

**Australian films at the cinema: rethinking the role of distribution
and exhibition**

Author

Aveyard, Karina

Published

2011

Journal Title

Media International Australia

Rights statement

© 2011 Media International Australia. This is the author-manuscript version of this paper. Reproduced in accordance with the copyright policy of the publisher. Please refer to the journal's website for access to the definitive, published version.

Downloaded from

<http://hdl.handle.net/10072/39972>

Link to published version

<http://www.uq.edu.au/mia/>

Griffith Research Online

<https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au>

Article title: Australian films at the cinema: rethinking the role of distribution and exhibition

Author: Karina Aveyard, Griffith University

Abstract:

Australian films are regularly criticised for their failure to engage local audiences and for their lack of commercial success. Academic and industry analysis of these shortcomings has tended to focus on problems in production and financing but has given inadequate attention to the role of distribution and exhibition. This article examines how the commercial and cultural situation of Australian films is fundamentally shaped by the manner in which they are circulated and screened. It highlights the complex interrelations between the production, distribution and exhibition sectors and addresses the implications of these issues for contemporary film policy and practice in Australia.

Introduction

The commercial performance of Australian films at local cinemas is often disappointing. While most are successful in getting a theatrical release, very few return more than a small proportion of their budget (see Film Finance Corporation 2008: 14, 30). Australian films account for a relatively low share of national box office admissions and revenue in a market that overall continues to boom (Screen Australia 2010a, 2009a). The ‘failure’ of Australian films is often attributed to deficiencies in the creative processes of development and production, or the funding strategies of government film agencies (see Eltham 2009, Kaufman 2009, Schembri 2008, Charlton 2005). However, these discourses are limited by their tendency to overlook the significance of distribution and exhibition in shaping the reception of Australian films. While researchers are beginning to examine these questions, the complexity of the issues and their implications for contemporary film policy and practice remains poorly understood. This is the gap my article seeks to address.

Distributors and exhibitors regulate the framework of reception by facilitating and controlling the interactions between the cultural product (films) and the market (audiences). As such they are crucial to the success and failure of local productions. However, despite their significance, these sectors have to date been inadequately accounted for in both industry and academic discourses. In relation to film policy in particular, this neglect has limited the framing of more comprehensive and effective responses to issues that have been facing the local cinema industry for several decades.

This article examines how contemporary circulation and screening practices influence the commercial and cultural possibilities for local productions. It focuses on three related areas of concern: firstly, the

claim that Australian filmmakers do not make productions that audiences are interested in watching; secondly, that distributors do not market Australian films effectively and therefore fail to maximise their commercial potential; and thirdly, that Australian exhibitors, particularly the major chains, are reluctant to screen local films, which significantly limits their accessibility and earnings. In surveying these issues the discussion draws attention to the limitations of a production-centred approach to film policy. It highlights the productive possibilities emerging from new trends in distribution and addresses the pressing need for the prioritisation of exhibition within the national film policy agenda.

The limitations of production-centred policy

Deficiencies in the development, financing and production of Australian films are often cited as being at the core of their lack of appeal (see Kaufman 2009, Miller 2009, Schembri 2008, Charlton 2005). The criticisms are varied but are generally levelled at three key areas – under-developed scripts, low budgets and dark, depressing subject matter. These views were summarised neatly by Ruth Harley CEO of Screen Australia in late 2008, ‘there have been a lot of [Australian] films which are low scale, low budget, contemporary, very dark, and urban. I think that mixture of ingredients isn't particularly audience friendly’ (cited in Murray 2008).

However, these arguments are not necessarily conclusive or straightforward. Jane Mills argues the achievements (or lack thereof) of the local industry have been consistently framed through unrealistic and unhelpful comparisons with Hollywood (2009: 4-5). She also highlights the problems associated with the highly subjective nature of assessing a film’s creative merits (see Mills 2001: 3-18). These concerns have been echoed by Tina Kaufman (2009) who notes a number of recent Australian films negatively labelled ‘dark and depressing’ in the mainstream media were positively reviewed by critics.

Nevertheless, Screen Australia has aimed many of its revamped funding programs squarely at addressing issues in the production sector. This assistance is delivered via two principal mechanisms - direct investment and regulation of the Producer Offset tax rebates. To date these initiatives have fallen somewhat short of their aim to revitalise the local film industry. Almost two years since the formation of Screen Australia and three years since the introduction of the Producer Offset, there has been little substantive change in the types of films being produced or their commercial fortunes. At a Senate hearing in late 2009, Screen Australia revealed that it had not recouped its initial investment on any project funded in the previous three years (Swift 2009). Similarly, mid-budget range films (\$1-6 million), of which Harley was critical in 2008, still account for the majority of feature films produced in Australia (Screen Australia 2010b).

Screen Australia's track record, together with a history of only intermittent success by former film agencies similarly focused on production¹ is not encouraging. It prompts the question: is this rather one-dimensional approach to policy capable of giving rise to the kind of vibrant, relevant industry so desired by filmmakers, government and cultural commentators? This article suggests it is not and argues that the linking of content creation initiatives with coordinated and well-funded strategies to support films in the local marketplace is vital to improving these outcomes.

Broadening the debate

¹ Annual reports from the Film Finance Corporation show that over the twenty years of this agency's operation it recouped only 20 per cent of its investments in feature films, television drama and documentaries (Film Finance Corporation 2008)

There has been an active discourse around the state of the local production industry over recent decades. This has been led by Tom O'Regan's detailed study of the production industry *Australian National Cinema* (1996) and subsequent publications such as his essay (2001) on the impact of internationalisation on locally-made films. Michael Dorland (1996) and Lisa French (2001) have also examined how film policy has influenced the Australian production industry and its outputs. More recently Kaufman (2009) has looked at the complex and contradictory nature of assessing the commercial and creative 'failures' of local films. Industry practitioners have articulated their views on the shortcomings of film agencies and their impact on creative practices and commercial success through various governmental reviews. These include the 2006 *Review of Australian Government Film Funding Support*, which received 82 written submissions (see DCITA 2006).

Scholars and industry commentators have been slower to engage with the detail and meaning of distribution and exhibition. As Deb Verhoeven argues there has been a tendency to focus on the 'production industry as the defining feature of the national cinema' (2010:136). However, a significant body of research is beginning to emerge which integrates and, in some instances, prioritises the role of distribution and exhibition and its impact on reception. This work includes the collaborative project involving Kate Bowles, Richard Maltby, Deb Verhoeven and Mike Walsh (2007), which is re-examining the history of cinema-going in Australia through the practices of circulating and screening films. Individually Bowles (2007) has argued for the foregrounding of exhibition as a means of enhancing our understanding of cinema attendance as a cultural event and Verhoeven (2010) has looked at the impact of digitisation and internationalisation on the circulation and consumption of screen content. Ramon Lobato's work on piracy and other informal distribution networks demonstrates

how these can add value to productions (2007, 2009). With a slightly different focus, Mills has looked at how cultural relativism has influenced film reception (2001: 1-18, 2009).

The processes of distribution and exhibition are key to understanding the current commercial and cultural situation of Australian film. In her book *Film Cultures*, Janet Harbord argues the circumstances in which films are consumed are central to their meaning and social value (Harbord 2002: 39).

Similarly Lobato contends the 'conditions of distribution are crucial in determining how audiences read films' (2007: 116). In relation to studies of national cinemas more specifically, Toby Miller suggests these considerations are fundamental: 'there must be a focus not merely on the texts conventionally catalogued as those of a national cinema but on the actual filmgoing experience of a nation's citizens. To what extent does the cinema made in their name engage them?' (1999: 97).

In Australia engagement with the circumstances of the cinema-going experience highlights the minority status of local films within the 'national cultural experience of cinema' (Bowles 2007: 246-247). This is a major issue for screen agencies and filmmakers who are deeply concerned by the lack of interest among local audiences in watching Australian-made films. However, their preoccupation with addressing these issues by attempting to produce films that are more 'appealing' has limited their capacity to effect change. This approach tends to ignore how the practical contexts of accessing and watching films can influence reception and to underestimate the extent to which these are shaped by the commercial imperatives of distribution and exhibition practice.

New directions in distribution

Distribution is where the creative work of filmmakers culminates in the planning and execution of strategies for connecting with the market (audiences). As UK cultural commentator Colin MacCabe (2007) observes, 'films only exist when they are distributed properly'. Yet many Australian films are often not well served by traditional circulation and marketing practices. The creative use of digital media and other less conventional advertising platforms by independent distributors suggest a way forward to improving the situation, particularly for specialised or niche films. New marketing programs from Screen Australia also signal some positive new directions for film policy.

Marketing budgets for most Australian films are relatively small and this inevitably limits their capacity to reach potential audiences. Distributors carry the financial risk when it comes to releasing a film and there are few incentives for them to take risks by spending more on prints and advertising (P&A) than necessary to recoup their guarantee. For many Australian films this restricts the advertising campaign to little more than a poster, some print advertising, a bit of PR and occasionally a few television commercials on SBS (Overett 2009: 7). There are naturally limits to what can reasonably be spent on promoting a film and what it is possible to achieve within that budget. However, filmmakers such as Cathy Overett are concerned that distributors do not always utilise the resources they do have to their full potential. Overett cites the lack of interest from established companies in pursuing newer strategies, such as viral marketing and online promotions, as being important areas of neglect (2009: 9; see also Ravier 2008).

However, some new trends in distribution are beginning to emerge. The work of a range of new independent distributors, including Australian Film Syndicate (AFS) and Titan View, has demonstrated the value of utilising non-traditional strategies to promote films. While their efforts have arisen largely

out of financial necessity, they nevertheless illustrate what can be achieved by tailoring promotions to specific audience groups, using alternative and less costly advertising formats and pursuing releases in both metropolitan and country areas over longer periods.

Leading this 'new wave' is Titan View, which in 2008 released *The Jammed* (McLachlan 2007), a confronting story about human trafficking. Established distributors had passed on the film and it was heading for a straight-to-DVD release when it was acquired by Titan. The company worked hard to secure a theatrical release and relied on a range of low-cost, niche marketing initiatives to promote it. These included targeting human rights and religious organisations, which helped attract large groups to screenings (Bodey 2008). According to Titan View, in its first two weeks at cinemas *The Jammed* became the highest grossing independent film in Australia on a per screen basis (Titan View 2010a). Titan was similarly creative with its second film *Men's Group* (Joy 2008), a story about the emotional journey of a group of men attending self-help meetings. The company promoted the film to community and health groups and generated strong interest from its screening at the 2007 National Men and Family Relationships Forum (Siemienowicz 2008). Titan also toured regional Australia with the film for over a year exhibiting it in both commercial cinemas and improvised venues including men's and women's prisons (de Bruyn 2009a). In 2008 *Men's Group* took out the Inside Film Awards for Best Film, Best Script and Best Actor (Titan View 2010b), which are decided by popular rather than peer vote. These awards demonstrate the effectiveness of company's strategies in raising public awareness for a specialised film with relatively limited resources.

AFS has also successfully exploited other less conventional and low-cost marketing initiatives. For its film *The Combination* (Field 2009), about Lebanese youths in western Sydney, the company elected to avoid expensive print advertising in order to be able to do more with its small P&A budget. It opted instead for bilingual poster and flyer campaigns in English and Arabic distributed in suburbs of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane with substantial Middle Eastern populations. AFS complimented these efforts by targeting the first stage of the film's release in cinemas located within these geographic areas. Despite some early adverse publicity this low-budget, specialised film earned a respectable \$740,000 from its theatrical run (de Bruyn 2009b, MPDAA 2010).

A further positive development within the local distribution sector has been the introduction of domestic marketing assistance programs by Screen Australia. Introduced in 2009, Screen Australia's initiatives include the Theatrical P&A Fund, which supports mainstream commercial releases, and the Innovative Distribution Fund, which supports creative distributors with alternate release strategies (Screen Australia 2010c). These initiatives represent a significant departure from the policies of its predecessor the Australian Film Commission², which concentrated its marketing efforts on international territories. Twenty projects received just under \$1 million in funding in the first year. The largest release supported was *Newcastle* (Castle 2008), whose \$200,000 box office result sadly did not justify its 54 screen opening, followed by *The Combination* (Field 2009) discussed above, which had a 32 screen release (MPDAA 2010). Significantly innovative distributors AFS and Titan View both received marketing assistance in the initial round of grants (Screen Australia 2009b: 99).

² The Australian Film Commission's (AFC) marketing programs had an almost exclusive international focus, providing resources for AFC presence at international film and television markets and festivals as well as overseas filmmaker travel grants (see Australian Film Commission Annual Report 2007/08 http://www.afc.gov.au/downloads/AFC_AnnualReport_0708.pdf, pp.32-36).

The importance of exhibition

Exhibitors and distributors control the circumstances in which Australian audiences watch local films and are therefore crucial to shaping their commercial possibilities and cultural meanings. This section is concerned principally with cinema exhibition but recognises there are a range of other viable formats through which films and audiences connect (Verhoeven 2010). These include DVD and Blu-ray discs for which sales have been growing strongly in recent years. In 2009 the retail value of DVD sales for Australian feature films reached \$18.4 million, double the \$9.9 million achieved in the previous year (Screen Australia 2010d). Australian films can also attract sizable television audiences. In 2008 the top five Australian films³ screened on free-to-air television attracted four million viewers, considerably more than the estimated 3.2 million cinema admissions for local productions that year (Screen Australia 2009a, 2010e, 2010f). Outside the mainstream, Lobato's work on informal distribution networks demonstrates the significance of these alternate modes of film consumption particularly for specialised titles (2007).

Nevertheless, watching movies in cinemas remains significant. Admissions have been growing steadily in Australia since the late 1980s, reaching 91 million in 2009 the second highest year on record (Screen Australia 2010g). Of concern to filmmakers and government agencies is that admissions for Australian films are often disappointingly low. This section examines how the operational imperatives of the exhibition sector contribute to the cultural marginalisation of Australian films by often actively discriminating against these titles regardless of individual merit.

³ The top five Australian films on free-to-air television in 2008 were *The Missing*, *Black and White*, *Little Fish* and repeats of *Crocodile Dundee 1* and *2*.

Most Australian films are not screened at multiplexes owned by major exhibition chains. The reasons for this are both revenue-driven and structural. Commercial exhibitors program films based on their ability to maximise attendance and profits. In Australia this means screening mostly mainstream Hollywood films, which account for the vast majority of box office revenues (Screen Australia 2010a, 2009a). Major chains, such as Hoyts and Village, pre-book the majority of their screens up to a year ahead in order to be assured of a consistent supply of studio film product (Aveyard and Moran 2009: 11). This practice significantly reduces the number of screens available for Australian films, which are a lower priority for most exhibitors. The regular turnover of product and the demand for wide releases at multiplexes is also not conducive to Australian films, which typically go out on small numbers of prints and take time to build audiences and profits, even for successful titles. *Lantana* (Lawrence 2001) grossed \$2.4 million in the first two weeks of its Australian cinema release but added almost three times as much to that total (\$7 million) in the ten weeks of screenings that followed (Gurney 2004).

The result is that Australian films tend to be screened predominantly at independent cinemas and some arthouse chains. These venues are able to be more flexible with their programming and take on smaller releases partly because they are not locked into block-bookings and predetermined release schedules to the same extent as the majors. However, the fact that most Australian films are not screened at mainstream multiplexes means the majority of cinema-goers do not have the opportunity to choose for themselves between seeing a local or imported film (Eltham 2009). This has important implications for their cultural accessibility.

The disconnection between specialised and mainstream cinema audiences has been documented by Janna Jones in her study of the Tampa Theater, an arthouse cinema the United States (2001). Jones found that the Tampa's patrons perceived themselves to be part of a 'community of discriminating patrons' and articulated their clear differentiation from mainstream audiences principally through reference to their profound dislike for multiplexes and blockbuster films (Jones 2001: 124). Work with specialised audiences in Australia suggests these delineations are applicable in local contexts.

Interviews with patrons of Electric Shadows, an iconic arthouse cinema in Canberra, emphasise the importance of distinctions between this cinema and the mainstream. As one patron expressed it: 'You went [to Electric Shadows] to enjoy a movie but you went to enjoy the social surrounding of it as well. It's quite different to a cineplex [multiplex] which is like a film supermarket – it has an entirely different feel' (*Electric Shadows: The Story of a Cinema*, Scarano 2009). Phil Hubbard's work with multiplex cinema-goers in Leicester, United Kingdom, suggests mainstream audiences may feel similarly 'distinguished' from their arthouse counterparts. When asked by Hubbard to describe the type of people who frequented their multiplex, among the most common responses from patrons were 'people like us', 'everyday people' (2003: 267).

The consequence for local films, which regularly screen only at specialised and independent cinemas, is that they are both spatially *and* culturally out of reach of the majority of Australian cinema-goers. These disconnections have a variety of practical manifestations. For example, many regular multiplex patrons who live or work within easy access of an arthouse cinema would probably never consider watching a film there. Screen Australia's analysis of box office performance suggests these divisions can also have profound commercial implications. Over the past four years (2005-2009) limited and

speciality releases, which include the vast majority of Australian films, captured just eleven per cent of total box office revenues (Screen Australia 2009c: 6).

Into the future: the challenges of exhibition in the digital age

Digital technologies are dramatically altering the exhibition landscape and changing the experiences of audiences at cinemas. Increasing numbers of once standard cinema screens are being replaced with a range of enhanced viewing options, including digital 3D, high-quality 4K projection and huge screens, designed for high-budget, large-scale films. By early 2010, 16 per cent of Australian cinema screens had already been converted from 35mm to digital projection, the majority with 3D capabilities (MPDAA 2010). Hoyts has announced it will embark on a program to convert all its 325 screens to 3D capable digital (Foresheew 2009) and other major exhibitors are almost certain to follow. In this evolving exhibition environment the focus is increasingly on the 'event film' shown at the 'event cinema' and this trend is reflected in the national box office results. In 2009 the top ten films accounted for 30 per cent of total box office revenue, despite comprising only two per cent of the total films released that year. The result was almost identical in 2008 (Screen Australia 2010a, 2009a).

The character-driven stories and relatively low budgets of Australian films have, with a few notable exceptions, been highly unsuited to the multiplex style of exhibition that has dominated the industry for the past twenty years or so. They are even less suited to the aesthetics of event-style exhibition (Verhoeven 2010: 134). Screen Australia's track record in production to date suggests there is little prospect that the style and scale of local films or their ability to access multiplex screens is likely to change significantly in the near future.

At independent and specialised cinemas, which historically have been more receptive to screening Australian films, there is also an observable shift. Increasing numbers of independents are converting 35mm screens to digital 2D and 3D projection (Kaufman 2010), and with it their commercial focus is also inevitably shifting to the 'event film' to maximise returns from the installation of these costly new technologies. Independents, particularly those in country areas, without the financial resources to convert to digital, face an uncertain future. For most the ability to combine screening selected Hollywood product alongside specialised films, including Australian titles, is essential for the ongoing viability of their businesses. As the digital transition gathers momentum and the availability of 35mm prints diminishes, these cinemas will find it increasingly difficult to access new release product. There are serious industry concerns that a significant number may be forced to close as a result.

Other countries with small national cinemas like Australia have been faced with very similar issues. The considered response of many has been to become actively involved in the processes of the digital transition to ensure that independent cinemas, typically key outlets for local films, are not forced to close (Hancock 2008: 356). In Norway, where most cinemas are individually-owned, the government film agency, Film & Kino, successfully negotiated terms for the conversion of all its 400 plus screens utilising a mix of public, private and Hollywood studio finance (Mead 2009). Similarly in Poland, a filmmakers association launched a scheme to support the installation of digital equipment in up to 400 smaller cinemas to ensure ongoing screening opportunities for their local productions (Hancock 2008: 356). Independent cinemas are also very important venues for Australian films. These 600 or so screens account for about 30 per cent of the national market. Two thirds are located in small complexes with three screens or less, most of which are in country areas (MPDAA 2010). These are the cinemas that will be particularly vulnerable as the digital transition progresses.

In 2006 the Australian Film Commission, and later Screen Australia, funded a three-year trial to install digital projection equipment in eight country cinemas. However, the aim of this program was to increase audiences for Australian films by utilising the lower cost benefits of digital distribution, rather than to assist with the capital cost of conversion (Australian Film Commission 2006). The trial has since ended and there are presently no initiatives under public discussion to assist small cinemas with digitisation. The industry body the Independent Cinemas Association of Australia has been negotiating for several years on behalf of its members for financial support from the Hollywood studios, but as yet no formal agreements have been announced (Dell interview 29 July 2009). There is no precedent for public funding for exhibition in Australia, one of the few independently profitable sectors of the local cinema industry. While most multiplexes do well, many small independents operate on low profit margins and their access to capital is often very limited. A shift in the bureaucratic culture to consider ways to assist these cinemas through the digital transition is both timely and appropriate.

Broadening policy discourses to more comprehensively engage with the cultural situation of Australian films and the diversity of viewing practices may provide another means of assisting local productions. With access to cinema screens increasingly shifting out of reach of local productions, extending marketing strategies to support the distribution of films via alternate platforms are well worth considering. Screen Australia's Innovative Distribution Fund makes a positive contribution in this regard with grants for undertakings such as straight-to-DVD releases, online marketing and limited theatrical releases aimed at helping to launch films more widely into other media. However, its budget represents only a fraction of the funds currently allocated by the agency for film development and production.

Conclusion

The present situation of the Australian film industry is widely regarded as unsatisfactory. Local productions are consistently failing to meet either the commercial ambitions or cultural objectives of filmmakers and screen agencies. The responsibility for this state of affairs and the search for solutions by governments has focused too narrowly on production, while ignoring the influence of other important segments of the industry. While not suggesting creative and funding processes are unimportant, this article has highlighted some of the limitations of these discourses. In surveying contemporary distribution and exhibition practice it has demonstrated that the way in which Australian films are marketed and where they are screened also fundamentally shapes their economic prospects and cultural significance.

There is a pressing need for the processes of distribution and exhibition to have a greater role in informing the future direction of our national film policy agenda. As outlined the rapidly developing digital environment presents a range of new challenges for screen agencies and the film industry. These are issues that must be addressed in order to ensure Australian films do not become more culturally and economically marginalised than they already are. Of these the conversion from 35mm to digital cinema projection should be an important area of concern. It is likely to reinforce and intensify existing exclusionary market forces and will make it increasingly difficult for Australian films to get a cinema release. Similarly engaging with the growing opportunities that lie beyond the cinema and supporting films in these contexts needs to be prioritised.

More broadly, this article contributes to an evolving research discourse that is increasingly framing our understanding of Australian cinema beyond analyses of film texts and funding mechanisms. This conceptual approach highlights the importance of the wider cultural, social and market-orientated frameworks that are crucial in determining how audiences consume and interpret texts. By refocusing the discussion about Australian films on the processes of distribution and exhibition this article has sought to draw attention to the impact of these hitherto neglected sectors in shaping local consumption, or habitual non-consumption as is often the case. In doing so it argues that for critical studies to more comprehensively account for the complex and disappointing situation of Australian cinema, these circumstances need to continue to be theorised in this wider articulation.

References

- Australian Film Commission (2006), 'AFC's Regional Digital Screen Network takes Australian films to more Australians', media release, 13 December, Australian Film Commission: Sydney.
- Aveyard, K. and Moran, A. (eds) (2009), *Researching Australian Film Exhibition and Distribution*, Working Papers in Communications No.7, Griffith University: Brisbane.
- Bodey, M. (2008), 'Calling Cut on Middleman', *The Australian*, 24 September, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/arts/calling-cut-on-middleman/story-e6frg8n6-1111117564760>. Accessed 10 May 2010.
- Bowles, K. (2007), "'Three miles of rough dirt road": towards an audience-centred approach to cinema studies in Australia', *Studies in Australasian Cinema*, 1:3, pp.245-260.
- Bowles, K., Maly, R., Verhoeven, D. and Walsh, M. (2007), 'More Than Ballyhoo? The Importance of Understanding Film Consumption in Australia', *Metro Magazine*, 152, pp. 96-101.
- Castle, D. (2008), *Newcastle*, film, Newcastle Pictures: Australia.
- Charlton, R. (2005), 'What's wrong with Australian movies?', Tribal Mind, *Sydney Morning Herald*, <http://www.smh.com.au/news/The-Tribal-Mind/Whats-wrong-with-Australian-movies/2005/04/11/1113071903708.html>. Accessed 19 April 2010.
- de Bruyn, S. (2009a), 'Men's Group to screen in prisons', *Inside Film*, 9 March, <http://www.if.com.au/2009/03/09/article/Mens-Group-to-screen-in-prisons/RLPCXCPIPF.html>. Accessed 18 May 2010.

- de Bruyn, S. (2009b), 'The Combination to kick start 2009', *Inside Film*, 29 January, <http://www.if.com.au/2009/01/29/article/The-Combination-to-kick-start-2009/APNMYXXDMV.html>. Accessed 17 April 2010.
- Dell, K. (2009), President Independent Cinemas Association of Australia, interview with Karina Aveyard, Nambucca Heads, 29 July.
- Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) (2006), Review of Australian Government Film Funding Support, http://www.arts.gov.au/film/film_industry_reviews/review_of_australian_government_film_funding_... . Accessed 19 February 2010.
- Dorland, M. (1996), 'Policy Rhetorics of an Imaginary Cinema: the discursive economy of the emergence of the Australian and Canadian feature film' in Moran, A. (ed), *Film Policy: International, National and Regional Perspectives*, Routledge: London and New York.
- Eltham, B. (2009), 'What's the real reason Australian films aren't popular?', *A Cultural Policy Blog*, <http://culturalpolicyreform.wordpress.com/2009/12/08/whats-the-real-reason-australian-films-arent-popular/>. Accessed 19 April 2010.
- Field, D. (2009), *The Combination*, film, See Thru Films: Australia.
- Film Finance Corporation (2008), *Annual Report 2007/08*, http://www.ffc.gov.au/annual/FFC_07_08.pdf. Accessed 15 February 2010.
- Foreshew, J. (2009), 'Hoyts goes digital to take flicker out of the flicks', *The Australian*, 1 December, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/australian-it/hoyts-goes-digital-to-take-flicker-out-of-the-flicks/story-e6frgakx-1225805508368> . Accessed 20 February 2010.
- French, L. (2001), 'Patterns of Production and Policy: The Australian Film Industry in the 1990s' in Craven, I. (ed), *Australian Cinema in the 1990s*, Frank Cass Publishers: London and New York.
- Gurney, J. (2004), 'Lantana', *OzFilm*, Murdoch University, <http://www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/film/dbase/2004/lantana.htm>. Accessed 26 February 2010.
- Hancock, D. (2008), 'Cinema screens at risk from digital: where is the model for Europe's independent cinemas?', *Screen Digest*, 447 December, p.356.
- Harbord, J. (2002), *Film Cultures*, Sage Publications: London.
- Hubbard, P. (2003), 'A Good Night Out? Multiplex cinemas as sites of embodied leisure', *Leisure Studies*, 22:3, pp. 255 – 272.
- Jones, J. (2001), 'Finding a Place at the Downtown Picture Palace: The Tampa Theater, Florida' in Shiel, M. and Fitzmaurice, T. (eds) *Cinema and The City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, Blackwell Publishers: Oxford.
- Joy, M. (2008), *Men's Group*, film, Sensation Philosophy Films: Australia.
- Kaufman, T. (2010), 'Avatar: 3D or Not 3D?', *Screen Hub*, 18 January.

- Kaufman, T. (2009), 'Drama on and off the screen', *Inside Australia*, 21 January, <http://inside.org.au/drama-on-and-off-the-screen/>. Accessed 19 April 2010.
- Lawrence, R. (2001), *Lantana*, film, Jan Chapman Films: Australia.
- Lobato, R. (2009), 'Invisible Audiences for Australian films? Cinema and Its Many Publics', *Metro Magazine*, 160, pp. 162-165.
- Lobato, R. (2007), 'Subcinema: Theorizing Marginal Film Distribution', *Limina*, 13, http://www.limina.arts.uwa.edu.au/__data/page/59120/Lobato.pdf. Accessed 22 April 2010.
- MacCabe, C. (2007), 'Save our film heritage from the political vandals', *The Observer*, 8 July, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theobserver/2007/jul/08/featuresreview.review1>. Accessed 21 April 2010.
- McLachlan, D. (2007), *The Jammed*, film, Film Victoria, Jammed Films and The Picture Tank: Australia.
- Mead, B. (2009), 'One nation, all digital: Norway prepares revolutionary rollout', *Film Journal International*, 19 August, http://www.filmjournal.com/filmjournal/content_display/news-and-features/features/technology/e3i57cc798c878be146810c49115261a520?pn=1. Accessed 27 February 2010.
- Miller, R. (2009), 'Living in Denial: The Australian Film Industry', *Homepage Daily*, <http://www.homepagedaily.com/Pages/article6639-living-in-denial-the-australian-film-industry-by-robert-miller.aspx>. Accessed 19 April 2010.
- Miller, T. (1999), 'Screening the Nation: Rethinking Options', *Cinema Journal*, 38:4, pp.93-97.
- Mills, J. (2009), *Loving and Hating Hollywood: Reframing global and local cinemas*, Allen & Unwin: Sydney.
- Mills, J. (2001), *The Money Shot: Cinema, Sin and Censorship*, Pluto Press: Sydney.
- Motion Picture Distributors Association of Australia (2010), *Reports*, www.mpdAA.org.au. Accessed 16 February 2010.
- Murray, K. (2008), 'Australia falls short of box office expectations', *7.30 Report*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 1 December, broadcast transcript, <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2008/s2434699.htm>. Accessed 19 February 2010.
- O'Regan, T. (2001), "'Knowing the Processes But Not the Outcomes": Australian Cinema Faces the New Millennium' in Bennett, T. And Carter, D. (eds) *Culture in Australia: Policies, Publics and Programs*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- O'Regan, T. (1996), *Australian National Cinema*, Routledge: London and New York.
- Ravier, M. (2008), 'Features: Swimming against the tide (marketing Australian films)', *In Film Australia*, 31 October, <http://www.infilm.com.au/?p=521>. Accessed 19 April 2010.
- Overett, C. (2009), 'The Plight of the Australian Film: Traditional Distribution and Exhibition and the Search For Alternatives' in Aveyard, K. and Moran, A. (eds) (2009), *Researching Australian*

Film Exhibition and Distribution, Working Papers in Communications No.7, Griffith University: Brisbane.

Scarano, A. (2009), *Electric Shadows: The Story of a Cinema*, documentary film, Ronin Films and Scarnett: Canberra.

Schembri, J. (2008), 'At Death's Door – an industry lost in the dark', Blog Central, *The Age*, 6 December, http://blogs.theage.com.au/schembri/archives/2008/12/at_deaths_door.html. Accessed 19 April 2010.

Screen Australia (2009a), *2008 Box Office Backgrounder*, http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/documents/SA_publications/BoxOffice2008.pdf. Accessed 13 February 2010.

Screen Australia (2009b), *Annual Report 2008/09*, Screen Australia: Sydney.

Screen Australia (2009c), *Australian Films in the Marketplace: Analysis of Release Strategies and Box Office Performance*, Screen Australia: Sydney.

Screen Australia (2010a), 'Australian films at the local box office in 2009', http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/news_and_events/2010/mr_100121_boxoffice.asp. Accessed 12 February 2010.

Screen Australia (2010b), 'National Survey of Feature Film and TV Drama Production 2008/09', Sydney: Screen Australia, <http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/nps/index.html>. Accessed 19 January 2010.

Screen Australia (2010c), 'Marketing Programs', http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/industry_support/Marketing-Support.asp. Accessed 19 February 2010.

Screen Australia (2010d), 'Australian share of top 1,000 retail video movie titles (DVD, Blu-ray and VHS), ranked by sales value, 2004–2009', <http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/gtp/mrvideomovies.html>. Accessed 12 May 2010.

Screen Australia (2010e), 'Top rating Australian feature films on television 2008', <http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/gtp/mrratemovies.html>. Accessed 26 April 2010.

Screen Australia (2010f), 'Cinema admission prices in Australia 1976-2009', <http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/gtp/wcboprices.html>. Accessed 26 April 2010.

Screen Australia (2010g), 'Number of Australian cinema admissions and gross box office, 1976–2009', <http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/gtp/wcboadmission.html>. Accessed 26 April 2010.

Siemienowicz, R. (2008), 'John L Simpson: Mapping the Terrain of Independent Film Distribution', Australian Film Institute, http://www.afi.org.au/AM/ContentManagerNet/HTMLDisplay.aspx?ContentID=5091&Section=John_L_Simpson_Interview. Accessed 5 May 2010.

- Swift, B. (2009), 'Screen Aus reveals losses', *Inside Film Magazine*, 11 December
<http://www.if.com.au/2009/12/11/article/Screen-Aus-reveals-losses/FQPOATVGOG.html>.
Accessed 19 February 2010.
- Titan View (2010a), 'About Titan View',
http://www.titanview.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=26&Itemid=39.
Accessed 2 June 2010.
- Titan View (2010b), 'Men's Group', <http://www.mensgroupthemovie.com/>. Accessed 26 February 2010.
- Verhoeven, D. (2010) 'Film, video, DVD and online delivery' in Cunningham, S. and Turner, G. (eds),
The Media and Communications in Australia, 3rd edition, Allen & Unwin: Sydney.