



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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CONGRATULATIONS TO *SAMSON & DELILAH* DIRECTOR

Arts Minister Peter Garrett today congratulated *Samson and Delilah* director Warwick Thornton for his success in winning the coveted Camera d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

"The Indigenous department of Screen Australia – and previously the Australian Film Commission – has been supporting Indigenous film-makers since the early 1990s and this is the first feature film to be supported by these programs under the new agency.

"With significant Government investment in this film, it is therefore especially pleasing to see the success *Samson and Delilah* has achieved at Cannes today," Mr Garrett said.

"*Samson and Delilah* is no stranger to critical acclaim, including having received the Audience Award at this year's Adelaide Film Festival, but this international success is fantastic recognition of this extremely moving and powerful film, much of which is in language.

"Indigenous talent in the visual arts sector has of course been acknowledged on the world stage since the 1970s, and a vigorous visual arts industry has developed, to the great benefit of our Indigenous communities.

"Now the great creativity of an Indigenous film-maker has done Australia's film industry proud."

Mr Garrett said 2009 is shaping up as an exciting year for the Australian film industry with the release of highly anticipated films such as *Balibo*, *Maos Last Dancer*, *Bran Nue Dae* and *The Boys Are Back*.

In 2009–10, the Australian Government is providing over \$146 million in direct support for film agencies and an additional \$165.3 million over three years to the ABC for Australian programming and capital funding. The Government is also providing significant indirect support for Australian films through the Producer Offset. To the end of March 2009, Screen Australia has certified 23 productions under this exciting new incentive.