

******* EMBARGOED UNTIL MONDAY 21 JULY 2008 *******

MIFF'S 37South2008: INTERNATIONAL FILM PLAYERS HEAD TO MELBOURNE

MELBOURNE, 20 July 2008: An expanded roster of international and Australia/NZ film financier/buyers have confirmed their participation in **37South2008**, the enhanced film co-financing market at the Melbourne International Film Festival (**MIFF**), which runs 24-27 July 2008.

Victorian State Minister for Innovation Gavin Jennings announced that **37South2008**, Australia's only film co-financing market to be held at a film festival, had more than doubled to 39 the number of its registered film financiers/buyers from last year's inaugural edition of the event, while producer registration was up by nearly one-third to 64 and that the number of scheduled meeting slots had more than tripled to 814.

Confirmed international film financiers/buyers include Miramax (USA), Aramid (Europe), Weinstein (USA), Bankside (Europe), Magnolia/Magnet (USA), The Works (Europe), Altadena (USA), Independent (Europe), Fortissimo (Europe/Asia), Seville (Canada), Spier (Europe), Arclight (USA/Australia), MovieHouse (Europe), Icon (USA/Australia), Bavaria (Europe), Bank of Ireland (USA/Europe) and Highpoint (Europe). Confirmed Australian/NZ financiers/buyers include Roadshow, Hopscotch, Transmission, ABC-TV, OmniLab, Madman, Kojo, Odin's Eye, Accent, Aztec, International Finance Group, Siren, Media Funds Management, Titan, Arkles, Umbrella, Jump Street, Rialto, Abacus, Beyond, Sharmill, Screen Australia and State Screen Agencies.

"This impressive and expanded line-up of international and local film financiers/buyers, as well as a greater number of producers, publishers, writers and directors, participating in MIFF's film co-financing market underlines Melbourne's position as a creative industries and screen business hub," said Minister Jennings. "The market offers Australian filmmakers multiple opportunities to meet with potential co-financiers and collaborators on their home turf, far away from the competition of the rest of the world's producers."

"**37South2008** is another important initiative of the Victorian State Government to build on Melbourne's position as a centre of the Australian screen production industry," added **MIFF** Chair Claire Dobbin. "Together with the Government's parallel initiative for the **MIFF Premiere Fund**, these industry initiatives mirror the role of other international film festivals which, like **MIFF**, have extended their roles to become important creative and financing hubs."

The film co-financiers/buyers will interact with the registered producers in **37South: Bridging the Gap's** packed program of 592 one-to-one scheduled meeting slots (more than double last year's tally), 12 roundtables, four public panel sessions and several networking events. The film co-financing companies will also have the opportunity to view 10 completed Australian films seeking local distribution or world sales agents and take follow-up meetings in the **37South: Breakthrough Screenings**, as well as attend the **MIFF 2008** world premieres of **MIFF Premiere Fund** co-financed titles **NOT QUITE HOLLYWOOD** and **CELEBRITY: DOMINICK DUNNE**.

With the participation of more than 20 Australian publishers/literary agents, including Allen & Unwin, Hachette Livre, HarperCollins, Murdoch's Pier 9, Penguin, Random House, Scribe Publications and Text Publishing, **37South's Books at MIFF (BaM)** returns to bring together book publishers and film financiers with screen adaptation case studies and public pitching of titles ripe for adaptation, plus, new for this year, scheduled meetings between publishers and film producers. Registered producers will also participate in **37South: Accelerator Express**, which showcases to producers, via screenings, the work of emerging short film directors who have attended MIFF's **Accelerator** workshop. Meantime, **37South: PostScript&Direct** will offer Victorian scriptwriters and directors the opportunity to meet **37South2008's** registered producers from across Australia/NZ.

Across the various strands of **37South2008**, the total number of scheduled one-to-one meeting slots has more than tripled to 814 for registered producers, who include Oscar-winner Melanie Coombs (**HARVIE KRUMPET**), Anthony Anderson (**SOMERSAULT**), Rosemary Blight (**CLUBLAND**), Helen Bowden (**SOFT FRUIT**), Andrea Buck (**THE JAMMED**), Penny Chapman (**ROAD TO COORAIN**), Martin Fabinyi (**WOLF CREEK**), Robyn Kershaw (**LOOKING FOR ALIBRANDI**), Helen Leake (**BLACK & WHITE**), Michael McMahon (**HOME SONG STORIES**), David Parker (**MALCOLM**), David Redman (**STRANGE BEDFELLOWS**), Robin Scholes (**ONCE WERE WARRIORS**), Miriam Stein (**HEY HEY ITS ESTHER BLUEBERGER**) and Liz Watts (**LITTLE FISH**).

"Filmmaking is an international people and financing business, as well as ultimately connecting with an audience, which is why MIFF's film financing market puts selected producers face-to-face with key film financiers in the context of Australia's oldest and largest film festival," said **MIFF** Executive Director Richard

Moore. "This expanded market also allows MIFF to enrich its longstanding and deep relationships with local filmmakers, distributors and international sales agents alike."

Meantime, some four public panel sessions will feature local and international film financiers discussing, with topics including Distribution, International Sales and the New Federal Film Agency and Incentives. This will include a special address by Federal Arts Minister Peter Garrett.

"Building on 2007's inaugural event with a larger number of producers and a wider variety of financiers and buyers, the enhanced **37South2008** offering affords a greater number of opportunities for screen business to occur in Melbourne – be that producers pitching screenplays to financiers, or writers and directors pitching their services to producers, or publishers pitching their titles to producers, or producers offering completed films to sales agents and distributors," said **37South2008 & Premiere Fund** Manager Mark Woods. "Meanwhile, as the Australian film financing landscape undergoes an exciting period of change with the recent introduction of new federal film production incentives and this month's launch of Screen Australia, the market's program of public panel sessions between the international and local financiers, as well as the Federal Arts Minister, will prove timely and interesting.

An initiative of the Victorian Government, **37South2008** runs 24-27 July 2008 at MIFF, Australia's oldest and largest film festival, and includes **37South: Bridging the Gap**, **37South: Breakthrough Screenings**, **37South: Accelerator Express**, **37South: PostScript&Direct** and **37South's Books at MIFF (BaM)**. For more details on **37South2008**'s sections and program updates, go to:

http://www.melbournefilmfestival.com.au/2007/special_events/37south/37south2008_program

and

http://www.melbournefilmfestival.com.au/2007/special_events/37south/37south2008_press_releases

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