



# DRAGON'S BREATH

**A SHORT FILM - EPK**

Written & Directed by **MELANIE EASTON**

Produced by **LISA BISHOP & POPPY FITZPATRICK**

## CONTACT

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# TECH SPECS, LOGLINE & SYNOPSIS

## TECH SPECS

**Length:** 10:20

**Shooting Format:** Digital

**Aspect Ratio:** 2.39:1

**Frame Rate:** 25fps

**Sound Mix:** 5.1

**Language:** English

## LOGLINE

A group of middle schoolers must convince their friend to perform in the school talent show after she reveals an embarrassing and fantastical secret.

## SYNOPSIS

Imagine the most awkward years of your life. What was your biggest insecurity? What was the most embarrassing thing that ever happened to you? What if everybody in the world (or at least your school, which is bad enough) knew about the thing you most wanted to stay hidden?

That's what Year 8 student Cass is facing. She knows her best friends – Maya, El and K – are depending on her to perform in the school talent show with them. They've been practicing their dance for weeks. Not only is the show a huge part of their grade – but each of them has something big at stake. Perfectionist Maya's parents (who may or may not be on the brink of divorce) are in the audience – and she is NOT prepared to disappoint them. Emotionally-avoidant El is caught in a pretty dicey love triangle – and both her ex-girlfriend and current girlfriend look ready to throw hands backstage. And the confident but mysterious K has just been surprised by the sudden appearance of their father – dredging up some dark family history they aren't ready to face. But Cass arguably has a bigger issue at hand – she's just grown a set of dragon wings and is absolutely MORTIFIED about it.

With five minutes till showtime, Maya, El and K must work together to get Cass on stage and make it through their dance routine without a catastrophe – or worse, public humiliation.



## CAST BIOS

**TILLY CARTER (CASS) (she/her):** Tilly is a South Australia-based actor. Her previous experience includes a theatre production of *Lord of the Flies* and a video series on mental health called *Emerging Minds*, both with the South Australian Youth Arts Theatre Company (SAYarts). In her spare time, she loves reading. She is currently represented by Actors Ink. *Dragon's Breath* is her first film.

**ASHA O'CONNELL (MAYA) (she/her):** Asha is a South Australia-based actor and model, represented by Adelaide Artist Management. She has appeared in modelling campaigns for companies such as MECCA, as well as in television advertisements and an extra role on the series *FIRST DAY*. Some of her hobbies include horse riding, volleyball and swimming. *Dragon's Breath* is her first film.

**SOPHIA PARK (EL) (she/her):** Sophia is a Queensland-based actor, with experience working in advertisements across various fields. She also appeared as an extra in *FIRST DAY*. Sophia is a fashion and makeup enthusiast and loves experimenting with new aesthetics and looks in her spare time. She was previously represented by RMT Management in South Australia before moving to Queensland. *Dragon's Breath* is her first film.

**JAY HINES (K) (he/him):** Jay is a South Australia-based actor. His previous acting credits include *MIKKI VS THE WORLD* and a supporting role on the Emmy-award winning TV series *FIRST DAY*. He has also appeared in Adelaide Fringe shows *Peter Pan* (2020) and *Mary Poppins* (2021). Jay is a big fan of horror films, and loves studying SFX makeup and prosthetics. He does not currently have an agent and is looking for representation.

**ANNA LINDNER (Special Appearance as MISS GOLDSTEEN) (she/her):** Anna is an actor and writer, hailing from country South Australia, who spent most of her childhood trying to roller-skate on dirt roads flanked only by the panicked eyes of onlooking sheep. Anna's web series, *A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO GRIEF* was produced by Kojo Studios, as a part of SBS's Digital Originals initiative and premiered in September 2022. Anna wrote and starred in the drama comedy series which explores themes of death, grief and identity. The series won the AACTA Award for Best Digital Series. Anna is also a practising artist, focused on creating immersive art experiences that investigate the secret worlds of human behaviour and our desire to seek absolution & relief from ourselves.





## KEY CREATIVES

**MELANIE EASTON (she/her) - WRITER/DIRECTOR:** Melanie is a queer writer and filmmaker who has worked in Canada, the UK, India and Australia. In addition to running her own Adelaide-based production company, Free Cake Films, she also worked as a Segment Producer on the children's television series *TOTALLY WILD* (Network Ten), and in production office roles across feature films and TV series for companies such as 57 Films, Beyond Content, Epic Films, Matchbox Pictures, Seven Network and the ABC. In 2017 Melanie wrote and directed the short film *AQUAPHOBE*, which screened at noteworthy festivals including the Adelaide Film Festival in 2020 and Flickerfest in 2021 and was nominated for three South Australian Screen Awards in 2020. She was also selected as one of twelve filmmakers from around Australia to participate in AFTRS National Talent Camp 2022 in Sydney. *DRAGON'S BREATH* is her second funded short as a writer/director.

**POPPY FITZPATRICK (she/her) - PRODUCER:** Since completing UniSA and Matchbox Picture's Graduate Certificate in Film and Television in 2020, Poppy has worked across a number of scripted programs, including as a runner on *FIRST DAY* Season 2, a Screen Australia Producer's Attachment on SBS program *A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO GRIEF* and Post Production Assisting on ABC's *AFTERTASTE* Season 2. Poppy also produced her own Mercury Quicksilver funded narrative short film *DRAGON'S BREATH*. She is currently working at Closer Productions as a Producer's assistant for Rebecca Summerton, and researcher for a documentary series written and directed by Matthew Bate. Poppy was chosen as one of the SA candidates for the 2022 AFTRS Documentary Talent Camp, to pitch her project *SHE MASS DEBATES*, which aims to hijack the social media algorithms with the sex education we never had. Poppy was selected to attend the AIDC Leading Lights Program in March 2023, and Screenworks New Kids on the Block.

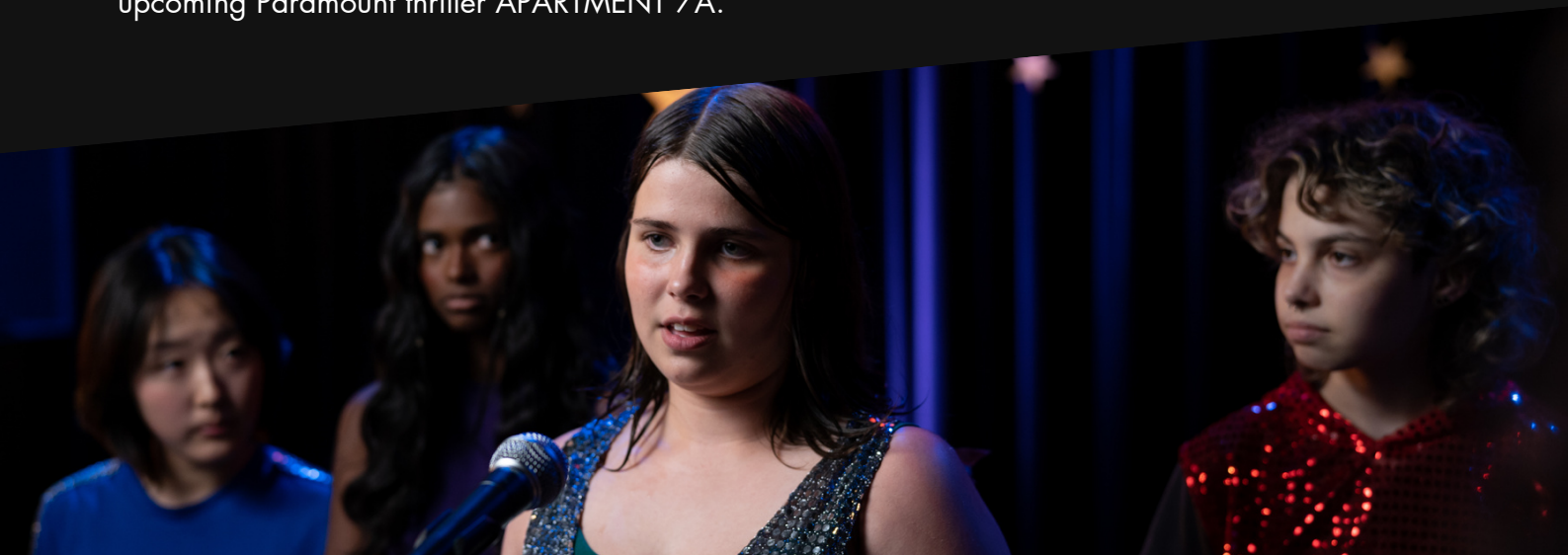
**LISA BISHOP (she/her) - PRODUCER:** Transitioning into the film industry from a 30-year business career, Lisa is the former CEO of Music SA and The Mercury and is currently a professional company director. Having freelanced on features and TV shows including *FIRST DAY* Season 2 and *KANGAROO ISLAND*, Lisa has built-up a skill set covering everything from script development to post-production. She was selected for the SAFC's Skilling Up Program. Her award-winning short film *AFTERSHOCK* won Best Foreign Short at the Atlanta Underground Film Festival and premiered at AFF. Her short film *HAPPY ANNIVERSARY* won Best Comedy at the 2021 SASA Awards. Lisa's short film *SOMETHING'S NOT QUITE RIGHT* won Best Film at the Geelong International, the Newcastle International and the Launch film festivals, and Best Writer at Canada Shorts. She has just produced her second QuickSilver short film *DRAGON'S BREATH*.

## KEY CREATIVES CONT'D

**REBECCA ELLIOTT (she/her) - EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:** Rebecca has over ten years' experience freelancing in production, across film, series and commercials, alongside producing her own work. As an Associate Producer at KOJO Studios since 2020, Rebecca has been an integral part of the team in building the KOJO Originals brand. Her recent credits with KOJO include 8 x 30 minute comedy GOLD DIGGERS for ABC and CBS Studios as Associate Producer and 6 x 10 minute dark comedy A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO GRIEF for SBS as Line Producer. In 2019 she was selected to participate in Screen Producers Australia's One To Watch initiative and received the Emerging Producer Award at the South Australian Screen Awards. In 2017, her two documentary proposals were selected by ABC Arts' Art Bites initiative. UNBOXED, a portrait series profiling Australian gender diverse artists produced with Kirsty Stark, and LESSONS FROM A MIDDLE CLASS ARTIST about a struggling musician travelling to America to learn from a novelty-song performer, were released on ABC iview in April 2018.

**BONNIE PAKU (she/her) - CINEMATOGRAPHER:** Bonnie is an early-career Māori Cinematographer who works and lives on the lands of the Kaurana people in South Australia. She was recently awarded the Emerging Cinematographer Award from the Australian Cinematography Society for her developing body of work. Since graduating with a Bachelor of Media Arts majoring in Film and Television from the University of South Australia, Bonnie has worked her way up through the Camera Department on projects such as THE STRANGER, I AM MOTHER, AFTERTASTE and THE SURVIVAL OF KINDNESS, as well as high-end TV Drama. Bonnie's projects include a Screen Australia funded streaming series created by Nelya Valamanesh, Melanie Easton's DRAGON'S BREATH, Stephanie Jaclyn's MATING CALL and Joel Brown's DJAAMBI.

**VERONICA BUHAGIAR (she/her) - EDITOR:** Veronica is passionate about editing films and has pursued this passion since completing her Bachelor of Creative Arts: Screen Honours at Flinders University in 2015. In 2014 Veronica won the South Australian Screen Award for Best Editing for the short film THE LITTLE GIRL and also travelled to Seattle to attend the National Film Festival for Talented Youth for a short she produced, NOSY - THE CURIOUS BOOGER. She has collaborated with South Australian filmmakers to create a range of work extending from branded content to feature documentary, short films, features and TV series. Since 2017, after gaining the opportunity to work on feature film I AM MOTHER as an editorial attachment, Veronica has been working as an assistant editor on feature films across Australia, including HERE OUT WEST and ARE YOU TOUGHER THAN YOUR ANCESTORS, as well as blockbusters MORTAL KOMBAT and Marvel's SHANG-CHI AND THE LEGEND OF THE TEN RINGS. Most recently Veronica has been working on US productions including Anna Kendrick's directorial debut WOMAN OF THE HOUR, and the upcoming Paramount thriller APARTMENT 7A.



## KEY CREATIVES CONT'D

**ORIANA MERULLO (she/her) - COSTUME DESIGNER:** Oriana is recognised as having 25 years in the screen industry working in wardrobe and costume design. She has worked on features, TV series and multiple award-winning short films. Her costume design credits include NEVER TOO LATE, 2067, FIRST DAY Season 2 and THE COST. She received an APDG Award Nomination for WRONG KIND OF BLACK.

**EMMA HOUGH HOBBS (she/they) - PRODUCTION DESIGNER:** Emma is a queer artist from South Australia. She's an emerging filmmaker, animator and props master. As a props specialist she has worked on film projects such as A24's TALK TO ME, Warwick Thornton's THE NEW BOY and Stan Original Film GOLD. Her co-directorial debut feature film LESBIAN SPACE PRINCESS is currently in production for 2024 release.

**PAUL HOWE (he/him) - PRODUCTION DESIGNER:** Paul is an emerging designer living and working in South Australia. Paul has worked on a wide variety of films, TV and shorts including ESCAPE FROM PRETORIA, THE NEW BOY and hit reality show STARS ON MARS. He designed the SAFC supported short THE LAST ELEPHANT ON EARTH. Paul specialises in buying/dressing and graphics.

**YVONNE MURRAY (she/her) - SOUND DESIGNER:** Yvonne comes from the sound department at the South Australian Film Corporation's Adelaide Studios and is credited on many award-winning projects as sound assistant, dialogue editor, mix assistant and sound editor. Yvonne is the recipient of multiple SASA Award nominations and her work has been in the official selection of numerous festivals. Her credits include GOOD LUCK TO YOU LEO GRANDE, THE FURNACE, RABBIT, THE SURVIVAL OF KINDESS, and THE FLIP SIDE.

**CARLOS MANRIQUE CLAVIJO (he/him) - SOUND DESIGNER:** Carlos is a Colombian/Australian Sound Editor/Sound Designer and animation Creative Producer. He is co-founder of boutique animation company, Karu-Karu ([www.karu-karu.com](http://www.karu-karu.com)), receiving nominations and awards in USA, Australia, Europe and Latin America for Best Animation, Best Sound Design and Best Music Composition. His work has been in the official selection of numerous festivals, including: Stuttgart Int. Animation Fest. (Germany), Flickerfest Int. Film Fest. (Australia) and LA Cinefest (USA). Some of his recent broadcast credits include re-recording mix for the Netflix series GYMNASTICS ACADEMY: A SECOND CHANCE and Sound FX editing for the ABC series MAVERIX. Carlos is involved in education as a lecturer for universities and colleges in Colombia and Australia (currently working with UniSA) and is the SA rep for the Australian Screen Sound Guild.



## KEY CREATIVES CONT'D

**BREE TRANTER (she/her) - MUSIC COMPOSER:** Ethereal singer-songwriter and striking multi-instrumentalist Bree Tranter is an unstoppable musical force. Her current and established musical identity as both a front-woman, session musician, visual artist and songwriter has taken her around the world for the past ten years. She borrows sounds and lyrical themes that far exceed the boundaries of an Australian or genre-specific influence. Bree has been omnipresent in the Australian music scene since 2009 having created rich playing history with The Middle East and as support for Jarryd James, Passenger, Oliver Tank, Matt Corby and Adelaide's Timberwolf. She has scored multiple award-winning short films and was selected for the inaugural APRA AMCOS Song Hubs Music Composers Program.

**SAM MATTHEWS (she/her) - COLOURIST:** Sam is committed to the craft of colour in film and TV. She also works as an editor and director, and is devoted to bringing stories of underrepresented groups to the screen. Her notable credits as colourist include LUCID DREAMING (2023), TAMBO (2023), GYMNASTICS ACADEMY: A SECOND CHANCE (2022), MY NAME IS GULPILIL (2021) and AQUAPHOBE (2020).

**FINLEY MCNEILAGE (he/him) - VFX ARTIST:** Finley has worked in compositing and VFX pipelines at some of the most prestigious VFX houses in the world. After graduating from a Bachelor of Creative Arts at Flinders University in Adelaide, Finley worked at Rising Sun Pictures before travelling to Sydney to work at Iloura and Animal Logic from 2015 to 2017. He then travelled to Montreal to expand his networks and opportunities and landed compositor roles at Dneg, Framestore and Method Studios. Finley has worked in VFX on some of the biggest films in the world, including MULAN, CAPTAIN MARVEL, PETER RABBIT and JOHN WICK 2.





## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I think there is a misconception that in order to be meaningful or important, films have to be sad, or dark, or difficult. I often wonder why we don't assign the same importance to joy – especially when, for a lot of us, happiness is harder to come by and harder to sustain. My favourite films, and therefore probably my biggest creative influences, are the movies that made me feel good – classic 80s movies, Bollywood, and female-led indies with a light genre twist. Not all of these films are happy from start to finish, of course, but there is joy in the execution. The films I want to make are the films I want to see: funny, queer, sometimes dark, but always with that element of light. If I did my job right with DRAGON'S BREATH, the emotional trajectory of the audience will, I hope, be something akin to surprise – humour – secondhand embarrassment – joy.

The biggest thing that drew me to this story – and why I wrote it – is because I still feel like these characters, even as an adult. We all have things that we're self-conscious about or afraid we'll be judged for – but it's a feeling that is especially pronounced in teenage years, and one that most of us remember clearly. Some of the characters in the film have very "real world" problems (like divorcing parents) while others have more fantastical problems (growing dragon wings or goat hooves). I chose this magical realist approach because I wanted to emphasize the way we imagine our personal insecurities (particularly physical ones) to be extremely obvious and even grotesque to others around us. Even though in reality, everyone has their own shit going on and most people are too caught up in their own problems to pay that much attention to ours.

It was also important to me to create a world where being gay or gender diverse isn't seen as out of the ordinary. Queer characters in DRAGON'S BREATH are just normal kids – their struggles aren't related to "coming out" or to their queerness. Although Cass's character arc can certainly be read as a metaphorical coming out of sorts – her story is more broadly about self-acceptance and learning to embrace and even love our perceived flaws, no matter what they are and who we are. And whether you're queer or straight or anything else, this theme is universal. This is also a film about the importance of community and friendship, and the power and confidence that comes from facing the world as a team, rather than taking everything on individually. For young queer kids in particular, feeling part of a community can be absolutely essential for survival.

I didn't figure out my own queerness until I was an adult, in large part because there were no examples of queer women (and queer teenagers) in media when I was younger. While things are a bit better today, there is still a dearth of stories about young queer female and non-binary characters and friend groups, and I know this project will appeal to an underserved but very eager audience. Ultimately I hope it creates a bit of joy for anyone who sees it – and maybe offers some comfort to anyone who still feels a little out of place, no matter what age they are.

# STILLS





## FULL CREDITS

### CAST

Cass

Maya

EI

K

TILLY CARTER

ASHA O'CONNELL

SOPHIA PARK

JAY HINES

Miss Goldsteen

Alison

Christine

Greg

Maya's Mum

Maya's Dad

K's Dad

Cass's Mum

ANNA LINDNER

PIA GILLINGS

IMOGEN STARR

JOSHUA ELFORD

ANSUYA NATHAN

JEYARAJ SUDAGARAN

ANDREW STEPHEN

MARIE QUINN

### EXTRAS

ALEXIS CORBIN, ALEX PRICHARD, ALICE BALDRIGHI, ANGELINA D'PENHA, BETHANY CORBIN, CAROLYN CORKINDALE, CELINE PARK, CHARLOTTE VICTORY, CHASE MAUL-DUNN, CLAIRE HUMMEL, CLARA PRZIBILLA, CLARA WILSON, CODY MAUL-DUNN, CONOR WEIR, CURTIS COMBLAS, DAMIAN MITTIGA, GRACE-EMILY MANDER, HUGH MANDER, INDIGO NETTLEFOLD, ISABELLA TAYLOR, JEMAH FINN, KERRI-ANNE PAKU, LIA HAN, LIZ CRISPE, MARCUS MURDOCH, MARY MCAULIFFE, NATASHA NAGLE, NIA JAMES, PAUL PRZIBILLA, PETER A. HOLLAND, SARA TAYLOR, SARAH FOALE, SARAH GOODA, SJAIDA SCHUTT, TAMMY MAUL-DUNN, TESS BURLEIGH, TIM PARK, TOM VICTORY, TONY SAAD, WILLIAM JAMES

## CREW

Writer & Director	MELANIE EASTON
Producers	LISA BISHOP POPPY FITZPATRICK
Executive Producer	REBECCA ELLIOTT
Cinematographer	BONNIE PAKU
Editor	VERONICA BUHAGIAR
Sound Design	CARLOS MANRIQUE CLAVIJO
Composer	BREE TRANTER
Production Design	PAUL HOWE EMMA HOUGH HOBBS
Costume Design	ORIANA MERULLO
1st Assistant Director	JAMES DUBAY
2nd Assistant Director	ADAM LEMMEY
Script Supervisor	STEPHANIE JACLYN
1st Assistant Camera	ELLA KRONING
2nd Assistant Camera	ANDREA RIZOS
Sound Recordist & Boom Op	MYLENE LUDGATE
Gaffer	MAXX CORKINDALE
Electrics Assistant	REBECCA DUNCKER
Key Grip	ISABELLE SENIOR
Best Boy Grip	ALEXANDER NGUYEN
Standby Props	BENJAMIN ALLEN
Costume Supervisor	KELLY HAINES
Costume Assistant	MEGAN OXENHAM
Hair & Makeup Designer	ADELE SHEARWIN
Hair & Makeup Assistant	TIARNA LEHMANN
SFX Makeup Artist	DOMINIQUE KEELEY
Fire Consultant/Fire FX	TIM GODDARD (DRAGON MILL)
Productions Runners	EKKIA EVANS ALISON STAMPKE

Catering, Unit & Locations	LISA BISHOP POPPY FITZPATRICK
Stills Photographer	MURRAY REHLING
Choreographer	ABBIE MADDEN
Assistant Editor & Data Wrangler	BILLIE LAMBERT-STOCKMAN
Colourist	SAM MATTHEWS
VFX Artist	FINLEY MCNEILAGE
Sound Mix	CARLOS MANRIQUE CLAVIJO YVONNE MURRAY
Dialogue Editor & ADR/Group Sound Design & FX Editor	YVONNE MURRAY CARLOS MANRIQUE CLAVIJO
Camera Equipment	PANAVISION
Additional Camera Equipment	MAXX CORKINDALE PICTURE HIRE URBAN CINE
Electrics Equipment	MR GRIPS
Radios	BRAD LANYON
Locations	THE PARKS THEATRE STAR AVENUE STUDIOS

### MUSIC

#### "TERRIBLE"

Written by Cahli Blakers and Tahlia Borg  
Performed by Teenage Joans  
Courtesy of Domestic La La

#### "IN THE HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING"

Written by Edvard Grieg  
Performed by Jackie Newcomb

### POEM

#### "UNTITLED POEM"

Written by Aaron Blair-McCutchen

FOR THE MERCURY

General Manager

SARAH LANCASTER

Development & Production Manager

STEPHANIE JACLYN

THANK YOU

AAA TALENT AGENCY, AARON BLAIR-MCCUTCHEN, AARUSHI CHOWDHURY, ADELAIDE ARTIST MANAGEMENT, ALISTAIR MCDOWALL, ANGIE CHRISTOPHEL, ANNA LOREN, ASHLEIGH KNOTT, AUSTRALIAN CINEMATOGRAPHY SOCIETY, BEC SCHEMBRI, BRAD HALSTEAD, BRENDAN GODFREY, BRENDAN WAN, BRIGITT AND DION JONES, CERI HUTTON, COURTNEY MACDONALD, CRAIG JACKSON, DANIELA CRIVELLOTTO, DIANA STENTA, EDWARD BIHARI, EDWARD CARTER AND MARIE QUINN, GARY JOSLING, GEORGIA MATTHEWS, GILBERT KEMP ATTRILL, GRAEME SHELTON, HAYLEY CROOKES, JO KEMP AND STEPHEN ATTRILL, JORDAN RINALDI, JONATHAN AND MELISSAH O'CONNELL, JONATHAN CHAMP, KAVITHA ANANDASIVAM, KELLY SCHILLING, KIRSTY SPECK AND MARK ELFORD, LEELA VARGHESE, LIAM JACKSON, MICHELLE LAW, MIRANDA AGUILAR, NICOLE SCHOEN, NIC GODOY, PAUL BISHOP, REBECCA SUMMERTON, RMT MANAGEMENT, ROSIE LOURDE, SA CASTING, SAM MATTHEWS, SARA TAYLOR, SARAH RYLAND, SARAH WORMALD, STEPH WESTWOOD, TAYLOR PEPLow-BALL, TED KEELEY, THE MERCURY BOARD, TIM AND STELLA PARK

Supported by Panavision



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South Australian **Film Corporation**

A POPPY FITZPATRICK & NEVER TOO LATE PICTURES PRODUCTION



The filmmakers acknowledge that this work was created on the traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains, and we pay respect to Elders past and present.