

Green light for Warwick Thornton's new feature *Sweet Country*

Thursday 15 September: Cannes Film Festival Caméra d'Or-winning writer/director **Warwick Thornton** is set to bring to the big screen *Sweet Country* - the 1920s tale of an Aboriginal stockman tried for murder. Joined by co-writer **Steven McGregor**, *Sweet Country* is Thornton's highly anticipated return to the director's chair after the acclaimed 2009 drama [Samson & Delilah](#) and 2013 documentary [The Dark Side](#).

Of the film's exploration of frontier justice Thornton noted, "The rule of law was the last to arrive and the first to be broken. *Sweet Country* is our history."

With major production investment from Screen Australia, *Sweet Country* has also received funding from the [Screen NSW](#) and [South Australian Film Corporation](#). *Sweet Country* received early development funding from both Screen Territory and Screen Australia.

"*Sweet Country* represents for us a chance to be involved in an Australian frontier drama told from an authentic Aboriginal perspective, from one of the most celebrated Indigenous directors of our time," said **Penny Smallacombe**, Head of Indigenous at Screen Australia. "Make no mistake - this film has the makings of a classic."

Sweet Country is to be produced by **David Jowsey** (*Goldstone, Jasper Jones*), **Greer Simpkin** (*Goldstone, The Secret River, The Code*) and **David Tranter** (*Nganampa Anwernekenhe*) with distribution by **Transmission Films** (Australia).

Beyond its box office appeal, *Sweet Country* will no doubt prompt conversation about a brutal time in Australia's history, where justice rarely prevailed for Aboriginal people.

Producer **Greer Simpkin** noted, "It is a great privilege to bring together a team of Indigenous creatives that we have admired for years to realise *Sweet Country*. This is a powerful story from the heart of the country that we believe will resonate with audiences here and overseas."

The production will shoot in South Australia and the Northern Territory later this year, with the South Australian Film Corporation's CEO **Annabelle Sheehan** noting, "The creative team behind *Sweet Country* is extraordinary and they have developed a really compelling project for which Northern South Australia will supply a magnificent backdrop to tell part of that story. The film's highly talented director Warwick Thornton generously gave his time to mentor South Australian Aboriginal filmmakers at our August drama workshop. We are delighted to welcome him back to the state."

Sweet Country is a true collaboration utilising locations, government assistance and filmmakers from all across Australia. It will partner the landscapes of South Australia and the Northern Territory with a creative team hailing from the NT (Warwick Thornton, Steven McGregor, David Tranter) and NSW (Greer Simpkin and David Jowsey), and will be post-produced in NSW.

"Warwick is a fearless, hugely creative filmmaker whose work is profound and deeply affecting. We're proud to support him on *Sweet Country* as he works alongside two of NSW's leading producers, David Jowsey and Greer Simpkin," said **Courtney Gibson**, CEO of Screen NSW.

The search is now on to find the actors to play Indigenous stockman Sam and star witness Philomac, with full casting expected to be announced in November.

For updates follow [@ScreenAustralia](#).

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