

Movies filmed and set in Australia

1. *Animal Kingdom (2010)*

- a. This film, director David Michod's first feature film, was nominated for AFI Awards in 18 categories, winning 10, including best film, director (Michod), best actress (Jacki Weaver), actor (Ben Mendelsohn), supporting actor (Joel Edgerton), and original screenplay (Michod). It's a strong unflinching look at a dysfunctional Melbourne crime family and the relationships the family members have with one another and with the police. Engrossingly taut from start to finish.

2. *Samson and Delilah (2009)*

- a. The story of two love-struck Aboriginal teenagers living in central Australia, Samson and Delilah won not only the AFI best film award but also the awards for best original screenplay and best direction for writer/director Warwick Thornton. The film's young actors, Rowan McNamara and Marissa Gibson, who had had no previous acting experience, shared the AFI award for best young actor. Set in a dirt-poor rural community outside Alice Springs, Samson and Delilah charts the plight of the two teenagers who seek to escape the area's poverty, violence, addiction and hopelessness by going on the run.

3. *The Black Balloon (2008)*

- a. This is the feature film directorial debut of Australian filmmaker Elissa Down, a semi-autobiographical coming-of-age story of a family dealing with an autistic child. It won six AFI awards, including those for best film and best direction. Earlier in the year, *The Black Balloon* had received the Crystal Bear Generation 14plus best feature film award at the Berlin International Film Festival, among other Australian and international honors.

4. *Romulus, My Father (2007)*

- a. The directorial debut of actor Richard Roxburgh from a screenplay by poet and playwright Nick Drake, *Romulus, My Father* stars Eric Bana as Romulus, father to the young Raimond Gaita (played in the film by Kodi Smit-McPhee). The book on which the film is based is professor of philosophy and author Raimond Gaita's celebrated memoir detailing his parents' struggle in the face of great adversity to bring up their son Raimond.

5. *Ten Canoes (2006)*

- a. *Ten Canoes*, directed by Rolf de Heer and Peter Djigirr, won six Australian Film Institute awards: best picture, director, original screenplay, cinematography, editing and sound. This is the first Australian feature film to have been made completely in an indigenous Aboriginal language. Set in both the distant past and a nearer time frame, *Ten Canoes* weaves an almost mythic story of jealousy and desire. Narrated in English by David Gulpilil, with the spoken Aboriginal language subtitled in English.

6. *Look Both Ways (2005)*

- a. An upbeat debut feature by Australian filmmaker Sarah Watt, *LOOK BOTH WAYS* examines the way in which a woman's life changes after she witnesses a stranger's

death. This romantic comedy with a twist uses animated sequences and live action to take on serious themes--like mortality--in a lighthearted, refreshing way.

7. *Somersault (2004)*

- a. This was the year of *Somersault* at the Australian Film Institute Awards. Cate Shortland won for best direction and best original screenplay, Abbie Cornish was best actress, Lynette Curran best supporting actress and Erik Thomson best supporting actor. Additionally, the film won the AFI awards for original score, sound, production design, costume design, editing and cinematography. *Somersault* was Shortland's debut feature. Its evocative setting is the New South Wales town of Jindabyne in the Snowy Mountains where Cornish plays a 16-year-old on the run from her family and a troubled past.

8. *Japanese Story (2003)*

- a. Directed by Sue Brooks, *Japanese Story* tells of a relationship forged in the Australian Outback where a high-strung Australian geologist (Toni Collette) escorts a Japanese businessman (Gotaro Tsunashima) through Western Australia's Pilbara Desert. With an initial mutual dislike arising from vast cultural differences — the egalitarian freewheeling Aussie lifestyle versus the structured, strictured, sometimes sexist customs of another race — the pair suddenly find themselves in a fight for survival which forges a deeper connection between the two. Then comes a sudden, unexpected shock.

9. *Rabbit-Proof Fence (2002)*

- a. Set in 1931 Australia, *Rabbit-Proof Fence* tells the story of three Aboriginal girls snatched from their homes who escape from a government camp where, along with other half-caste children of mixed parentage, they were to be trained to work as servants. Directed by Philip Noyce and based on the true story of Aboriginal woman Molly Craig, the film tells part of the story of what is now known as the Stolen Generation. The Aboriginal cast comprised mainly untrained indigenous actors. The film also features British actor Kenneth Branagh as the legal guardian of the Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal actors David Gulpilil and Deborah Mailman.

10. *Lantana (2001)*

- a. *Lantana* is a mosaic of complex relationships superbly acted by an ensemble cast including Anthony LaPaglia, Geoffrey Rush, Barbara Hershey, Kerry Armstrong, Russell Dykstra, Daniela Farinacci, Vince Colosmo, Peter Phelps, Rachael Blake and Leah Purcell. It is director Ray Lawrence's first film since *Bliss* in 1985. The *Lantana* screenplay was adapted by Andrew Bovell from his own play *Speaking in Tongues*. The film won seven Australian Film Institute Awards for best picture, best director (Lawrence), best actor (LaPaglia), best actress (Armstrong), best supporting awards (Blake, Colosimo), and best adapted screenplay (Bovell).

11. *Looking for Alibrandi (2000)*

12. *Two Hands (1999)*

- a. Starring Bryan Brown, Heath Ledger and Rose Byrne, *Two Hands* is a fast-paced thriller directed by Gregor Jordan and set in the Sydney underworld. The film revolves around the misadventures of a 19-year-old (Ledger) who loses some gang loot and must find

some way to recover it or else suffer "punishment" from the criminal overlord (Brown) and his gang. Unfortunately, two street kids have found the money and have now embarked on a wild spending spree.

13. *Shine (1996)*

- a. This is the film which won for Geoffrey Rush the best actor Oscar for his portrayal of Australian piano virtuoso David Helfgott. Shine also received Oscar nominations for best picture, director (Scott Hicks), original screenplay (Scott Hicks, Jan Sardi) and supporting actor (Armin Mueller-Stahl). With a father (Mueller-Stall) traumatised by war, the pianist (Rush) suffers through mental illness, asylum incarceration, and an obsession with the virtually unplayable Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 3. The film also stars Lynn Redgrave, John Gielgud, and Noah Taylor (as the young David Helfgott).

14. *The Piano (1993)*

- a. Directed by Jane Campion, The Piano is an evocatively filmed story about a mute woman (Holly Hunter) who finds expression through her piano. Becoming a mail-order bride to a lonely New Zealander (San Neill), she arrives in 1800s New Zealand with her piano and daughter (Anna Paquin). Her husband does not want the piano and leaves it on the beach. Another man (Harvey Keitel) offers to pay to have her piano taken to his home. In return for slight romantic advances, he sells the piano back to her key by key, ending in a crescendo of passion. The film won Oscars for best actress (Hunter), supporting actress (Paquin), and original screenplay (Campion).

Documentaries

15. *Bra Boys (2007 Documentary)*

- a. A film about the cultural evolution of the Sydney beach side suburb of Maroubra and the social struggle faced by it's youth - the notorious surf gang known as the Bra Boys.

16. *Salt (2009 Documentary)*

- a. A documentary film on photographer Murray Fredericks' extreme journey's to capture the heart of the world's most featureless landscape on Lake Eyre, South Australia.

17. *Australia: Land Beyond Time (2002 Documentary)*