

MEDIA RELEASE

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Movie-going shows resilience despite unprecedented challenges to out-of-home entertainment from the COVID-19 pandemic

The 2020 Australian cinema box office reveals the impact of overwhelming and unprecedented challenges faced during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Movie theatres have, for decades, been a cultural institution and an essential community hub, particularly in regional areas. For the past five years, the sector has generated \$1.2 billion+ in average annual turnover and employed around 13,000 Australians nationally.

Following a buoyant January period where box office was up by 9% versus 2019, the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus in March resulted in forced cinema closures, capacity restrictions, the postponement of film releases and public health concerns about attending theatres.

Despite an almost 70% decline in earnings from 2019, the total 2020 box office of **\$401mⁱ** was a testament to the Australian public's ongoing love of seeing movies on the big screen. This result is especially encouraging given the acceleration of audience fragmentation through growing digital content services coupled with stay-at-home trends during the pandemic.

Jumanji: The Next Level (Sony) was the top grossing film in 2020, followed by ***1917*** (Universal) and ***Bad Boys for Life*** (Sony). Of the top films, only two were released after cinemas re-opened in June 2020: ***Tenet*** (Warner Bros.) and ***Wonder Woman 1984*** (Warner Bros.).

Title	Distributor	Release Date	2020 Box Office
Jumanji: The Next Level	Sony	26/12/2019	28,034,063 ⁱⁱ
1917	Universal	9/01/2020	23,250,190
Bad Boys for Life	Sony	16/01/2020	19,565,676
Tenet *	Warner Bros.	27/08/2020	15,939,752 ⁱⁱⁱ
Little Women	Sony	1/01/2020	15,636,873
The Gentlemen	Roadshow	1/01/2020	15,429,554
Sonic the Hedgehog	Paramount	13/02/2020	14,019,912
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker	Walt Disney	19/12/2019	13,668,267 ^{iv}
Wonder Woman 1984 *	Warner Bros.	26/12/2020	11,876,753 ^v
Dolittle	Universal	16/01/2020	11,619,714

*Still screening

Brian Pritchett, Chairman of the MPDAA and MD, Paramount Pictures Australia said, *“The death of cinema has been heralded each time a new technology shifted traditional business models. However the unquestionable enhancement of seeing a film on the big screen as well as the sentimental attachment to the communal experience of going to the movies with family and friends has proven to be robust and durable. And the outlook is bright with an abundance of great films releasing in 2021”*.

Many of the 39 Australian films released in 2020 had garnered acclaim at festivals and markets prior to the pandemic. While their box office performance was severely impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions, they grossed a total of \$22.6m in 2020 with Universal’s ***The Invisible Man*** earning over \$9m and Roadshow’s ***Rams*** taking \$4.4m and still screening.

Exhibitors made remarkable efforts to evolve and adapt to the changing 2020 marketplace. In line with State Government and Health department regulations, they implemented a range of new measures to ensure the ongoing safety of customers and staff, including a reduction in auditorium and foyer capacities, staggered seating to ensure physical distancing for patrons, upgraded booking systems, enhanced air conditioning and stringent cleaning programs involving sanitising all touch point areas. As a result, going to the movies has proven to be one of the safest activities for small groups of people, with zero cases of community transmission of Coronavirus in cinemas anywhere in Australia.

Now and throughout the pandemic, distributors and exhibitors have provided an essential and valued cultural and community resource and a much-needed escape from the stress of this pandemic. With the support of the Government’s JobKeeper scheme, they have also continued to employ thousands of Australians.

2021 has started with terrific results for a stellar line-up of diverse films including ***Wonder Woman 1984*** (Warner Bros.) and ***The Croods: A New Age*** (Universal). Australian film ***The Dry*** (Roadshow) starring Eric Bana in an adaptation of Jane Harper’s 2016 bestselling debut novel, has earned almost \$13m (and is still screening) and ***Penguin Bloom*** (Roadshow) grossed \$2.5m in its opening week.

Cinemas are reporting a wide range of Australians attending in 2020 – from young families to older adults - as the enhanced state-of-the-art experience endures as a good value and popular out-of-home social occasion.

As a global business, the movie industry will continue to be impacted by cinema restrictions in key overseas territories, particularly the United States. However, the movie-going experience will survive the Coronavirus pandemic and there is optimism about the many highly anticipated titles that will be released in cinemas in 2021, providing audiences with the irreplaceable collective experience of watching great content on the big screen, together.

Important news from the MPDAA

The MPDAA is proud to announce its partnership with **Numero**, a Vista Group Company providing an aggregated Box Office reporting platform designed and developed for film studios, distributors and cinemas. Using proprietary infrastructure and technology, as well as pre-built and custom reports for consistent and accurate performance tracking, Numero delivers clean, fast and effective information to the film industry and media.

The MPDAA operated a box office data service from the mid 1980’s. It was the first of its kind in Australia and the only service offering theatrical box office data to subscribers for many decades.

In a rapidly changing theatrical eco-system, the need for instantaneous, reliable and customised data, available on responsive platforms, has become increasingly important. With two established and well-regarded commercial database services now operating in Australia, the MPDAA has closed its box office database.

Número will aggregate and deliver the official weekend, weekly and yearly box office results. Número customers include all leading film studios, Australian film distributors, exhibitors, media outlets and Government agencies.

“The MPDAA has a long history and tradition of reporting the official results for all films screening at the Australian box office,” said Número CEO, Simon Burton. “To be in the privileged position of now holding this responsibility from the MPDAA, is a significant milestone for us. It is also a reflection of the innovation and quality of Box Office reporting Número has built over the years, and currently delivers to the film industry.”

About MPDAA

The MPDAA is an industry association representing the interests of theatrical film distributors to Government, media, industry and other stakeholders. The MPDAA members are Paramount Pictures Australia, Sony Pictures Releasing, Universal Pictures International, Walt Disney Studios Australia and Warner Bros. Entertainment Australia.



About Número

Número provides an aggregated Box Office reporting platform, giving the film industry and media clean, fast and effective information. Designed and developed primarily for film studios, distributors and cinemas, the platform delivers accurate box office numbers using proprietary infrastructure and technology, as well as pre-built and custom reports for consistent and accurate performance tracking. Número is a company of Vista Group International Ltd (NZX & ASX: VGL).

Website www.numero.co



For further enquiries please contact:

Lori Flekser, Executive Director, Motion Picture Distributors Association of Australia

Phone: 0418 276602

Email: lori@mpdaa.org.au

ⁱ Box Office data from Número

ⁱⁱ **Jumanji: The Next Level**: Total Cumulative BO at 24 January 2021: \$46,741,793

ⁱⁱⁱ **Tenet**: Total Cumulative BO at 24 January 2021: \$16,135,401

^{iv} **Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker**: Total Cumulative BO at 24 January 2021: \$47,778,003

^v **Wonder Woman 1984**: Total Cumulative BO at 24 January 2021: \$22,787,798