



A HUNDRED THOUSAND CONGRATULATIONS FOR MIFF PREMIERE FUND-SUPPORTED FILMS

Just weeks after garnering critical acclaim during its world premiere season at the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF), MIFF Premiere Fund-supported **PUTUPARRI & THE RAINMAKERS** has won the \$100,000 Film Prize during its MIFF Premiere Fund presentation at Western Australia's Cinefest Oz.

“PUTUPARRI AND THE RAINMAKERS had a story and characters that were so compelling and emotionally engaging,” said actor, and Cinefest Jury Chair, **David Wenham**. “This story was told in such a way that it reinforced the power of cinema to entertain, touch us deeply and stay with us forever.”

Directed and produced by **Nicole Ma** with producer **John Moore**, PUTUPARRI AND THE RAINMAKERS is a feature documentary exploring **Tom Lawford**'s struggle to fulfil his destiny as a leader of his people and to pass on his indigenous culture to the next generation (**Sylvestor Rangie**).

After its Melbourne season at MIFF, the film kicked-off its MIFF Travelling Showcase tour at Bendigo and during September it heads to Benalla, Wangaratta, Geelong, Ballarat and Mildura (see <http://miff.com.au/travelling>).

This is the second year running that a MIFF Premiere Fund-supported film has won the Prize, following the inaugural Cinefest \$100,000 Film Prize last year going to **Robert Connolly**'s MIFF Premiere Fund-supported PAPER PLANES which went on to become a hit with Australian takings of nearly \$10 million.

“The winner last year, *Paper Planes*, went on to be an outstanding box office success and I would like to think the prize will become an important pointer to the films Australian audiences want to see,” said Cinefest Deputy Chair **Helen Shervington**.

After its MIFF premiere, PUTUPARRI AND THE RAINMAKERS was hailed by *The Conversation* as a “nuanced, respectful and powerful film” and by *The Age* as “a remarkable piece of filmmaking that makes us feel we've been granted the rare privilege of witnessing something utterly unique.”

“It's an honour for a small film like ours to win against such heavy weight competition,” said producer John Moore. “It's a great boost for the people of Fitzroy Crossing who appear in the film and I hope it will encourage all Australians to value and better understand the culture of our first peoples.”

“The MIFF Premiere Fund came in early and championed the film and we wouldn't have been able to get the film up without it,” said director Nicole Ma. “Launching *Putuparrri* at MIFF was a wonderful experience for us and I am grateful to MIFF Premiere Fund for all it has have done in getting the film to audiences.”

Meantime, following its world premiere at MIFF 2015, fellow MIFF Premiere Fund-supported film DOWNRIVER has been selected to have its international premiere in the Discovery section of the Toronto International Film Festival. Produced by **Jannine Barnes**, the film is directed by **Grant Scicluna** who is an alumnus of the MIFF Accelerator directing workshop.

“We had the most wonderful premiere season at MIFF and it put us on a high to get to Toronto and go again,” said Scicluna. “Becoming a partner right when we needed it, the MIFF Premiere Fund took a leap of faith to nurture us all the way. The MIFF Premiere Fund propels projects, often giving a leg-up to first-time filmmakers like us. There are a shrinking number of investors prepared to do that. With those same films supported by the MIFF Premiere Fund winning awards and getting selected for A-list festivals, it shows how important this Fund is for the Australian industry and is a timely reminder that a bold vision is still the foundation of an enduring film.”

Launched in 2007, with funding from the State Government of Victoria, the MIFF Premiere Fund provides strategic minority co-financing to new Australian feature films that will then premiere at MIFF. Previous MIFF

Premiere Fund-supported films include Berlin-selected THE TURNING, 2010 box office hit BRAN NUE DAE, Cannes-selected THESE FINAL HOURS, and feature documentary ELECTRIC BOOGALOO which is being released across the USA later this month by Warners.

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For more details, see the following:

- MIFF Travelling Showcase:
<http://miff.com.au/travelling>
- Q&A with PUTUPARRI AND THE RAINMAKERS Director Nicole Ma
<http://miffindustry.com/assets/2015/PF/PUTUPARRI%20AND%20THE%20RAINMAKERS%20Q&A.pdf>
- Photos of MIFF 2015 world premiere of PUTUPARRI AND THE RAINMAKERS:
<http://miff.com.au/photo-galleries/view/Putuparri+and+the+Rainmakers+World+Premiere>
- Putuparri & The Rainmakers website
<http://putuparriandtherainmakers.com>
- Q&A with DOWNRIVER Director Grant Scicluna:
<http://miffindustry.com/assets/2015/PF/Downriver%20QandA.pdf>
- Photos of MIFF 2015 world premiere of DOWNRIVER
<http://miff.com.au/photo-galleries/view/Downriver+World+Premiere>

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