



ASIA INTERNATIONAL  
ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM  
亚洲国际参与计划

## Media Release

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# Australian Academy launches 2019 Asia International Engagement Program at Gala dinner in Shanghai

## Films in competition for 2019 Best Asian Film Award announced

The Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) has launched the third year of their Asia International Engagement Program in Shanghai, holding an exciting China | Australia Film Forum and Panel Discussion and an exclusive gala dinner to celebrate the 2019 Program.

Over 300 guests attended the gala dinner at Wanda Reign on the Bund, which included a stand out performance from Chinese boy band **WayV**.

During the gala dinner, AACTA announced many of the films competing for a nomination for the 2019 AACTA Award for Best Asian Film presented by Eureka International Group (EIG), which honours the finest films of the past year from 19 Asian regions, reflecting the popularity and importance of Asian films in Australia.

Among the Chinese-language films in competition are the second highest-grossing film of all time in China and one of the top 20 highest-grossing science fiction films of all time worldwide, **THE WANDERING EARTH**, as well as three of the ten highest-grossing films in China of 2019 so far: comedy **PEGASUS**; Chinese-Hong Kong comedy-drama **THE NEW KING OF COMEDY**; and animated fantasy film **WHITE SNAKE**, whose executive producer **Yu Zhou** attended the gala dinner to introduce his film.

Also attending the gala dinner to introduce their competing films were: **Renny Harlin**, director of crime thriller **BODIES AT REST** which opened the Hong Kong International Film Festival earlier this year; and president and CEO of Perfect Village, **Ellen Eliasoph**, who introduced **THE WHISTLEBLOWER**, one of the biggest Chinese-Australian co-productions ever made.

Other films from the China region competing for a nomination are: China's Best Foreign Language Film Oscar® entry, action comedy **HIDDEN MAN**; period film **SHADOW**, which won four awards at the 55th Golden Horse Awards; crime drama **THE WILD GOOSE LAKE**, which premiered in competition at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival; Hong Kong Film Award-winning action film **PROJECT GUTENBERG**; dark comedy **A COOL FISH**; and mystery drama **HEADLINES**.

AACTA also announced a number of the films in competition from other regions. Indian films competing for a nomination include: the highest-grossing Bollywood film of 2019, military action film **URI: THE SURGICAL STRIKE**; India's Best Foreign Language Film entry for the 91st Oscars®, Kamrupi Assamese language coming-of-age film **VILLAGE ROCKSTARS**; and action comedy **THE MAN WHO FEELS NO PAIN**, which won the Midnight Madness People's Choice Award at the 2018 Toronto International Film Festival.

Also in competition are: the first Korean film to win the Palme d'Or, dark comedy **PARASITE**; South Korea's Best Foreign Language Film Oscar® entry and the first Korean film to make the Oscars® final nine-film shortlist, psychological drama mystery **BURNING**; action comedy **EXTREME JOB**, which is the second most-viewed film in South Korean history; Sundance and Berlinale Award-winning Japanese drama **WE ARE LITTLE ZOMBIES**; and Japanese animation **WEATHERING WITH YOU**, from filmmaker **Makoto Shinkai** whose 2016 animation **YOUR NAME** is the highest-grossing anime film of all time.

The winner of the Best Asian Film Award will be determined by the 2019 Best Asian Film Grand Jury, led by Oscar® and multiple AFI and AACTA Award-winning actor **Russell Crowe**, who will return as President.

It was also announced at the event that Hong Kong Film Award-winning actress **Chloe Maayan** (THREE HUSBANDS, LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT) and Shaw Brothers Executive Director **Virginia Lok** will join Crowe on the 2019 Best Asian Film Grand Jury. Finnish director **Renny Harlin** (THE LONG KISS GOODNIGHT, BODIES AT REST) and Australian producer **Paul Currie** (HACKSAW RIDGE, BLEEDING STEEL) will also return as Grand Jurors.

The AACTA Award for Best Asian Film presented by Eureka International Group will be presented at the 2019 AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel, held on Wednesday 4 December 2019 in Sydney at The Star Event Centre and telecast nationally on Channel 7, with encore screenings on Foxtel.

While in Shanghai, AACTA will also hold a **China | Australia Film Forum and Networking Party** on Tuesday 18 June at Sky Banquet Show. The event will provide those in attendance with unique and informative insights into co-productions and collaborations between Australia and China from creative, cultural, business, and financial perspectives.

The panel includes some of the most experienced professionals involved in Chinese and Australian film collaboration: Best Asian Film Grand Jurors **Renny Harlin** and **Paul Currie**; Chinese screenwriter **Liu Yi** (WOLF WARRIOR II); President and CEO of Perfect Village Entertainment **Ellen Eliasoph** (THE WHISTLEBLOWER, SHADOW); CEO of China Film Assist **Geng Ling** (MAO'S LAST DANCER); co-CEO of Harvest Pictures Group, producer **David Redman** (SPIN OUT, STRANGE BEDFELLOWS); and moderator **Max Yang**, producer and former Director of the Market Department at Shanghai International Film Festival.

"We are proud to return to Shanghai to launch the third year of our Asia International Engagement Program, and to continue encouraging, promoting and growing the opportunities for creative collaborations and meaningful pathways between our film industry and those of our Asian neighbours," said **AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trehwella**. "We're also thrilled to present tomorrow's Film Forum, which will focus the importance of encouraging and fostering creative and cultural exchange between the Australian and Chinese film industries – an essential area of growth which has incredible potential to give our industries access to wider pools of talent, special skills, expertise, infrastructure, and funding, among other areas."

"As the presenting partner for the AACTA Award for Best Asian Film, we are proud to see such a diverse slate of world-class films representing regions from all around Asia in competition for this year's Award," said **Eureka International Group Chairman Kelvin Dong**. "It's an exciting time of growth for the film industries in Australia, China, and the wider Asian region, and we are proud to join AACTA in recognizing film excellence in these regions."

"Australian Chinese audiences have had a tremendous impact on the Australian film industry, and Matrix has been committed to the integration of Chinese and Western cultures to achieve further mutual understanding and cooperation," said **Sammy Shi, CEO of Organising Partner Matrix United Technology Pty Ltd**. "By working with AACTA's Asia International Engagement Program, Matrix hopes to effectively build a strong cooperation channel between Australia and China's film and television industry, and to provide a stronger international stage for Chinese films and film producers."

"When Harvest Pictures Group first took the idea of the Asia International Engagement Program to AACTA we imagined it could help build connection and understanding between Australia and Asia through the power of sharing our stories. With the fantastic work of the Australian Academy and our new partner in the program Matrix, it has already surpassed our expectations and we look forward to continuing to grow the program and the important cultural and commercial links it can support and nurture," said **David Redman and Tony Combs, Co-CEO's of Harvest Pictures Group**, who are a partner to AACTA's 2019 Asia International Engagement Program.

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

#### **EVENT IMAGES**

Images from the Gala Dinner can be accessed at [www.image.net/AACTAshanghai2019](http://www.image.net/AACTAshanghai2019).

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Official hashtag: #AACTAs | Facebook: /AACTAawards | Twitter: @aacta | Instagram: @aacta  
For further information about AFI | AACTA visit: [www.aacta.org](http://www.aacta.org)

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## AACTA ASIA INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

AACTA's Asia International Engagement Program aims to foster the burgeoning relationship between the film industries of Australia and its closest Asian neighbours. The Program not only champions the skills and achievements of Asian filmmakers to audiences and industry in Australia, but also promotes Australia's highly skilled practitioners to the booming industries of Asia, developing meaningful pathways for collaborations between Australia and the Asian region.

The cornerstone of the Program is the **AACTA Award for Best Asian Film presented by EIG**, recognising excellence in filmmaking throughout the Asian region. The Award reflects the growing popularity and importance of Asian films in Australia, with the growing Chinese and Indian diaspora having had a substantial impact on Australian box office and cinema trends.

## EUREKA INTERNATIONAL GROUP (EIG)

EIG is a global company with over 20 years' experience in international business and relationships. With major head offices located in Melbourne, Beijing and Shanghai, EIG specialises in business across the globe, including Australia, Mainland China, Hong Kong, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, Dubai, USA and various regions across Europe.

EIG is built on strong business values – transparency, honesty and openness. The multifaceted business provides services and products including: property development; project financing; fund management; immigration and education services; high-end tourism; agriculture and horticultural farming; international trade; retail franchise (food and beverage); and software development.

A strategic leader in the marketplace, EIG has an in-depth knowledge of all aspects of modern business, marketing and international trade. EIG's companies are constantly growing and evolving, allowing them to be innovative, strengthen their international business relationships and help guide other companies to successfully expose their products and services globally.

## MATRIX UNITED TECHNOLOGY

Matrix United Holding Pty Ltd is based in Australia, Canada and China. Matrix has rich cultural and recreational resources, including: media exposure of various Chinese communities; strong overseas business and media resources; professional Event Planning & Execution with experience in both China and Australia; and a strong ticketing platform. It has gathered the best content resources of China and successfully landed in Australia and Canada, opening a new chapter in the history of cultural entertainment for Chinese people overseas. It has completed many significant events like "The Rap of China 2019"; the 2017 and 2018 Huayi Brothers Icon & Model Search, "Happless Avengers", and "Goodbye Mr. Loser" of Mahua FunAge in both Australia and Canada.

## HARVEST PICTURES GROUP

Harvest Pictures Group is a media company based in Australia and China that develops, finances and produces Film, Television and online content for a global market as well as culturally significant events. It has just completed the Australian film, **MEASURE FOR MEASURE**, which is screening at the Melbourne International Film Festival, and is currently in production on the Chinese animated film, **GIRL OF ASHIMA**. Its upcoming production, **MISSION NOW**, an official Chinese-Australian co-production, has recently been approved and is planned to go into production in late 2019. It currently has a slate of Chinese facing productions in development as well as a range of educational and cultural programs.

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