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Susie Dobson Global PR
p. 310 573 2146
e. susiedobson@labridge.com

ON TOP FROM DOWN UNDER!
Australians join forces for expatriate film organization

Los Angeles, CA, March 23, 2004 - With the support of a dazzling array of homegrown filmmaking talent, including three Academy Award® winning actors as Ambassadors, as well as a new Board of Advisors and an expanded Board of Directors, ***Australians In Film*** has been launched as Australia's premier entertainment industry organization in Hollywood with an exciting slate of screenings and special events set for 2004.

Nicole Kidman, who won the Best Actress Academy Award® in 2003 for *The Hours*, says she "did not hesitate" when invited to become one of 34 (and counting) ***Australians In Film*** Ambassadors.

She joins fellow Australian Oscar-winning actors Russell Crowe (*Gladiator*, 2000) and Geoffrey Rush (*Shine*, 1996), Oscar-winning director Mel Gibson (*The Passion of the Christ*, 2004) and other internationally known stars and film-makers including Cate Blanchett, Hugh Jackman, Phillip Noyce, Heath Ledger and Naomi Watts as Ambassadors.

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"Everyone knows how tough a struggle it can be to make it in Hollywood and, as an Australian, I'm very appreciative of the fact that ***Australians In Film*** not only showcases the work of those of us who have enjoyed some success, but also the work of up and coming talent from our country," Kidman says.

Founded in May 2001 as LAAFTA (Los Angeles Australian Film and Television Association), the newly named ***Australians In Film*** currently has over 400 members.

The mission of the non-profit ***Australians In Film*** is to celebrate the work of Australian film and television makers by creating an environment in which Australians and Americans can foster a strong and long-lasting relationship through Australian screen culture and the individuals who create it.

"The response to various screenings and events organized by LAAFTA during the past three years confirmed that there is overwhelming interest in Australian films and talent in Hollywood, so now we feel it is appropriate to take the next step by restructuring and renaming our group," says co-founder David Pratt.

"The response of high-profile Australian talent in support of this move has been tremendous."

With LAAFTA having screened more than 30 productions featuring Australians, the re-launched ***Australians In Film*** kicked off 2004 by co-presenting the *Jurlique Australian Film Festival* in January, and with a sold-out screening of Mel Gibson's *The Passion Of The Christ*, with this year's animated

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short film Oscar® winner *Harvie Krumpet*.

The world premiere of *Strange Bedfellows* (Paul Hogan and Michael Caton) was hosted in early March by Australians In Film

On March 24th, a special screening of *Ned Kelly* will be presented, starring ***Australians In Film*** Ambassadors Heath Ledger, Geoffrey Rush, Naomi Watts, and Rachel Griffiths. A Q&A with director Gregor Jordan and Heath Ledger will follow.

Future screenings are slated to include: *Gettin' Square* (starring David Wenham); *Thunderstruck* (a road movie involving 5 boys devoted to the legendary Aussie band AC/DC); *Josh Jarman* (starring Marcus Graham) and others to be announced.

The restructured Board of Directors of ***Australians In Film*** comprises of Mr. Stephen Basil -Jones, Senior Vice-President - Media/ Columbia Tri-Star Film Distributors International; Ms Jenny Cooney-Carrillo, member of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association; Ms. Susie Dobson, President, Susie Dobson Global PR, Mr. Rob Marsala, Manager/Producer The Bauer Co., Mr. Lawrie Masterson, Vice President of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, Ms. Paula Paizes, Producer/Business Affairs Consultant; Mr. David Pratt, Film Commissioner, AusFILM LA; Mr. Ian Sutherland, Snr. VP International Theatrical Distribution and Marketing

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MGM and Ms. Megan Worthy, Deputy Film Commissioner, AusFILM LA.

The Board of Advisors consists of: Ms. Kym Barrett award winning costume designer, Mr. Greg Coote, President, Coote/Hayes Productions; Mr. Bruce Davey, President, Icon Productions; Mr. Richard Francis-Bruce, multiple Academy Award nominated Editor, Mr. Scott Neeson, Senior Executive Vice-President Marketing/Columbia Tri-Star Film Distributors International; Mr. Dean Semler, Academy Award winning Cinematographer.

Australians In Film is proud to have the support of the Australian Government, AUSFILM, Austrade, the Australian Film Institute and American Cinematique and sponsors McWilliams Hanwood Estate Wines, and Hahn beer.

For membership information please email inquiry@australiansinfilm.org or visit www.australiansinfilm.org.

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