

MIFF PREMIERE FUND SUPPORTS VICTORIAN FILMMAKERS

MELBOURNE: Friday 9 November 2007 – The **Melbourne International Film Festival's** new **Premiere Fund** has announced the recipients of funding from its first round of applicants. In Melbourne this morning, **Victorian Minister for Innovation and Deputy Government Leader in the Legislative Council Gavin Jennings** unveiled the projects and teams receiving offers of support from the Premiere Fund:

- **ROCK & ROLL NERD:** Executive Producer: Lizzette Atkins; Producer/Director/Writer: Rhian Skirving. *A rags to riches observational documentary following Melbourne musician and performance artist's Tim Minchin meteoric rise to fame in London, Montreal and Edinburgh. Offering a personal journey that is both a performance showcase and an intimate portrait of someone who now has somewhere to fall.*
- **CELEBRITY - TALES OF DOMINIC DUNNE:** Executive Producers: Sue Maslin & Daryl Dellora; Producers/Directors/Writers: Tim Jolley & Kirsty De Garis. *Set against the backdrop of the trial of music producer Phil Spector, Celebrity travels through a world intrigue, showbiz, the American justice system and the all-pervasive cult of celebrity, while giving the inside scoop through Australian eyes on Vanity Fair's Dominick Dunne, one of the world's most famous chronicler in the Age of Celebrity and a champion of victim's rights in high profile murder cases.*
- **BASTARDY:** (Producer: Philippa Campey; Director/Writer: Amiel Courtin-Wilson (a 2004 attendee of MIFF's Accelerator emerging talent workshop)). *Journeying into a little-seen side of Melbourne, Bastardy is an adventurous portrait of Jack Charles, a well-known personality on the streets of Melbourne, colourful fringe-dweller and sometime actor in the likes of The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith.*
- **BRAND NEW DAY:** (Producers: Robyn Kershaw & Graeme Issac; Director: Rachel Perkins; Writers: Rachel Perkins, Reg Cribb, Jimmy Chi. *An adaptation of popular Aboriginal musical Bran Nue Dae, the film is an upbeat coming-of-age, romantic musical and 1960s road movie featuring the choreography of Stephen Page.*
- **WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BRENDA HEAN:** (Producers: Michael McMahon & Scott Millwood; Director/Writers: Scott Millwood). *An investigative environmental documentary that seeks to uncover the true story of Brenda Hean, one of one of the first leaders of an environmental party in the world and her fight to save Tasmania's Lake Pedder, which ends abruptly with her mysterious disappearance in 1972.*

The Premiere Fund was launched in July at the inaugural edition of MIFF's new film financing market, **37 South: Bridging the Gap**. The **Premiere Fund** enables the **Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF)** to offer financial support to a range of local feature films and documentaries that will premiere at the festival. The Fund, which will distribute A\$1.4 million of production funding across rounds in 2007 and 2008, accepts applications from market-ready projects in advanced stages of financing stages which meet the eligibility criteria (see Key Facts on next page).

The **Premiere Fund's** Round One attracted 18 eligible applications, ranging from musical comedies and feature-length bio-pics to low-budget thrillers and conspiracy documentaries, seeking a total of \$2.1 million worth of production funding against the A\$350,000 available in this round.

"This is a very significant day for **MIFF** when Australia's largest film festival is taking its long standing and deep relationship with Victorian filmmakers to a new level," said **MIFF Executive Director Richard Moore**.

"With such a diverse number of strong applications for this highly competitive first round, there is clearly a demand and role for this specialist Fund in assisting the production of quality cinema for the benefit of Victorian filmmakers and audiences alike," said **MIFF Premiere Fund & 37 South Manager Mark Woods**. "MIFF has stretched its available funds across as many projects as possible. If **37 South** can help bridge the gap, the Premiere Fund can help close the film financing gap."

Minister Jennings also launched a report outlining the success of the first edition, during **MIFF 2007**, of **37 South: Bridging the Gap**, MIFF's new film co-financing market, and a promotional flyer about the market and MIFF's family of 'script-to-screen' industry and audience development activities.

"The **Premiere Fund** and **37 South** are much appreciated and a very important initiatives 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**. "These industry initiatives mirror the development of other international film festivals which, like **MIFF**, have extended their remit to become important creative and financing hubs."

The MIFF **Premiere Fund**'s Round Two, which will call for submissions for projects that can premiere at MIFF 2009, opens from 20 November 2007 and closes on 14 December 2007.

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KEY FACTS

MIFF PREMIERE FUND:

- Launched by Victorian Premier John Brumby in July, the **Premiere Fund** is an initiative of the Victorian State Government, which enables **MIFF** to offer strategic minority supports to a range of quality theatrical narrative feature films and documentaries that will premiere at MIFF.
- Premiere Fund supports can include completion/enhancement loans, mini-gap equity investments and matching marketing/distribution advances.
- The Fund accepts applications from market-ready projects in advanced stages of financing which demonstrate that they: have strength of connection to Victoria; can premiere at **MIFF**; have viable co-financing to enable them to go into production in time for a **MIFF** premiere; and will benefit in creative, industrial and/or distribution terms from MIFF's financial backing.
- The Fund will distribute almost \$1.4 million of production funding across rounds in 2007 and 2008. Round One, which called for submissions from projects which could complete production in time for a **MIFF 2008** premiere (and also from projects going to the December meeting of the Film Finance Corporation (FFC)), attracted 18 eligible applications seeking a total of A\$2.1 million worth of funding.
- The MIFF **Premiere Fund**'s Round Two, which is calling for submissions for all projects that can premiere at MIFF 2009 (as well as those going to the FFC April meeting), opens from 20 November 2007 and closes on 14 December 2007 with decisions due on 23 January 2008.
- Updated Guidelines and Application Forms for Round Two can be found at: http://www.melbournefilmfestival.com.au/miff_premiere_fund
- **MIFF 2008** Festival Dates: Friday 25 July – Sunday 10 August, 2008

37 SOUTH: Bridging the Gap

- **37 South** is MIFF's new film co-financing market.
- In its first year, during MIFF 2007, **37 South** brought key international film financiers (including Paramount(USA), Sundance Channel (USA), ContentFilm (Europe), Lightning (USA), The Works (Europe), Fortissimo (Europe/Asia), Slingshot (Europe), Rezo (Europe), A3/Crosby Fund (Asia), Highpoint (Europe), Myriad (USA), Wide (Europe), Becker (Europe/Australia)) and local funding organisations (including Madman, Roadshow, Accent, Aztec, Hopscotch, OmniLab and Australian Government screen agencies) face-to-face with Australian film producers (including Jan Chapman (*The Piano*), Melanie Coombs (*Harvie Krumpet*), Robert Connolly and John Maynard (*Romulus My Father*), Bridget Ikin (*Look Both Ways*), Michael McMahon (*Home Song Stories*), David Redman (*Strange Bedfellows*), Liz Watts (*Little Fish*) and many more.