



PRESS RELEASE - EMBARGOED

\*\*\*Under strict embargo until PST 9pm June 1 / AEST 2pm June 2 2015 \*\*\*

## **2015 AUSTRALIANS IN FILM HEATH LEDGER SCHOLARSHIP WINNER ANNOUNCED TODAY IN WEST HOLLYWOOD**

At the Sunset Marquis Hotel in Los Angeles this evening, Matt Levett was announced the winner of the prestigious **2015 HEATH LEDGER SCHOLARSHIP** and **Emilie Cocquerel** and **Lily Sullivan** were named the runners up.

For the high calibre judging panel, the choice was not an easy one to make. Emmy award winning casting director, Laray Mayfield (*Fight Club*, *Gone Girl*, *House of Cards*, *The Social Network*), who joined the panel for the first time this year said, 'It was inspiring to be on a judging panel where every person was passionate and invested in the result. The decision was not easy as each of the applicants are talented and unique and we are sure they will have long and lovely careers. Ultimately our decision was to award the scholarship to Matt Levett. We are all excited about watching his talent and career continue to grow and we are also looking forward to seeing the work the runners up Emilie Cocquerel and Lily Sullivan will do.'

Each year Heath's father, Kim Ledger, contacts the winner of the scholarship to advise them that they have won. He said, "It is always such an exciting phone call to make because we know that the scholarship makes such an impact on a young performer's career. For the seventh year, the scholarship has gone to a deserving recipient in Matt Levett. This is a wonderful initiative run by Australians in Film and we wish Matt every success."

Of his win, Levett said, "I am humbled to have received this incredible gift. Working in this industry, I have realized success here is not something you can do on your own. The support this scholarship gives, allows me opportunities I could otherwise only imagine. The chance to tell stories on an international level would be a dream come true. I am deeply grateful to the Ledger family and AIF for their ongoing support and generosity towards Australian actors. To know you can travel halfway around the world and find a sense of community is a true testament to the work done by Australians in Film (AIF)."

Levett receives a USD\$10,000 cash fund, a two year scholarship at the Stella Adler Academy of Acting and Theatre in Los Angeles, he flew to Los Angeles flying Virgin Australia to attend the announcement ceremony and will receive a second flight when he is ready to transition to the United States, a 7 day Californian trip from Visit California, USD\$5,000 worth of visa and immigration services from Raynor and Associates and complimentary lifetime membership to StarNow. The scholarship also includes mentorship from professionals in the industry.

Cocquerel and Sullivan will receive a round-trip ticket to Los Angeles courtesy of Virgin Australia where they can profile themselves in the US market and for the first time, they will also receive a scholarship to attend Masterclasses at Screenwise Film & TV School for actors in Sydney.

Simonne Overend, President of Australians in Film says; "We wish to congratulate Matt Levett for



winning this year's Heath Ledger Scholarship, and to acknowledge all the talented finalists including Emilie Cocquerel and Lily Sullivan. The high calibre of entrants this year is testimony to the amazing acting talent coming out of Australia and to the high regard with which the scholarship is perceived by the industry."

Matt Levett graduated from the Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in 2009. Whilst at WAAPA he was awarded both the Sally Burton prize for Most Outstanding Performance in a

Classical Text, and the Lesley Anderson award. Matt's screen credits include the AACTA and Logie award winning Matchbox Pictures mini-series *Devil's Playground*, lead in the critically acclaimed Australian feature *Drown*, Channel 7's hugely popular *A Place to Call Home*, *Home & Away*, *Two Twisted* and *All Saints*. Matt directed the Tropfest Film Festival short *Unwanted Friend* and is a member of *ScreenInkMedia*, a collective of young filmmakers who have just completed their latest short *Kid* which Matt wrote and directed.

Like Levett, **Emilie Cocquerel** also undertook the prestigious WAAPA acting program. At the end of her first year of study she attended a three-month exchange program with the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique de Paris (CNSAD) where she studied under renowned director Daniel Mesguish and Jean Damien-Barbin. While still studying at WAAPA, Rachel Ward cast and directed Emilie in the ABC tele-movie *An Accidental Soldier*. Emilie recently shot a small role in *Lion* opposite Rooney Mara and is currently on location shooting a role in *Joe Cinque's Consolation*, based on the novel by celebrated Australian writer, Helen Garner.

**Lily Sullivan** recently wrapped opposite Timothy Spall in Australian feature film *Sucker*, written by Lawrence Leung and to be released this year. She co-starred in Rhys Graham's feature *Galore*, which was in competition at Berlin International Film Festival in 2013 and earned her a 'Best Supporting Actress' award at 2014 Cinema des Antipodes Saint-Tropez. Lily made her feature film debut in 2012 in P.J. Hogan's *Mental*, opposite Toni Collette, Liev Schreiber and Anthony LaPaglia for which she earned an AACTA Award nomination for Best Young Actor and a Film Critics Circle of Australia Award nomination for Best Performance by a Young Actor.

The judges for the 2015 scholarship were **Rose Byrne** (*Damages*, *The Internship*, *Bad Neighbours*), **Ben Mendelsohn** (*Bloodline*, *Exodus: Gods and Kings*, *The Dark Knight Rises*), American actor, writer and producer **Vince Vaughn** (*True Detective*, *The Internship*, *The Break-Up*), executive producer **Adam Schroeder** (*Zoolander*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *Clueless*), directors **Kieran Darcy-Smith** (*Wish You Were Here*, *By Way of Helena*) and **Gregor Jordan** (*Ned Kelly*, *Two Hands*), Australian-based casting director, **Ann Fay** (*Anzac Girls*, *Packed to the Rafters*) and Emmy award winning casting director, **Laray Mayfield** (*Fight Club*, *Gone Girl*, *House of Cards*, *The Social Network*).

Benefactors of the Heath Ledger Scholarship include Nicole Kidman, Naomi Watts, Hugh Jackman, Deborah-Lee Furness, Rose Byrne, Alex O'Loughlin, Liam Hemsworth, Michelle Williams, Phil Noyce, Baz Luhrmann and Catherine Martin.

Australians in Film 2015 Heath Ledger Scholarship is sponsored by: Virgin Australia, Visit California, Screenwise Film & TV School for Actors, Ausfilm, Nixco and AiF's agency of record, BIW.



**THE OTHER HEATH LEDGER SCHOLARSHIP 2015 FINALISTS WERE:**

**Mojean Aria** (*The Bronx Bull, Aban and Khorshid*)  
**David Berry** (*A Place to Call Home*)  
**Shareena Clanton** (*Wentworth*)  
**Ashleigh Cummings** (*Puberty Blues, Gallipoli, Galore*)  
**Taylor Ferguson** (*The Turning, Strangerland*)  
**James Fraser** (*Devil's Playground, Deadline Gallipoli, The Water Diviner*)  
**Reef Ireland** (*Puberty Blues, Wentworth*)  
**Joel Jackson** (*Deadline Gallipoli, Peter Allen: Not the Boy Next Door*)  
**Travis Jeffrey** (*Unbroken, Gallipoli*)  
**Brandon McClelland** (*Anzac Girls*)  
**Arianwen Parkes-Lockwood** (*A Place to Call Home*)  
**Jordan Patrick Smith** (*Neighbours, Unbroken, Banished*)  
**Adele Perovic** (*The Code*)  
**TJ Power** (*Underbelly, The Sapphires, The Little Death*)  
**Harry Richardson** (*Looking for Grace*)  
**Millie Samuels** (*Neighbours, The Gods of Wheat Street, Alex and Eve*)  
**Geraldine Viswanathan** (*Dysfunktion*).

Reef Ireland, Ashleigh Cummings, Millie Samuels, James Fraser and TJ Power have all been Heath Ledger Scholarship finalists in previous years.

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**ABOUT AUSTRALIANS IN FILM**

Founded in May 2001, Australians in Film is a non-profit organization that serves as the industry guild for Australian entertainment professionals in Los Angeles, holding regular screenings, career development programs, seminars and labs, and currently has over 600 members. For more information on AiF, please visit [www.australiansinfilm.org](http://www.australiansinfilm.org)

**ABOUT VIRGIN AUSTRALIA** Virgin Australia is bringing the romance back to flying. With constant innovation at the heart of everything they do, their superior products and award-winning service set them apart from their competitors and lets you enjoy a world-class experience on every flight. Whether you're flying for business or leisure, experience the difference with Virgin Australia. For more information, please visit [virginaustralia.com.au](http://virginaustralia.com.au)



## **ABOUT VISIT CALIFORNIA**

Visit California is a non-profit organization with a mission to develop and maintain marketing programs – in partnership with the state's travel industry – that keep California top-of-mind as a premier travel destination. According to Visit California, travel and tourism expenditures total \$106.4 billion annually in California, support jobs for 917,000 Californians and generate \$6.6 billion in state and local tax revenues.

According to preliminary overseas visitor arrival forecasts, 546,110 Australians visited California in 2012 and spent \$959 million. For more information about Visit California go to [visitcalifornia.com](http://visitcalifornia.com) or [visitcalifornia.com.au](http://visitcalifornia.com.au)

## **ABOUT SCREENWISE**

Screenwise was established fifteen years ago to provide specialist, career-focused training in acting for film & television by employing the crème de la crème of industry professionals – award-winning actors, directors & casting consultants who are articulate and inspirational teachers. Overseen by Denise Roberts (*Schapelle*, *Wonderland*, *The Moodys*, *Cliffy*, *Packed To The Rafters*, *Blood Brothers*, *Always Greener*, *GP...*) the teaching staff includes award winning actors, directors, casting directors and technicians who are currently employed and up to date with the Australian and International film industry standards.

## **ABOUT AUSFILM**

Ausfilm connects the international film community with Australia's screen incentives, talent and facilities. Ausfilm markets Australia's Screen Production Incentive Scheme which comprises the Location, PDV (post, digital and visual effects) and Producer Offsets. Ausfilm is an Australian industry – government partnership. It comprises Australia's Federal and State Governments and the major studios and the leading post and digital effects facilities and production service providers. For more information, please visit [australiansinfilm.org](http://australiansinfilm.org)

## **ABOUT BIW**

Driven by a philosophy of global thinking and hands-on experience in fashion, entertainment, lifestyle, and business, BIW understands the value of establishing an enduring and captivating image. The team excels at working with companies and brands to unlock their distinctive voice and tell their story in the most authentic, engaging and cohesive manner, across all platforms. They understand the continually evolving, multi-lingual design space, and the need for brands to connect with diverse audiences through a single distinctive identity. For more information, please visit [brandingironworldwide.com](http://brandingironworldwide.com)

## **ABOUT NIXCO**

NIXCo is Australia's leading independent film and entertainment PR agency, established in 1998 by company director Fiona Nix. With Fiona at the helm and over 25 years of experience in the entertainment industry, the NIXCo team provide a broad range of professional public relations services to a wide spectrum of clients including Australian and international film, home entertainment and television production companies and distributors. The team also maximise the impact of events in the media landscape and offer discreet media management for talent, government bodies and corporations when it is needed. Providing individually tailored campaigns, NIXCo has vast experience in all elements of publicity, promotions and marketing and most recently, has moved to create engaging campaigns in the digital media space. For more information, email: [info@nixco.com.au](mailto:info@nixco.com.au).