

THE BURNING SEASON

MEDIA RELEASE

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One Man, One Filmmaker and Three Hollywood Heavyweights – Can They Save The World?

It's an unlikely trio worthy of a movie in their own right - the Terminator, the Wolverine and the man who brought you An Inconvenient Truth - on one bill, to save the World.

It's not the hard sell of a Hollywood movie but the film the audience voted as best at last year's Brisbane International Film festival.

Now all of Australia can see the award-winning documentary about the destruction of our rainforest and the threat to orangutans that had audiences at New York's Tribeca Film Festival talking.

The Burning Season, narrated by Hugh Jackman, was the only Australian documentary screened at this year's Tribeca Film Festival in New York. Its inclusion in the Festival's World Documentary Feature Competition is the second time producer, director and writer Cathy Henkel has been recognised for excellence. The movie is so powerful; Cathy was also handpicked to participate in the opening press conference.

The Burning Season updated feature-length version is now on screen nationally.

When an earlier version of the documentary screened at festivals last year, it won the Audience Choice Award at the Brisbane International Film Festival 2008 and the IF Award for Best Documentary.

But a lot changed in the second half of 2008 - the world was plunged into a financial crisis, America elected a new president, and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger held a climate change conference in LA, inviting the leading characters and director of *The Burning Season* to join him.

"The film needed a new third act," Cathy said.

"While the ending in this year's cut is positive, there is room for this documentary to be the very first of its kind that is continually updated until the world receives the ending it deserves – rainforests and wildlife preserved for generations to come."

Hugh Jackman is equally enthusiastic: "Every year, there is one outstanding documentary that you cannot miss, that people will talk about because of its significance to the planet's future. This coming year, *The Burning Season* is that documentary."

'Can you make money and still save the environment?' is the central question posed in the documentary and one that has struck a chord with Gen X and Y.

By his own admission dot com millionaire and 'green entrepreneur' Dorjee Sun, who started this campaign at 29 years of age and is now 32, is brash and cocky. He had to be because the stakes are so high - 300 football fields of Indonesian rainforest are cut down and burnt every hour to clear land for crops such as palm oil in Indonesia, a country that is the world's third largest carbon dioxide polluter, after the US and China.

Dorjee uses his charisma to enter boardrooms of Starbucks, eBay and Merrill Lynch selling Indonesia's carbon credits to polluters in the West. He's dogged by controversy – does putting a price on the environment make him a pioneer or profiteer?

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Dorjee, the founder of the carbon trading company, Carbon Conservation, was rejected 203 times in four months but he insists entrepreneurs can make a difference.

“As governments begin to put carbon emission limits on factories, those that exceed these limits must pay to offset their emissions, for example, by planting one tree for every two pounds of carbon emitted, or by protecting carbon-soaking forests, like those in Indonesia,” he said.

“If much of the payments go to the locals who live in the forests, then they have a financial incentive to not burn down their trees. I said, 'Hey, if it's not going to be me, who's going to do it?'"

Dorjee's company is one of the first to put this idea into practice, attracting investors like Merrill Lynch (now owned by Bank of America).

“Not everyone agrees with carbon trading. Some have concerns this might be a way for companies to buy their way out of being green, since those that exceed their carbon limit aren't actually reducing emissions, they're simply paying someone else to clean up their carbon,” Dorjee said.

“But we have to start somewhere – there has to be some incentive to attract business.”

The economic crisis works to Dorjee's advantage as he pitches his radical concept to the international banking community. Indeed the Merrill Lynch/Bank of America deal depicted in film was short listed for the Financial Times Sustainable Banking Deal of the Year Award and won Environmental Finance's Carbon Finance Deal of the Year Award.

Dorjee was also honoured by the African Rainforest Conservancy who named a newly discovered species of chameleon after him.

The UN believes climate change will be the defining issue of our era. To date 182 countries have agreed to the Kyoto Protocol, which was adopted in 1997. Yet more than 10 years later the US is still not one of them.

Whatever side of the fence you sit on – Dorjee Sun shows us one drop can become a ripple.

For interviews with Cathy Henkel or Trish Lake contact Gary McDonald on 0419 728 016 .

To preview The Burning Season follow the link: to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAoisvvvAVk>

Filming and editing of the new cinema version received support from the Queensland Government's Pacific Film and Television Commission. Other investors in the film are Screen Australia and the NSW Film and TV Office.

OPENING IN CINEMAS!

Thursday 9 July

Dendy Newtown (Sydney), Dendy Canberra, Dendy Portside (Brisbane), State Cinema in Hobart

Thursday 16 July

Trak Cinema, Adelaide

Thursday 30 July

Byron Bay

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