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First AACTA Winners Announced at Industry Luncheon in Sydney

SWEET COUNTRY, LADIES IN BLACK, MOUNTAIN and PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK lead the Awards count with three Awards each.

This year's first AACTA Award winners were announced today in Sydney at the 2018 AACTA Awards Industry Luncheon presented by Foxtel, held at The Star Event Centre.

Celebrating both the 60th Anniversary of AFI | AACTA – Australia's longest standing national screen culture and industry development organisation – and the nation's top achievements from the past year, 35 Awards were presented during the Luncheon, recognising screen craft excellence across all industry sectors.

The remainder of this year's Award winners will be announced at the AACTA Awards Ceremony presented by Foxtel on Wednesday 5 December, held at The Star Event Centre in Sydney and telecast at 8:30pm on Channel 7, with encore screenings on Foxtel.

The inaugural AACTA Award for Best Indie Film presented by Event Cinemas went to Australia's Best Foreign Language Film Oscar® entry for this year, **Benjamin Gilmour's JIRGA**. Event Cinemas will further celebrate Australian independent film with special screenings of **JIRGA** in 2019, giving audiences all around Australia the opportunity to see the AACTA Award-winning film on the big screen.

LADIES IN BLACK won three out of a potential five Awards, including Best Costume Design, Best Hair and Makeup and Best Original Music Score, marking a second AFI | AACTA win for Emmy-nominated composer **Christopher Gordon**.

Warwick Thornton, who is also nominated for Best Direction at Wednesday night's Awards Ceremony, took home his third AACTA Award for Best Cinematography for **SWEET COUNTRY**, which also won Best Original Screenplay and Best Editing.

Oscar® winner **Lisa Thompson** and Oscar® nominee **Roger Ford** received the AACTA Award for Best Production Design for their work on **PETER RABBIT™**, which also won Best Visual Effects or Animation.

PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK leads the television Awards tally, receiving three Awards – Best Cinematography in Television, Best Production Design in Television and Best Costume Design in Television.

Taking home consecutive AACTA Awards in television categories were **Glendyn Ivin** (Best Direction in a Television Drama or Comedy for **SAFE HARBOUR**), **Antony Partos** and **Matteo Zingales** (Best Original Music Score in Television for **MYSTERY ROAD**).

Allison Meadows received the inaugural AACTA Award for Best Casting presented by Casting Networks for her work on gay rights movement mini series, **RIOT**.

Other television Award winners include: **ROMPER STOMPER, HAWKE: THE LARRKIN AND THE LEADER, THE BUREAU OF MAGICAL THINGS** and **THE LETDOWN**, which took home the AACTA Award for Best Comedy Program.

Following three consecutive nominations for the Award, **SELLING HOUSES AUSTRALIA's Shayna Blaze** took home the Subscription Television Award for Best Female Presenter, with co-presenter **Andrew Winter** taking home Best Male Presenter. The Subscription Television Award for Best New Talent went to **MR**

INBETWEEN writer, producer and lead actor **Scott Ryan**, who is also nominated for Best Lead Actor in a Television Drama at Wednesday's Awards Ceremony.

The remaining two Subscription Television Awards went to: **SKY NEWS LEADERSHIP SPILL** for Best Live Event Production and **FINALS FOOTY ON FOX: RICHMOND V COLLINGWOOD**, which won the inaugural Subscription Television Award for Best Sports Presentation.

Receiving two Awards, Oscar® winner **Robert Mackenzie** won his fifth and sixth AACTA Awards: Best Sound for **BREATH**, alongside two-time Emmy nominee **Jed Dodge**, **Trevor Hope** and **Tara Webb**; and Best Sound in a Documentary for **MOUNTAIN**, alongside fellow Oscar® winner **David White**.

Winning three out of a potential four AACTA Awards this afternoon, **Jennifer Peedom's MOUNTAIN** also took home Best Cinematography for **Renan Ozturk** and Best Original Score in a Documentary for Australian Chamber Orchestra Leader and Artistic Director **Richard Tognetti AO**.

EMPLOYABLE ME received the AACTA Award for Best Documentary or Factual Program, while **GHOSTHUNTER** took home the remaining documentary award for Best Editing in a Documentary.

Billie Pleffer's DEADLOCK took home the AACTA Award for Best Online Video or Series (alongside **Fiona Egger**, **Deb Cox** and **Belinda Mravicic**), while the AACTA Awards for Best Short Animation and Best Short Fiction Film went to **LOST AND FOUND** and Palme d'Or winner **Charles Williams' ALL THESE CREATURES**, respectively.

The luncheon was hosted by two-time AFI and AACTA Award-winning actress **Kat Stewart** and **ORANGE IS THE NEW BROWN** comedian **Nazeem Hussain**, who were joined on stage by presenters including **Simon Baker**, **Susie Porter**, **Stephen** and **Bernard Curry**, **Celia Pacquola**, **Aaron Pedersen**, **Sara Wiseman**, **Matt Okine** and **Leah Purcell**.

"On behalf of the Australian Academy, I congratulate all of this afternoon's nominees and winners," said **AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trewhella**. "AACTA is the only Australian organisation to honour practitioners across all screen industry sectors and genres, and this afternoon's luncheon was a true showcase of the world-class talent within our industry, both in front and behind the camera. In addition to Oscar®, BAFTA, Emmy and multiple AFI and AACTA Award winners, we also saw 43 first-time AACTA Award winners receive well-deserved recognition, a promising sign for what lies ahead for the Australian screen industry."

"I congratulate all of today's winners and am delighted that Australia's leading state for film and television production, NSW, is home to the industry's most prestigious awards, the AACTAs," said **NSW Minister for the Arts Don Harwin**. "Having supported the AACTAs since 2011, the NSW Government recognises the importance of creativity and remains committed to growing this vital industry."

– ENDS –

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

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