



Press release

30 March 2010

Green fields for *Reel Earth* environmental film festival

Palmerston North's *Reel Earth* film festival organisers today announced more than 200 films from over 35 countries have been entered into its 2010 Manawatu-based competition for environmentally-themed films. The annual international festival opens with a 'green carpet' gala awards night at the Regent on Broadway on Saturday 22 May. Auckland actor and environmentalist Robyn Malcolm returns as MC along with Wellington band The Black Seeds, plus guest presenter, photographer/filmmaker Vincent Laforet of New York and Los Angeles.

'In just five years our home-grown, volunteer-run 'green' festival has become the largest international, juried environmental film festival in the southern hemisphere,' says *Reel Earth* Festival Director Warren Jones. 'It's now recognised as an important and sought-after event by acclaimed environmental filmmakers throughout the world. It's also becoming an established fortnight of environmental awareness and celebration on Palmerston North's May/June calendar of events.'

'The combined production budget of more than \$75 million for this year's films demonstrates filmmakers around the world are becoming more and more committed to films about environmental stories. Shared global concerns from this year's entrants feature in a number of films about water cleanliness and availability, as well as issues around fishing.'

The festival has three categories—ultra short films of up to 15 minutes, short films of 15 to 45 minutes, and feature-length movies. From the 200 films entered into the festival competition, 40 films will be selected for the festival screening by a jury of New Zealand-based and scientifically-rigorous film specialists. A printed festival programme will be freely available from late April and films will screen in downtown cinemas from 23 May to 5 June 2010.

'This year, several Palmerston North businesses and local authorities, as well

as some major international industries have come on board to support *Reel Earth's* growing significance for our region. Together we want to deliver a bigger and better event and create a 'green carnival atmosphere' of sustainability for our city. We want get the whole community involved with the festival, thinking and talking about the environment and coming to see our films. We also want to see more visitors from outside the region sharing our growing event and recognising Palmerston North's science-led sustainability initiatives. Our goal is that three years from now *Reel Earth* will be regarded as one of the top five environmental film festivals globally,' says Mr Jones.

Reel Earth's line up of activities includes:

- screening for school's programme on 19 May at the Regent Theatre;
- a civic welcome for visiting filmmakers and media in the Civic Chambers on Friday 21 May
- some 35 environmentally-themed exhibitors in Palmerston North's Civic Square on Saturday/Sunday 22 & 23 May for hands-on activities, information, technologies and games connected with environmental and sustainable living;
- award-winning entries announced at the 'green carpet' gala opening night at the Regent Cinema on Broadway on Saturday 22 May with Robyn Malcolm as MC and Wellington band *The Black Seeds*;
- a high-visibility and environmentally-themed festival programme over two weeks throughout the CBD; and
- special international guest speaker, Vincent LaForet, of New York and Los Angeles, attending the opening weekend to hold workshops and a public seminar. LaForet is an acclaimed French-American photojournalist, filmmaker, and Canon Explorer of Light. His Pulitzer prize-winning work includes essays and movies on subjects as diverse as climate change and conflict, human endeavour and endurance.
- *Reel Earth—environmental stories through film*
www.reelearth.org.nz

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For more information please contact:

Warren Jones, *Reel Earth* Festival Director

Mob: +64 27 325 6004 Office +64 6 350 1812 warren@reelearth.org.nz

***Reel Earth* Fact Sheet – supplement to media release, 30 March 2010**

- *Reel Earth* is a not-for-profit volunteer organisation founded and based in Palmerston North.
- *Reel Earth* was established by a group of like-minded, passionate Manawatu-based individuals and filmmakers wanting to share environmental stories and concerns through the powerful medium of film.
- *Reel Earth* is run by its founding group of hands on and dedicated volunteers who are professionals working in fields of science, research, education, photography, and filmmaking.
- Festival brings together national and international filmmakers of repute.
- Festival is open to all professional and amateur national and international filmmakers of any age.
- Encourages films that are contemporary, challenging, creative, original and resonant.
- Festival organisers encourage a strong representation of young filmmakers.
- A robust and rigorous jury process - Kiwi-based high-level media professionals, scientists, educators, and filmmakers, select 40 best films.
- An adjudicated festival. Judges are a key strength of festival and its Palmerston North profile – ie scientists from Massey apply rigorous science focus to film analysis.
- The award winning entries and other selected highlights will tour New Zealand following the Palmerston North screenings.
- This year, for the first time, a 90-minute package of *Reel Earth* highlights will be accessible to nearly 2000 New Zealand schools throughout the country.
- Empowering current and future NZ environmental filmmakers through international internship programme (current intern in USA in leading pixel animation studio, will attend festival. Two internships will be available in the United States during 2011).
- Strong and growing support and buy-in from local and international agencies, businesses, industries and organisations.
- Post festival tours to Wellington film industry, e.g. Park Rd Post, Weta.
- *Reel Earth* set to grow and enhance the Manawatu's stance on sustainability and environmental best practice.
- *Reel Earth* is a powerful driver for Destination Manawatu's vision for an annual event of international significance, based up on the strategic strengths of the region.
- *Reel Earth* is growing to become a globally significant festival that showcases Manawatu's vision for leadership in environmental best practice research.
- Funding partners, associated supporters, local and international sponsors:
 - Palmerston North City Council
 - Manawatu District Council

- Manawatu Chamber of Commerce
- Destination Manawatu
- Massey University
- Spinning Planet
- Palmerston North City Library
- Kingsgate Hotel Palmerston North
- Eastern and Central Communities Trust
- Community Arts Palmerston North
- Manawatu Standard
- Triple Bottom Line
- New Zealand Institute of Professional Photographers (NZIPP)
- Canon Australia
- Apple Communications South East Asia