

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian film *Samson & Delilah* wins Caméra d'Or at Cannes

Monday 25 May 2009: The Australian feature film ***Samson & Delilah*** (writer/director **Warwick Thornton**, producer **Kath Shelper**) has won the coveted Caméra d'Or, one of the major awards of the prestigious Cannes Film Festival.

The Caméra d'Or is awarded to the best first film screened in Official Selection (Competition and Un Certain Regard), Directors' Fortnight or International Critics' Week. This year 26 films were eligible. The award last went to an Australian in 1996, when Shirley Barrett won it for *Love Serenade*.

Fresh from attending the Festival's closing ceremony last night, Screen Australia CEO Ruth Harley reported that the announcement had been greeted with huge applause. "It was clear the closing night audience endorsed the jury's decision," she said. "The award is a wonderful achievement and we congratulate all those involved in making this beautiful film."

Samson & Delilah is on a remarkable journey. In Cannes it received standing ovations for its official screenings as well as intense media interest, and in Australia, it continues to achieve high screen averages, taking close to \$850,000 in three weeks of release on only 16 screens.

"There's no doubt the film is connecting with audiences everywhere," added Harley. "It's a unique love story that passes through tragedy to redemption, told with unsentimental compassion by a director/cinematographer with an extraordinary cinematic eye. The Caméra d'Or is a well-deserved testament to the talent and skill of Warwick and his team."

Samson & Delilah is the first feature film funded through Screen Australia's Indigenous department, which supported Warwick Thornton's first short, *Payback*, in 1996 and has since supported his internationally acclaimed short films *Nana* and *Green Bush*.

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, NSW 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.