

MEDIA RELEASE

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Two Australian features selected for Cannes

Friday 24 April 2009: Screen Australia is delighted to announce that *Bright Star* and *Samson & Delilah* will screen in Official Selection at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival.

Bright Star (writer/director **Jane Campion**, producers **Jan Chapman** and **Caroline Hewitt**) has been selected to screen in Competition at Cannes this year. It is the first Australian feature selected for this category since Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge* opened the festival in 2001. The Australia/United Kingdom co-production is based on the three-year romance between 19th century poet John Keats and Fanny Brawne. It is the ninth film directed by Campion to screen at the festival and her fourth feature selected. The Cannes screening will be *Bright Star's* world premiere.

Samson & Delilah (writer/director **Warwick Thornton**, producer **Kath Shelper**) has been selected to screen in Un Certain Regard, the official section dedicated to highlighting new cinematic works with original message and aesthetics. *Samson & Delilah* follows the story of two Indigenous teenagers from an isolated desert community who turn their backs on their home and embark on a journey of survival. It is Thornton and Shelper's feature film debut and follows on from the international festival success of their numerous shorts. *Samson & Delilah* will have its international premiere at Cannes. *Samson & Delilah's* world premiere at the 2009 Adelaide Film Festival was greeted with rave reviews.

"It is a wonderful achievement and a testament to the talent of the Australian film industry to have two features in Official Selection at a festival as prestigious as Cannes," said **Ruth Harley**, Screen Australia's Chief Executive. "We congratulate all of the filmmakers involved. We are especially proud that *Samson & Delilah* is the first feature film to be funded through Screen Australia's Indigenous Department and equally thrilled to have provided production investment support for *Bright Star*."

The line-up for prestigious Competition and Un Certain Regard programs was revealed in Paris today. Three remaining sections of Cannes – Quinzaine des Realisateurs (Directors' Fortnight), La Semaine de la Critique (Critics' Week) and the Official Shorts Competition are expected to announce their selections within the next 48 hours.

Both films will be theatrically released in Australia in 2009. *Samson & Delilah* opens nationally on 7 May through Footprint Films. *Bright Star* is slated for release through Hopscotch Films later in 2009.

The Cannes Film Festival will run 13 – 24 May 2009. www.festival-cannes.com

Media are invited to attend a photo call with Jan Chapman, Warwick Thornton, Kath Shelper and Ruth Harley at Screen Australia's Sydney office at 11am on Friday 24 April. Address: Level 4, 150 William St, Woolloomooloo, Sydney.

Bright Star

www.brightstarthemovie.com

(120 mins)

Production Companies: Jan Chapman Productions, Brightstar Films Ltd

Writer/Director: Jane Campion

Exec. Producers: Francois Ivernel, Cameron McCracken, Christine Langan, David M. Thompson

Producers: Jan Chapman, Caroline Hewitt

Australian Distributor: Hopscotch Films

International Sales: Pathé Pictures International

Finance: Pathé Productions, Screen Australia, BBC Films, UK Film Council, New South Wales

Film and Television Office, Hopscotch International

Cast: Abbie Cornish, Ben Whishaw, Paul Schneider, Kerry Fox

Synopsis: John Keats, the romantic poet, wrote the love poem 'Bright Star' for his 18-year-old next-door neighbour Fanny Brawne. This is the story of their first love.

Samson & Delilah

www.samsonanddelilah.com.au

(101 mins)

Production Companies: Scarlett Pictures Pty Ltd, CAAMA Productions Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Warwick Thornton

Producer: Kath Shelper

Australian Distributor: Footprint Films

International Sales: Elle Driver

Finance: Screen Australia, New South Wales Film and Television Office, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Adelaide Film Festival

Cast: Rowan McNamara, Marissa Gibson, Mitjili Gibson, Scott Thornton

Synopsis: The world is a small place when you're Samson and Delilah – an isolated community in the desert. Their silent love for each other takes them on a journey of survival. Lost, unwanted and alone, they discover that life isn't always fair but love never judges.