



PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sydney 10 March 2005

MEAA halts world-first film project in Australia

Next generation film company, MOD Films, was refused any dispensation from the Australian Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) to contract local actors to an interactive re-mixable sci-fi film called *Sanctuary*. The decision on Wednesday brings to a halt an AU\$100,000 short film shoot scheduled this month by preventing actors from being contracted under the MEAA award, despite letters of support from all the principal actors.

The MEAA Board decided that it could grant none of the dispensations sought by MOD Films, on the grounds that these would be "inappropriate". The production had asked for dispensations and support for its world-first plans to employ professional actors in a film with only "Some Rights Reserved" by the production company. The company intends to permit non-commercial use and re-voicing of the film by the audience. The MEAA also rejected the option of any further negotiations with MOD Films.

MOD Films had sought a dispensation, since early January, to allow professional Australian actors to participate in the short (15 minute) film and had worked with actors agents to communicate the extent of the project before auditions. The cast chosen for *Sanctuary* had been offered 110% on top of the MEAA award rate to take part in the experiment.

MOD Films is using the Creative Commons licensing scheme that expressly permits more audience freedom than All Rights Reserved. The Creative Commons was first devised in 2002 and Australian-specific licenses were released in February. Mash-up and re-mix potential is an intrinsic part of the *Sanctuary* project – empowering the audience to exercise greater control over purchased film content and treating re-use as an opportunity as opposed to a threat. Audience re-use is already prevalent in the computer games industry, often referred to as MOD'ing, and certain bestselling games have started out as MODs (e.g. Counter Strike). MOD Films is exploring how this may work creatively and commercially with films.

Sanctuary was funded by an Inventions award granted on the basis of its world-first experimental approach which goes well beyond MEAA standard Internet provisions. MOD Films is developing a next-generation process for original film production and distribution in tandem with a film sampling business. *Sanctuary* will be eventually sold as a new kind of film DVD product and will be available online, via a



modfilms.net subscription, as a digital asset library (comprising more than audio and video).

Michela Ledwidge, the director of *Sanctuary*, and the recipient of the Inventions award that is primarily funding the film, said

"Having worked for years to fund this project and bring it back home to Australia to showcase local talent, I'm both dismayed and rather embarrassed by the MEAA position. It is no small irony that the actors and talent agents, who supported our little pilot and our submission to the MEAA, have the most to lose from this decision. We will still make the film but plans for an Australian shoot will have to be revised."

MOD Films is yet to receive a written response to its formal submission to the MEAA.

For further information on *Sanctuary*, contact:

Michela Ledwidge,
Tel: +61 (0) 415 644 781
Email: michela@thequality.com
Email: sanctuary@modfilms.com

About MOD Films

MOD Films is a next generation film company developing re-mixable films and tools for film re-use. The company was formed from an Inventions and Innovations award that Michela Ledwidge received in 2004 from the UK's National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts.

<http://modfilms.com>

About thequality.com

thequality.com is an Internet production company that applies creative energy, experience and a cross-cultural, collaborative vision to exceptional media projects. Established in 1993, the company is based in London and a principal investor in MOD Films

<http://thequality.com>