama investments include the two-part telemovie biopic ***Gina***, which tells the epic story of Australian mining heiress Gina Rinehart. It is produced for the Nine Network by **Claudia Karvan**, **Michael Cordell** and **Paul Bennett**, and is written by both Bennett and **Katherine Thomson**. It is executive produced by **Nick Murray**, **Jo Rooney** and **Andy Ryan**.

MEDIA RELEASE

***The Kettering Incident***, written by **Victoria Madden**, is a high-end serialised mystery drama set and shot entirely in Tasmania, and is produced for Foxtel by producer **Vincent Sheehan** with executive producer **Penny Win**.

The landmark mini-series ***The Secret River***, based on the iconic Australian novel of the same name by Kate Grenville and successful stage-play, will be adapted for the small screen by writers **Jan Sardi** and **Mac Gudgeon**. Directed by **Daina Reid**, the mini-series will be produced for ABC Television by **Stephen Luby**.

***Hiding***, written by **Matt Ford** and produced for the ABC by **David Taylor**, **David Maher** and **Ford**, is a series about a Gold Coast criminal who, with his dysfunctional family, enters witness protection, suddenly finding himself in a strange city with a new identity, posing as a psychology academic.

Creator/director **Luke Jurevicius**'s award winning, high quality children's animation series ***The New Adventures of Figaro Pho*** returns for a second series for ABC3. It's written by various writers including **Mark Shirrefs** and is produced by **Frank Verheggen**, **Daniel Fill**, **Michael Boughen** and **Jurevicius**, with executive producers **Matthew Street** and **Christopher Mapp**.

"These five outstanding television drama projects announced today will deliver exceptional and iconic Australian stories to local audiences, and Screen Australia is proud to be an investor in them," said Mr Mason.

## **FEATURES**

### **LIFE**

**See-Saw (Life) Holdings Pty Ltd**

**Producers** Emile Sherman, Iain Canning, Christina Piovesan, Benito Mueller, Wolfgang Mueller

**Writer** Luke Davies

**Director** Anton Corbijn

**International Sales** FilmNation

**Australian Distributor** Transmission Films

**Cast** Dane DeHaan, Robert Pattinson

**Synopsis** A freelance photographer hustling for the next job and a little-known but soon-to-be-immortal actor strike up an improbable friendship in the course of the cat-and-mouse game that is a photo assignment for *Life Magazine*.

### **ODDBALL**

**WTFN/The Film Company in association with Kcommunications**

**Producers** Richard Keddie, Steve Kearney, Sheila Hanahan Taylor

**Writer** Peter Ivan

**Director** Clayton Jacobson

**International Sales** Global Screen

**Australian Distributor** Roadshow Films

**Cast** Shane Jacobson

**Synopsis** The story of an eccentric chicken farmer who saves a colony of penguins by putting his sheepdog on their island.

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**ONLY THE DEAD****Wolfhound Pictures Pty Ltd & Penance Films Pty Ltd****Producer** Patrick McDonald**Writers** Michael Ware, Patrick McDonald**Directors** Bill Guttentag, Michael Ware**International Sales** Cinetic Media LLC (representing North American rights)**Australian Distributor** Transmission Films**Cast** Michael Ware (reporter/cinematographer)**Synopsis** Theatrical feature documentary *Only the Dead* is the story of what happens when one ordinary man, Michael Ware, an Australian journalist for CNN and *Time Magazine*, is transplanted into the Middle East by the reverberations of 9/11 and butts into history. It is a journey that courses through the deepest recesses of the Iraq War and reveals a darkness lurking in Ware's own heart – a darkness he never knew was there.**SHERPA: IN THE SHADOW OF THE MOUNTAIN****Felix Media Pty Ltd****Producers** Bridget Ikin, John Smithson, John Maynard**Writer/Director** Jennifer Peedom**Australian Distributor** Footprint Films**Synopsis** In 1953 Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay reached the summit of the world in an act that symbolised everything good about human cooperation and courage. Sixty years later, an ugly confrontation high up the mountain between Western climbers and a mob of angry Sherpas makes global news. What's going on up there?**ADULT TV DRAMA****GINA****Cordell Jigsaw Zapruder****Executive Producers** Nick Murray, Jo Rooney, Andy Ryan**Producers** Claudia Karvan, Michael Cordell, Paul Bennett**Writers** Paul Bennett, Katherine Thomson**Broadcaster** Nine Network**International Sales** Cordell Jigsaw Distribution**Synopsis** A sweeping saga of empires rising and falling as the world's richest woman, Gina Rinehart, fights to maintain and expand the mining dynasty left to her by her father, whilst her children sue her for their share of the multi-billion dollar inheritance.**HIDING****Playmaker Media Pty Ltd****Producers** David Taylor, David Maher, Matt Ford**Writer** Matt Ford**Broadcaster** ABC Television**Domestic Sales** Universal Pictures (Australasia)**International Sales** ITV Global Entertainment**Synopsis** A Gold Coast criminal enters witness protection, along with his dysfunctional family. He suddenly finds himself in a strange city, with a new name, a new house and a new job – in a university psychology department.**Media enquiries** Teri Calder, Screen Australia**Tel** +612 8113 5833 | **Mobile** 0408 440 995 | [teri.calder@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:teri.calder@screenaustralia.gov.au)

**THE KETTERING INCIDENT****Porchlight Films & Sweet Potato Films****Executive Producer** Penny Win**Producer** Vincent Sheehan**Writer** Victoria Madden**Broadcaster** Foxtel**Domestic Sales** Jetty Distribution**International Sales** BBC Worldwide

**Synopsis** When two girls mysteriously disappear in identical circumstances in the wilds of Tasmania 15 years apart, Doctor Anna Macy finds herself inexplicably linked to both cases. To clear her name, Anna must delve into her troubled past and face some truths about herself and the otherworldly nature of this gothic land.

**THE SECRET RIVER****Ruby Entertainment****Producer** Stephen Luby**Writers** Jan Sardi, Mac Gudgeon**Director** Daina Reid**Broadcaster** ABC Television**Domestic Sales** ABC Commercial**International Sales** ABC Commercial

**Synopsis** In 1810, emancipated English convict William Thornhill stakes a claim on 100 acres of land on the remote Hawkesbury River in New South Wales, only to find that a clan of Aboriginal people also lay claim to the land, as they have done since time immemorial.

**CHILDREN'S TV DRAMA****THE NEW ADVENTURES OF FIGARO PHO****Chocolate Liberation Front Pty Ltd (co-production by Ambience Entertainment, an Omnilab company)****Executive Producers** Matthew Street, Christopher Mapp**Producers** Frank Verheggen, Daniel Fill, Michael Boughen, Luke Jurevicius**Creator/Director** Luke Jurevicius**Writer** Mark Shirrefs, various**Broadcaster** ABC3**Domestic Sales** ABC Commercial**International Sales** ABC Commercial

**Synopsis** Figaro Pho has had enough of being fearful. His fears are preventing him from enjoying a fulfilling life. He has decided, once and for all, to face them and head out into the world and live! With his trusty companion Rivet by his side, surely he will succeed. But Figaro Pho's new adventures are wilder, more surreal and more hilarious than you could ever have imagined.