



Department of Culture and the Arts
Government of Western Australia



Media Statement

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Wave of success for WA at AFI Awards

Western Australia has cemented its reputation for excellent television drama winning two awards at the 2007 Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards held in Melbourne last night.

Children's series *Lockie Leonard* won 'Best Children's Drama' and Indigenous actor David Ngoombujarra took out the award for 'Best Guest or Supporting Actor in Television Drama' for the outstanding adult drama series *The Circuit*.

ScreenWest Chief Executive Ian Booth said he was delighted to see national recognition for both programs that showcased the diverse filmmaking talent in WA.

"These two fantastic series winning the nation's highest awards for television drama caps off a fantastic year for the Western Australian screen industry," Mr Booth said.

"*Lockie Leonard's* win acknowledges WA's reputation as *the* home of quality children's production in Australia and David Ngoombujarra's portrayal of Indigenous community leader Harry Pope in *The Circuit* brought a rich depth to the series.

"These series showcase our beautiful locations and feature rich characters that draw us into the heart of issues critical to people living in the regional areas of our State."

The Circuit is in the running for 'Best Telefeature or Mini Series', to be announced tonight and two WA actors will also find out if they come home with an AFI; Corey McKernan from *Lockie Leonard* is competing for the 'Young Actor Award' and Tammy Clarkson from *The Circuit* is nominated for 'Best Lead Actress in Television Drama'.

The Circuit producer Ross Hutchens said the series is being hailed as a landmark drama because of the way it embraces Indigenous issues.

"This Award is a terrific acknowledgement of the hard work put in by the whole team. I am so happy that all those involved, the cast crew and Indigenous community in Broome, can all walk a little taller now," Mr Hutchens said.

WA scored a record 11 AFI nominations for *The Circuit*, *Air Australia*, *Lockie Leonard* and *The Sleepover Club* (series 2), all supported by ScreenWest and Lotterywest.



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Background information

The Circuit

The six part mini-series broadcast by SBS is set in the confronting, moving and at times hilarious world of Western Australian legal system in the remote Kimberley region.

The Circuit, starring Aaron Pedersen and Gary Sweet, is the biggest adult drama series ever produced in the State and was filmed entirely on location amid the Kimberley's dramatic and breathtaking scenery.

It tells the story of city lawyer Drew Ellis (Pedersen) and his rude awakening to the chaotic and challenging world of the Kimberley 'circuit' Court.

David Ngoombujarra is a highly regarded WA Indigenous actor who previously won an AFI Award for 'Best Actor in a Supporting Role' for his work in the Western Australian feature film *Blackfellas*.

The Circuit star Aaron Pederson took out the Male Actor of the Year award at the 2007 Deadly Awards held recently, with director Richard Frankland winning the Outstanding Achievement in Film, Television or Theatre Award.

The series has also been recognised for its outstanding contribution to human rights issues with a shortlisting in the Television category for the 2007 Human Rights Awards.

Production company Media World Pictures continues to produce quality work in WA and is now shooting the feature film *To Hell and Back* – set to be Australia's first contemporary Indigenous comedy.

ScreenWest invested \$600,000 in the series.



Lockie Leonard

Based on the Lockie Leonard novels by Tim Winton, the series tells the story of 13 year old Lockie and his eccentric family as Lockie narrates us through the wild times and weirdness of being a teenager in a new town.

Filmed on location in and around the South West of Western Australia, the 26 part live action series has been sold to numerous markets internationally and premiered to strong audience numbers in the United Kingdom in May.

ScreenWest Chief Executive Ian Booth commented that the success of the series is not hard to fathom given the author's iconic status, the acclaimed producer and directors working on the series, the talented crew and cast and the visually breathtaking Western Australian locations depicted in the series.

Lockie Leonard won the 2007 EnhanceTV Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) Awards in the category 'Best Children's Television Series' and was recently nominated for a British Academy of Film and Television Award's (BAFTA) International Award, competing against international hits like *Sponge Bob Square Pants*.

ScreenWest invested \$700,000 in the series.

Both *The Circuit* and *Lockie Leonard* are now available on DVD.

