

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Screen Australia approves \$9 million to develop screen industry businesses

**Friday 25 September 2009:** Screen Australia today announced \$9 million in support over three years for 12 production companies under its new Enterprise Program.

“The Enterprise Program is an extremely important initiative for Screen Australia, underpinning our vision for a more commercially sustainable screen production industry,” said Chief Executive Officer **Ruth Harley**. “It complements our programs of single-project development support by providing companies with significant resources over a three-year period based on detailed business plans.”

The companies to be funded span features, television, documentary and interactive digital platforms, and include both experienced entrepreneurs and newer players. Their business plans incorporate strategies for development including diversification, new revenue streams, new alliances, innovative approaches to distribution, strategies for raising private equity, and expansion across states and into international markets. Mentorship and opportunities for talent renewal are also represented.

“These are exciting proposals, involving some very skilled and talented people,” said Dr Harley. “They represent a diverse group of companies with diverse ambitions, but what they have in common is a strong vision of what they want to achieve, and clear, carefully considered and well documented plans for the next stage of their development. The slates of projects already on the table are very promising but most importantly, this is about building capacity and ongoing business viability.”

The 12 successful companies are (in alphabetical order):

- Cordell Jigsaw Productions (Michael Cordell, Nick Murray)
- Essential Media & Entertainment (Chris Hilton, Ian Collie, Sonja Armstrong, Carmel Travers)
- Goalpost Pictures Australia (Rosemary Blight, Kylie du Fresne, Ben Grant, Cass O'Connor)
- Hoodlum (Tracey Robertson, Nathan Mayfield)
- Hopscotch Features (Troy Lum, Andrew Mason, John Collee, Frank Cox)
- Matchbox Pictures (Helen Bowden, Penny Chapman, Tony Ayres, Michael McMahon, Helen Panckhurst)
- Prospero Productions (Ed Punchard, Julia Redwood)
- Renegade Films (Australia) (Joe Connor, Ken Connor)
- Roar Film (Stephen Thomas, Kath Symmons, Craig J Dow Sainter)
- Scarlett Pictures (Kath Shelper)
- Waking Dream Productions (Jan Chapman)
- Warp Films Australia (Anna McLeish, Mark Herbert, Robin Gutch)

The companies were selected from a shortlist of 24 by a panel that included screen business development consultants **Jonathan Olsberg** and **Ian Jones** as well as Ruth Harley and Screen Australia's Senior Manager, State and Industry Partnerships, **Chris Oliver**. Applications were assessed against criteria relating to business plan, track record, slate of projects and resources. In addition, the panel considered whether proposals would contribute to the Enterprise Program's aim of supporting a diverse range of companies, budget levels and production genres.

“The standard of applications was very high,” added Dr Harley, “and we hope those companies we were unable to fund in this round will still be able to benefit from the thinking and analysis that went into their business plan proposals.”

Funding for the inaugural Enterprise recipients will span three years, from 2009/10 to 2011/12. Further funds will be available for new intakes in 2010/11 and 2011/12. The timing for the next round will be announced early in the new year.

## **2009 Enterprise Program recipients**

### **Cordell Jigsaw Productions (NSW)**

*Michael Cordell, Nick Murray*  
\$1,000,000

Cordell Jigsaw is an integrated production company covering factual, drama, comedy, light entertainment and new media production. Formed in 2005 the company brings together the diverse skills of Michael Cordell (formerly of Hilton Cordell) and Nick Murray (Jigsaw Entertainment) whose joint credits cover nearly 500 hours of production. Recent projects include the popular series *Bondi Rescue*, *Recruits*, *Guerrilla Gardeners*, *Sleek Geeks*, *Two Men in a Tinnie* and *Two in the Top End* with John Doyle and Tim Flannery. The company's eclectic range of shows are highly awarded and watched by millions of people every week throughout the world.

Plans include expansion through strategic alliances with international and new media producers. CJP will also increase development across all genres and further nurture relationships with third-party creatives by bringing its proven creative and business expertise to bear on each partnership.

### **Essential Media & Entertainment (NSW)**

*Chris Hilton, Ian Collie, Sonja Armstrong, Carmel Travers*  
\$900,000

Essential Media & Entertainment and its principals have strong track records in factual and drama production including *Rogue Nation*, *The Floating Brothel*, *Whatever! The Science of Teens*, *Solo*, *Miracle on Everest*, *In the Line of Fire* and *How Kevin Bacon Cured Cancer*.

The company's vision for development involves genre diversification, international expansion based on current and future relationships, access to third party investment, building inhouse management capacity to free up the key creatives, and strategic exploitation of intellectual property through better rights management and development of specifically targeted IP across multiple platforms. The company also plans to develop an overseas presence in English-speaking territories.

### **Goalpost Pictures Australia (NSW)**

*Rosemary Blight, Kylie du Fresne, Ben Grant, Cass O'Connor*  
\$750,000

Goalpost Pictures (formerly RB Films) is a well established company with credits across both TV drama and feature film production and significant marketplace connections including a shareholding in UK based sales agent Goalpost Film. Recent credits include *Clubland* directed by Cherie Nowlan, *The Eternity Man* with director Julien Temple, the children's series *Lockie Leonard* and the telemovie/cross-platform event *Scorched*.

Its vision for the future is based on strengthening and enhancing its creative development capacity, including securing the services of award-winning writer and script editor Keith Thompson as Head of Creative. Plans also include resourcing a Development Fund to attract ideas and scripts from a broad range of new and experienced writers and to initiate an International Script Lab where writers will work with senior members of the UK industry.

### **Hoodlum (QLD)**

*Tracey Robertson, Nathan Mayfield*  
\$1,000,000

Hoodlum is a Brisbane-based digital entertainment company which has won numerous awards including several BAFTAs and a recent Emmy for Outstanding Creative Achievement in Interactive Media – Fiction for its work on *Dharma Wants You*, the multi-platform component of the US series *Lost*. Hoodlum will commence pre-production on the multiplatform TV series *Slide* early next year.

New revenue streams via joint ventures with 'program brand' owners and broadcasters will be at the heart of the next phase of growth. The company has technology owned and developed inhouse, plus business ventures in which they intend to retain IP and revenue shares. Plans include enhanced business management, establishment of a full-time presence in the US and UK, and skills development of digital producers, digital creatives, and digital entertainment developers.

### **Hopscotch Features (NSW)**

*Troy Lum, Andrew Mason, John Collee, Frank Cox*  
\$1,000,000

Hopscotch Features is a new entity that brings together the considerable and diverse experience of writer John Collee (*Happy Feet, Master & Commander: The Far Side of the World*), producer Andrew Mason (*Dark City, Danny Deckchair, The Matrix Revolutions, The Matrix Reloaded*) and distributors Troy Lum and Frank Cox of Hopscotch Film Distributors.

The company sees itself as presenting a new model for the independent Australian feature film landscape: a 'one-stop shop' for film finance, development, production and distribution. This integrated model will offer filmmakers access to diverse sources of investment finance and revenue – both domestic and international; mentoring and collaboration with experienced film professionals throughout the project's development and production process; and extended reach to both domestic and international audiences through the networks of Hopscotch Film Distributors.

### **Matchbox Pictures (NSW/VIC)**

*Helen Bowden, Penny Chapman, Tony Ayres, Michael McMahon, Helen Panckhurst*  
\$750,000

Matchbox began in April 2008 as an affiliation of five producers from NSW and Victoria: Tony Ayres (*The Home Song Stories, Bogan Pride, Anatomy*), Helen Bowden (*Girl in a Mirror, Soft Fruit*), Penny Chapman (*RAN, The Leaving of Liverpool, Blue Murder, Brides of Christ*), Michael McMahon (*Saved, Whatever Happened to Brenda Hean?*), and Helen Panckhurst (*First Australians, Ali & the Ball*). By joining together, they aimed to increase their production capacity, gain momentum in the marketplace and expand their network of creative partners.

Strategies for the next three years include building a development slate focused on high-quality, longer-running television programming across factual, drama, children's and associated interactive platforms, venturing into new markets, consolidating existing partnerships and building international profile.

### **Prospero Productions (WA)**

*Ed Punchard, Julia Redwood*  
\$500,000

Prospero is a highly regarded factual producer based in WA, with recent productions including *Death of the Megabeasts, The Snake Crusader, Navy Divers* and *Eco House Challenge*.

Over the next three years, the company plans to pursue new genre production, new media opportunities and new income streams as well as maintain existing market relationships. It aims to build on its international connections, expanding into children's TV activities, and enhance its marketing representation.

### **Renegade Films (Australia) (VIC)**

*Joe Connor, Ken Connor*  
\$700,000

Renegade is a medium-sized production company based in Melbourne. Established in 1995, its success is founded on television commercials production but the company is growing into a multi-faceted enterprise with a reputation for engaging and cultivating new talent. Recent projects include *RockWiz* and *Wilfred*, and a Factual Division was launched in 2007, headed by Alex West (*Ned Kelly Uncovered*).

Development strategies include engagement with the local and international marketplace and ongoing slate development in factual and drama geared for international markets.

**Roar Film (TAS)**

*Stephen Thomas, Kath Symmons, Craig J Dow Sainter*  
\$600,000

Roar Film, based in Tasmania, has a background in producing award-winning content with cross-platform elements for the educational market – particularly in the UK. Recent titles include *Alive and Kicking* and *Real Life Water Rats*. The current production slate includes the television documentary *The Rebels*, documentary series *Inventing Australia*, the four-part series *The Mission* and the feature-length documentary *Someone's Daughter*. All projects have substantial cross-platform elements.

Over the next three years the company plans to use innovative business practices to meld the success of its online digital media business in the UK and Australia with its traditional film/television output, addressing global market niches to create a viable and sustainable cross-platform production and distribution company.

**Scarlett Pictures (NSW)**

*Kath Shelper*  
\$600,000

The production company behind the successful feature *Samson & Delilah*, Scarlett Pictures is essentially a creative partnership between filmmakers Kath Shelper, Beck Cole and Warwick Thornton. The strength of this partnership has been forged over the past five years, starting with their award-winning short films. Writer Liz Doran is another valuable member of the team

The company aims to continue developing innovative programming and production/finance models suited to each project on their slate. This will include forging more relationships internationally with finance, production and world sales partners, capitalising on the international success of *Samson & Delilah*.

**Waking Dream Productions (NSW)**

*Jan Chapman*  
\$750,000

This is a new venture from successful producer Jan Chapman, whose feature credits include *The Piano*, *Lantana*, *Love Serenade*, and the upcoming *Bright Star*. Jan has also executive-produced features such as *Somersault* and *Suburban Mayhem*, playing a mentoring role to the producer in each case.

As well as continuing to develop features directly, Waking Dream Productions aims to fill a gap in the current development market by mentoring and financially supporting a limited number of emerging producers to make their first or second features and offering select writers an ongoing script consultation relationship. The company will be launched and initially operated by Jan Chapman, with other experienced producers to join later.

**Warp Films Australia (VIC)**

*Anna McLeish, Mark Herbert, Robin Gutch*  
\$400,000

Warp Films Australia, a fully owned and controlled Australian entity, was established in 2008 when Anna McLeish, ex-Madman distribution executive, partnered with Mark Herbert and Robin Gutch from the UK. The Warp brand (*This Is England*), and its unique approach to independent development and production has emerged as a key asset in the UK and internationally.

The company is looking to refine this approach in Australia, building on Warp's creative and commercial credibility, connection to contemporary audiences and reputation for developing new talent. It is developing a feature slate encompassing low-budget genre films, mid-range features and Australian-UK co-productions.