

24 November 2015

## **ASTRA & AACTA announce new awards partnership**

Industry bodies ASTRA and AACTA today announced a new partnership with the Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association (ASTRA) that will see subscription television channels compete more broadly in Australia's most prestigious screen awards – the AACTA Awards.

The agreement will be ushered in with a special one-off AACTA Subscription Television 20th Anniversary Award for Best Drama, timed to coincide with the subscription television industry's twentieth birthday in 2015. The Award will be judged by a select group of television critics and writers with the recipient announced at the 5th AACTA Awards Ceremony presented by Presto on 9 December in Sydney, home of the AACTA Awards.

From 2016, subscription channels will continue to enter a range of existing categories, as well as some newly created AACTA television awards specifically acknowledging subscription television productions and performers which will be presented in Sydney at the 6th AACTA Awards presented by Presto.

"The subscription television industry is delighted to be partnering with the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts to promote our content to brand new audiences," ASTRA CEO, Andrew Maiden, said today.

"Now we're twenty years old, the subscription television industry produces quality content that we believe is unparalleled on Australian screens. Therefore the time is right for subscription television content to compete with the best in Australia for the nation's highest accolade," he concluded.

ASTRA members include subscription television platforms and some 20 local and international content companies. In 2014/15 the industry invested \$800 million in local television production, supporting more than 8300 jobs and generating 253,000 hours of Australian screen content.

The new initiative will replace the ASTRA Awards, which have been held continuously for 13 years since 2002.

"While we're sorry to bid farewell to the ASTRAs, we're also gratified that subscription television has achieved the depth, breadth and quality to confidently participate in this larger and more competitive awards ceremony," Mr Maiden said.

AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trehwella said the initiative marked a positive step forward for both organisations.

"AACTA is delighted to partner with ASTRA to recognise excellence in Australian subscription television via the AACTA Awards," Mr Trehwella said.

“AACTA’s peer-assessed Awards are modelled on global best-practice in line with the Oscars and BAFTAs, and therefore bring rigorous debate by the industry’s best to discuss and determine outstanding achievement in film, television and now more specifically subscription television via a select number of dedicated Awards.

“With fantastic productions, and a reach of more than one third of all Australians, subscription television is a critical and much-loved component of our nation’s television landscape, and AACTA is honoured to recognise this contribution,” Mr Trehwella said.

The organisations said they would announce the detailed subscription television categories in 2016 ahead of next year’s 6th AACTA Awards presented by Presto.

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**About ASTRA:** The Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association (ASTRA) is the peak body representing the subscription media industry in Australia. Members include television operators, independent content companies, technology companies and the industries that support them. ASTRA members produce content seen by nearly nine million Australians. In 2014/15 members invested \$796 in local production, generating 253,000 hours of Australian content and creating jobs for 8370 Australians.

**About AFI | AACTA:** The AACTA Awards (a continuum of the AFI Awards) are the Australian screen industry's "stamp of success" – the Australian equivalent of the Oscars and the BAFTAs. The AACTA Awards, held annually in Sydney, recognise excellence across film, television, documentary and short film in more than 40 categories. In addition to the AACTA Awards, AFI | AACTA’s core remit is to promote Australian screen culture. AFI | AACTA fulfils this remit by delivering a year-round Screen Culture and Industry Development program for members – connecting screen fans and enthusiasts with screen professionals, and the fantastic screen content that Australia produces. AFI membership is open to all. AACTA membership is open to accredited screen professionals.

**5th AACTA Awards Presented by Presto | Sydney:** All 5th AACTA Awards presented by Presto winners will be revealed at two major events in Sydney: the 5th AACTA Awards presented by Presto | Industry Dinner presented by Blue Post on Monday 30 November 2015; and the 5th AACTA Awards Ceremony & Official After Party presented by Presto on Wednesday 9 December 2015. Tickets for both events can be purchased via the AFI | AACTA website. For more information about both Awards events, see the AFI | AACTA website: [www.aacta.org](http://www.aacta.org)