

**AFC/FFC Cannes Media Conference,
1pm Monday 8 May, 2006
AFC Chief Executive, Chris Fitchett**

The AFC is thrilled to be here to today to celebrate the five feature films and three short films screening at this year's Cannes International Film Festival.

Since the Cannes Film Festival began, a total of 108 Australian films have screened. The eight films selected this year means that 2006 has become Australia's most successful year since 1986 in terms of the number of films screening at the Festival. This is doubly rewarding as this year's strong line up coincides with the AFC's 30th anniversary of supporting the Australian film industry at Cannes.

This year the feature films TEN CANOES, SUBURBAN MAYHEM and 2.37 have been invited to screen in Official Selection, Un Certain Regard. The criteria for selection into this particular program of the Festival is that the film expresses a personal vision of whatever subject has captured the filmmaker's interest. Emphasis is also placed on cultural expression and innovation in the cinema. Each year approximately 22 films screen in Un Certain Regard, so it's quite an achievement to have 3 Australian films selected.

JINDABYNE has been selected for Director's Fortnight which is organised by the French Directors Guild and screens up to 20 feature films every year. The program consists of a selection of world cinema and is an affirmation of diversity and personal visions. Since it began in 1969, Directors' Fortnight is the only section that is open to the general public - celebrating the films and the directors.

LOOK BOTH WAYS will have a special screening as part of the 45th International Critics' Week. Critic's Week was created in 1962 by the Cannes Film Festival and the Association of French Critics as a parallel section of the Festival. Since 2000, the International Federation of Film Critics is offered the opportunity to screen one especially noteworthy film as part of Critics' Week, a film which has already received an award elsewhere before Cannes. This year LOOK BOTH WAYS has been selected by this Federation as the "Revelation of the Year".

The short film SEXY THING has been selected for the official Short Film Competition where it will compete for the prestigious Short Film Palme d'Or award. Each year only about 10 shorts are screened in this section so, again, this is quite an achievement.

Also selected to screen in the Official Selection shorts program, out of competition, is the short film THE WATER DIARY which is part of the feature film project “8” where feature film directors from around the globe were invited to create a short film in response to the United Nations 8 Millennium Development Goals. Out of Competition films are generally films by directors who have previously won many awards at Cannes or require special programming.

The other short film to be selected is SNOW which will screen in the student section of Cinéfondation. Created in 1998, the object of this program is to present and highlight films under 60 minutes from film schools all around the world.

As well as these films, writer/director Christina Andreef has been selected to attend Cannes with her feature film which is in development called Shiver, as part of a financing workshop run by the Festival to help producers raise money for their projects.

This line-up is a tremendous achievement for the filmmakers, many of whom are in attendance today and eager to speak to you and answer your questions. The AFC congratulates all those involved.

And now I'll ask Brian Rosen, Chief Executive of the Film Finance Corporation to introduce them to you.