

MEDIA RELEASE:

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PREMIERE FUND OPENS SUBMISSIONS

MELBOURNE, 03 September 2007: The Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) Premiere Fund is now open and has issued its first two Calls for Submissions for projects that will premiere at MIFF 2008 and MIFF 2009.

The Fund, which will be a strategic minority supporter of a range of quality theatrical feature films and feature-length documentaries, has posted its Eligibility Guidelines, Assessment Criteria, and Applications Forms on the MIFF website at melbournefilmfestival.com.au/miff_premiere_fund.

"This is a very exciting day for MIFF," said MIFF Executive Director Richard Moore. "This new Fund will allow Australia's most popular and successful film festival to take its longstanding and deep relationship with Victorian filmmakers to a new level."

For the Premiere Fund's initial rounds, applications will be prioritized in the order that they can realistically premiere at either MIFF 2008 or MIFF 2009. Depending on the type of projects applying, applications close on either 08 October 2007 or 14 December 2007, giving applicants either five weeks or 14 weeks to prepare their applications. The first Round opens on 03 September 2007 and calls for projects which can premiere at MIFF 2008 and for projects confirmed for the December FFC meeting (Marketplace and Evaluation greenlight). Applications close 08 October 2007, with decisions expected by 06 November 2007. The Second round calls for all other projects that can premiere at MIFF 2009 (as well as those going to the FFC March meeting), opens 20 November 2007 and closes 14 December 2007 with decisions expected by 23 January 2008.

The rounds call for submissions from fully-developed market-ready projects at varying stages of completion (ranging from feature film scripts and documentary proposals/outlines to partially-completed films) and Premiere Fund supports can include marketing/distribution advances, completion/enhancement loans and equity investment/mini-gap supports.

"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 MIFF Chair Claire Dobbin. "Together with the Government's parallel MIFF initiative for the 37 South film co-financing market, which was held for the first time in July, 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."

The Fund will be managed by Mark Woods, who is also Manager of 37 South. Most recently CEO of Australia's national content attraction organisation Ausfilm, Woods is a former CEO of the Irish Film Board, where he served as Executive Producer on such titles as 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, where, 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*.

Woods, will be assisted by part-time Fund Administrator Kate Kennedy, who served as 37 South Coordinator and has previously worked at the Pacific Film & TV Commission and the New Zealand Film Commission.

"MIFF's Premiere Fund looks forward to supporting, through a range of mechanisms and co-operation with other supporters of Australian film, a wide range of new projects that can premiere at MIFF 2008 or MIFF 2009," said MIFF Premiere Manager Fund Mark Woods. "As the Australian film financing landscape undergoes an exciting period of change, MIFF's Premiere Fund will be an important means of additional support for local filmmakers."

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