

2026 SCREEN AUSTRALIA FILMMAKER MASTERCLASS

THE STAR, GOLD COAST

Monday 26 October 2026 | 11am - 6pm



DEIRDRE BRENNAN

CEO,
Screen Australia



JACQUI FEENEY

CEO,
Screen Queensland



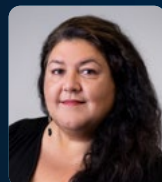
STEPHEN BASIL-JONES

Executive Vice President & Managing Director, Sony Pictures Releasing (Aus & NZ)



LOUISE GOUGH

Director of Narrative Content, Screen Australia



GILLIAN MOODY-ARDLER

Head of First Nations Content, Screen Australia



PAUL WIEGARD

CEO & Co-Founder, Madman Entertainment



SHARON STRICKLAND

President, Independent Cinemas Australia & CEO, Dendy Icon



GINA BLACK

Screen Industry Advisor
Certified Film Commissioner (AFCI)
Gold Coast Film Commission



MATTHEW LIEBMANN

Chief Product, Innovation & Marketing Officer, Vista Group



RAKEL TANSLEY

Head of Market & Audience, Screen Australia



AICHA ROBERTSON

Content Creator



ALEX MOIR

Head of Marketing, Palace Cinemas



CLAIRE GANDY

General Manager of Film & Content, Event Cinemas



DR RUARI ELKINGTON

Senior Lecturer & Screen Academic QUT



SOPHIE HYDE

Director, Producer, Closer Productions



JUB CLERC

Writer, Director, Independent



ADRIAN CHIARELLA

Writer, Director, Independent



SAM JENNINGS

Producer, Causeway Films



HANNAH NGO

Producer, Lazy Susan Films



LEAH JAMES

Producer & Executive Producer, Flying Bark Productions



LUKE MACKAY

Owner, Lismore Cinemas



NIKITA LEIGH-PRITCHARD

Theatrical Marketing Manager ANZ, Umbrella



LAUREN SIMPSON

Producer, Iris Arc Pictures



FIONA NIX

Company Director, NIXco



EDWINA WADDY

Head of Australian Content, Roadshow Films



DEMI HOPKINS

Creative Director, Carnival Studio



LUKE WESTBURY

Marketing Manager Customer Experience & Film Distribution, Village Cinemas



RACHEL WATT

Founder & Social Media Marketing Consultant, Watt Social



KATIE PAGE

Creative Marketing Producer, Iris Arc Pictures



LORI FLEKSER

Executive Director Motion Picture Distributors Association of Australia Australasia



CAMERON MITCHELL

Executive Director, Cinema Association Australasia

2026 SCREEN AUSTRALIA FILMMAKER MASTERCLASS

THE STAR, GOLD COAST

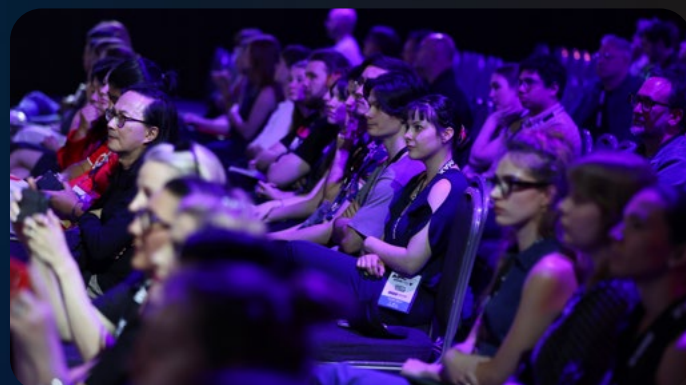
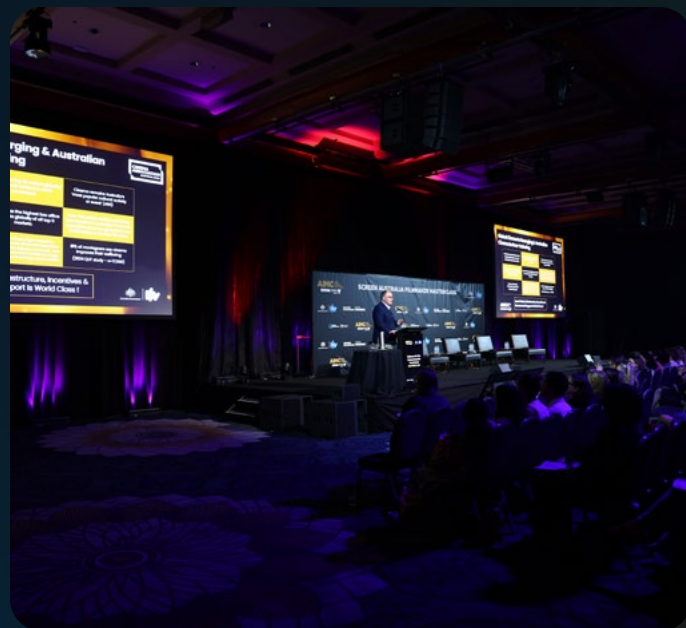
Monday 26 October 2026 | 11am - 6pm

The Screen Australia Filmmaker Masterclass

Now in its third year, the Screen Australia Filmmaker Masterclass returns with valuable insights into strengthening pathways to audience.

Hear from industry leaders and explore how the interconnected ecosystem of exhibitors, distributors and marketers can shape how audiences discover your next film. Every Australian film is made for someone, and the people closest to that someone are the exhibitors, distributors and marketers who meet audiences every single day. They know what audiences respond to, what makes a film travel, and what makes someone choose a night at the cinema over everything else competing for it.

The Filmmaker Masterclass is a rare chance for filmmakers to hear from industry leaders first-hand and use it to shape how they produce and package their films.



2026 SCREEN AUSTRALIA FILMMAKER MASTERCLASS

THE STAR, GOLD COAST

Monday 26 October 2026 | 11am - 6pm

Screen Australia, Screen Queensland and the Gold Coast Film Commission will be presenting at the Masterclass, along with leading Australian filmmakers, distributors, marketers and exhibitors. The program will include:

11.00am	Arrivals
11.15am	Begins
11.30am	Presentation: Screen Australia
11.35am	In Conversation: What Audiences Want Speakers: Matthew Liebmann, Paul Wiegard, Rakel Tansley In this conversation we are bringing together three people who see the Australian cinema audience from different ends of the business: the data behind every ticket, the films worth backing, and the stories audiences turn up for. Together they draw the real picture of who's going to the movies, why, and what it means for how your film gets made, positioned and sold.
12.20pm	Presentation: Screen Queensland
12.25pm	Panel: Big Screen Marketing Speakers: Leah James, Luke Westbury, Demi Hopkins, Fiona Nix, Rachel Watt, Aicha Robertson You've got a great film, a great distributor and the cinema chains have locked it in their release schedule - now you need people to know about it! Considering marketing once the film is in the can is already too late. This panel is a practical conversation about building your film's marketing campaign while you build the film.
1.10pm	In Conversation: Director on Director Speakers: Edwina Waddy, Sophie Hyde, Jub Clerc Filmmakers talk shop. A candid conversation about getting a first feature off the ground, the lessons learned the hard way, and what it's really like to have your film distributed and up on the big screen, from traditional pathways to alternative routes rewriting the rules, and where it's all heading next.
1.40pm	Break brought to you by StarNow
2.30pm	Presentation: Gold Coast Film Commission
2.35pm	Panel: What Makes An Exhibitor Say Yes? Speakers: Ruari Elkington, Stephen Basil-Jones, Sharon Strickland, Claire Gandy, Luke Mackey For most filmmakers, the booking decision and programming process is a black box. Exhibitors are here to open it and tell us what they weigh up before backing an Australian film, how screens get allocated, the impact of P&A and how a film is programmed, sustained and grown.
3.20pm	In Conversation: Australian Cinema of Past, Present and Future Speakers: Katie Page, Rakel Tansley, Louise Gough, Gillian Moody-Ardler Filmmakers only ever see their own film's numbers, whereas Screen Australia sees everyone's. This conversation is a rare look at the market insights shaping the future of how Australian films can land with real impact, and the real data on how Australian films get financed, the programs opening up to more filmmakers, and what separates a film that gets made and seen from one that doesn't.
4.00pm	Presentation: MPIBS
4.05pm	Case Study: From Pitch to Audience - The LEVITICUS Journey Speakers: Lauren Simpson, Adrian Chiarella, Sam Jennings, Hannah Ngo Go behind the scenes of LEVITICUS with writer-director Adrian Chiarello and the film's producers as they unpack the journey from concept and development to production, international festival premieres, sales and theatrical release, sharing the key lessons learned along the way.
4.45pm	Panel: Ask Me Anything! Speakers: Cameron Mitchell, Deirdre Brennan, Jacqui Feeney, Alex Moir, Nikita Leigh-Pritchard Experts from across the industry brought together to answer your questions. Submit yours throughout the day and have them put to the panel in this closing session.

2026 SCREEN AUSTRALIA FILMMAKER MASTERCLASS

THE STAR, GOLD COAST

Monday 26 October 2026 | 11am - 6pm

Tickets start from \$125
for the Screen Australia
Filmmaker Masterclass,
and is free to attend for all
AIMC delegates with a full
AIMC registration package.

[Click here to register](#)

The Cinema Association Australasia remains focused on bringing the industry together to celebrate and support the sustainability of Australian films on the big screen and is proud to bring together every part of the industry to work towards the same goal: producing and championing the films audiences genuinely want to see.

Thank you to Screen Australia and our industry partners for their ongoing support of the Screen Australia Filmmaker Masterclass.

For more information about the Australian International Movie Convention or the Screen Australia Masterclass please visit
<https://cinemaassociation.asn.au/convention/aimc-2026/>

We look forward to seeing you on the Gold Coast!

