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REGIONAL SA BIG WINNER IN NEW MARTIN FREEMAN FEATURE FILM

Regional South Australia is the major beneficiary of a new feature film starring Emmy and BAFTA award winning actor Martin Freeman (*The Hobbit*, *Black Panther*, *Sherlock*, *Fargo*), which started filming in the State in late August.

Supported by the South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC), *Cargo*, a moving post-apocalyptic thriller, is shooting in South Australia, including the Flinders Ranges and the Murray River, boosting their local economies and highlighting these stunning locations.

Martin Freeman will play the role of a father stranded in rural Australia who has 48 hours to find a new home for his one-year-old daughter after being infected in the wake of a violent pandemic.

He will star alongside David Gulpilil (*Ten Canoes*, *Storm Boy*), who won best actor in Cannes Film Festival for *Charlie's Country*.

Also starring will be Anthony Hayes (*Animal Kingdom*), who has just completed filming on *War Machine* with Brad Pitt and the Dreamworks' movie *The Light Between Oceans*. Joining Anthony is his co-star from *The Light Between Oceans*, Caren Pistorius (*Slow West*, *Offspring*). Susie Porter, star of *Puberty Blues* and many significant Australian feature films, has also been confirmed.

South Australian locations to feature in the film include the northern Flinders Ranges, where the filmmakers found a landscape that evoked a remote world which supported the film's post-outbreak context.

Filming will also take place at the Murray River, where the picturesque location will provide the perfect contrasting scenery to the arid outback.

South Australian Arts Minister Jack Snelling said *Cargo* will inject millions into the local economy resulting in significant employment for local crew.

"The locations chosen for this film offer extraordinary South Australian landscapes. Productions such as these are incredibly valuable to the economy of regional towns providing a direct economic boost during the shoot as well as long-term tourism benefits from being showcased on screen to an international audience," said Mr Snelling.

Cargo is being produced by Causeway Films, who established a relationship with the South Australian film industry after coming to the State to produce *The Babadook*.

Causeway's producers Samantha Jennings and Kristina Ceyton will work alongside South Australian producer Mark Patterson (*Force of Destiny*, *Innocence*), and co-directors Yolanda Ramke and Ben Howling, who were the team behind the original short film *Cargo*.

The short film was a finalist in Tropfest 2013 and subsequently has attracted more than 10 million views on YouTube, the most watched video on the Tropfest channel. In 2015 it was the **Gateway LA Script Development** winner, acclaimed Australian producer Bruna Papandrea (*Milk*, *Gone Girl*, *Wild*) calling it "a beautifully rendered script that is both emotional and suspenseful."

“The decision to shoot in South Australia was based on various factors, said Ms. Ceyton.

“First and foremost, we had such a fantastic experience on *The Babadook.*, with great support from the SAFC. We had access to outstanding facilities including the Adelaide Studios, and the crew and industry partnerships formed in SA have endured.

“For *Cargo*, the landscapes are so central to the power of this story and the directors' vision, we all felt very strongly that South Australia's diverse and stunning outback locations would add beautifully to the film's screen impact.

“We are really excited about bringing our next, bigger production to the State.”

“The landscape is a key player in our ‘outbreak’ scenario, its harsh and unforgiving nature throws up countless obstacles for our protagonists, whilst at the same time offering protection and a means to survive, said Ms. Ramke.

“We've been blown away by the spectacularly diverse locations on offer in South Australia, from the beaches to the vineyards, the wheat belt, the river lands right up to the towering Flinders Ranges. There is no doubt in our minds that we have found the perfect home for our story, and we genuinely cannot wait to get the cameras rolling, said Mr. Howling.

Australia's national screen funding body, Screen Australia, is a principal funding partner in the project. Sally Caplan, Head of Production at Screen Australia said:

“It's fantastic to see the trajectory of *Cargo* from a highly viewed short through to a feature. Screen Australia is thrilled to be able to support *Cargo* and *Causeway* again, having worked with them on *The Babadook* and the upcoming feature *The Nightingale*. They're a formidable and exciting team as are the two directors, who are making their feature debut and for whom we have very high hopes.”

South Australian Film Corporation's (SAFC) Chief Executive Annabelle Sheehan said *Cargo* underlines the value of developing partnerships.

“*Cargo* is a prestigious, nationally supported project with a great creative team who are collaborating with a South Australian producer and our highly regarded crews. It provides a real opportunity to further build our industry here. The Flinders Ranges and Murray River are ideal for telling this story and the film will bring a lot of attention to the State.”

“It's also great to see a short film being expanded into a feature and demonstrates the range of pathways available to filmmakers to develop their careers.”

Pre-production on *Cargo* commenced mid-July and filming commenced in late August.

The film has also received production investment from Screen NSW and will be distributed by Umbrella in Australia and New Zealand, and internationally by Bankside and Icon UK.

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