

Perth Now

WA's shooting stars

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Dean Daley-Jones (TJ) and Douglas Macale (Uncle Black) in a scene from Mad Bastards, shot in WA.
Source: Supplied

IT'S the reel deal for WA film-makers in 2011 as a string of locally shot and produced movies are set to make waves on the world stage.

The action starts on Tuesday with the Sydney premiere of Mad Bastards, shot in WA and shaping up as one of the biggest movies to come out of Australia this year.

The feature has already been sold to a US distributor and will make its international debut at America's prestigious Sundance Film Festival later this month.

Filed on a shoestring budget in Perth and the Kimberley, Mad Bastards tells the story of TJ, an "urban street warrior" in search of his estranged son.

Three more movies are slated to be shot in WA in the next two years, including The Drowner and Shallows,

based on novels by WA authors Robert Drewe and Tim Winton.

With budgets of between \$40 and \$50 million each, the films will be co-produced by local production company Impian Films and Mel Gibson's Icon Entertainment.

Meanwhile, Margaret River is bracing for Hollywood hype as preparations begin for the filming of Drift, a surfing-based movie starring WA's Sam Worthington.

Stephen Van Mil, from Impian Films, said the features would provide a massive cash injection to WA.

Mad Bastards director Brendan Fletcher said he was thrilled with the attention the film was getting.

"For me it's so exciting that we are making the Hollywood papers with a little film shot in Wyndham in far north WA," he said.

"Hopefully it unlocks a whole lot of the talent that's lurking just beneath the surface of the WA community. The Kimberley in particular is a hotbed of creative juices."

Developed in collaboration with Fletcher, three local lead actors, Dean Daley-Jones, Greg Tait and John Watson play characters based on their own lives.

This week the trio, who had no former acting experience, will fly from the Kimberley to Sydney for the premiere before jetting off to the US with Fletcher where the film will compete in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition at Sundance, the section which last year was won by the Australian smash-hit Animal Kingdom.

The selection at Sundance and US sale meant big things for the film.

Ten years in the making, it was given a boost when ScreenWest funded the first draft of the script.

"They supported us the whole way through, they had a lot of patience," Fletcher said.

The film includes music from legendary Broome musicians the Pigram Brothers and Aria award-winner Alex Lloyd.

A US release for Mad Bastards is anticipated later this year. It will be released in Australia on May 5.

Golden Globes form guide Page 62

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