

## AUSTRALIAN FILMS – 2000 BOX OFFICE SHARE

The Australian film industry has produced a record-breaking performance in the competition for box office share in 2000. Australian films earned \$54.2 million (8 per cent) of the total Australian box office of \$689.5 million in 2000.

This result is the highest total (unadjusted dollars) ever.

The 2000 result was the highest for Australian films since 1988 (when adjusted for current dollar value). The figures even eclipsed the high of 1994 (the year of *Muriel's Wedding* and *Adventures of Priscilla: Queen of the Desert*). It was the 5<sup>th</sup> highest result since data collection started in 1977.

Australian films' share at the box office 1990 to 2000

Year	Total Gross	% share
1990	6.7	3
1991	19.1	6
1992	29.7	9
1993	24.7	6
1994	46.6	10
1995	19.8	4
1996	43.7	8
1997	28.4	5
1998	25.6	4
1999	21.1	3
2000	54.2	8

Source: MPDAA and AFC Policy Research and Information

Four films earned over \$5 million each in 2000. One of these, *The Dish*, was placed sixth in the Top 10 box office earners for the year. It is currently number five of the top Australian films of all time. A total of four Australian films made the Top 50 in 2000.

Eight Australian films earned over a million dollars each in 2000, compared to five in 1999, nine in 1998, and five or six titles a year between 1991 and 1997.

The top grossing Australian films for 2000 were:

1	The Dish	19-Oct-00	Roadshow	16,880,893
2	The Wog Boy	24-Feb-00	Fox	11,448,547
3	Looking For Alibrandi	4-May-00	Roadshow	8,300,454
4	Chopper	4-Aug-00	Palace	5,718,014
5	Me Myself I	20-Apr-00	BVI	2,698,330

In addition to the top grossing titles mentioned above, three other Australian films earned over a million dollars, *Bootmen*, *Better than Sex* and *Mr Accident*.

The top grossing Australian films in 1999 were:

1	Two Hands	REP	5,441,578
2	Craig, The	Roadshow	5,265,935
3	Babe: Pig in the City*	UIP/Universal	3,443,240
4	Paperback Hero	PolyGram	1,369,280
5	Sally Marshall is not an Alien (Australia/Canada)	UIP	1,291,802

\* screened in 1998 and 1999; total box office \$7.7 million

Source: MPDAA

## The figures

While Australian films performed well in terms of total dollars and box office share, the *total* box office for 2000 fell 2.1% to \$689.5 million, down from \$704 million in 1999. This is the first fall in total box office in Australia for 13 years. However this figure is the second highest result ever.

The downturn has been attributed to a combination of influences including the saturation of the multiplex market, the impact of the GST and the Olympics.

A total of 250 films were released in the Australian market in 2000. Of the 22 Australian releases, 18 were feature films and four were documentaries. A full list of Australian releases for the year is in Appendix I.

The number of films released here and their Australian box office share by country of origin is as follows:

	No of films		% box office share	
	2000	1999	2000	1999
Australia	22	24	8	3
US (mainly studio films)	167	177	83	84
UK films	28	25	6	10
Other (mainly Europe)	32	33	3	3
Total	250	258		

The production value of the 18 Australian feature films was \$73 million - estimated to be in the vicinity of a mere 0.5% of the production value of the total slate of films released here in 2000.

Australian films have been receiving wide releases from distributors. Roadshow gave a blockbuster size release of 284 screens for *The Dish* with a total cinema audience of approximately 2.1 million. Roadshow also released *Looking for Alibrandi* onto 173 screens for an estimated audience of one million while *The Wog Boy* was released by Fox onto 198 screens for an audience figure of approximately 1.4 million. The R rated *Chopper* was seen by an estimated 721,000 when it was released onto 138 screens - the largest campaign so far for specialist

distributor Palace. This distributor confidence in Australian films in 2000 has increased the Australian public's opportunities to see Australian films on the big screen.

### Uneven Playing Field

Despite the doubling of Australian box office results from last year's low, Australian film remains the underdog against the dominant US film industry. Like most countries the Australian film market is dominated by big budget US studio films that run vigorous and well-resourced marketing campaigns. Studio backed films come to the Australian market with a huge amount of publicity following their release in the US market.

\* The top five films watched by Australians (all US studio-backed) grossed an average \$22 million. *Gladiator*, with Australia's Russell Crowe in the lead role, finished on top with \$30.7 million. The highest placed Australian film was *The Dish* at number six with \$16.9 million.

\* The average budget of US studio films was US\$73.9 million (approx. A\$123 million) in 1999. The average budget of Australian films released last year was A\$4 million.

\* In 2000 the top 50 films took 67.9% of the box office (77% in 1999). 41 of the top 50 were from the US. Of the remaining nine, four were Australian and four were British (*Chicken Run*, *Billy Elliot*, *Snatch*, *Angela's Ashes*) and one was Japanese (*Pokémon 2*).

The performance of Australian films vis-a-vis low budget independently produced films from other countries has improved from last year's result.

\* The 22 Australian films released in 2000 took an average of \$2.4 million each. The average result for the 28 UK films was well below this at \$1.4 million each; the 32 foreign films (non-UK/US) fetched on average only \$534,483 per film. (This compares to last year's result of 24 Australian films at an average of \$728,000 each to 31 foreign films at \$428,000 per film.) The take of US films here was \$3,115,812 per film.

### International Comparisons

In contrast to the strong box office performance in Australia, the trend in Europe has been for the local market share to decrease. The UK was the exception with a market share rising to 20% on the back of hits such as *Billy Elliot* and *Snatch*. France was down to below 30%, a fall from 1999's 32.4%, Italy dropped from 27% to 14% in 2000, Norway slid to a 30-year low of 6.6% after 1999's 8.8% and Spain posted its worst result since 1996 with 9.6%.

Commenting on the poor performance of local product across Europe in the past year, Variety journalist David Rooney wrote:

*"Despite more multiplexes in Germany, new 'designer' screens in Britain, cut-rate cinema passes in France, air-conditioning in Italy and a glut of movies to choose from in Spain, the total box office take across Europe this year will barely match its 1999 performance. And not withstanding the ongoing efforts around the Continent to stimulate local production and create a European-wide film industry, local pics generally got a thumbs-down from movie goers this year. "Yanks Rank but Locals Tank," Variety, December 24-31, 2000.*

Despite a strong year for UK cinema, only two British-made films reached the top 10 in that country.

In terms of overall cinema admissions, the UK film attendances were higher than in any year since 1974. France too had its highest cinema attendance in 10 years, up 8%.

US films are still the main drawcard for the international market, but according to Variety takings for US films worldwide will show a drop for the second year in a row, down 10% on 1999's US\$6.66 billion.

Estimates from the US indicate US box-office will rise by a modest 2% to between US\$7.45 billion to US\$7.7 billion. This rise is largely attributed to a rise in ticket prices with attendances decreasing by 43 million, 3% down on 1999.

### International Status

Australian films have received critical praise both in Australia and abroad. *The Dish* and *Chopper* and have been included in the prestigious Sundance Film Festival for 2001. *Soft Fruit*, *Chasing Buddha*, and *Original Schtick* were shown at Sundance 2000. *Innocence* has won a number of international awards including best film at the Montreal World Film Festival and a third prize at the Toronto International Film Festival with *The Dish* receiving second prize. Last year there was an unprecedented nine Australian features shown at Toronto. Rose Byrne was awarded Best Actress at the Venice Film Festival for the, as yet, unreleased *The Goddess of 1967* while the film's director Clara Law was honoured as Best Director at the Chicago International Film Festival. *Mall Boy* screened at the Cannes Film Festival Director's Fortnight and *My Mother Frank* was shown at the Berlin Festival. For a more complete list see Appendix II.

In an Olympic year when the world was focussed on Australia's sporting achievements, Australia's cinematic talent has also caught the world's attention, by playing major roles in some of the most successful films of 2000.

Russell Crowe starred in *Gladiator*, number one at the box office around the world, as well as being the lead of *The Insider*. Mel Gibson and Heath Ledger starred in *The Patriot* while Hugh Jackman was a lead in *X-Men*. Number two film for the year *Mission Impossible II* was largely filmed here with an Australian crew and a number of Australian stars including John Polson and Richard Roxburgh. Cate Blanchett featured in *The Talented Mr Ripley*, Ben Mendelsohn in *Vertical Limit* and Toni Collette in *Shaft*. Acclaimed Australian director Bruce Beresford created the worldwide hit *Double Jeopardy*.

### The Future

Despite the successful year at the box office for Australian films, a report recently released by the AFC established that film development – the crucial phase in which projects are originated, scripts are written and marketplace attachments are secured – remains under-resourced. Development budgets in Australia are proportionally far below those available in the UK, Europe and the United States. For more detail see the AFC's, *Development: A study of Australian and international funding and practice in the feature film industry*, November, 2000.

<http://www.afc.gov.au/about/howe/dev/index.html>

The AFC has recently recommended a number of development benchmarks. As part of the new approach to development, the AFC is implementing a range of measures including higher levels of investment in fewer projects and programs to appropriately resource teams of writers, directors and producers. This is on top of the critical support programs the AFC has provided to the Australian film industry over the previous two and a half decades.

While a number of films have not replicated their domestic success overseas as yet, several of Australia's major box office successes have only recently sold to international distributors. Among those that have sold and are awaiting release are *Chopper*, *Looking for Alibrandi*, *My Mother Frank* and *The Dish*. For more information on the distribution of Australian films see Appendix III.

2001 promises to be another exciting year for Australian film. Significant forthcoming Australian releases include Clara Law's *The Goddess of 1967*, Baz Luhrmann's ambitious musical *Moulin Rouge* starring Nicole Kidman and Ewan McGregor, and *He Died with a Felafel in his Hand*, the film version of John Birmingham's cult novel. Presently in production are also Phillip Noyce's *Rabbit Proof Fence*, Ray Lawrence's *Lantana*, Paul Hogan's *Crocodile Dundee III* and *The Man who Sued God* starring Billy Connolly and Judy Davis.

*Australian Film Commission 16/1/2001*

## Appendix I

### Australian Films released in 2000 and Distributors

Angst	UIP
Better than Sex	New Vision
Bootmen	Fox
Chasing Buddha (Doco)	Indies
Chopper	Palace
Cunnamulla (Doco)	Indies
Cut	UIP/Beyond
The Diplomat (Doco)	Indies
Dish, The	Roadshow
15 Amore	M.Murphy
Innocence	Sharmill
Looking for Alibrandi	Roadshow
Magic Pudding	Fox
Me Myself I	BVI
Mr Accident	Roadshow
Muggers	REP
My Mother Frank	UIP/Universal
Sample People	REP
Selkie	UIP
Strange Fits of Passion	UIP/Beyond
Tackle Happy (Doco)	Indies
The Wogboy	Fox

## Appendix II

### Awards and Critical Recognition for Australian films released in 2000

*This list has been compiled from ongoing monitoring of awards by AFC staff and from information provided to the AFC by filmmakers. While great effort has been made to locate the information, there may be a small number of awards which have been omitted from the list.*

Angst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Australian Screen Sound Guild Awards: Best Achievement in Sound for Feature Effects Editing - Yulia Ackerhold, Linda Murdoch</li><li>* if - Independent Filmmakers Awards: Best Music - David Thrussell</li><li>* Cork Film Festival</li></ul>
better than sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Cork Film Festival</li><li>* London Film Festival</li><li>* Telluride Film Festival</li><li>* Toronto International Film Festival</li></ul>
Bootmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Australian Film Institute Awards: Best Costume - Tess Schofield; Best Achievement in Sound - David Lee, Laurence Maddy, Andrew Plain, Ian McLaughlin; Best Achievement in Cinematography - Steve Mason; Best Achievement in Production Design - Murray Picknett; Best Original Music Score - Cezary Skubiszewski</li></ul>
Chasing Buddha (Documentary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films: First Prize; The 8<sup>th</sup> NSW Film and Television Office Rouben Mamoulian Award; Best Documentary - Amiel Courtin-Wilson</li><li>* if - Independent Filmmakers Awards: Best Documentary - Amiel Courtin-Wilson</li><li>* Sundance Film Festival 2000</li><li>* New Zealand Film Festival</li></ul>
Chopper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Australian Film Institute Awards: Best Achievement in Direction - Andrew Dominik; Best Actor - Eric Bana; Best Supporting Actor - Simon Lyndon</li><li>* if - Independent Filmmakers Awards: Best Cinematography - Geoffrey Hall, Kevin Hayward; Best Independent New Filmmaker - Andrew Dominik; Best Actor - Eric Bana</li><li>* Hof International Film Festival</li><li>* Sundance Film Festival 2001 - to be screened</li><li>* New Zealand Film Festival</li><li>* Toronto International Film Festival</li><li>* Edinburgh International Film Festival</li><li>* Telluride Film Festival</li><li>* Cork Film Festival</li></ul>
Cunnamulla (Documentary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA)</li></ul>

Cut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Edinburgh International Film Festival</li> <li>* Frightfest</li> <li>* Fantasy Filmfest, Festival for Science Fiction, Horror &amp; Thrillers</li> <li>* International Filmfest Oldenburg</li> </ul>
The Diplomat (Documentary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Australian Film Institute Awards: <b>Film Australia Award for Best Documentary - Sally Browning, Wilson da Silva; SBS Television Award for Best Direction in a Documentary - Tom Zubrycki</b></li> <li>* Hawaii International Film Festival</li> <li>* Cork Film Festival</li> <li>* London Film Festival</li> <li>* Vancouver International Film Festival</li> </ul>
The Dish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Toronto International Film Festival: <b>Second Place - Benson and Hedges Film People's Choice Award</b></li> <li>* Sundance Film Festival 2001 - to be screened</li> <li>* London Film Festival, screened</li> </ul>
15 amore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Aspen Film Festival: <b>Most Popular Film</b></li> <li>* Marcos Island Film Festival: <b>Best Foreign Feature</b></li> <li>* Australian Cinematographers Society (ACS) Awards - NSW/ACT: <b>Gold (shared) - John Brock</b></li> <li>* Noosa Film Festival: <b>Audience Prize for Most Popular Film</b></li> <li>* Singapore International Film Festival</li> <li>* Tahoe International Film Festival</li> </ul>
Innocence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Montreal World Film Festival: <b>People's Choice Award Official Competition; Grand Prix of the Americas (Best Film) - Shared</b></li> <li>* Taormina International Film Festival: <b>Fipresci Prize</b></li> <li>* Toronto International Film Festival: <b>Third Place - Benson and Hedges Film People's Choice Award</b></li> <li>* Saint Tropez Film Festival: <b>Cinema de Antipodes : Best Film In Competition</b></li> <li>* if - Independent Filmmakers Awards: <b>Best Visual Design/Editing - Simon Whittington; Best Sound Design - James Currie, Craig Carter; Best Feature - Paul Cox, Mark Patterson; Independent Filmmaker of the Year - Paul Cox</b></li> <li>* New Zealand Film Festival</li> <li>* Telluride Film Festival</li> <li>* Vancouver International Film Festival</li> <li>* Chicago International Film Festival</li> <li>* Flanders International Film Festival</li> <li>* Raindance Film Festival</li> <li>* The Hamptons International Film Festival</li> <li>* Festival Du Cinema International En Abitibi-Temiscamingue</li> <li>* Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival</li> <li>* AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival</li> </ul>



Looking for Alibrandi \* Australian Film Institute Awards: **Best Film** - Robyn Kershaw; **Best Supporting Actress** - Greta Scacchi ; **Best Actress** - Pia Miranda; **Best Achievement in Editing** - Martin Connor; **Best Screenplay Adapted from another source** - Melina Marchetta  
 \* if - Independent Filmmakers Awards: **Best Script** - Melina Marchetta  
 \* Hawaii International Film Festival, screened  
 \* St Louis Film Festival, screened  
 \* London Australian Film Festival, screened  
 \* Seattle International Film Festival, screened

Me Myself I \* Australian Screen Sound Guild Awards: **Best Achievement in Sound for Feature Location Sound Recording** - David Pearson Guntis Sics, Stuart Waller (Tied Result); **Best Achievement in Sound for Feature Effects Editing** - Craig Carter, Antony Gray  
 \* Boston International Festival of Women's Cinema  
 \* Palm Beach International Film Festival  
 \* US Comedy Arts Festival  
 \* San Diego International Film Festival  
 \* Saint Tropez Film Festival - Cinema de Antipodes  
 \* Portland International Film Festival  
 \* London Australian Film Festival  
 \* Telluride Film Festival

My Mother Frank \* Temecula Valley International Film Festival: **Audience Award**  
 \* Australian Screen Sound Guild Awards: **Best Achievement in Sound for Feature Dialogue and ADR Editing** - Ross Brewer, Kuji Jenkins, Phil Snow, Tony Vaccher; **Best Achievement in Sound for Feature Foley** - John Dennison, Paul Huntingford, Duncan McAllister; **Australian Screen and Sound Guild Soundtrack of the Year**  
 \* Berlin International Film Festival  
 \* Hawaii International Spring Film Festival  
 \* Montreal World Film Festival

Muggers \* Hof Film Festival  
 \* London Australian Film Festival

Sample People \* Australian Cinematographers Society Awards (National) - **Award of Disinction** - David Foreman  
 \* Raindance Film Festival

Strange Fits of Passion \* Cannes Film Festival Critics' Week (1999)  
 \* Australian Cinematographers Society (ACS) Awards - **Victoria/Tasmania Features, Cinema: Silver** - Jaemes Grant  
 \* Filmfest Hamburg (1999)  
 \* Palm Springs International Film Festival (2000)  
 \* Outfest Film Festival (2000)

Wog Boy, The

\* Australian Screen Sound Guild Awards: **Best Achievement in Sound for Feature Mixing** - Phil Judd

\* if - Independent Filmmakers Awards: **Best Domestic Box Office**

\* Filmfest Hamburg

### Appendix III

#### Overseas Sales and Distribution of Australian films released in 2000

*Chopper* has been sold to First Look Pictures in the US for a March 2001 theatrical release and was released in late November in the UK by Metrodome. It has also been sold to a number of major territories including Canada (Blackwatch), Japan (Mipic) and Scandinavia (Non-Stop). *The Magic Pudding* has recently been sold to Icon Films for an Easter British release. It will also be distributed by Icon throughout Europe (except for France which has been sold to BAC films) as well as South Africa, the Middle East and Scandinavia. Working Dog has sold UK rights for *The Dish* to Icon Entertainment and US rights to Warner Bros Classics. *Looking for Alibrandi* has sold rights to Italy (Fandango Distribution) Hungary (HBO RT), Scandinavia (Rialto Film Entertainment) and Israel (Shapira Films).

Angst :                    Israel (Shapira Films)  
                              Russia (EA Cinema)

Chopper:                Czech Republic (Intersonic)  
                              UK (Metrodome International Ltd)  
                              USA (Overseas Film Group/First Look Pictures)  
                              France SPKG Europe (Sagittaire Films)  
                              Canada (Blackwatch)  
                              Japan (Mipic)  
                              Scandinavia (Non-stop)  
                              Russia (EA Cinema)  
                              Greece (Audio Visual Enterprises SA)  
                              Hungary (Best Hollywood)  
                              South Korea (Dae Sung Film Co)  
                              Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia (Motovun Film)  
                              Benelux (MS Trading-Paradiso)  
                              South Africa (Numetro)  
                              USA (overseas Film Group)  
                              Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay (S&C Entertainment)  
                              Spain (SAV)  
                              Israel (Shapira)

The Dish:                UK (Icon Entertainment)  
                              US (Warner Bros Classics)

Looking for Alibrandi: Italian SPKG Europe (Fandango Distribution)  
                              Hungary (HBO RT)  
                              Poland (Best Films)  
                              Scandinavia (Rialto Film Entertainment)  
                              Israel (Shapira Films)  
                              USA (Romance Classic Channel)  
                              Spain (Civite)  
                              SE Asia (HBO Asia)  
                              Russia (EA Cinema)  
                              Benelux (Film Entertainment)  
                              China (Pheonix)

The Magic Pudding: UK/Europe (Icon Films)  
France (BAC films)  
South Africa  
Middle East  
Scandinavia

My Mother Frank: Hungary (HBO RT)  
Benelux (PPA Communications NV)  
Israel (Shapira Films)  
CIS (EA Films)  
Asia (HBO Asia)  
Scandinavia (Rialto Film Entertainment)  
Turkey (Standard Films)  
South Africa (Ster Kinekor)  
Poland (Best Films)  
Greece (PCV)

Muggers Hong Kong, Taiwan (Alpha Entertainment)  
Greece (Audio Visual Enterprises SA)  
Eastern Europe (Daro Film Distribution)  
Thailand (Mongkol Cinema Co)  
Philippines (Pioneer Films)  
Israel (Shapira Films)  
Turkey (Umut)  
Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden (CCV/AS)  
Italian SPKG Europe (Cecchi Gori)  
German SPKG Europe (MBM Mediemvertriebs GMBH)  
Iceland (Stjornubio)  
Portugal (Lusomundo)  
South Africa (Vision Africa)  
CIS (Visionway)  
Mexico (Nuvision SA DE CV)

The Wog Boy: Scandinavia (BV Film International)  
Hungary (HBO RT)  
Israel (Shapira Films)  
Czech Republic and Slovakia (Butterfly E G SVO)  
Poland (Best Films)  
CIS (EA Cinema)  
Benelux (Film Entertainment Group)  
German SPKG, Europe, Greece (20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox)  
Iceland (Goodtimes Distribution)  
South East Asia (HBO Asia)