

**Media Release**

Strictly embargoed until Tuesday 10 September 2019, 12:01am AEST

## **Australian Academy reveals thirty-four feature films in competition for the 2019 AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel**



The Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) today announced the thirty-four feature films in competition for this year's AACTA Awards – Australia's highest screen accolade.

Films vying for an AACTA Award nomination include **HOTEL MUMBAI, I AM MOTHER, THE KING, THE NIGHTINGALE, PALM BEACH, RIDE LIKE A GIRL** and **TOP END WEDDING**,

In an industry first, **THE KING**, a Netflix Original, has been considered an eligible feature film in competition without screening theatrically in Australia. Featuring Australians across all key creative roles - director **David Michôd**, screenwriters Michôd and **Joel Edgerton**, actors **Ben Mendelsohn** and Edgerton, and producers Edgerton, Michod and **Liz Watts**- the Australian Academy have included the film given the significant reach of its distribution strategy and recognition at major international film festivals.

This marks the second time that the Australian trio – Edgerton, Mendelsohn and Michôd - will compete for nominations at this year's AACTA Awards following the critically acclaimed **ANIMAL KINGDOM** (2010).

Also in competition for the 2019 AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel is **Anthony Maras'** feature film directorial debut **HOTEL MUMBAI**, starring emerging Australian actress **Tilda Cobham-Hervey** and international actor and AACTA Award winner **Dev Patel**, as well as **Grant Sputore's** Netflix Original film **I AM MOTHER** starring AFI | AACTA Award winner **Rose Byrne** alongside international actress **Hillary Swank**. AACTA Award nominated director **Sophie Hyde's** Australian-Irish co-production **ANIMALS** is another testament to the globalisation of the Australian film industry, bringing her Australian creative team together with international stars **Holliday Granger** and **Alia Shawkat** to craft a unique coming-of-age story with universal appeal.

This year's slate of feature films in competition represent a wide range of genres and themes, highlighting our industry's achievement in original and compelling storytelling. From the ever increasing numbers of genre films, through to powerful dramas and idiosyncratically Australian comedies, the 34 competing films really do offer something for everyone, with a wonderful diversity of themes created by first timers and experienced film makers alike.

The full list of feature films in competition are: **ACUTE MISFORTUNE, ANGEL OF MINE, ANIMALS, BILCHED, BOOK WEEK, BUOYANCY, CELESTE, CHOCOLATE OYSTER, THE COMBINATION REDEMPTION, DANGER CLOSE: THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN, EMU RUNNER, ESCAPE AND EVASION, HEARTS AND BONES, HOTEL MUMBAI, I AM MOTHER, JUDY & PUNCH, JUVENILE DELINQUENTS, THE KING, LOCUSTS, THE NAKED WANDERER, NEKROTRONIC, THE NIGHTINGALE, OUTBACK, PALM BEACH, PIMPED, PROMISED, REFLECTIONS IN THE DUST, RIDE LIKE A GIRL, SEQUIN IN A BLUE ROOM, SLAM, STORM BOY, SUBURBAN WILDLIFE, TOP END WEDDING and UNDERTOW.**

Among those making their feature film directorial debuts are AFI | AACTA Award winning and Oscar® nominated actress **Rachel Griffiths'** with RIDE LIKE A GIRL, alongside exciting new talent including **Samuel Van Grinsven's** SEQUIN IN A BLUE ROOM and **Thomas M Wright's** ACUTE MISFORTUNE. Previous AACTA Award winning writer and director **Jennifer Kent** features in competition with her acclaimed sophomore film THE NIGHTINGALE, alongside PALM BEACH from the AFI Award winning and Golden Globe nominated **Rachel Ward.**

The feature films in competition also feature an impressive list of top Australian talent and previous AFI | AACTA Award Winning actors, including: **Bryan Brown** (PALM BEACH), **Daniel Henshaw** (ACUTE MISFORTUNE), **Damon Herriman** (JUDY & PUNCH, THE NIGHTINGALE), **Jacqueline McKenzie** (PALM BEACH), **Sam Neill** (PALM BEACH, RIDE LIKE A GIRL), **Richard Roxburgh** (ANGEL OF MINE), **Mia Wasikowska** (JUDY & PUNCH), **Hugo Weaving** (HEARTS AND BONES) and **Odessa Young** (CELESTE).

This year's mix of feature films in competition also include an impressive showcase of talent vying for their first AACTA Award nomination including: **Jai Courtney** (STORM BOY), **Travis Fimmel** (DANGER CLOSE: THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN), **Natasha Liu Bordizzo** (THE NAKED WANDERER), **Jessica McNamee** (LOCUSTS), **Radha Mitchell** (CELESTE), **Yvonne Strahovski** (ANGEL OF MINE) and **Toby Wallace** (ACUTE MISFORTUNE).

"It's an incredibly interesting year for the Australian film industry, with an increasing amount of cinema quality films opting for digital distribution models. From large-scale productions to those vying for our Best Indie Film award, on-demand viewing is fast becoming a viable option for productions to have their work seen by a wide audience, which is expanding our creative relationships globally," said **AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trehwella.** "The quality and diversity of each of the feature films in competition is reflective of the Australian industry's distinct ability to reinvent itself. The amount of women in key creative roles among this year's slate of films in competition offers fresh takes on traditional genres and storytelling from unique perspectives. We look forward to seeing how the Australian industry votes in what is another fantastically competitive year."

All thirty-four of the feature films in competition will be available for AACTA and AFI members to view online via [AACTA TV](#) from 10 September. The full schedule is available at [www.aacta.org](http://www.aacta.org).

This year, AACTA will continue to shine a spotlight on Australian film by transforming the AACTA website into a hub of conversation and analysis, encouraging and supporting a broader discussion around the thirty-four competing films and Australian screen craft. Guest contributors from the wider Australian screen industry will share articles exploring the feature films in competition and the performers and practitioners behind them. New articles will be posted each week at [www.aacta.org/aacta-awards/news](http://www.aacta.org/aacta-awards/news).

– ENDS –

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

#### **MEDIA KIT**

A media kit including publicity stills and synopsis for the feature films in competition can be downloaded [here](#).

#### **VOTING, NOMINATIONS AND THE 2019 AACTA AWARDS PRESENTED BY FOXTEL**

The feature films in competition mark the long list of feature films deemed eligible to compete for the 2019 AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel. These films will be narrowed down to a list of nominees through the Round One voting period. Round Two voting will take place after the announcement of the nominees in late October 2019. More information on voting can be found at <https://www.aacta.org/aacta-awards/voting/>.

Winners will be announced during the two major 2019 AACTA Awards events in Sydney, home of the AACTA Awards: The Industry Luncheon on Monday 2 December, followed by the AACTA Awards Ceremony & Official After Party on Wednesday 4 December, televised on Channel Seven with encore screenings on Foxtel. Tickets for both events will go on sale in early October 2019.

#### **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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