



#### MEDIA RELEASE

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## Australian Academy Announces Presto as AACTA Awards Presenting Partner & Reveals Feature Films in Competition

Anticipation around the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) Awards increased today, with the announcement of 23 Feature Films in Competition, and a new Presenting Partner.

Presto, an Australian streaming service offering ad-free movies and television on demand, was announced as the new “Presenting Partner” of the 5th and 6th AACTA Awards; a significant endorsement of Australia’s top screen Awards.

Presto is backed by Foxtel, a major partner of the AACTA Awards, and the Seven Network, broadcast partner of the AACTA Awards, marking the perfect fit.

AACTA also launched the **5th AACTA Awards presented by Presto** Official Screenings Program.

The four-week program, which screens in Sydney and Melbourne and online via AACTA TV, brings Australia’s leading screen professionals together with screen fans to watch, discuss and judge the Feature Films, Short Films and Feature Length Documentaries competing for an Award.

A total of 23 Feature Films will compete for the **5th AACTA Awards presented by Presto: *Alex & Eve; Blinky Bill the Movie; Cut Snake; The Dressmaker; Force Of Destiny; Holding the Man; Infini; John Doe; Vigilante; Kill Me Three Times; Last Cab to Darwin; Love is Now; Mad Max: Fury Road; Now Add Honey; Oddball; One Eyed Girl; The Pack; PAPER PLANES; Partisan; RISE; Ruben Guthrie; Strangerland; Touch; unINDIAN.***

The screenings program offers a chance to catch up on Australian Feature Films which have released throughout the year, and to see competing films which have not yet released - ***Alex & Eve, The Dressmaker, unINDIAN*** and ***Now Add Honey***. ***Now Add Honey*** will open the screenings program in Sydney on September 14 then in Melbourne on September 15, with the film’s director **Wayne Hope** and writer-performer **Robyn Butler** attending.

The screenings program will be held between 14 September – 8 October in Sydney (Event Cinemas, Bondi Junction) and Melbourne (Cinema Nova), and online via AACTA TV, accessible anytime, anywhere. Screenings are exclusive and complimentary to members of the AFI (open to all) and AACTA (accredited screen professionals). The screenings program will be available on the AACTA website from 9am Thursday 27 August 2015.

### A LOOK AT THE FEATURE FILMS IN COMPETITION

A fresh perspective is evident in this year’s mix of Feature Films in Competition, with ten of the 23 films competing by first-time feature film directors, including **Brendan Cowell (*Ruben Guthrie*)**, **Ariel Kleiman**

**(Partisan), Kim Farrant (Strangerland), Wayne Hope (Now Add Honey) and Anupam Sharma (unINDIAN).**

Debut directors will compete alongside seasoned directors, including AFI, BAFTA and Oscar awarded **Dr George Miller (Mad Max: Fury Road)**, and multi-AFI Award winners **Robert Connolly (Paper Planes)**, **Jocelyn Moorhouse (The Dressmaker)** and **Paul Cox (Force of Destiny)**, to name a few.

Among high calibre award-winning home-grown talent - **Nicole Kidman (Strangerland)**, **Hugo Weaving (Strangerland and The Dressmaker)**, **Jacki Weaver (Last Cab to Darwin)**, and **Anthony LaPaglia and Guy Pearce (Holding the Man)** - this year's Feature Films in Competition also see performances from international talent including **Charlize Theron and Tom Hardy (Mad Max: Fury Road)**, **Kate Winslet (The Dressmaker)** and **Joseph Fiennes (Strangerland)**.

**AFI | AACTA CEO, Damian Trehwella, said:**

"AACTA is delighted to see emerging filmmaking talent competing alongside industry icons, indicating a healthy industry and making for interesting competition.

"It's also fantastic to see a big year for women in film, with ten of the films competing either produced or directed by women. These include the return of past AFI or AACTA Award winners, including **Jocelyn Moorhouse** and **Sue Maslin**, director and producer of **The Dressmaker**, **Partisan** producers **Anna McLeish** and **Sarah Shaw**, who produced **Snowtown**, and **Holding The Man** producer **Kylie du Fresne**, who co-produced **The Sapphires**."

"Box office results for, and critical acclaim of, Australian films so far this year have indicated that our stories are impressing viewers and reaching and resonating with audiences. The Academy encourages everyone to join the AFI or AACTA, and to come along to our screenings or watch online in support of our talented industry and in celebration of great Australian filmmaking. The screenings program compliments our year-round screen culture and industry development member program, which has attracted more than 4,500 people to our screenings throughout the year, showing a huge appetite for great Australian film content," Trehwella said.

Trehwella said he is delighted to partner with Presto as the Presenting Partner of the AACTA Awards, offering new opportunities for sharing AACTA Awards content with new audiences around Australia.

"Presto is already a great supporter of Australian screen content, with a dedicated 'Australian Made' television showcase, and many Australian films featuring in Presto's movie showcase. By partnering with the AACTA Awards, Presto is sending a strong message of support for the Australian industry, and we look forward to delivering one of our best Awards seasons yet with our suite of new and returning partners, including Presto in the key role of Presenting Partner."

**Presto Interim CEO Shaun James said:**

"Presto is delighted to be Presenting Partner for the AACTA Awards. This is the ideal natural partnership with AACTA recognising, encouraging and promoting Australian film and television while Presto celebrates film and television by offering Australians a quality on demand entertainment service."

Voting will take place following the Official Screenings, with the remaining nominees for the **5th AACTA Awards presented by Presto** scheduled to be announced in October 2015.

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

## NOTES TO EDITORS REGARDING FEATURE FILMS

The Feature Films in Competition mark the long list of eligible Feature Films to be narrowed down to a list of nominees via voting. These are the Feature Films deemed eligible to compete, either automatically (having achieved a minimum four capital city cinema release), or through jury pre-selection (two to three capital city release or alternative distribution pathway). The Academy notes an amendment to theatrical release dates for Feature Films in Competition applicable to the **5th AACTA Awards presented by Presto** as follows. Following consultation with the industry, to be eligible for competition, Feature Films will need to have had a theatrical release in Australia for the first time between 1 January and 5 November 2015, as opposed to 1 January and 15 October 2015, as was previously announced.

## VOTING

For the **5th AACTA Awards presented by Presto**, AFI members (film and television enthusiast members of the public) have the opportunity to vote within the categories of Best Short Animation and Best Short Fiction Film, and AACTA members (accredited screen professionals) can vote across all Award categories.

Following a review with scrutineers, Ernst & Young, AFI | AACTA has determined that the Feature Film nominees will continue to be determined by preferential voting in Round One, with the nominees in the Best Film category now being limited to five. In Round Two, the Feature Film winners will now be determined by a simple majority vote, in line with BAFTA and AMPAS methodology. This is also how the Feature Length Documentary and Short Film winners will be determined. Further voting details will be published on the AACTA website ahead of Round One voting opening in early October.

## NOMINATIONS ANNOUNCEMENT

Feature Film nominees, Television nominees and remaining Documentary nominees will be announced in October 2015. Short Film nominees and Feature Length Documentary nominees for the **5th AACTA Awards presented by Presto** were announced in July 2015.

## COUNTDOWN TO THE AACTA AWARDS | SYDNEY 2015

Winners will be announced at the **5th AACTA Awards presented by Presto** in Sydney, home of the AACTA Awards, in December 2015.

The **5th AACTA Awards presented by Presto** follow four highly successful Awards seasons since the launch of AACTA by the Australian Film Institute (AFI) in 2011. The AACTA Awards are a continuum of the AFI Awards which have celebrated Australian screen excellence and achievement since 1958.

## ABOUT PRESTO

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