



NEWS RELEASE

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CO-PRO FORUM IN SYDNEY FAST TRACKS ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN AUSTRALIAN AND CHINESE FILM INDUSTRIES

SYDNEY/SINGAPORE: On November 23, at Fox Studios Australia, a significant cross-section of the Australian film industry met with a major film delegation from China for the first Australia China Coproduction Forum, hosted by the Motion Picture Association (MPA), the Australian Screen Association (ASA), the International Chinese Film Festival (ICFF) and the China Cultural Center.

With co-productions between countries proving to be a tangible approach to accessing the fast growing Chinese market, the forum looked to fast track exchange between representatives from the two film industries and provide an environment for new co-production projects to match partners and expertise.

“As China grows to becoming the largest theatrical market in the world, and produces more films, there is a great deal of interest from the international screen community to engage with the Chinese film industry at every level. Australia is well placed to take advantage of this terrific opportunity,” said Mike Ellis, President and Managing Director, Asia Pacific, MPA.

In the first of two panels, Sonia Borella - Media, IP and Entertainment partner at Holding Redlich, moderated a discussion on *Developing high-value IP in Australian-Chinese co-productions*, with speakers William Feng - Chief Representative China MPA, Pauline Chan - Writer/Director (*33 Postcards*), LU Wei – producer (*The Monkey King Returns*), AN Xiaofen - producer and President, Desen International Media, and Colleen Champ - Program Manager, Co-production, Screen Australia.

“The Chinese market offers Australian filmmakers so much potential right now,” said Pauline Chan. “If you look at the results of recent releases in the Chinese theatrical market, small budget films with good stories have broken out, while some bigger budget films have sunk at the box office. This suggests that it is important to think outside the box, know your audience and target your film at the audience it is intended for.”

“The Chinese market is dynamic and changing rapidly,” said LU Wei. “There is a large audience of young people aged between 15 and 25. This is an audience that does more than sit passively watching the movie –

they are actively engaged in the whole movie ecosystem, which gives we filmmakers the opportunity to engage with them on social media and get them interested in our story even during the development process.” *The Monkey King Returns*, said Mr. LU, became the highest grossing Chinese animation, hauling in over USD 150 million, off the back of huge social media engagement with a young fan base.

“Developing high value IP in coproductions,” said AN Xiaofen. “...requires evolving your movie brand for all potential markets across the world. Look to create IP that will become a household name.”

All panellists agreed that Australian filmmakers should consider developing a presence on the ground in China: “Choose a partner at the earliest stage of development to test whether your film idea will suit the Chinese market,” encouraged Pauline Chan. “Don’t waste your time doing 4 or 5 drafts of a screenplay only to find that the idea has no relevance to Chinese audiences.”

Debra Richards - CEO of Ausfilm, hosted the second panel *Pathways to Post & VFX Excellence on Australian-Chinese co-productions*, with a stellar line up of speakers from the Australian post and VFX industry, including Alaric McAusland - DDP Studios / Iloura / StageOne Sound, Andy Brown and Luke Hetherington - Animal Logic, and Dane Maddams and Mike Hammel - Plastic Wax.

The panelists were keen to promote the three Australian government financial initiatives, made up of a 16.5% Location Offset, a 30% Post, Digital and Visual Effects Offset (PDV) and a 40% Producer Offset, 40% for films and 20% for television (including official co-production treaties). “These financial initiatives, together with Australia’s first class Post and VFX capabilities, amazing shooting locations, highly experienced production crews and established studios and infrastructure, make Australia an attractive partner for Chinese filmmakers,” said Debra Richards.

Australia’s superior quality VFX, post, music and sound production capabilities were on display for the visiting filmmakers as the panel ran through visually dynamic movie trailers demonstrating their work on a range of tent-pole feature films – encouraging cheers and applause from the producers in the delegation.

Following the panel discussions, the delegation of Chinese filmmakers, producers and directors visited Spectrum Films (*Storm Surfers 3D*, *Bait*, *Strangerland*), Animal Logic (*The LEGO® Movie*, *Happy Feet*, *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*), Deluxe (*Mad Max: Fury Road*, *The Water Diviner*, *The Railway Man*) and Fox Studios Australia (*The Great Gatsby*, *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, *Unbroken*) as part of a week-long tour of Australian studios and post production/VFX companies. The delegation will also visit the Asia Pacific Screen Awards in Brisbane and Village Roadshow Studios on the Gold Coast, where high-profile Australian-Chinese coproduction *The Nest* is currently being filmed.

The Australia China Co-production Forum was supported by Ausfilm and its member companies: Fox Studios Australia, Screen Australia (SA), Screen NSW, Animal Logic, Spectrum Films, Plastic Wax and Deluxe, with additional support from Australian Directors Guild (ADG) and Screen Producers Australia (SPA).

Images from the event are available [here](#).

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About the MPA:

Promoting & Protecting Screen Communities in Asia Pacific

The Motion Picture Association (MPA) and the Motion Picture Association International (MPA-I) represent the interests of the six international producers and distributors of filmed entertainment. To do so, they promote and protect the intellectual property rights of these companies and conduct public awareness programs to highlight to movie fans around the world the importance of content protection. These activities have helped to transform entire markets benefiting film and television industries in each country including foreign and local filmmakers alike.

The organizations act on behalf of the members of the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc (MPAA) which include; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.; Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation; Universal City Studios LLC; Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures; and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. The MPA and the MPA-I have worldwide operations which are directed from their head offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. and overseen in the Asia Pacific by a team based in Singapore. For more information about the MPA and the MPA-I, please visit www.mpa-i.org.

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