

Contact:
Susie Dobson
Susie Dobson Global PR
Tel: 310.573.2146
susiedobson@labridge.com

AUSTRALIANS IN FILM ANNOUNCES HONOREES FOR 2006 BREAKTHROUGH AWARDS

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (5/05/06) Australians in Film - the preeminent entertainment industry organization for expatriate Australians in Los Angeles - announced its honorees for the **2006 Breakthrough Awards** taking place on May 11th poolside at the Avalon Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. This event celebrates the accomplishments of Australia's brightest young talents emerging in Hollywood. The second annual *Australians in Film Breakthrough Awards* will honor Jacinda Barrett, starring in the upcoming blockbuster movie "Poseidon": Jesse Spencer from the Fox television series "House", and James Wan and Leigh Whannell, directors and co-writers of the successful horror film franchise, "Saw".

The exclusive, invitation-only event will be attended by 150 of the entertainment industry elite. Last year's inaugural awards were presented to actress Melissa George "Alias, Derailed" and director Robert Luketic "Legally Blonde, Monster in Law".

ABOUT THE HONOREES

Jacinda Barrett

Named one of *People Magazine's* 50 Most Beautiful People in the World, Jacinda Barrett continues to shine on the big screen. Barrett stars alongside Kurt Russell and Josh Lucas in the highly anticipated action adventure film "Poseidon," directed by Wolfgang Petersen. This fall, Barrett appears in Todd Phillips' comedy "School for Scoundrels," opposite Jon Heder and in Tony Goldwyn's comedy "The Last Kiss," opposite Zach Braff and Rachel Bilson. This winter, Barrett appears in Mira Nair's drama "The Namesake." Barrett was most recently seen alongside Renee Zellweger and Colin Firth in Beeban Kidron's "Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason," opposite Joaquin Phoenix and John Travolta in "Ladder 49," and opposite Nicole Kidman and Sir Anthony Hopkins in Robert Benton's "The Human Stain."

Jesse Spencer

A man of many talents, Spencer sang in the Australian boys choir as a youth, has played the violin since the age of 10, and also plays both guitar and piano.

Spencer starred in the Australian TV series "Neighbors" before landing his debut feature role in "Swimming Upstream" opposite Geoffrey Rush. He made his American on-screen debut in the movie "Uptown Girls" alongside Brittany Murphy and Dakota Fanning. Spencer currently plays the character Robert Chase in the hit Fox television series "House" and just wrapped work on the feature film "Flourish".

James Wan & Leigh Whannell

Director, co-writers and executive producers of the mega successful horror film franchise "Saw", Wan and Whannell met and became friends and work partners at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology's film school in Australia. It was there that they both started working on ideas together and co-created "Saw". Whannell has worked both on and off camera as an actor/writer/producer. Wan has worked behind the camera as a director/producer in both film and television, including music clips. They are back in their roles as director (Wan) and co-writers of the upcoming "Silence" for Universal Pictures.

ABOUT AUSTRALIANS IN FILM

Founded in May 2001, Los Angeles-based *Australians In Film* has held over 70 screenings, premieres and special events and currently has over 500 members. AIF is comprised of members, an executive director, board of directors, board of advisors and ambassadors.

Ambassadors include Australian Oscar-winning actors Cate Blanchett (*The Aviator* 2005), Nicole Kidman (*The Hours*, 2002), Russell Crowe (*Gladiator*, 2000) and Geoffrey Rush (*Shine*, 1996), Oscar-winning director Mel Gibson (*Braveheart* 1995, *The Passion of the Christ*, 2004) and 30 other internationally known stars and film-makers including Hugh Jackman, Fred Schepisi, Heath Ledger and Naomi Watts.

Australians In Film celebrates 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. *Australians In Film* is proud to have the support of the Australian Government, and to be sponsored by AUSFILM, Austrade, Jurlique, McWilliams Hanwood Estate Wines, Qantas, MacCorkindale Alonso and Holton, Tooheys New Beer and Tourism Australia. For further information please visit www.australiansinfilm.org.

#

MEDIA ARRIVALS ONLY. ALL MEDIA MUST BE CREDENTIALLED TO ATTEND.