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AUSTRALIAN FILMMAKER WINS PITCH COMPETITION AT MPA CICE FILM WORKSHOP BEIJING

Sydney/Beijing: The three-day MPA CICE Film Workshop held in Beijing concluded on December 3 with an announcement of the winning filmmakers in the feature film pitch competition.

Brendon Skinner, from Australia, who presented an Australian-Chinese co-production film idea titled *The Pulse*, was chosen from among sixteen emerging filmmakers from China and the Asia Pacific participating in the feature film pitch competition on the final day of the film workshop.

The winner was announced by Sid Ganis, former President of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and founder of Out Of The Blue Entertainment: "Brendon is a deserving winner of this impressive pitch competition. His presentation was delivered with clarity and simplicity. He took us on an emotional journey and involved us in the lives of his characters. He also very cleverly communicated the business case for his project. The pitch competition was an ideal final session for the MPA CICE Film Workshop here in Beijing. Congratulations to everyone on a highly successful event."

The winner's prize includes a trip to Los Angeles to meet with Executives from the Motion Picture Association (MPA) and their Member Companies, as well as attendance at the American Film Market (AFM) and the annual Chinese American Film Festival.

Five filmmakers were also acknowledged for the quality of their film pitches and rewarded with finalist certificates and trophies of unique Chinese design: Liu Ying, from China, for her film *The Scroll*, Sho Fujii, from Japan, for his film *Intangible*, Sitthipol Vannaniyom, from Thailand, for his film *Choose Me*, Liu Yaonan, from China, for his film *I Love You*, and Chris Ng, from Hong Kong for his film *Fatal Engagement*.

Co-hosting the event, Mike Ellis, President and Managing Director Asia Pacific MPA, announced a President's Special Recognition Prize for the film pitch that demonstrated the most promise towards reaching an audience in the Asia Pacific region. Liu Ying, writer of the film *The Scroll*, was rewarded with a VIP invitation to be the special guest of Mr. Ellis at the 6th Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSAs), which will take place on the Gold Coast in Australia in November 2012.

"The feature film pitching session was a perfect conclusion to what has been a stimulating series of master-classes from some of the best movie and TV minds in China and Asia Pacific," said Mr Ellis. "We hope that this exercise has proved to be of benefit not only to the emerging filmmakers in this part of the world, but also to our established industry practitioners who gave their time and expertise so generously these past few days. I thank our generous hosts and partners, the China International Copyright Expo (CICE) who helped us set a high benchmark for this type of event."

Filmmaker Brendon Skinner said: "'Dreams do come true! This is the perfect end to a fabulous year of intensive development and training. Simon Williams and I have always believed in *The Pulse*, and we knew we are aiming high with this project. While I presented the pitch, I had the advantage of being supported by a host of different people, companies and organisations that

really believe in what we're trying to do. This win has given us the confidence to pursue the project with international partners. The opportunity to visit executives with the MPA and with the US Studios, and to attend the American Film Market is of great benefit to us and our project. The workshop here was fabulous, and we're thankful to the MPA for including us in this worthwhile event."

Neil Gane, Executive Director of the Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft said: "Congratulations to Brendon on his success. We're delighted that Australian filmmaking talent has achieved recognition on such a broad Asia Pacific stage. Kudos also to MetroScreen and the other state-based screen learning and development hubs for conducting their local and national pitch competitions in the lead up to the MPA CICE Film Workshop in Beijing. This endeavour has a direct and valuable impact on the career development of our region's emerging filmmakers."

The MPA CICE Film Workshop, presented by the Motion Picture Association (MPA) Asia Pacific and the China International Copyright Expo (CICE), provided a master class on a range of contemporary topics on screenwriting, filmmaking, film marketing, film distribution and co-production opportunities between China and the international community. The Workshop also endeavoured to provide an opportunity for filmmakers to develop their careers, build networks and potentially collaborate on new projects.

The Workshop's international and Chinese speakers included Chairman of China Film Group **Han Sanping**; Deputy Director-General of China Film Bureau **Zhang Hongsen**; President of China Film Co-Production Corp **Zhang Xun**; Founder and Chairman of Huayi Brothers **Wang Zhongjun**; Founder and Chairman of Bona Film International **Yu Dong**; Managing Director of Shanghai International Film Festival **Tang Lijun**; President of the Hong Kong Screenwriter's Guild and Vice President of Beijing Enlight Pictures Ltd **Abe Kwong Man Wai**; Co-Founder and CEO of DMG **Dan Mintz**; award-winning scriptwriter-turned-director (*Ocean Heaven*) and Associate Professor at the Beijing Film Academy **Xue Xiaolu**; Australian film director and scriptwriter **Alister Grierson** (*James Cameron's Sanctum*); Award-winning actor, director and Tropfest founder **John Polson** (*Siam Sunset*, *Swimfan*, *Hide & Seek* and *Tenderness*); Australian-Chinese writer, director, actor and producer **Pauline Chan** (*33 Postcards*, *Traps*, *The Dragon Pearl*); Executive Producer and the author of *The Independent Film Producer's Survival Guide* **Harris E. Tulchin**; Co-founder of Cinecom and Fine Line Features as well as Chair of Columbia University's Film School **Ira Deutchman**; United Talent Agency Agent and Executive Producer (*Animal Kingdom*) **Bec Smith**; Producer *Big Daddy*, *Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo*, *Mr. Deeds and Akeelah And The Bee* and previously President of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences **Sid Ganis**; Head of Physical Production for Warner Bros. (*The Great Gatsby*, *The Hobbit* and *Mad Max: Fury Road*) **Jon Kuypers**; international screenwriting teacher "Beyond Structure" **David Freeman**; and Principal consultant at China Media Consulting and Beijing Film Academy teacher **Lora Chen**.

CICE is the premier international copyright industry forum and trade show in China, held annually since 2008. In 2012, the Expo will focus on the promotion and protection of film and television content.

The MPA Asia Pacific has hosted film workshops since 2006, providing stepping-stones for emerging filmmakers to develop their careers. In 2006, breakthrough filmmaker Xue Xiaolu participated in the Workshop, won the film writing competition, and landed the opportunity to travel to the US to meet with MPA and member company studio executives. Last year, her film *Ocean Heaven*, starring Jet Li, produced by Bill Kong and shot by Christopher Doyle, opened the Shanghai International Film Festival in 2010 and Xue Xiaolu was named Emerging Talent of the Year at CineAsia, the region's premiere movie convention in Hong Kong. This year Ms. Xue joined the Workshop as a guest speaker.

About AFACT

AFACT works closely with industry, government and enforcement agencies to address copyright theft and protect the interests of the film and television community as well as the interests of Australian movie fans.

In February 2011, IPSOS and Oxford Economics released a study on behalf of AFACT entitled "Economic Consequences of Movie Piracy in Australia". The key findings, outlined below, indicated the scale of harm caused by movie piracy to the Australian economy in the 12 months up to July 2010.

- \$1.37 billion in revenue was lost across the entire Australian economy.
- 6,100 jobs were forgone across the entire economy.
- Tax losses to movie piracy amounted to \$193 million.
- Direct consumer spending losses to the movie industry, ie. cinema owners, local distributors, producers and retailers amounted to \$575 million.

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