

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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TROPFEST

THE WORLD'S LARGEST SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

Tropfest coming to South African cinemas in March

The Australian High Commission in Pretoria is proud to be bringing the Managing Director of Tropfest, Mr Michael Laverty, to South Africa next month. Mr Laverty will be visiting Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and Pretoria as part of a series of free Tropfest short film screenings from 16-19 March, in partnership with Ster-Kinekor's Cinema Nouveau. A copy of the festival program and flyer is attached.

Tropfest, which had humble beginnings in a local café in Sydney two decades ago, has grown to become the world's largest short film festival, with competitions in Australia, South East Asia, New Zealand and the Middle East.

Tropfest is committed to fostering filmmaking talent at an international level and offers a ground-breaking opportunity for filmmakers to showcase their skills in front of the largest live audience a short film can get. Festival organisers have said they hope to establish an African version of the competition in the future.

"The massive expansion of Tropfest around the globe conveys a worldwide appetite for fresh storytelling voices. It is so exciting to have Tropfest travel to Africa. We know that there is an enormous community of storytellers in this region, and we hope to one day establish a local platform for these filmmakers - with a global audience to share their stories with", said Mr John Polson, Tropfest Founder and Director.

Australia's High Commissioner to South Africa, HE Mr Graeme Wilson, said he was proud that Australia was supporting this important cultural exchange in the film sector, and hoped that Tropfest will be well received by South African audiences. "The festival forms part of a larger program of cultural and sporting events planned to coincide with this year's 20th anniversary of democracy celebrations, which will showcase the strong and diverse Australia-South Africa relationship to the broader public".

In 2011, Australia and South Africa established a treaty-level film co-production agreement which aims to streamline some of the administrative and funding issues around cooperation in film-making. There are many practical benefits to the treaty which allow Australian and South African film-makers to pool their creative and financial resources.

Ster-Kinekor's Cinema Nouveau is renowned for screening art-house and independent film content including specialist film festivals. The first Tropfest film festival in South Africa takes place from 16 – 18 March at the following venues: Cinema Nouveau V&A Waterfront in Cape Town on Sunday, 16 March; Ster-Kinekor The Bridge in Port Elizabeth on Monday, 17 March; and at Cinema Nouveau Rosebank Mall in Johannesburg on Tuesday, 18 March. While the festival is free, tickets are limited and need to be reserved by contacting TicketLine on 082 16789: tickets will be issued on a first come, first served basis. Limited

media tickets will be available for an invitation-only Tropfest screening in Pretoria on 19 March. Please contact Natalie Mendelsohn (natalie.mendelsohn@dfat.gov.au) for more information about this event.

For more information about Tropfest, please see: www.tropfest.com

For more information about the potential benefits of the bilateral film co-production agreement for filmmakers, please see the Screen Australia website: www.screenaustralia.gov.au/coproductions