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MEDIA RELEASE

GSFM partners with Australian Entertainment Partners to launch new Australian film and television fund

GSFM has partnered with Australian Entertainment Partners to launch the AEP Screen Fund.

The Fund will invest in film and television projects made in Australia, and is structured so that it has no material exposure to box office or other audience related factors. Producers, studios and streamers will be supported through the financing of these productions and having access to industry insider oversight.

AEP was established in 2022 and comprises a management team with over 100 years of production, management and finance experience in the global screen industry. AEP is based in Melbourne and has a representative office in Los Angeles, in the United States.

GSFM Screen Investments Pty Ltd will be the fund's trustee and GSFM will also be responsible for the distribution and back office administration of the fund.

GSFM CEO, Damien McIntyre, says the AEP Screen Fund provides access to an attractive, alternative asset class while also supporting the Australian film and television industry.

"GSFM's goal is to partner with high calibre investment managers to deliver differentiated, quality investment capabilities. We actively seek out innovative and diverse investment strategies to offer Australian investors.

"The Fund will provide long term financing for the Australian screen industry on a low-risk basis for investors in the fund. This is because the investment criteria for the Fund to finance a project requires the costs of the vast majority of projects to be fully covered by studio or streamer contracts and government incentives prior to the commencement of production.

"With the launch of this Fund, GSFM is not only bringing a compelling investment opportunity to the market but is also creating opportunities for Australians in the screen industry and industries that support it.

"AEP's founders - Greg Bassler, Bob Osher and David Burdge - have over 100 years combined entertainment industry experience of producing, managing and financing film and TV productions in the global screen industry and, in particular Hollywood. Between them they have produced or financed over 400 projects in excess of US\$30 billion, and have produced or financed films with over 150 Academy Award nominations and 30 Oscar wins," says Mr McIntyre.

AEP co-founder, managing director and executive producer, Greg Bassler, says he was impressed with GSFM's reach in the Australian market, and by its distribution capabilities.

"With the support of GSFM we are able to offer a screen financing fund unlike any other in the market.

"AEP's business plan is principally to work with streamers, studios, distributors and producers (both Australian and international) to bring and to undertake the production of film and television in Australia.

"A principal goal of the fund is to provide long term financing for the Australian screen industry on a low-risk, financing basis for investors in the Fund.

"The production cost of the vast majority of projects will be covered by contracts and government rebates and incentives concurrent with the commencement of production.

"The Fund will offer significant value to producers, studios and streamers - maximising Australian rebates and incentives, fully financing the cost of production and bringing oversight to the productions from experienced and respected industry insiders.

"The Fund will not only be a solid funding source for Australian projects, but will also attract international production to Australia thereby creating long term jobs, providing significant sustainable economic activity and contributing to GDP, helping to retain industry production levels post pandemic," says Mr Basser.

The Fund will raise up to A\$100 million of equity to be coupled with a bank facility of up to A\$500 million arranged and led by the leading financial institutions in the global screen industry.

AEP Screen Fund will be a seven-year fund (five years with a two-year wind down) capped at producing 40 original productions and increasing to 55 total projects including sequels and continuing series.

Over the five years of the Fund's investment term, the fund is forecast to produce film and television content in excess of A\$1.7 billion, the vast majority which will be spent in Australia.

Mr Basser says the timing is right to launch the fund in Australia.

"Globally, streaming subscribers have surpassed 1.8 billion subscribers worldwide. Streaming services content spend has grown to over US\$220 billion per annum to support subscriber growth and demand for new content. Meanwhile, content produced in Australia almost doubled from A\$1.04 billion in 2019/20 to A\$2.29 billion in 2021/22.

"Australian cast, crew and creative talent are highly regarded by the global film and TV community and continue to be in high demand. As well, Australian facilities, locations, and post-production/SFX are world-class and actively engaged by producers from all over the world."

He adds: "Australia is perceived as being a "safe" place for film and TV production, combined with the pandemic and instability in Eastern Europe - a traditional destination for production - it is seen as a desirable location and lower risk political environment.

"Finally, Australian government rebates and production incentives lead the world. This was reinforced by the Federal Government's increase of the Location Offset from 16.5 per cent to 30 per cent announced in last week's budget.

"The Government is to be applauded for the fillip this will give to the Australian screen industry and, beyond that, to economic activity and jobs across the wider community.

An Australia-based fund is in a better position to maximise these than a foreign producer or studio could access directly," he concludes.

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About Australian Entertainment Partners Pty Ltd (AEP)

AEP was established in 2022 and comprises a management team with over 100 years of production and finance experience. AEP is based in Melbourne and has a representative office in Los Angeles. The executive team consists of:

Greg Bassler, co-founder, managing director and executive producer - Greg has more than 37 years of media and entertainment industry experience including 33 years with Village Roadshow Group. Co-founded and led Village Roadshow Entertainment Group, which produced 101 Hollywood films with global box office exceeding US\$19 billion.

Bob Osher, co-founder, director and executive producer - Bob has more than 30 years media and entertainment industry experience in senior production and management positions with Walt Disney Studios, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Turner Pictures, and Miramax Films. Bob has completed over US\$3 billion of entertainment financing including arranging and managing such funds.

David Burdge, co-founder, director - David has more than 30 years of media and entertainment industry experience. He has financed in excess of US\$5 billion of transactions. David previously served as Global Head of Media & Entertainment for Paribas.

AEP will also have access to the experience and expertise of its two highly respected independent directors.

Kim Williams-Bradley is a member of the AEP Investment Committee. Kim has over 30 years' experience as a media and entertainment executive including serving as Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Warner Bros. Entertainment. She also served as interim Co-Chief Executive Officer of Warner Bros.

Malcolm Smith is a member of the AEP Investment Committee. Malcolm has over 25 years' experience in film and television international distribution including as Senior Vice President and General Manager at Warner Bros. International TV and as EVP of Warner Bros. Sales and Business Development.

GSFM was established in 2007 as a subsidiary of the Grant Samuel Group. In 2016, Canadian wealth manager CI Financial Corp (CI) purchased an 80 per cent stake in the business, acquiring the stake previously held by Grant Samuel.

GSFM specialises in marketing funds managed by high calibre local and international managers to Australian and New Zealand institutional and Australian retail investors, and has formed partnerships with six specialist investment managers:

- *New York based Epoch Investment Partners, Inc*
- *Tribeca Investment Partners, a successful Australian boutique manager*
- *Payden & Rygel, a Los Angeles based independent investment management firm*
- *Munro Partners, an independent global equity manager*
- *London-based Man Group plc*
- *Tanarra Credit Partners, a specialist in private credit instruments*

GSFM represents approximately \$8.6 billion funds under management (as at 30 April 2023).

For more information about GSFM please visit the website: www.gsfm.com.au