**Media Release**
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# INAUGURAL *ASTRA GRADUATE PROGRAM* ANNOUNCES STUDENT PLACEMENTS

## - *Short term work contracts awarded to 10 AFTRS graduates –*

In a bid to foster creativity and nurture talent, the subscription television industry's peak body, Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association (ASTRA) has announced the student placements for the ***ASTRA Graduate Program***. Through an industry first partnership with Australian Film, Television & Radio School (AFTRS), 10 Foundation Diploma graduates have been awarded short term work contracts with some of the leading names in broadcast and subscription television (STV).

Starting in February 2011, each graduate will work for three months with one of the following STV channels/platforms: Premiere Media Group (FOX SPORTS), FOXTEL, CBeebies (BBC Worldwide Australia), Showtime Movie Channels, TV1 & SciFi Channel, Discovery Channel Networks Asia Pacific, MTV Networks Australia and TVSN/Expo Channel. Work contracts have been awarded in different areas of STV including marketing, promotion, programming, production and broadcasting.

The successful candidates of the ***ASTRA Graduate Program*** include Ashley Bell, Olivia Julietta, Hayden Dyer, Nick D'Arcy, Bradley Slabe, Ciaron Kelly, Gabriel Robinson, Akil Ahamat, Alex Lee and Oliver Kennedy.

The ***ASTRA Graduate Program*** was initiated to create employment pathways to creative talent in a fiercely competitive subscription television industry that recently announced a sound 7% growth in employment from 2007 – 2009.

"These career opportunities are rare for new graduates and we are thrilled to be able to provide a framework for STV to nurture talent," the CEO of the Australian Subscription Television Association (ASTRA) Ms Petra Buchanan commented. "We have received phenomenal feedback from the STV channels/platforms participating in the program, and other STV channels have already approached us to participate next year."

The short-term positions will provide invaluable experience in the Australian subscription television industry which is now in its 15th year and continues to grow at a healthy pace.

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“We had 25 applicants to the program which was over half of our graduating class. Our students immediately recognised the unprecedented opportunity which was being offered — essentially much needed experience in a competitive industry,” AFTRS chief executive Ms Sandra Levy said.

Creative Director at Showtime Movie Channels, Mr Charley Holland said of the five students he interviewed, “We were blown away by their skills. It was very, very hard to choose just one. I would like to keep in touch with everyone as other opportunities may arise.”

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**About ASTRA**

ASTRA is the peak industry body for subscription television in Australia. The subscription TV industry is the undisputed market leader of digital broadcasting with more than 110 channels broadcast on the FOXTEL, AUSTAR and OPTUS subscription TV platforms received by 34% of Australians through their homes and many more through hotels, clubs and other entertainment and business venues. www.astra.org.au

**About AFTRS**

As the national screen arts and broadcast school, the Australian Film Television and Radio School is the only institution of its kind in the nation - with professional, industry standard, film, television, radio and production facilities all under one roof. It is dedicated to nurturing and preparing the next generation of Australian screen storytellers, broadcasters and digital practitioners and delivers courses across the nation. Courses are spread across three levels: Foundation Diploma (beginner), Graduate Certificate (intermediate) and Graduate Diploma (advanced). AFTRS is federally funded by the Australian Government, and all award courses are FEE-HELP approved. www.aftrs.edu.au

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