



MEDIA STATEMENT

EMBARGOED TILL 8.00pm WST Wednesday, 19 July 2017

BELOW announced as West Coast Visions 2017 feature film

Screenwest has announced *BELOW* is the successful 2017 West Coast Visions project, and will receive \$750,000 in production funding.

BELOW is the debut feature film for Western Australian director **Maziar Lahooti**. Producers are WA's **Kate Neylon** (*HOTEL COOLGARDIE*) and Madman Production Company's **Veronica Gleeson** and **Nick Batzias**. The script is by **Ian Wilding**, who first wrote it as a play while living in Western Australia. Director of Photography is **Michael McDermott** (*HOUNDS OF LOVE*) and Production Designer **Emma Fletcher** (*WHITELEY, A FEW LESS MEN*).

Screenwest Chair Janelle Marr said "West Coast Visions is Western Australia's most significant and competitive development program. It aims to uncover, inspire and develop the career of Western Australian filmmakers."

"West Coast Visions has been pivotal in launching the international careers of Western Australian filmmakers. Directors Ben Young (*HOUNDS OF LOVE*) and Zak Hilditch (*THESE FINAL HOURS*) received critical acclaim for their West Coast Visions films and have gone on to helm largescale projects. *WASTED ON THE YOUNG* and *BLAME* were selected for some of the world's most competitive and prestigious film festivals including Toronto. Last year's film, *1%*, is about to make its mark.

"We congratulate Maziar, Kate and everyone involved with *BELOW* on the selection.

"Maziar has worked in the screen industry for 10 years on feature films, television productions, commercials and corporate videos. He has a Masters of Screen Arts – Directing from AFTRS, and has won many awards for his short films. In 2014 he was selected for the year-long Screenwest Feature Navigator directors program and the following year was director's attachment to Kriv Stenders on *RED DOG: TRUE BLUE*.

"For Kate, this opportunity follows on from her co-producing acclaimed documentary feature *HOTEL COOLGARDIE* and being Sue Taylor's producer's attachment on Ben Elton's feature film *THREE SUMMERS*."

Lahooti said "I'm thrilled and humbled at the continued support and faith of the producers, Madman, and Screenwest for this opportunity. It is with great responsibility, respect, and dedication to the themes of this story and the audience we're making it for that we will work tirelessly to do Ian's phenomenal writing justice in the form of what we're determined to create - an inceptive, mad, and wildly entertaining piece of Australian cinema."

Neylon said “We are very excited to receive the West Coast Visions funding. This support provides an opportunity to tell an ambitious story and work with great West Australian talent, both established and emerging. Having Veronica, Nick and the Madman team bring their experience and talent to the table from inception through to delivery gives us the confidence to deliver on Maz and Ian’s dark, comic vision.”

BELOW synopsis: Darknet grifter Dougie is recruited by his stepdad to work security at a refugee detention centre. There, Dougie is drawn into an underground operation blackmailing detainees to fight for profit. When champion Iranian fighter Azad is killed and his young sister Hamasa left alone, Dougie locates his hitherto dormant conscience and takes a stand.

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