



# OYSTER FARMER

An official co-production between Oyster Farmer (UK) and Anthony Buckley Films (Australia), produced by Anthony Buckley and Piers Tempest, written and directed by Anna Reeves

**Release Date:** June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005  
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## **SHORT SYNOPSIS:**

A romantic drama filmed on the spectacular Hawkesbury River near Sydney, *Oyster Farmer* features an internationally-acclaimed cast including Kerry Armstrong, David Field, Jack Thompson, Jim Norton and Claudia Harrison, along with exciting newcomers Alex O'Loughlin and Diana Glenn.

A young urban man runs away up the wild reaches of the Hawkesbury River to work for eighth generation oyster farmers. He lies. He steals. He falls in love. A battle is fought over a bathtub, a marriage is saved, and nothing will ever be the same again.

## **SYNOPSIS:**

JACK FLANGE, 23 yrs, moves from Sydney to a small oyster-farming community to work for BROWNIE and his old man MUMBLES, one of the founding families of the river who are now almost bankrupt.

Jack has moved to the river to be closer to his sister NIKKI who is recovering from a car accident in a private hospital nearby. In a desperate bid to find money for her hospital bills, Jack robs the Sydney Fish Markets with a frozen lobster and an edible balaclava. He posts the proceeds to himself upriver and waits for the package to arrive.

In a terrible twist of fate, Jack's package is lost when the river postman has a heart attack at the marina and the mail disappears upriver in the bottom of a local's boat. Jack spends the next few weeks suspecting innocents of having stolen his money.

Jack's suspicions fall on PEARL, a beautiful young local who takes over the postal run and has an expensive shoe fetish.

Early on Jack picks Pearl up hitchhiking from a jetty. He is instantly attracted to her and she is quick to respond. Unfortunately for Jack, he jumps to the wrong conclusions about most people on the river, including Pearl's father SLUG, the local sewerage collector who upgrades his motor and is accused of dumping waste in the river.

Confused and lonely, Jack asks his new friend, SKIPPY, a Vietnam Vet, for advice on love and revenge.

Meanwhile, Jack's boss has heartache of his own. Ever since Brownie's wife, TRISH, has walked out on the marriage, he has been unable to stop his oysters from spawning too soon.

Mumbles believes that Trish is able to stop oysters coming simply by looking at them and is not surprised she is making a success of a rival oysterman's leases. He tries to persuade his son to woo her back but Brownie is too proud to admit he still loves her deeply.

Trish, in turn, still loves Brownie but demands an equal partnership and recognition of her talents. It takes Jack's helpful suggestions to mend this marriage but not without some misplaced jealousy and paranoia from Brownie over his labourer's friendship with Trish.

In the end, Trish and Brownie get back together and she helps him win the New South Wales Oyster Farmer's Competition.

Jack also finds his money but Mumbles ensures it will never be spent, having plastered it into a ludicrous bathtub creation for Trish.

Devastated and angry, Jack quits his job and takes a train with Nikki who is transferring herself to a public hospital. Half way there, Jack decides to turn back. He promises to visit Nikki at weekends. She is happy to see him settle for an honest life of hard work and love on the river with Pearl and Oyster Farmers.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

*Oyster Farmer* is a major new Australian/UK feature film co-production filmed on the spectacular Hawkesbury River, near Sydney.

Produced by veteran Australian filmmaker Anthony Buckley and UK producer Piers Tempest, *Oyster Farmer* features an internationally-acclaimed cast including Jack Thompson (*Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*), Kerry Armstrong (*Lantana*), David Field (*The Night They Called it a Day*), Jim Norton (*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*) and Claudia Harrison (*Cats Meow*).

Exciting newcomers Alex O'Lachlan and Diana Glenn are the young lovers Jack and Pearl.

*Oyster Farmer* is a romantic drama about a young man who runs away up an isolated Australian river and gets a job with eighth generation oyster farmers.

"This is an irresistible tale created by a young filmmaker, Anna Reeves, whose creative vision for the film sparkles with originality," says producer Anthony Buckley.

*Oyster Farmer* is an official co-production between Oyster Farmer (UK) and Anthony Buckley Films (Australia), produced by Anthony Buckley and Piers Tempest, written and directed by Anna Reeves. Domestic distribution will be by Ocean Pictures/Dendy Films with Beyond International Films managing international sales.

## THE SCRIPT

Anna Reeves describes *Oyster Farmer* as her love letter to Australia.

*Oyster Farmer's* setting, the Hawkesbury River, is a wild and glorious landscape just an hour north of Sydney, but so remote that most of the film's locations could only be accessed by boat.

Anna had fallen in love with the landscape of the Hawkesbury River when a friend started to build a 'weekender' on the shores of the upper river. She began spending weekends in the area and for four years researched a film based on the river, getting to know and gaining the trust of the small communities of oyster farmers and assorted eccentric and loners who choose to live there in virtual isolation.

She began to write the film after moving to London following her studies at the Australian Film Television & Radio School and the French National Film School.

“I was supposed to be writing something else, but I was really missing Australia and so my husband said ‘why don’t you write that thing on the river you’ve said you are going to write’. I’d taken a whole lot of photographs of the river, so I put them up on the wall and began to write a really positive film about all the things I absolutely love about Australia - the zany sense of humour, the full-throated strong sexy women and the wonderful landscapes,” Anna says.

Anna thought of making a film about the river the first time she saw it.

“In making a decision to write a film, there have to be a few key elements that inspire me to continue. The story has to have enough legs to be entertaining for an hour and a half and the idea has to be very cinematic. When I went up the river I kept seeing a movie, it has such an epic landscape. In the film the river is like a character of its own and the way the environment shapes the people who live in that environment is something I find quite fascinating,” she says.

“It was so exhilarating to get into those little ‘tinnies’ (small aluminium boats) and whiz up the river, experiencing that whole feeling of escapism which is also so cinematic. I knew it was something that would work well in a film.”

As a filmmaker Anna says she has been shaped by growing up in a household with several older brothers. When she met Oyster Farmers – some of whom have been on the river farming oysters for eight generations – she realised her brothers would find them interesting people.

“I wrote the film for my brothers, feeling confident that if they got it, then I knew it would have audience appeal,” she says.

As Anna came to know the people of the river, so too she became aware that their way of life was under threat from the pressure of encroaching real estate development. She wanted to capture the magic of the Hawkesbury before it was too late:

“The way I chose to bring the story to audiences was to write a fish-out-of-water story about someone from Sydney who comes into the community and as that person discovers the community, so does the audience.

“When the funding was finally in place, I rocked up to the pub on a Friday night – which is the best time to see everyone up there – and some of the people said I’d come too late, that ‘such and such had sold his oyster leases and given up the business’, so I think we made this film just in time.”

Anna’s script, through the characters of Mumbles, Brownie, Jack and the boy Heath, represents the four ages of man: “One of the things that really touched me about Oyster Farmers is the tremendous history that’s been passed down from generation to generation; such as being able to read the river so intimately. It is a special thing and when it is gone, it will be gone forever.”

The script for *Oyster Farmer* was optioned by UK producer Piers Tempest while Anna was still working on the first draft. It was, he says, the most incredible script he’d ever read and he immediately knew it was a film he wanted to make.

“Out of the 200 or 300 scripts I get across my desk every year, this was the only one I really wanted to do. I think I optioned it within 24 hours of reading it. It was an extraordinary piece of work – very, very visual and with a great sense to humour. Anna also gave me a book, a photographic history of the Hawkesbury River, which also had

poems about Oyster Farmers. It was a very atmospheric book and, combined with the script, gave me an entry into knowing the world of Oyster Farmers. It was quite easy to make the jump from sitting in a little London office to being in an oyster farming community on the Hawkesbury," Piers says.

"Everyone we sent the script to bought into it almost without exception, so actually raising finance for the project was fairly straight forward. And the talent we have in cast and crew also came on board very quickly, also because of the quality of the script, so we knew we had something very special."

With Piers confirmed as UK producer, Anna returned to Australia to seek a co-producer. She approached Anthony Buckley, knowing that with his 30 years in the business, he'd be the perfect producer to shepherd the production through the logistics of filming on the water and the business of dealing with a co-production.

"Tony's probably the only producer I've come to know in the entire world that no-one has a bad word about so we were very excited when he read the script and agreed to be co-producer," Piers says.

Tony Buckley says *Oyster Farmer* was the best film script he'd read since his acclaimed film *Bliss* in 1985: "I'd read a lot of scripts in between but none as good and as crisp as *Oyster Farmer*, and Anna never stopped working on refining her script and the development of her characters. The shooting script said 5<sup>th</sup> draft, but it was more likely the 15<sup>th</sup>.

"It was clear to me from my first reading that the script reflected a real understanding of the people of the river at first hand, which is very rare, and which is why the script was so lively and fresh."

## **ON THE RIVER**

What Tony Buckley and Piers Tempest didn't know was that complex legal structures and incompatible time zones were going to be easy to overcome compared to the challenges of the physical production.

The remoteness of the Hawkesbury, which made for such an enchanting script, also made for locations completely inaccessible to the usual film crew entourage of trucks and people. All but four locations of the 19 river locations were inaccessible by road. A flotilla of boats was needed to get cast and crew to location and to use as camera platforms when the huge tides of the Hawkesbury made shooting from land no longer possible.

"Fortunately Pat Nash, one of the most experienced boat people in the Australian film industry was available to be our marine co-ordinator and he set forth to muster all the boat owners and sailors of the Hawkesbury whose services we would need for our five weeks on the river," Tony says.

The main consideration in planning the shoot was the tides. The tide on the river moves rapidly between high and low, so an extensive study of the tide chart was done, revealing that at many selected locations there was no room for equipment on shore. Each day's shooting schedule and crew call times were dictated by the tide. The importance of the rising and fall of the water was highlighted by the daily appearance of a tide chart at the top of each day's call sheet.

In some locations, at high tide the crew were knee-deep in water; one day the entire production was stranded in the rain on mud-flats.

“It was a miracle that we were only stuck once and a testament to the remarkable work of our first assistant director, Mark Turnbull, and the marine team,” Tony says.

At the last pre-production meeting, Mark Turnbull took the crew through every day of the shooting schedule and its relation to the tides each day. When asked if everyone was clear about the schedule, one of the marine team gingerly spoke up and said ‘what about the fogs’.

“I will never forget this moment. Twenty-nine pairs of eyes turned and focused on the boatman – ‘the fog’ everyone chorused,” Tony laughs. “Mark quietly asked when the fog lifted. ‘Aw geees, mate,’ said the boatman, ‘could be eleven, more likely twelve o’clock.’ ‘Radar?’ Mark asked. ‘Nope,’ came the reply, ‘not even the water taxis will venture out in our fogs – and they’ve got radar.’

*Oyster Farmer* was filmed in late spring/early summer so the production team felt mildly confident that the fogs wouldn’t be too much trouble. The first morning crew call – at 5.45am – and the weather sunny and clear. The sun glinting on the river was every cameraman’s dream come true. The first barges set out carrying grips and electrics, and following at the rear of the flotilla the hilarious sight of a flat-bottom raft with two portaloos. The flotilla turned into a river tributary, only to be enveloped in fog!

The production continued to experience unusually wet and cold weather for a Sydney summer, but the wealth of experience held by Pat Nash and his marine team ensured the schedule was completed.

“The weather was topsy-turvy but it enabled Anna and our wonderful cinematographer Alun Bollinger to capture the river in its many moods. Anne and Alun also spent most Saturdays, when everyone else had the day off, filming the river and its life. In what became known as the Albol Nature Unit, they quietly captured the dramatic escarpments and the wildlife of the river, including the extraordinary mangroves and the battalions of crabs that emerge from the mud flats as the tide rapidly recedes. This was wonderful material for our editor to integrate into his celluloid tapestry,” Tony says.

As Anna says, you had to have a great sense of humour to be part of *Oyster Farmer*:

“You’ve got 33 days on an extremely tidal river, the tide waits for no-one, you’ve got dogs, often untrained dogs, you’ve got amateur actors a lot of the time, and even in the middle of summer you’ve got thick fog that can appear at any moment. There are moments I’ll never forget – like shooting a sex scene with what feels like the Spanish armada parked off the end of the jetty.

“Probably the night we got stuck in the mud was the toughest day on the whole shoot. It was cold, it was raining, we were stuck in mud, everyone was very stressed, some people wanted to use the portaloos which was floating on a boat but no-one could get to it..... The high points were the magic of turning up for work every day and getting on a boat and going up the river and coming back at night on the river, with the sense of family that comes from working closely with a small crew.

“I think the phrase we used a lot ‘the tide waits for no-one’ engendered a certain type of energy in the crew. You can see the tide coming in, it comes in really quickly, and you just can’t get precious about what you’re doing because the continuity of the background is just not going to work, you just run out of time.

“I don’t know how in the hell Mark Turnbull scheduled this thing. An example – apart from the tides – was the sequence on the train. We only had a morning to shoot it and we had seven minutes on the line between the two stops where we wanted to shoot.

“We had five passes at it. Sydney Rail would allow us to get on a train and clear a cabin between Brooklyn and Wondabyne Station but they wouldn’t let us go back as it was peak time going back to Sydney, so as the train came into Brooklyn the art department put a ladder up the window and climbed up to clean it; while Mark had the crew lined up on the platform like we were back at primary school. We jumped into the train and got on with the lightning and camera set up. By this stage the training was moving and we weren’t allowed to hold it up. As we neared Wondabyne Mark would shout ‘stop’ and we’d have to pack up and pile out at the station, made a mad dash across the tracks and leap into a boat with two massive motors –and we’d literally race the train back down the tracks, carry our gear across the overpass over the station, and wait on the platform for the next train to come. It was like making a documentary – guerrilla style and highly entertaining as well.”

## **CAST AND CREW**

As well as recruiting river veterans for the marine team, many local oyster farmers feature in the film in both speaking and non-speaking roles. They bring an additional authenticity to the film and their generosity in sharing their stories with cast and crew made the production of the film a special experience for the film professionals.

They’re joined in the cast by an exciting ensemble of actors, melding hugely experienced performers such as Jack Thompson, Kerry Armstrong, David Field and Jim Norton (from Australia and the UK) with newcomers Alex O’Lachlan, Diana Glenn and Claudia Harrison.

“You couldn’t ask for a better cast,” says Piers Tempest. “Casting took quite a long time as we were determined to find the right qualities in the lead actors and as a result we’ve ended up with very strong actors from both the UK and Australia.”

Kerry Armstrong was one of the first actors to be cast. Anna had written the role of oyster farmer’s wife and oyster ‘whisperer’ with Kerry in mind.

“You’re not supposed to admit as a writer/director that you write roles for actors, but I just felt Kerry would be absolutely perfect, that she had all the qualities I wanted to put into that character. Then I was very nervous that she wouldn’t like the script. It is quite hard in a small population like Australia to find a woman in her 40’s who has got enough femme fatale about to her believably put a young man in his 20’s in a position where an audience will believe he’s attracted to her,” Anna says.

“I auditioned for the role in case Kerry didn’t want to do it and found people who were very good at convincing me that they could be an oyster farmer’s wife but they weren’t sexually dangerous enough.”

Fortunately, Kerry loved the role of Trish and accepted quickly. She relished the opportunity to play a woman in her 40's who's sexually attractive, highly competent at her job and a thoroughly decent human being.

"Too often women of this age are portrayed wearing scarves and tending children. We question if they should be sexual, or if they should still be saying what they believe in. The news about getting older and quieter hasn't reached Trish, or Kerry Armstrong for that matter and maybe that's why Anna wanted me to do it!" Kerry says.

Trish and her husband Brownie, together since their teens, have been separated for several months when the film opens. Trish is working on a rival's oyster lease, much to Brownie's chagrin, but it is clear there's still great love and chemistry between the pair.

"Trish is in the middle of a transformation. She's a loyalist at heart, she knows no other way of life than being with Brownie. Their separation means their lives are on hold or completely gone and they don't know if there's a way back, so there is great danger in her freedom and I like that, that's really exciting. She's really starting to enjoy the feeling of being independent and I think that makes a lot of people in the male-oriented oyster farming world a wee bit nervous."

Tony Buckley is hugely impressed by the amount of work Kerry and David Field, who plays Brownie, put into their roles in pre-production as well as during the shoot: "They met over lunch, long before we started shooting, to see how they would work the chemistry between them. As a result it really clicked between them, each knows the other and what's on the screen is a totally convincing and believable relationship."

David Field auditioned and 'just was Brownie', says Anna Reeves. She was very happy as she'd been a fan of David's since arriving in Australia. "I think this role is an opportunity for David to show his softer side, to play a man in love with his wife, even if he doesn't always show it."

For his part, David felt incredibly at home in the character of Brownie, whom he describes as 'just a hard working man and a gentle soul'. David worked with men such as Brownie before becoming an actor. To immerse himself in the life of the river, he and Alex O'Lachlan, in his first major film role as Jack Flange, went camping on the banks of the Hawkesbury and started to get to know the locals.

Featuring as Vietnam veteran Skippy is legendary Australian actor Jack Thompson. "It is a big thrill to have Jack in the cast and I can promise that he certainly didn't do it for the money!" says Tony Buckley.

"Jack is a pro. He knows this is a small Australian film with a big look, and he's one of many Australia's actors of international calibre who are willing to come home and do a small but important role because they love the craft, they love acting and they love working on Australian films."

Jack did everything he could to encourage the production of *Oyster Farmer* as he was so impressed by Anna's affectionate and acute portrayal of Australian life. Skippy, his character, is virtually a hermit, living in an isolated camp with a handful of other former soldiers.

"There are Vietnam vets in Australia and all over America who live in isolated communities; having taken a decision that they'd rather live with people who know how awful it was rather than integrate into society. Even in the world of Oyster Farmers,

which feels a long way from urban life, these guys are on the edge of it. Skippy is a man who's chosen to deal with an intolerable past in that way," Jack explains.

Irish actor Jim Norton took over the role of Mumbles when David Kelley (*Waking Ned Devine*), originally cast in the role, became ill just three weeks before production began. Ironically Jim and David were old friends and Jim had read the script about a year earlier. He was in New York for a few days, renewing his green card, when the call came that he was needed urgently in Australia so he arrived in Sydney with just a few clothes, jet lagged and headed straight for the read-through.

Anna had adjusted the role of Mumbles to work for David Kelley's Irish accent, so was immensely relieved when she decided Jim Norton would be a perfect replacement and he agreed to come to Australia. Jim loves Australia. He first visited many years ago, when his wife Mary Larkin had the lead role in the Australian television epic *Against The Wind*. When the producers discovered that Jim was an actor, he was offered a role as well. He's subsequently returned on holidays and appeared in the mini-series *The Paper Man*.

"*Oyster Farmer* is an incredible story and there aren't many of those around! It has adventure, it's a romance, it's about loss and redemption, but of course for me the real attraction was working in Australia and working on *The Hawkesbury*. It could well be the real star of the movie, it's beautiful," Jim says.

Mumbles' past is a mystery. He came to Australia more than 40 years ago, probably on the run from the law, fell in love with a woman who ran an oyster farm, married and took her name. In Jack he sees a young man not unlike himself many years before and he becomes something of a surrogate father to him.

In the lead role of Jack Flange is Alex O'Lachlan, a role which seems destined to mark him as Australia's next big international star.

"When I looked around the set at the amazing actors I was working with – Jack Thompson, Kerry Armstrong, Jim Norton, David Field – it sometimes didn't feel quite real. I feel very fortunate to have had the experience, every moment I listened intently and watched what they were doing. I had so much to learn and they were all so willing to teach....I felt blessed," Alex says.

Alex related to the character of Jack Flange immediately, a character Anna describes as an 'alpha male' and a lot like the brothers she grew up with.

"Finding the right actor to play the leading man was surprisingly difficult...I guess because a lot of guys like the one I was looking for don't choose to become actors, they don't go to drama school, so ultimately they don't get to audition for you. But Australia is full of them – you go down to the beach and there's all these gorgeous young men who could play Jack Flange but they probably couldn't act their way out of a paper bag," Anna says. "I had to find an actor who was convincing as a man Oyster Farmers would give a job to, he had to look like he'd done hard physical work. But I knew I would recognise the qualities when I found the right actor.....and Alex walked in. He was so keen and I knew he would have the courage to play the role and give it his all."

Alex found many layers within Jack that he could identify with: "The script looks at what it is like to be a man in this society. Jack is an Aussie bloke, he's a little bit ostentatious, a little bit obnoxious, a little bit cheeky, but he's sensitive as well. Jack is really a city kid

who ends up in the scrub for the first time in his life and, unexpectedly, finds a community and love,” Alex says.

Alex loved the experience of camping on the river with David Field before production began: “We hired a boat, found a little beach somewhere up the river and rolled out our swags. We went fishing, ate fresh fish, talked about the script.....it was great. It is so peaceful on the river, the air is clean, there’s wildlife and trees. It has its own little sub-climate and that has an interesting effect on you.”

As Pearl - the independent spirit, with an outrageous shoe collection, who Jack falls in love with – is Diana Glenn, also in her first major film role.

“Peal has lived on the river her whole life and her family have lived there for many generations. For most of the film she doesn’t see the beauty of the river, it takes her relationship with Jack for her to see the river and the community through his eyes. She has always wanted to be something more special amongst the group along the river where she find everything quite ordinary and masculine, which is why she has a shoe fetish and spends all her money on shoes,” Diana says.

“She’s a lovely character because she dares to dream to be something a little bit more. She’s been waiting for something extraordinary to happen her whole life and when Jack comes along, it is the love affair and excitement that every girl ever wishes for.”

UK actress Claudia Harrison, best known to international audiences for her role in Peter Bogdanovich’s *Cats Meow*, plays Jack’s hospitalised sister Nikki, tackling the notoriously difficult Australian accent with aplomb.

“What a magnificent job she did!” Anna says. “Claudia has incredible listening skills and she’s a very empathetic person, which were very helpful to her learning an Australian accent.”

One of New Zealand’s most illustrious cinematographers Alun Bollinger was Anna Reeves’ first choice to shoot the spectacular landscapes she wanted to capture on film and she approached him to shoot the film long before the financing was in place. Alun’s credits include Director of Second Unit Photography on two of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *Perfect Strangers* and *Heavenly Creatures*.

“I knew so many people in the film industry who’d worked with Alun or trained under him, that I always hoped I’d have the opportunity to work with the Real McCoy – a man who had inspired so many other wonderful cinematographers. I thought it would be very interesting to have an outsider look at the Australian landscape and see if he could see something fresh in it,” she says.

Other key crew on *Oyster Farmer* were Production Designer Stephen Jones-Evans who won the AFI Award for Best Production Design for *Ned Kelly* and Academy-Award nominated make-up artist (for *Mary Shelly’s Frankenstein*) Deborah Lanser. Composer is Stephen Warbeck, who won an Academy Award for his *Shakespeare in Love* score. Stephen plays in a folk band and has experimented with a number of unusual instruments, including a Jew’s Harp and a drainpipe, in creating the music for *Oyster Farmer*. Editors of the film are Jamie Trevill and Peter Beston.

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Beyond International Films managing international sales. *Oyster Farmer* was produced with the financial assistance of the Film Finance Corporation Australia, the New South Wales Film & Television Office and Showtime Australia.

## PRINCIPAL CAST

### **ALEX O'LACHLAN as JACK**

Alex O'Lachlan seems destined for a huge international career. The charismatic young actor is 'hot property' and his leading role as JACK FLANGE in *Oyster Farmer* reveals why.

Alex graduated from Australia's leading acting training institution, the National Institute of Dramatic Art, in 2002. As a student he appeared in a number of plays including *Titus Andronicus*, *The Seagull* and Nick Enright's *Country Music*.

He graduated into television roles in the series *White Collar Blue*, *Love Bytes* and the telemovie trilogy *BlackJack* and was chosen for the US film production of *Man Thing*, based on the Marvel comic.

*Oyster Farmer* is his first lead role.

### **DIANA GLENN as PEARL**

*Oyster Farmer* is also Diana Glenn's first lead role in a feature film and she will feature in the up-coming *Hating Alison Ashley*.

The talented actor, writer, dancer and acrobat and writer has, however, appeared in a number of major Australian television productions including the sexy, 20-something hit series *The Secret Life of Us*. Other television credits include *White Collar Blue*, *Pizza*, *Outriders*, *Neighbours*, *Raw FM* and *State Coroner*.

Diana has considerable theatre experience ranging from The Melbourne Comedy Festival production *The Girls Are Out There*, which she co-wrote and produced, to *Henry V* and *Under Milkwood*.

## **JACK THOMPSON as SKIPPY**

An Australian icon, Jack Thompson was one of the first Australian actors to achieve international recognition for his work. His early films, such as *Breaker Morant*, first attracted attention. He received the Best Supporting Actor award for the film at the Cannes International Film Festival and the Best Actor Award at the Australian Film Institute (AFI Awards).

Jack has also received Film Critics Circle of Australia Best Actor Award *The Sum of Us* (1994), the Logie Hall of Fame Award, the Critics Circle of Australia Life Time Achievement Award and the Cinema Owners Association of Australia Award for Outstanding Contribution to Australian Film Entertainment.

His numerous international feature film credits include Clint Eastwood's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, *Star Wars*, John Woo's *Broken Arrow* and the acclaimed *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence* (co-starring Tom Conti and David Bowie).

Amongst Jack's numerous Australian feature film credits are *Sunday Too Far Away*, *Caddie*, *Turtle Beach*, *The Club*, *The Man from Snowy River*, Fred Schepisi's *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*, *The Sum of Us* and *Wake in Fright*.

His many fine television performances both in Australian productions and internationally include *South Pacific*, *My Brother Jack*, *Waterfront* and *A Woman Called Golda*.

## **KERRY ARMSTRONG as TRISH**

Kerry Armstrong is at the peak of her illustrious career. In the past two years she has been nominated as Best Actress in Australia's leading industry awards, the AFI Awards, for her role in the ABC TV series *MDA*, nominated by the London Critics Circle for her leading role in the acclaimed Australian movie *Lantana*, and won two AFI awards for her performances in the much-loved ABC Drama series *SeaChange* and for *Lantana*. She was the first actress in Australian history to win the Best Performance by an Actress Award in both the feature film and television categories at the AFI Awards in the same year.

Kerry began her career in Australian television with starring roles in series such as *Skyways*, before moving to New York to study acting at the renowned Herbert Berghof Actors' Studio.

Internationally, while living in the US, Kerry featured in *Murder She Wrote* and *Tales from the Dark Side*. She also has appeared in a number of US stage productions including *Dalliance*, directed by Tom Stoppard.

Other feature film roles have included Bruce Beresford's *The Getting of Wisdom* and, more recently, *Amy* with Rachel Griffiths and the new Australian feature *One Perfect Day*.

Kerry has had roles in some of the best known Australian series of recent times, including *Water Under the Bridge*, *The Sullivans*, *Prisoner*, *Police Rescue*, *GP*, *Come in Spinner*, *Ocean Girl*, *Blue Heelers* and *Halifax f.p.*.

## **DAVID FIELD as BROWNIE**

David Field is one of Australia's most talented character actors across film, television and theatre. He played former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke in the recent Australian film *The Night We Called It A Day*, starring Dennis Hopper and Melanie Griffiths, and he featured in the Australian box-office hit films *Chopper* with Eric Bana, *Two Hands* with Heath Ledger, Bryan Brown and Rose Byrne and last year's *Gettin' Square* with David Wenham.

David's other film credits include *Silent Partner*, Yahoo Serious' *Mr Accident*, *Sample People* with Kylie Minogue, *On Our Selection*, *Blackrock*, *Every Night Every Night*, *Broken Highway* and *Ghosts of the Civil Dead*.

On television he starred in the telemovie *My Husband My Killer*, winning the 2001 AFI Award for Best Actor in a Telefeature or Mini-series. He also was nominated for an AFI Award the previous year for *Grass Roots*. David stars in the new Network Ten telemovie franchise *BlackJack* and he has also appeared in *Water Rats*, *Wildside*, *The Man From Snowy River*, *Blue Heelers*, *Police Rescue* and *G.P.* His numerous theatre credits include the Neil Armfield productions for Belvoir St Theatre of *The Tempest*, *The Governors Family*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* and *No Sugar*.

## **JIM NORTON as MUMBLES**

After decades as a venerated actor in UK theatre, film and television, Jim Norton was invited to feature in one of Britain's biggest hits of all time - *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. One of his first film roles was in Sam Peckinpah's legendary *Straw Dogs*, starring Dustin Hoffman and he has also featured in Ken Loach's *Hidden Agenda* and Mike Newell's *Into the West*. Jim's television work has taken him to Australia, where he appeared in the mini-series *Against the Wind* and *The Paper Man*, and to the US for such programs as *LA Law*, *Frazier* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. His UK television credits are too numerous to list, but include *Rumpole of the Bailey*, *The Bill* and *Ballykissangel*. Jim has appeared on stage frequently in the UK and Ireland and last year was nominated for an OBIE in New York for his role in *Dublin Carol*.

## **CLAUDIA HARRISON as NIKKI**

Claudia Harrison graduated with a first class degree in drama and theatre arts from Birmingham University and completed RADA Summer in 2000. In only her second film role, Claudia featured in Peter Bogdanovich's critically-acclaimed *The Cat's Meow*, the fictionalised account of a Hollywood murder that occurred at a star-studded gathering aboard William Randolph Hearst's yacht in 1924. Her first role was in Philip Claydon's *Stacy*. Claudia starred as Luce in the television series *Attachments* and as Annie in the series *Murphy's Law*.

## **ALAN CINIS as SLUG**

Alan Cinis has the reputation of one of Australia's great character actors. His feature film credits include PJ Hogan's *Peter Pan* and he's appeared in numerous Australian television productions including the mini-series *Changi*, the Anthony Buckley-produced telemovie *My Husband My Killer* and the series *Grass Roots*, *White Collar Blue*, *Young Lions*, *Water Rats* and *Always Greener*.

## PRINCIPAL CREW

### DIRECTOR/WRITER – ANNA REEVES

*Oyster Farmer* is Anna Reeves' first produced feature film. Anna is a graduate of the Australian Film Television and Radio School and also studied at the National French Film School in Paris. Her short film *La Vie En Rose* won the Gold Plaque for Best Short Film at the Toronto Film Festival and won the Best Drama Award at the New Zealand Short Film Festival as well as the Festival's audience award. The short film *The Imploding Self* screened in competition at the Venice, Toronto, Sitges and Hamburg Film Festivals and was sold to French, Spanish, Polish, Norwegian and New Zealand television. A third short, *Warbling Matilda*, was produced under the New South Wales Film & Television Office Young Filmmakers Fund scheme and was selected in the Cinefile section of Cannes in 2002 and also for Sohoshorts (London), St Tropez and Creteil. Anna was chosen as a writer in residence at the first Tropnest development initiative at Fox Studios, Sydney, where she developed one of several feature films she is currently writing, and was also selected for the UK Women in Film and Television mentorship scheme in 2002/2003, with Sir Alan Parker. Anna currently resides in London.

## **PRODUCER – ANTHONY BUCKLEY A.M.**

Anthony Buckley is one of Australia's most respected screen producers and the recipient of such accolades as the Raymond Longford Award and the Ken G. Hall Award for his services to the Australian film industry. He began his career as a laboratory assistant then film editor, working on notable features such as Michael Powell's *Age of Consent*, Ted Kotcheff's *Wake in Fright* and Rudolf Nureyev's *Don Quixote*.

As a documentary filmmaker his *Forgotten Cinema* helped influence the government to support the renaissance of the Australian film industry in the late 1960s. Tony began producing feature films in 1975 with the internationally acclaimed *Caddie*, followed by *The Irishman*, *The Night The Prowler*, *The Killing of Angel Street* and *Kitty and the Bagman*. *Bliss* was selected in competition at the Cannes Film Festival in 1985 and was winner of Best Film at the 1984 AFI Awards. He also produced the Cannes selected *Bedevil*, *On Our Selection* and co-produced *The Sugar Factory*.

For television Tony has produced, among others, *The Harp in the South*, *Poor Man's Orange*, *The Heroes*, *Heroes' Mountain* and the mini-series *The Potato Factory* and *Jessica*, both, based on best-selling Bryce Courtenay novel, and the acclaimed telemovie *My Husband My Killer*. He continues to develop a wide range of film, television and documentary projects.

## **PRODUCER – PIERS TEMPEST**

Piers started his career at Working Title Films in London, over the course of a couple of years gaining valuable hands-on production experience on films such as Jake Scott's *Plunkett & Maclean*. He then left to pursue freelance work for Director's such as Philip Kaufman on Fox Searchlight's *Quills*.

Moving from physical production into development, Piers worked on several films for a London-based financier in his capacity as Head of Development which including Gillies Mckinnon's *Pure*, the BAFTA Nominated *American Cousins*, John Henderson's *Two Men Went to War* and *Tabloid TV* starring Matthew Rhys and John Hurt.

In addition, Piers has also produced several short films including *The Poetry Thief* and the multi-award winning *Subterfuge* and he recently co-produced the James Toback feature film *When Will I be Loved* starring Neve Campbell.

Tempest sits on various industry panels, lobbies on behalf of UK Film, and is a member of the IFC group of producers who promote international co-production.

## **CINEMATOGRAPHER – ALUN BOLLINGER**

Alun Bollinger is one of New Zealand's most celebrated cinematographers. His credits are a roll call of that country's most important film and television productions of recent years. Alun's relationship with director Peter Jackson began when he was DOP of *Heavenly Creatures* and he subsequently was Second Unit DOP on two of the *Lord of the Rings* Trilogy – *The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Return of the King*.

Alun was DOP on Gaylene Preston's acclaimed recent feature *Perfect Stranger*, starring Sam Neill, and he also shot the documentary *Cinema Of Unease: A Personal Journey By Sam Neill* and Preston's feature documentary *War Stories*.

Alun was cinematographer of Robert Zemekis' *The Frighteners* and his other credits include, as camera operator, *The Piano*, *What Becomes Of The Broken Hearted* and *Bread & Roses*

## **PRODUCTION DESIGNER – STEVEN JONES-EVANS**

Steven Jones-Evans won the 2003 AFI for Best Production Design for the Gregor Jordan-directed *Ned Kelly*, starring Heath Ledger, and he was also production designer for Jordan's US film *Buffalo Soldiers* and first feature *Two Hands*, also starring Heath Ledger. His many additional credits include *Walk The Talk*, *Siam Sunset*, *Cut*, *True Love & Chaos*, *Love Serenade*, *Romper Stomper* and *Metal Skin*.

## **COMPOSER - STEPHEN WARBECK**

One of Britain's best composers of music for film, Stephen Warbeck's many acclaimed soundtracks include the Academy-Award winning *Shakespeare In Love*. He also wrote the music for the recent Australian feature *Love's Brother*, the US smash-hit *Clueless*, and for *Charlotte Gray*, *Billy Elliot*, *Quills*, *Birthday Girl*, *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* and *Her Majesty*, *Mrs Brown*. Stephen also plays in a folk group.

## **COSTUME DESIGNER – EMILY SERENSIN**

Emily Serensin became working in costume design in the UK where she worked on such film as *Damage*, directed by Louis Malle and starring Jeremy Irons, and *The Secret Garden*. She returned to Australia and was costume supervisor on *Priscilla, Queen Of The Desert* and she has subsequently acted as costume designer on *Praise*, *Two Hands*, *Strange Planet*, *The Money's Mask*, *The Night We Called It A Day* and *Danny Deckchair*.

## **KEY MAKE-UP/HAIR – DEBORAH LANSER**

Deborah Lanser was an Academy-Award nominee for Best Make Up for *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* with Kenneth Branagh and Helen Bonham-Carter and her work has featured in Bruce Beresford's *Paradise Road*, *Red Plant*, *Queen Of The Damned*, *Garage Days*, *The Night We Called It A Day* and *The Illustrated Family Doctor*. Her television credits include the mini-series *Jessica*, also produced by Tony Buckley, and *South Pacific*.

## **PRINCIPAL CAST**

|                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Jack</b>                | <b>Alex O’Lachlan</b>    |
| <b>Mumbles</b>             | <b>Jim Norton</b>        |
| <b>Pearl</b>               | <b>Diana Glenn</b>       |
| <b>Brownie</b>             | <b>David Field</b>       |
| <b>Trish</b>               | <b>Kerry Armstrong</b>   |
| <b>Nikki</b>               | <b>Claudia Harrison</b>  |
| <b>Slug</b>                | <b>Alan Cinis</b>        |
| <b>Skippy</b>              | <b>Jack Thompson</b>     |
| <b>Bruce</b>               | <b>Bob Yearley</b>       |
| <b>Heath</b>               | <b>Brady Kitchingham</b> |
| <b>Oyster Farmer Barry</b> | <b>Gary Henderson</b>    |
| <b>Oyster Farmer #1</b>    | <b>Ian Johnson</b>       |
| <b>Oyster Farmer #2</b>    | <b>Peter Johnson</b>     |
| <b>Pearl’s Mum</b>         | <b>Natalie McCurry</b>   |

## **PRINCIPAL CREW**

|                                 |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Writer/Director</b>          | <b>Anna Reeves</b>                |
| <b>Producer</b>                 | <b>Anthony Buckley</b>            |
| <b>Producer</b>                 | <b>Piers Tempest</b>              |
| <b>Line Producer</b>            | <b>Sue Mackay</b>                 |
| <b>Production Manager</b>       | <b>Sam Thompson</b>               |
| <b>First Assistant Director</b> | <b>Mark Turnbull</b>              |
| <b>Location Manager</b>         | <b>Annalies Norland</b>           |
| <b>Casting Director</b>         | <b>Susie Maizels</b>              |
| <b>Director of Photography</b>  | <b>Alun Bollinger</b>             |
| <b>Sound Recordist</b>          | <b>Chris Alderton</b>             |
| <b>Production Designer</b>      | <b>Stephen Jones-Evans</b>        |
| <b>Art Director</b>             | <b>Lucinda Thomson</b>            |
| <b>Marine Co-ordinator</b>      | <b>Pat Nash</b>                   |
| <b>Costume Designer</b>         | <b>Emily Serensin</b>             |
| <b>Key Make-up/Hair</b>         | <b>Deborah Lanser</b>             |
| <b>Editors</b>                  | <b>Jamie Trevill/Peter Beston</b> |
| <b>Composer</b>                 | <b>Stephen Warbeck</b>            |
| <b>Unit Publicist</b>           | <b>Tracey Mair</b>                |
| <b>Stills Photographer</b>      | <b>Matt Nettheim</b>              |

