



## MEDIA RELEASE

WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2015

# 62<sup>ND</sup> SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL SAYS: IT'S A WRAP! & FOXTEL MOVIES AUDIENCE AWARD

The 62<sup>nd</sup> Sydney Film Festival wrapped on Sunday 14 June with the much anticipated world premiere of Neil Armfield's *Holding the Man* to a sold out audience at the State Theatre.

Today the Festival announced the **Foxtel Movies Audience Awards**; the list of the people's top five film favourites. Winner for best narrative feature went to *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* directed by **Alfonso Gomez-Rejon**; and winner for best documentary went to *Wide Open Sky* directed by **Lisa Nicol**.

"Attendances at screenings, events and talks grew for the eighth year by 13% to 176,000," said **Sydney Film Festival CEO Leigh Small**. "With the return of daytime sessions to the State Theatre, total daytime attendances increased by 20%; sold out screenings across the Festival increased by a 21 sessions; with a resulting 9% increase in income for the Festival."

"All up a total of **346 sessions** were held across **12 days** of the Festival, screening **256 films** from **68 countries**, with **33 world premieres** (including **22 world premiere short films**), **138 Australian premieres** (including **18 Australian premiere short films**) and **5 international premieres**."

"Sydney Film Festival is also delighted to announce that **Nashen Moodley** will continue as Festival Director for another four year term," she said.

"The Festival has been bolstered by a strong line-up of Australian films," said **Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley**. "From the world premieres of Australian feature films *Ruben Guthrie*, *Holding the Man*, *The Daughter*, *Strangerland*, *Last Cab to Darwin* and *Riz*; to important Australian documentaries including *Sherpa*, *Gayby Baby*, *Tyke Elephant Outlaw* and *Freedom Stories*; to great examples of new and dynamic Australian short films, such as the *Screen: Black* program of 13 new Indigenous Australian films, and the Dendy Shorts including Academy Award winner **Adam Elliot's** new claymation *Ernie Biscuit*."

"Other highlights included hosting Academy Award winning documentarian **Alex Gibney** to sell out sessions of his new film *Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief* at the State Theatre, and the Australian premieres of Gibney's other most recent films *Steve Jobs: the Man in the Machine*, and *Mr Dynamite: The Rise of James Brown*."

"Staging the southern hemisphere's first ever premiere of a film on a ship – **Princess Cruises' Sun Princess**, with **Gillian Armstrong's Women He's Undressed**; and an almost instantaneous sell out of **Amy** - the new Amy Winehouse biopic at Dendy Newtown, have also contributed to an incredible year for the Festival," he said.

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The Festival's footprint grew, with more venues than ever this year. The **State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Cinemas Opera Quays, Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, Art Gallery of NSW**, and **Skyline Drive-In Blacktown** returned; with new venues **Dendy Cinemas Newtown** and **Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre** added to the program.

The Festival Hub was the nucleus of the Festival; a place to meet before or after screenings, discuss films, and speak to Festival program specialists for recommendations. With a unique line-up of talks, entertainment, parties, performances and art, the Hub was a place to connect with the Festival community between screenings.

**NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for the Arts Troy Grant** said, "The NSW Government has been proud to support the Sydney Film Festival. This year's festival opened and closed with feature films produced in NSW and enthralled audiences with more than 250 films over 12 days, reinforcing Sydney's role as a global creative hub."

**Lord Mayor Clover Moore** said, "This year's Sydney Film Festival was another hugely enjoyable triumph. With more than 300 screenings of the best local and international cinema, we've seen the world through the eyes of some of the most exciting directors, screenwriters and cinematographers."

**Screen Australia CEO, Graeme Mason** said "This year's festival treated Sydney not only to a fantastic celebration of film from around the world but a wonderful range of Australian film and television storytelling on the big screen. It was great to see local films open and close the festival, and the extraordinary range and quality of Australian content was showcased throughout. Particularly important to us was the premiere of the **Songlines on Screen** program – an opportunity to share some of our vitally important cultural heritage, in the form of screen versions of Indigenous Australian songlines narrated and performed by traditional custodians and their communities across the country."

Nine feature films and six shorts from this year's Festival will premiere in Newcastle this weekend when the Travelling Film Festival brings **Last Cab to Darwin, Slow West, Gayby Baby, Strangerland, Tehran Taxi, The Second Mother, A Second Chance, Phoenix** and **The Crow's Egg** to Tower cinemas from Friday 19 – Sunday 21 June.

**What:** Travelling Film Festival

**When:** 19-21 June 2015

**Where:** Tower Cinemas, 183-185 King Street, Newcastle NSW 2300 PH: (02) 4926 2233

**Full program details and ticketing information can be found at:**

[www.sff.org.au/film-guide/travelling-film-festival-next-stop-newcastle/](http://www.sff.org.au/film-guide/travelling-film-festival-next-stop-newcastle/)

## **EDITOR'S NOTES**

### **THE FOXTEL MOVIES AUDIENCE AWARDS**

The **Foxtel Movies Audience Awards** are Sydney Film Festival's people's choice awards, and reflect the most popular films at the Festival. After each screening, audience members are invited to rate the film via our web, app and SMS-based voting systems. Two audience awards are presented: one for best narrative feature and one for best documentary.

The **Foxtel Movies Audience Awards**, Sydney Film Festival's people's choice awards, were today announced. Winner of the **Foxtel Movies Audience Award** for best narrative feature went to **Me and Earl and the Dying Girl** directed by **Alfonso Gomez-Rejon**. The **Foxtel Movies Audience Award**

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for best documentary went to **Wide Open Sky** directed by **Lisa Nicol**

**Foxtel Movies Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature Top Five:**

1. **Me and Earl and the Dying Girl**, directed by **Alfonso Gomez-Rejon**
2. **Last Cab to Darwin**, directed by **Jeremy Sims**
3. **Deathgasm**, directed by **Jason Lei Howden**
4. **Corn Island**, directed by **George Ovashvili**
5. **Song of the Sea**, directed by **Tomm Moore**

**Foxtel Movies Audience Award for Best Documentary Top Five:**

1. **Wide Open Sky**, directed by **Lisa Nicol**
2. **Gayby Baby**, directed by **Maya Newell**
3. **The Lost Aviator**, directed by **Andrew Lancaster**
4. **The Bolivian Case**, directed by **Violeta Ayala**
5. **Sherpa**, directed by **Jennifer Peedom**

**OTHER 2015 SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL AWARD WINNERS INCLUDE:**

The 62<sup>nd</sup> Sydney Film Festival awarded **Arabian Nights**, directed by **Miguel Gomes**, the prestigious **Sydney Film Prize**, out of a selection of 12 Official Competition films.

The \$62,000 cash prize was awarded at the Festival's **Closing Night Gala awards ceremony** and event: the world premiere screening of **Neil Armfield's Holding the Man**, held at the State Theatre.

Journalist **Michael Ware** and two-time Oscar winner **Bill Guttentag** were awarded the **Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentary**, a \$10,000 cash prize, for **Only the Dead**; with a special mention going to **The Lost Aviator** directed by **Andrew Lancaster**.

The **Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films** were announced; awarding **A Single Body** directed and written by **Sotiris Dounoukos** the **Dendy Live Action Short Award**; **Grace Under Water** directed and produced by **Anthony Lawrence** the **Yoram Gross Animation Award**; and **Brooke Goldfinch** for **Red Rover** the **Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Director**.

The **Event Cinema Australian Short Screenplay Award** was awarded to **Bluey**, written and directed by **Darlene Johnson**, who received a \$5,000 cash prize, with a special mention to **Ryan Griffen** for **You Turn**.

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## ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From **Wednesday 3 June to Sunday 14 June 2015**, the 62<sup>nd</sup> Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, panel discussions, international guests and more. Each year the Festival's programming team curates 12 days of cinema sourced from world-famous film festivals, including Cannes, Sundance, Toronto and the Berlinale; as well as Australia's finest local productions.

Sydney Film Festival also presents an Official Competition of 12 films that vie for the Sydney Film Prize, a highly respected honour that awards a \$60,000 cash prize based on the decision of a jury of international and Australian filmmakers and industry professionals. Previous Sydney Film Prize winners are: *Two Days, One Night* (2014); *Only God Forgives* (2013); *Alps* (2012); *A Separation* (2011), which went on to win an Academy Award; *Heartbeats* (2010); and *Bronson* (2009).

The Festival takes place across greater Sydney: at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, Dendy Newtown, Art Gallery of NSW, Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, Casula Powerhouse, the Festival Hub at Sydney Town Hall and SFF Outdoor Screen.

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The Festival is a major event on the New South Wales cultural calendar and is one of the world's longest-running film festivals. For more information visit: [www.sff.org.au](http://www.sff.org.au).  
The 62nd Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW and Destination NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the City of Sydney.

Winners of all Sydney Film Festival awards are presented with the Festival's signature mesmeric swirl award, designed and handmade in Sydney by Festival partners Dinosaur Designs



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## MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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