

MEDIA RELEASE

Media enquiries Victoria Buchan, The Lantern Group
Tel +61 2 9383 4033 | Mobile 0408 114 864 | victoria@lanterngroup.com.au

www.screenaustralia.gov.au

Latest production approvals from Screen Australia

Wednesday 6 May 2009: Screen Australia has announced it will provide production finance for two features, a children's television series and two documentaries following yesterday's Board meeting. Budgets for these projects total \$17 million.

The team behind *Black Water*, writer/director **Andrew Traucki** and producer **Michael Robertson**, received finance for the feature *The Reef*, a thriller set on the Great Barrier Reef, where four friends are stalked by a Great White Shark.

Craig Lahiff and **Helen Leake** (*Black and White*, *Heaven's Burning*) will team up with **Kent Smith** to produce *Swerve*, a fast-paced film noir set in the South Australian outback, from a script by Lahiff.

Margot McDonald, one of Australia's most experienced producers of children's television, will produce *Dead Gorgeous*, a 13-part children's TV series based on the comic adventures of three strong-willed and sassy teenage sisters who just happen to be ghosts. *Dead Gorgeous* is a co-production with the UK, with **Ewan Burnett** and **Julian Scott** as executive producers. **Stephen Johnson** (*Yolngu Boy*) will direct.

The two documentaries are both financed by Screen Australia under the National Documentary Program, in conjunction with the ABC. Produced by **Laurie Critchley** and **Lesley Holden**, *Family Confidential* is a six-part series taking a behind-the-headlines look at six notable families. *Leaky Boat*, from producer **Penny Chapman** and writer/director **Victoria Pitt**, documents one of the defining events of Australian history: the trilogy of the Tampa, the SIEV X and the Children Overboard affair.

The Board also congratulated the winners of the recent TV Week Logie Awards, noting that Screen Australia-financed programs – *Underbelly*, *First Australians* and *H₂O: Just Add Water* – had taken out the awards for Most Outstanding Series, Most Outstanding Documentary and Most Outstanding Children's Program.

"It's been a great year for Australian television, and we're very pleased to have played a role in bringing these programs to the screen," said Screen Australia CEO **Ruth Harley**. "Their success is our success: evidence that good stories, well told, will find audiences who want to watch."

Underbelly series 1 was produced by **Greg Haddrick** and **Brenda Pam**, with **Des Monaghan** and **Bob Campbell** as executive producers. The series also earned Most Outstanding Actor and Actress awards for **Gyton Grantley** and **Kat Stewart**. Set on the Gold Coast, the successful children's series *H₂O: Just Add Water* was produced by **Jonathan M Shiff**. The landmark documentary series *First Australians* was produced by **Rachel Perkins** and **Darren Dale**.

The next deadline for production investment applications is 12 June for TV drama, children's television, domestic and international documentaries, and low-budget features. Applications for Offset-eligible features and National Documentary Program projects can be submitted at any time.

Features**THE REEF****Prodigy Movies****Producer** Michael Robertson**Writer/Director** Andrew Traucki**Australia and NZ Distribution** Polyphony Entertainment**International Sales** Lightning Entertainment**Synopsis** When their boat capsizes on the Great Barrier Reef, four friends swim for land, stalked by a Great White Shark.**SWERVE****Duo Art Productions****Producers** Helen Leake, Kent Smith, Craig Lahiff**Writer/Director** Craig Lahiff**Distributor** Kojo Pictures**Sales Agent** Moviehouse Entertainment**Synopsis** A fast-paced film noir set in the South Australian outback, in the hands of an experienced feature team.**Children's Television****DEAD GORGEOUS****Burberry Productions**; a co-production with Coolabi (UK)**Producer** Margot McDonald**Executive Producers** Ewan Burnett, Julian Scott**Writers** Barbara Slade, Sam Carroll, Richard Preddy, Neil Mossey, Clive Endersby**Director** Stephen Johnson**Sales and Distribution** ABC TV, BBC, Nickelodeon / MTV Networks Germany, Cake Entertainment**Synopsis** This 13-part children's series features the comic adventures of three strong-willed and sassy teenage sisters who just happen to be ghosts.**National Documentary Program****FAMILY CONFIDENTIAL****Australian Documentaries****Producers** Laurie Critchley, Lesley Holden**Sales and Distribution** ABC TV**Synopsis** In this six-part series, six notable families take us on an intimate journey as they reveal for the first time the personal details of their history and the reality of lives that have made headlines.**LEAKY BOAT****Indian Pacific Picture Company****Producer** Penny Chapman**Writer/Director** Victoria Pitt**Sales and Distribution** ABC TV**Synopsis** The extraordinary trilogy of the Tampa, the SIEV X and the Children Overboard affair formed one of the defining events of Australian history.**Producer Offset Update**

As of 30 April 2009, 230 projects have been issued with provisional certificates: 90 features, 96 non-feature documentaries and 44 other projects (eg TV series, telemovies, direct-DVD/online, short-form animation).

Final certificate figures are updated quarterly. Next update will be end of June 2009.