

Screenrights is a non-profit company which administers copyright licences in Australia and New Zealand and collects similar royalties from Europe and North America for its 2,500 members from 52 countries.

November 2006

Feature: Getting all the attention

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Jill Bryant new Chair of Screenrights

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Why are some films talked about, even before they are released? And for those that get all the attention, there are many that slip in and out of the cinemas, barely noticed. There's no doubt that the movie itself matters, but so much also comes down to the right publicity at the right time. **Off the air** speaks to Nicki Martin from Dendy Films, publicist Sally Steele, from Gallus & Co, and Daily Telegraph reviewer Vicky Roach about what works and what doesn't.

Sally Steele, from Gallus & Co, has spearheaded the campaign for over 50 films, from docos to musicals, award winners, box office smashes and foreign language break-out hits; covering themes as diverse as wheelchair rugby, bird migration, "krumping", historical truces, quantum physics, architecture and Hitler.

Getting attention for independent films when you are competing against major studio movies with large publicity budgets is never easy.

"Without a huge advertising campaign there is a greater emphasis on gaining a profile for the film through editorial coverage," she said. "The pitch becomes tantamount when you are competing with films that have a high profile cast."

She nominates the publicity for **Wah-Wah** as one of her company's most effective and fun campaigns, for a few reasons.

"Richard E Grant as a personality had such a wide demographic appeal which never ceased to surprise me – and it meant I could do interviews with a wide range of outlets," she said.

"Also he'd written a book about making the film and because the publishers were fantastic to deal with, and keen to maximise cross publicity, I was able to send all interviewers copies. This gave them interesting back stories, so they got much more than the same few soundbites."

Sally also felt that Richard connected well with audiences at Meet the Filmmaker sessions, generating a word of mouth effect for the film.

"In addition I was able to do other non-arts based interviews with him on current affairs shows as he was so passionate and well informed about issues facing Swaziland. This meant we were able to reach a very wide audience and make them aware of the film which led to a great box office result, completely overshadowing results in the UK and US," she said.

Nicki Martin from Dendy Films is also well aware of the challenge in getting attention for a film.

"The number of films released every week is increasing, so my team at Dendy Films works in innovative ways to explore niche opportunities above and beyond traditional entertainment editorial," she said. "For example, with a film like **Enron: The Smartest Guys In The Room**, leveraging exposure within the financial media; for **Unfolding Florence**, working with design and fashion publications. For us it's about exploiting word of mouth and generating a buzz for the film within the most appropriate demographic."



Gallus & Co Publicist Sally Steele



Good Night, And Good Luck
Movie Cover, Dendy Films

November 2006

Nicki nominated **Supersize Me** and **Good Night, And Good Luck** as having had particularly effective publicity campaigns.

"Having McDonalds produce television ads airing on commercial networks refuting the allegations made in a small, independently released documentary does wonders for increasing awareness!" she said.

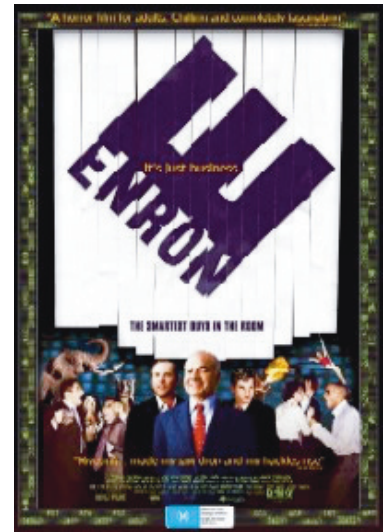
"**Good Night, And Good Luck** Movie Cover, Dendy Films "Good Night, And Good Luck is also a great example. With a tour by the articulate and erudite lead actor David Strathairn, we managed to link 1950's McCarthyism with the current political climate in Australia. We tied the steady deterioration of press freedom in Australia with the [at the time very topical] anti-terrorism laws so the film took on a particular relevance here. So rather than a staid black and white period piece, **Good Night, And Good Luck** became a film that was immediately relevant to Australians today."

Vicky Roach from Sydney's Daily Telegraph has been working as a reviewer for several years, and has seen many publicity campaigns. For her, the publicity generated for **Kenny** was particularly interesting.

"The campaign for **Kenny** was risky, but it seems to have paid off," she said. "I'll probably regret saying this at some point, but a part of **Kenny's** success might well be attributed to a decision on the part of the distributors and filmmakers not to overly accommodate the media. Rather than follow the traditional path, they felt the central character was the best person to promote the film (rather than the unknown actor who plays him), and they stuck to this decision even if that meant no coverage. They were right – and good on them for having faith that it was they who understood their film better than anyone else. Ultimately, the quality of the film is what drew audiences in. But I think the slow, grass-roots, word-of-mouth build and the focus on taking both the film and its loveable central character to the audiences themselves was very well orchestrated."

When asked what grabs her attention as a journalist, and what doesn't, Vicky described glossy production notes as "a complete waste of money."

"Equally frustrating are long, lyrical explanations of what the film is about. We just need the essential details, and correct spellings of the actors names," she said. "If a director's statement is required, it usually means the film can't stand on its own two legs."



Eron: The Smartest Guys in the Room, movie cover, Dendy Films

November 2006

Jill Bryant new Chair of Screenrights

Screenrights is delighted to announce the election of Jill Bryant as Chairman of Screenrights.

Jill, who is CEO and Co-Producer, Walking with Dinosaurs – the Live Experience, was formerly the Marketing Director, Asia-Pacific, BBC Worldwide Limited. She has brought considerable marketing expertise to the organisation since she became a director of Screenrights in 2003.

Jack Ford, Executive Vice President/ Managing Director Sony Pictures Television Pty Ltd, was elected Deputy Chairman, replacing Jill who was elected to the position in 2005. Jack, who has been a Director of Screenrights since 1997 is also a Director Premium Movie Partnership, TV1 and Chairman of Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation.

Speaking at the meeting of the Board of Directors in Sydney on November 22, Jill thanked the outgoing Chairman Bridget Godwin, who decided not to stand for re-election. Bridget, who is Manager, Business and Regulatory Affairs, Seven Network, has been Chairman of Screenrights since 1999.

"Under her leadership, the organisation has flourished," Jill said. "We have had record collections, excellent distribution results, the introduction of new services such as the retransmission service, and an expansion of our online resource centre for teachers, EnhanceTV. We would all like to thank her for her hard work and enthusiasm in overseeing this period of remarkable success in Screenrights' history."

Retiring Chairman Bridget Godwin said: "It has been a privilege to chair the Screenrights Board over the past 7 years and I am very proud of all that the organisation has been able to achieve in that time. I would like to thank my fellow directors for their support and commitment, the Screenrights staff for their excellent work and most of all, CEO Simon Lake for his vision and energy."

"I am confident that Screenrights is well positioned for the future and that it will be in excellent hands with Jill Bryant as Chairman and Jack Ford as Deputy Chairman ably supported by the wonderful Simon Lake as CEO. I wish them every success," Bridget said.

Consultation regarding the distribution policy for retransmission royalties

At the recent meeting of Screenrights' Board of Directors on 22 November 2006, the Board reached a preliminary view as to an appropriate distribution policy for retransmission royalties.

Screenrights is the declared collecting society for the provisions that allow for the retransmission of free to air broadcasts by services such as pay television. We are currently collecting royalties from pay television operators and expect to make the first payments of this money in the second half of 2007.

In considering changes to its Distribution Policy, Screenrights always consults with its members. As part of this process, we invite you to forward any comments you may have on these proposed additions by Wednesday 10 January 2007. The Board will then consider any feedback and take it into account in deciding upon what changes to the Distribution Policy are appropriate.

The **proposed changes**, including the full text of the Policy and details as to where your comments should be sent, are available for viewing.

November 2006

International update

Screenrights International will be registering titles with AGICOA for European returns during the month of December.

If you have not registered with us and would like us to collect overseas royalties on your behalf, contact Maha Ismail (maha@screenrights.org) to obtain copies of the forms.

Members who are registered with Screenrights International should also contact Maha if they would like to register new titles or check on the status of their current registrations.

Screenrights International provides a fast and cost efficient way of collecting royalties from Europe, the United States and Canada. There is no fee to register and with administrative costs capped at 12%, the service is one of the most competitive in international collections.

ATOM winners

Congratulations to the winners of this year's Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) Awards held in Melbourne on Friday November 10.

The awards are open to students, industry practitioners, and educational bodies, and honour audiovisual works that entertain, educate and enlighten.

The winner of the EnhanceTV sponsored award for Best Documentary Social & Political Issues was Frank Haines from Big hart Inc for **900 Neighbours**, and for Best Documentary Science Technology & The Environment was Kate Reidl from Dragonet Films for **The Man Who Saved A Million Brains**.

November 2006

SPAA and SPADA conferences

Hollywood player Todd Wagner's keynote session at the recent Screen Producers Association of Australia (SPAA) conference proved both popular and thought provoking.

Wagner, whose address was sponsored by Screenrights, is founder and CEO of 2929 Entertainment, and has been involved in a number of significant feature films over the last few years, including **Good Night, and Good Luck** directed by and costarring George Clooney.

Wagner has forged an innovative film distribution strategy that is making an impact on Hollywood. In a deal with director Steven Soderbergh, six movies for his company HDNet Films are being released day-and-date across theatrical, television and home video platforms allowing audiences to choose how, when and where they wish to see a film.

In his session, Wagner emphasised the importance of audience choice in a multimedia age. He also believed people still craved the social experience of the cinema despite having access to a number of ways in which they can consume media. The analogy he used was: "I eat food at home, but I still dine out".

With his vertically integrated companies (production, distribution, exhibition, cable) and day-and-date release he reduces the cost of delivering a movie in three main ways, while at the same time developing content for his cable channels:

1. By shooting digital (with the right director) to reduce production costs
2. By exhibiting in digital to eliminate the cost of prints
3. By simultaneously releasing in theatres and on DVD to reduce advertising costs through having one campaign rather than two.

Screenrights was also delighted to sponsor the Great Screenrights Lunch at the Screen Producers and Directors Association

Conference in Auckland in November. The South Pacific Pictures Pitching Competition was held during the lunch. There were many excellent pitches and a very deserving winner in the Simmonds Brothers (Jeff and Phil Simmonds), who also picked up the SPADA Award for the New Filmmaker of the Year.

Copyright Amendment Bill 2006

The Copyright Amendment Bill 2006 is currently before the Senate after being considered by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee.

Screenrights appeared before the Committee on 7 November 2006 seeking a number of changes to the Bill. The Government has indicated that it expects the legislation to be passed by the end of the year.

Further updates will be included in **Off the air** when the legislation is passed.

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EnhanceTV sponsors English Teachers' Conference

With the English curriculum now incorporating the study of audiovisual media, the NSW English Teachers' Association Annual Conference in December includes many sessions looking at film in the classroom.

EnhanceTV is proud to sponsor William Simon's session "TV and Manuf[r]acturing Reality". The session examines Reality TV and proposes that it has displaced the morality of traditional folktales. For more information about the conference, visit www.englishteacher.com.au