

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL BOOSTS VICTORIAN SCREEN ACTIVITY

Friday, 25 July 2008

The Premier John Brumby tonight announced a \$2.4 million injection to boost Victoria's local film industry for a further two years.

At the opening of 37South2008, Mr Brumby said the Victorian Government funding would provide \$1.6 million for the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) Premiere Fund and \$800,000 for the 37South initiative to support local filmmakers to boost their international connections.

"Our Government is committed to supporting Victoria's local film industry to ensure it continues to grow and thrive," Mr Brumby said.

"With production activity boosting the economy by an estimated \$260 million in the last financial year, Victoria's screen industry is a key driver of our creative economy.

"And as Australia's oldest and largest film festival, the Melbourne International Film Festival is playing a vital role in strengthening Victoria's reputation as a creative capital, showcasing our local filmmakers internationally and leading the way in demonstrating new creative technology."

Mr Brumby said the MIFF Premiere Fund was acting as a strategic investor in Victoria feature films and feature documentaries, adding not only to the number but also the diversity of local films.

"The fund is about providing financial support of Victorian films to assist their production and premiere at Australia's most popular festival – the Melbourne International Film Festival and boosting local production by providing more opportunities for Victorian filmmakers to bring their stories to the big screen," he said.

"Tonight's funding announcement of \$2.4 million builds on the \$2.4 million we committed last year which secured and financed 12 films to appear in this year's festival."

Innovation Minister, Gavin Jennings, said 37South2008 had grown significantly since the Government introduced it last year as a way to enhance Melbourne's reputation as a screen hub by helping filmmakers to make direct connections with international financing and distribution partners as part of MIFF.

"The opportunity for producers to meet with potential investors on their home turf, far away from the competition of the rest of the world's producers is crucial to the future of the Victorian film industry," Mr Jennings said.

"Registered film financiers and buyers attending this year have more than doubled to 36, scheduled meetings have more than tripled to 814 and producer registrations are up nearly one third to 64 from last year.

"The development of this industry arm of the festival mirrors international developments where film festival activities are being extended to include industry offices, financing hubs and film markets."

37South2008 highlights include screenings of 10 completed Australian films seeking distribution, 12 roundtables, four public panel sessions, several networking events with books at MIFF to also bring together book publishers and film financiers seeking new material.

"Major international and local financing distribution players attending 37South2008 include Miramax, Weinstein, Fortissimo, Arclight, MovieHouse, Highpoint, Roadshow, Hopscotch, ABC-TV, Madman, Umbrella, Jump Street, Rialto, Beyond, Sharmill and Screen Australia," Mr Jennings said.

"Together 37South and the MIFF Premiere Fund are building a pipeline of Victorian films to premiere at future festivals with six productions backed by the fund to screen at this year's festival."

The Victorian Government has contributed more than \$80 million to support Victoria's film industry since 1999.