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## News from Film Otago Southland

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5 December 2025 at 04:29



*Image provided by Wānaka Lavender Farm*

## SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

Kia ora, and welcome to the latest edition of the [Film Otago Southland](#) newsletter - your seasonal digest for film-related news from the beautiful Otago and Southland region of New Zealand's South Island.

As the days grow longer and the hills turn green again, the screen industry in the south is also blooming. A mix of returning productions, celebrations of creative achievements, and community events are breathing fresh opportunities into the region.

Read on to discover what's been happening across Otago and Southland this season.

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## PRODUCTION NEWS



*Image: Kahu Wesling Macgregor as Jo in THE ROAD OUT*

## THE ROAD OUT SHOOT IN MILFORD SOUND

In early September, amidst omnipresent storm warnings, a team of dedicated filmmakers headed to Piopiotahi/Milford Sound to shoot THE ROAD OUT, a short film about a teen with low vision who is desperate to escape the confines of the isolated settlement and seizes her independence at the wheel of her father's ute, driving the precarious road out of Milford Sound.

The lead role is played by Kahu Wesling Macgregor (BAD BEHAVIOUR), and the film also stars Jake Ryan (SAVAGE) and newcomer Ayano Masuda.

The team stayed in Piopiotahi for the duration of the filming and experienced everything the location had to offer, from torrential rain and epic thunderstorms, to avalanches closing the road, and finally snow and sunshine. But far from ruining the continuity of the shoot, the landscape plays its own special role, and cinematographer Tim Flower was able to capture the beauty and nuance of a place both primordial and precarious.

The story was written and directed by Pennie Hunt and produced by Alex Reed of Bloom Pictures and Amanda Jenkins of AJ Films, with the support of a Catalyst Grant from the [New Zealand Film Commission](#), as well as support from Film Queenstown Lakes and the Dunedin City Council.

Currently in post-production, THE ROAD OUT will hit the festival circuit in 2026.



Image: ARPTD cast, via Screentime New Zealand

## A REMARKABLE PLACE TO DIE SEASON 2

We're excited to have Kiwi crime drama A REMARKABLE PLACE TO DIE back in Queenstown for a second season. As [Screentime](#) CEO Philly de Lacey told [Deadline](#), "This production showcases New Zealand's stunning scenery, sense of humor, and vibrant character, bringing major investment in the local economy, through high regional spend and new employment opportunities."

We're looking forward to helping the crew out around town and seeing what cases Detective Anais Mallory and her colleagues solve next in our alpine landscapes.

In the meantime, you can catch up on season one here: [TVNZ+](#)

## TASTE OF ART

And that's not all that Screentime has brought to town. TASTE OF ART, a brand new culinary reality TV show, filmed entirely at [Remarkable Studios](#) in Queenstown back in August. As reported in the [Otago Daily Times](#), the show will feature ten chefs from across the country competing to impress judges - Amisfield's Vaughan Mabee and MasterChef Australia's Melissa Leong.

It's fantastic to have studio shows like this filming locally, showing off the versatility of the region thanks to new dedicated indoor film facilities - stay tuned for more!



## BRAD PITT X DĒ'LONGHI X QUEENSTOWN

TVC SPOTLIGHT: A new Dē'Longhi TV commercial directed by Academy Award-winner Taika Waititi and featuring Brad Pitt has recently been spotted with the iconic view of Lake Wakatipu in the background. Perfetto!

## EVENT NEWS

### TE ATAMIRA BRINGS A WEEKEND OF WĀHINE IN FILM TO QUEENSTOWN

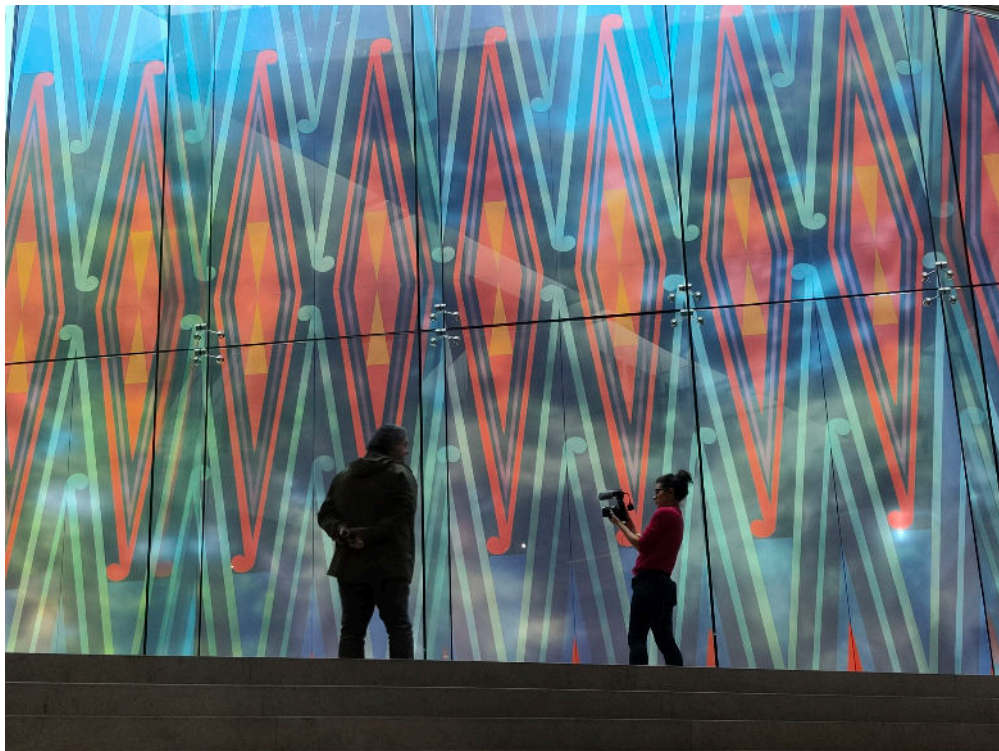


Image: [TOITŪ: Visual Sovereignty](#)

Four iconic New Zealand artists and storytellers are set to come together for a weekend of inspiring kōrero in Queenstown and Wānaka.

On Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 December, Chelsea Winstanley ONZM, Dame Gaylene Preston, Dame Robin White, and Julia Holden will be sharing their work and insights into the power of collaboration in the arts.

Events in this exciting weekend of programming include:

- Julia Holden artist talk about her newly opened exhibition, The Artist 10:30am Saturday 6 December | Free, [Te Atamira](#)
- Panel discussion with all four women on 'The Power of Collaboration' 11am Saturday 6 December | \$25, [Te Atamira](#)
- Screening of TOITŪ: Visual Sovereignty followed by Q&A with Director Chelsea Winstanley 4pm, Saturday 6 December | \$20, Silky Otter Cinema, Frankton, 2pm, Sunday 7 December | \$21, Cinema Paradiso, Wānaka
- Screening of GRACE A Prayer for Peace followed by Q&A with Director Gaylene Preston and artist Robin White 11am, Sunday 7 December | \$20, Silky Otter Cinema, Frankton

This is a rare opportunity to hear from four extraordinary artists and storytellers who have shaped Aotearoa's creative landscape through courage, generosity, and connection.

With the exception of Julia Holden's artist talk, all events in this weekend of programming are ticketed and spaces are limited.

To book your place, go to [www.teatamira.nz/whats-on](http://www.teatamira.nz/whats-on)

## SOUTHERN DOCUMENTARY ACCELERATOR

### STAGE 1 - THE DEVELOPMENT LAB

[Short Film Otago](#) recently launched their newest support offering targeted at documentary filmmakers. The Development Lab was Stage 1 of the [Southern Documentary Accelerator](#) project. Hosted in Wānaka, a hub for outdoor filmmaking, the workshop was well attended by twenty local documentary filmmakers from across the region. Guest speakers included Max Quinn ([Producer/Director/Cameraman](#)), Craig Meade ([Wildbear Entertainment](#)), Jess Covell ([Boosted](#) mentor) and Whitney Oliver ([New Zealand Mountain Film Festival director](#)). Participants were also given the opportunity to workshop and pitch ideas, followed by some dynamic debrief chats in town at the post-workshop networking event.



## STAGE 2 - DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

Applications are now closed for Stage 2 - Development Funding. Sign up to Short Film Otago's [newsletter](#) to stay tuned for more details on Stage 3 - Production Funding.

The Southern Documentary Accelerator is made possible through the generous support of [Film Otago Southland](#), [Queenstown Lakes District Council](#) and [The Central Lakes Trust](#).

## SHOW ME SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL HITS DUNEDIN

Show Me Shorts film festival arrived in Ōtepoti Dunedin in October for the first time, welcomed by a sold out crowd! The one special screening of The Sampler was hosted at the iconic Metro Cinema. The sold out event means more Show Me Shorts can be expected in 2026.



## LITTLE CINEMA

The [Southern Filmmakers Collective](#) recently took the much-loved Little Cinema local short film event to the road, from Queenstown to Dunedin and soon Wānaka!

The event showcases local short films created by our talented Otago and Southland creatives. Little Cinema is not a competitive film festival, but a grassroots screening celebrating local filmmakers of all levels.

Tickets are on sale for the Wānaka screening on Friday 12 December 6-8pm, hosted at the Wānaka Community Hub. To purchase tickets click [here](#).

## CONGRATULATIONS

### PLANET 13 SHORT FILM

Congratulations to all involved in the production of local short film [PLANET 13](#). The film has had a successful film festival campaign with seventeen selections/nominations and multiple finalist placings, ultimately winning two Best Short Film awards and one Best Director award. It's inspiring to see what can happen when the local film community comes together to work on an independent project.

Writer/director Joe Murdie says: "At its core, PLANET 13 is a sobering reflection on humanity's complacency towards the state of the earth and the misguided belief that there will always be a 'Plan B' available."



Image: Team photo from PLANET 13

## NATIONAL CINEMATOGRAPHY AWARD FOR LOCAL CINEMATOGRAPHER

Congratulations are also due to local cinematographer Rob Romero and team Midnight Sunburn for being awarded National Best Cinematography for their work on [EVERY LAST BASTARD](#) as part of the [48 Hour Film Festival](#). The competition received over 500 entries this year, so standing out in this impressive pool of talent is a huge achievement. Well done Rob and co!



Image: Frame from EVERY LAST BASTARD

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

We're pleased to spotlight our newest directory members—fresh faces who've joined our FREE [Industry Directory](#) this quarter. A warm welcome to the storytellers, crew and companies who support our screen community.

- [Misfits Workshop](#) - Studio, Production Office, Co Working Space
- [REdeFINE Fashion Styling Services](#) - Wardrobe & Styling Services
- [Rachel Clegg](#) - Costume Assistant
- [Vanessa Wyllie](#) - Wardrobe, Styling & Tailoring
- [Matthew Goodman](#) - DOP/ Cinematographer
- [RYD](#) - Rental Vehicles
- [Seumas Cooney](#) - Assistant Director
- [Merrin Brewster](#) - Production Assistant, Stunts, Entree Level/Trainee
- [Electrotechnical Services Ltd](#) - Lighting Assistant, Driver, Production Runner
- [Jacinta Ricketts](#) - Entree Level/Trainee
- [Sarah Moore](#) - Production Coordinator, Assistant Director
- [IEIM Film & Photo](#) - Stills Photography

Becoming a member is free for film crew and businesses. For more information and to join, [click here](#).

## LOCATION SPOTLIGHT



*Images: Deanna Gerlach for Bike Glendhu*

### BIKE GLENDHU

Bike Glendhu is a privately-owned mountain bike park just ten minutes from Wānaka, offering a variety of landscapes including:

- Elevated views over Lake Wānaka, Glendhu Bay and Roy's Peak
- Ridgeline access overlooking Matukituki Valley, with views of Treble Cone and Mt. Aspiring National Park
- Views of the Motatapu Valley towards the Fern Burn and Mahu Whenua
- Flexible terrain for vehicles, large crews or intimate set-ups.

Additionally, Bike Glendhu can:

- Provide vehicles + Can-Am access to remote spots
- Close trails for exclusive use
- Offer on-site catering or coordinate with your preferred provider
- Work with your crew to keep shoots efficient and stress-free

For full details visit <https://bikeglendhu.co.nz/commercial-shoot-location-wanaka/>

View more locations in our Locations Directory here: [Location Directory » Film Otago Southland](#).

Or find a local location scout in our Industry Directory here: [Industry Directory » Film Otago Southland](#)

## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



*Image: Provided by Sudima Five Mile*

### SUDIMA FIVE MILE

For film and TV crews, flexibility isn't a perk — it's essential. Sudima Queenstown Five Mile has earned a reputation among production teams for their ability to adapt to ever-changing schedules. Their friendly, professional approach and understanding of the fast-moving nature of the film and production industry means they adapt seamlessly to changing schedules, shifting shoot dates, and last-minute room changes.

Along with long-stay rooms, guest laundry, boxed breakfast or lunch options and onsite parking, Sudima Five Mile hotel also offers boardrooms and conference spaces, ideal for production offices, rehearsal rooms or wardrobe set ups and fitting space - giving crews a functional, private base of operations.

Local Travel and Accommodation Coordinator Kim Godby sums it up perfectly: "I love working with the Sudima Five Mile team. I've used them for multiple productions and every time they make my life easier. They just get us, and they always go above and beyond".

To find out how Sudima Queenstown Five Mile can support your next project, contact Xanthe Smythe – Sales Manager Conference & Business Groups.

Email: [XantheS@sudimahotels.com](mailto:XantheS@sudimahotels.com)

Web: [www.sudimahotels.com](http://www.sudimahotels.com)

View other local film freindly accommodation providers in our Industry Directory [here](#) by filtering by Ancillary Services > Accommodation or get in touch with us directly for a full list.

To subscribe to our Quarterly Newsletter, please email [info@filmotagosouthland.com](mailto:info@filmotagosouthland.com)



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