



MEDIA RELEASE: MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL – FILM INVESTMENT FUND

WOODS TO HEAD MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL INVESTMENT FUND

MELBOURNE, 25 July 2007: Victorian Minister for Innovation John Brumby and Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) Board Chair Claire Dobbin today announced the engagement of Mark Woods as the Manager of the MIFF Film Investment Fund.

The Fund will enable MIFF to act as a strategic minority investor in Victorian feature films and feature documentaries. Guidelines, application forms, and dates of application rounds will be announced on the MIFF website by the end of August.

“The establishment of this fund is another important initiative of the Victorian State Government to build on Melbourne’s position as a centre of the Australian screen production industry,” said Dobbin at the launch of MIFF’s inaugural film co-financing forum **37 South: Bridging the Gap**. “Together with the Government’s parallel MIFF initiative of 37 South, this new Fund provides a crucial means of support for local filmmakers in the context of Australia’s most popular and successful film festival.”

“These industry initiatives mirror the role of other international film festivals which, like MIFF, have extended their remit to become important creative and financing hubs,” added Dobbin. “Mark brings a vast knowledge of both international film financing and the local industry to this position, so we are thrilled to have someone with such expertise, connections and high standing on board.”

Woods, who has served as Consulting Manager for MIFF’s inaugural film co-financing forum **37 South: Bridging the Gap**, is the outgoing Chief Executive of Ausfilm, Australia’s national content attraction organisation, which markets Australia internationally as centre of production and Post/Digital/VFX (PDV) excellence, while advocating at home for enhanced production incentives. Recently, the Australian Government has greatly enhanced the Federal production incentives, while confirmed international production includes HBO large budget series *The Pacific*, DreamWorks’ *The Ruins* and Walden’s *Nim’s Island*.

Previously, Woods served as CEO of Ireland’s national screen agency, the Irish Film Board (IFB), which developed and co-financed feature films, TV drama, documentary, animations and short films, as well as facilitating international production. At IFB, Woods was an Executive Producer on: Neil Jordan’s Golden Globe-nominated *Breakfast at Pluto*; and Ken Loach’s Cannes 2006 Palme d’Or winner *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*, amongst others.

A former Australian reporter for *Variety*, Woods is also well known to Australian film practitioners from his role as Head of Acquisitions & Investment for the Premium Movie Partnership’s Showtime and Encore movie channels in Australia. In addition to managing all international independent film acquisitions for the channels, Woods oversaw such Australian film investments as *Rabbit Proof Fence* (Toronto 2003), *Japanese Story* (Cannes 2003), *Somersault* (Cannes 2004) and box office hit *Crackerjack*.

“I admire what MIFF Chair Claire Dobbin and MIFF Executive Director Richard Moore are doing at MIFF, and I have greatly enjoyed consulting with them on 37 South, so I am delighted to extend my relationship with MIFF to serve as the inaugural head of the MIFF Film Investment Fund,” said Woods. “As the Australian film financing landscape undergoes an exciting period of change, MIFF’s Investment Fund will be an important means of support for local filmmakers.”

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