

Media Release

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Australian Academy announces first-ever feature documentary shortlist to screen during new stand-alone AACTA Docs Fest



Shining the spotlight on Australia's thriving documentary industry, the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) has today announced that ten of Australia's best feature length documentaries from the past year will screen during AACTA's stand-alone Docs Fest.

AACTA's Docs Fest program marks the first time that a wider shortlist of feature documentaries competing for the AACTA Award for Best Feature Length Documentary will be officially screened in cinema to voting members.

"We are thrilled to be profiling a larger number of incredible Australian documentaries to our members and the Australian public, especially in one of the highest-grossing years for Australian documentaries on record," said **AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trehwella**. "Australian documentary filmmakers continue to produce an ever-increasing number of highly engaging, world-class documentaries, as we have seen with a 136% increase in feature documentary entries between 2015 and 2018. AACTA Docs Fest will help facilitate a broader exploration of the very best of these films, drawing attention not just to the great filmmakers behind them, but also the incredible stories and people they are exploring."

The ten films making up the Best Feature Documentary Shortlist are: **BACKTRACK BOYS, DYING TO LIVE, GHOSTHUNTER, GUILTY, GURRUMUL, HAVE YOU SEEN THE LISTERS?, ISLAND OF THE HUNGRY GHOSTS, JILL BILCOCK: DANCING THE INVISIBLE, MOUNTAIN** and **WORKING CLASS BOY**.

From delving into the lives of some of Australia's most iconic musicians, artists and film practitioners (GURRUMUL, HAVE YOU SEEN THE LISTERS?, JILL BILCOCK: DANCING THE INVISIBLE, WORKING CLASS BOY), to tackling complex and haunting issues such as organ and tissue donation (DYING TO LIVE), repressed trauma and child abuse (GHOSTHUNTER), the ten feature documentaries are a truly diverse collection of stories.

The stories span the globe, taking audiences from the outskirts of Armidale in New South Wales (BACKTRACK BOYS) to the tops of some of the highest mountains in the world (MOUNTAIN), and behind the

walls of death row at the notorious Kerobokan Prison in Indonesia (GUILTY) and the Christmas Island Detention Centre (ISLAND OF THE HUNGRY GHOSTS).

This year sees five first-time feature documentary directors – **Gabrielle Brady, Axel Grigor, Paul Damien Williams, Matthew Sleeth** and **Ben Lawrence** – compete for a nomination alongside AFI and AACTA Award-winning directors **Jennifer Peedom, Eddie Martin** and **Mark Joffe**.

The Best Feature Documentary Shortlist was determined by the AACTA Documentary Branch, which is made up of past AFI and AACTA documentary award winners and nominees as well as other highly esteemed members of the Australian documentary industry. All AACTA members will vote to determine the Best Feature Length Documentary nominees during Round One voting in October, with winners being determined during Round Two voting in November.

AACTA Docs Fest will screen during the first week of October in Sydney at the **Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS)**, in Melbourne at **Cinema Nova** and in Brisbane at **Griffith Film School**.

AACTA Docs Fest is exclusive and complimentary to AFI | AACTA members, with guests permitted to attend selected events. The full Program is available on www.aacta.org. In addition to Docs Fest screenings, the ten competing feature documentaries will be available to view online via [AACTA TV](#) from 2 October – available to AFI and AACTA members anytime, anywhere and on any device.

– ENDS –

The AACTA Awards are supported by the New South Wales Government via its tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW.

NOTES ON AACTA DOCS FEST

AACTA's Docs Fest (complimentary and exclusive to members) provides the opportunity to watch, discuss and judge the feature documentaries in competition for the AACTA Award for Best Feature Length Documentary at the 8th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel. **To become a member, visit www.aacta.org/membership/ or call 1300 139 697.**

For further information on AACTA's two other stand-alone festivals – AACTA Film Fest (currently screening in cinemas in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and online via AACTA TV) and AACTA Shorts Fest – please visit www.aacta.org.

VOTING, NOMINATIONS AND THE 8TH AACTA AWARDS PRESENTED BY FOXTEL

Round One voting will take place following AACTA Film Fest, with the remaining nominees for the 8th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel to be announced in October 2018. More information on voting can be found at <https://www.aacta.org/aacta-awards/voting/>.

Winners will be announced during the two major 8th AACTA Awards events in Sydney, home of the AACTA Awards: The **Industry Luncheon** on Monday 3 December, followed by the **AACTA Awards Ceremony & Official After Party** on Wednesday 5 December, televised on Channel Seven with encore screenings on Foxtel. **Tickets for both events will go on sale in early October 2018.**

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