



Media Release

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***Reel Earth*—the environmental film festival that could**

Palmerston North's sixth annual international environmental film festival *Reel Earth* opens next week with more than 70 films from around the world to screen in the city's downtown cinemas from 23 May to 5 June. The two-week festival opens with a 'green carpet' gala awards night at Palmerston North's Regent Theatre, 22 May.

Special guests include Auckland actress and environmentalist Robyn Malcolm as host and internationally recognised platinum selling band from Wellington, [The Black Seeds](#). Information about the festival programme, film synopses and gala night tickets are on *Reel Earth's* website at: www.reeearth.org.nz.

The festival programme includes feature-length stories and documentaries, short films and 'ultra' short films. The stunningly produced and directed films cover a wide range of entertaining, inspiring and beautifully visual stories as well as some hard-hitting topics. Included are stories about a hawk in New York, medicinal plants in the Amazon narrated by Susan Sarandon, the resurgence of domestic and community gardens, futuristic tales, as well issues on water resources, toxins, animal life, climate change, bio-diversity, conservation, and a look at dirt as narrated by Jamie Lee Curtis. New Zealand films are well represented with films about wildlife and nature including documentaries about the kakapo and the albatross.

Reel Earth was founded in Palmerston North in 2005 by a group of Manawatu environmentalists, scientists and film enthusiasts with just six environmental films and a big world vision for the future. From that inaugural festival to now, six years later, the festival is flourishing on the international film circuit. It has become highly recognised and sought after throughout the world by established and emerging filmmakers who want to share environmental stories through the craft of film. The 200 plus entries received for this year's festival have undergone rigorous scrutiny by a New Zealand-based jury panel to select some 70 films for the festival programme. Twenty-four films are nominated for four award categories, winners will be announced at the gala opening evening. More than 20 filmmakers from around New Zealand and from overseas are journeying to Palmerston North for the festival.

Reel Earth is run by a dedicated group of Palmerston North volunteers and growing support from local bodies and businesses working together to build a green festival for the city. The website is loaded with information about the festival programme including film synopses and supporting events. For the first time this year, the festival will be supported by the *Reel Earth off Broadway Green* weekend over 22 and 23 May at Palmerston North's Civic Square. The weekend of activities features fun and family entertainment with displays and interactions about best environmental practices. The Palmerston North City Council Library is on board with *Reel Earth* organisers building a social media platform through Facebook and Twitter. The Library is also hosting a series of pre and in festival film screenings and filmmakers' workshops.

Reel Earth's gala opening night on 22 May coincides with the world's annual International Biodiversity Day and the United Nation's focal day for its 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, which calls for preservation of diversity of life on earth: www.biodiversity-day.info

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For more information or to arrange interviews with New Zealand and international filmmakers please contact Reel Earth Festival Director:

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www.reearth.org.nz