



4 October 2018

## THE REAL FILM FESTIVAL BACK IN THE HUNTER FOR 2018

The Real Film Festival, now in its seventh year, is one of the Hunter's favourite community events. Showcasing incredible local and international talent, the Real Film Festival is a three-day celebration of film that this year will span from Lake Macquarie to Port Stephens. From Friday 26 to Sunday 28 October, the Festival will feature more activities in more locations than ever before.

The Festival launches in Newcastle on Friday with a series of workshops and masterclasses, aimed at filmmakers of all levels, the business community and anyone keen to learn more about the art of storytelling, filmmaking, production, special effects and more.

Special guest presenters include Academy Award nominated cinematographer, Don McAlpine as well as Zac Garred, a Newcastle-born actor who's enjoyed great success here and abroad.

Festival Director, Annette Hubber says this year's Festival has something for everyone. "If you love filmmaking or just enjoying watching brilliant movies, seeing short stories, or spending an evening under the stars in an open air cinema, you can be part of the Festival."

The official program launch will be held Friday 26 October at the Culture Club on King Street. Sally Regan, from Create NSW, will be opening the program for 2018 before inviting guests to Tower Cinemas for the first film of the Festival. Guests will be treated to an advanced screening of *Momentum Generation*, a story about mateship, passion and legacy in the pro surfing world and the complexity of their relationships with each other and their sport.

"Opening night will then continue with our Gala Party at Custom House Hotel, where everyone is welcome to enjoy some of the best local wines and produce as we celebrate the start of another home-grown festival," Annette added.

Day Two of the Festival is where film lovers from all over the Hunter can get really get involved. The Port Stephens Inaugural Film Screening will be held at Scotty's Cinema from 5pm and features three Indigenous short films and two local Port Stephens films, including one about a local event that showcases the beauty of the region, and a highly regarded documentary *Beyond the Red Zone*. The special screening finishes with a feature film about a young girl's difficult journey to her hometown of Brewarrina.

"Not only are these local films about issues that are important to the community, we will be holding an exclusive Q&A session with the filmmakers and talent after the screening, so guests will be able to explore the films much more deeply," Annette says. "It's a truly unique way to experience film."

At Speers Point Park, families are invited to share the Festival excitement with a free open air cinema. From 5pm, everyone is invited to throw out their picnic blankets and enjoy a short documentary about Natalie Ritter and her incredible four-year-old daughter's race to save her life. With plenty of entertainment, food, drink and activities available on the day, everyone can then enjoy the classic film Cool Runnings, under the stars.

Newcastle will also host a number of film screenings across the day at the iconic Tower Cinemas.

"The diversity of films this year is quite incredible, with a number of great local stories to tell. Stone Empire explores the Newcastle music scene, Brewtown uncovers the local craft beer industry and Hey Honey celebrates our local, amazing honey makers," Annette explains.

"Our feature films for Saturday are also incredible stories about events that have had great impact on our global community".

One Less God is a remarkable look into the 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai when ten young members of Lashkar-e-Taiba set out "inflict as much damage as possible in a series of 12 coordinated shooting and bombing attacks lasting four days.

Filmmaker Rob Stewart also presents the action adventure, Sharkwater Extinction, which exposes the billion dollar illegal shark fin industry and the political corruption behind it. With endangered sharks now being used to make products for human consumption, this film is a must-see.

The third and final day of the Festival will feature more Australian talent and exclusive Q&A sessions with filmmakers and performers, including members of the first PNG women's rugby league team and the Westpac Rescue team.

Annette concludes, "We wrap up the Festival on Sunday night with a party and everyone is invited to join us at the Culture Club. It's a fantastic way to celebrate the diversity of culture, the personal experiences and the honest stories that our filmmakers bring to us all."

The Real Film Festival starts October 26.

Tickets to events are limited. For the full program, or to book a seat for screenings, workshops and master classes, go to [www.realfilmfestival.com.au](http://www.realfilmfestival.com.au)

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