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SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SCREEN PRODUCTION HITS NEW PEAK WITH THE MOUNTAIN PART OF STATEWIDE BOOM

South Australia is enjoying a new screen production boom, with a surge in locally-led productions resulting in a record number of major feature films and TV series shooting simultaneously in the state.

Six major screen productions are currently underway involving more than 400 local cast and crew, creating unprecedented jobs and career escalation opportunities for a growing bench of South Australian crew.

Among the current slate is Netflix commissioned young adult drama series *Gymnastics Academy: A Second Chance!* from South Australia's Glen Pictures, currently shooting at the Adelaide Showgrounds with more than 100 local cast and crew.

Written, produced and created by local filmmaker Clay Glen, who also directs with South Australian directors Kelly Schilling and Stephen de Villiers, and co-produced by South Australian producer Sally Clarke, the 10-episode series is the first Netflix series commission from a South Australian production company.

Also underway is new feature film *The Mountain*, produced, written and directed by Rolf de Heer (*Charlie's Country*, *Ten Canoes*, *The Tracker*) with South Australian producer Julie Byrne of Triptych Pictures (*Gold*, *Touch*, *The Babadook*), which has just wrapped filming in the Flinders Ranges and will shoot in Tasmania through November.

An allegorical examination of race and power, *The Mountain* follows a nameless woman (South Australian actor Mwajemi Hussein) as she walks from the desert to the mountains in a nameless country, battling privilege and pestilence, perhaps to find those who once imprisoned her, abandoned her and left her to die.

Significantly, the film is providing four South Australian First Nations crew with their first feature film credits as Heads of Departments: Production Designer, Yunkunytjatjara and Antakarinya woman Maya Coombs, Gaffer/Grip Narungga and Kurna man Damian Wanganeen, Sound Recordist/Sound Designer Kurna man Adam Galea and Editor, Ngarrindjerri man Isaac Lindsay.

Other major productions currently underway, all with South Australian producers attached and majority South Australian cast and crew, are:

- AMC Studios and See-Saw Films vampire series *Firebite*, shooting in Coober Pedy and around Adelaide, including at the SAFC's Adelaide Studios, with South Australian producer Paul Ranford;
- Feature documentary *Embrace Kids* from South Australian body image activist Taryn Brumfitt, with South Australian producers Anna Vincent and Bonnie McBride;
- ABC Kids series *Beep and Mort*, directed by Rosemary Myers and produced by Kaye Weeks of South Australia's Windmill Pictures;
- Docu-series Aussie Snake Wranglers S2 from South Australian producer Colin Thrupp of Breakout Productions.

Three major TV series are also currently in post-production in South Australia: BBC, HBO Max and Stan series *The Tourist*, from Two Brothers Pictures and South Australia's Highview Productions, ABC and Netflix series *Maverix*, and season two of award-winning ABC children's series *First Day*, from South Australia's Epic Films and KOJO Studios.

The production boom comes as the South Australian Film Corporation today celebrates the 10th anniversary of its Adelaide Studios production facilities in Glenside, which officially opened on 20 October, 2011.

Minister for Innovation and Skills David Pisoni said: "It is brilliant to see the expansion of the South Australian screen industry over the last 18 months, in particular this new wave of locally-led productions which demonstrates the capability of the South Australian sector to produce quality content for audiences around the world. With an unprecedented level of filming activity taking place right across the state, it's clear that South Australia's reputation as a world class location for quality screen production is stronger than ever."

SAFC CEO Kate Croser said: "The SAFC has delivered a consistent pipeline of screen production for South Australia, which not only creates jobs and training and skilling opportunities for screen sector workers, but also creates employment for South Australians across many other sectors including tourism, hospitality, services and trades, generating significant economic impact for the state as a whole.

"As an agency committed to boosting the representation of diverse voices and practitioners in South Australian screen content, and improving inclusion and diversity in the screen sector, it is particularly exciting to support productions such as *The Mountain* and *Firebite* which are providing such invaluable career pathways for local First Nations practitioners.

"Combined with the SAFC's innovative employment, training and skilling initiatives such as the recently concluded Skilling SA program and the Master/Apprentice Mentorship, currently in round two with presenting partner Mercury CX, the opportunities for making a career in the sector are enormous."

Producer of *The Mountain* Julie Byrne said: "Part of the nimble and lean production methodology on *The Mountain* is to give our largely emerging crew, especially first time HODs, an authentic hands-on production experience in which to upskill, supported by the more experienced members on team. This includes additional support from external mentors for our First Nations crew. Maya, Adam, Damien and Isaac have so much to offer the industry, the benefits are entirely mutual. Now, mid-production, it has been immensely rewarding and exciting to see the entire crew's careers grow before our eyes."

Editor of *The Mountain* Isaac Lindsay said: "As a young Aboriginal boy watching *The Tracker* and *Ten Canoes*, watching the behind-the-scenes of those DVDs trying to find out who made it and how it was made, influenced me to become a filmmaker and hopefully meet Rolf de Heer one day. The fact that I'm editing for one of his films and it being my first feature film is a dream come true. I'm editing a Rolf de Heer film, I still can't believe it!"

Find out more about why South Australia is a one-stop-shop for quality screen production:
youtu.be/CTToQ0V9rb0

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