

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **American Filmmaker Gets Aussies Writing FAST**

SYDNEY -- In his latest attempt to get Australians writing movies, *Screenplay.com.au* founder Jeff Bollow has devised a simple, step-by-step process to make the job easier. It's called the F.A.S.T. System™, and it's the newest addition to his acclaimed two-day *F.A.S.T. Screenwriting Workshop™*, which returns to Sydney, Melbourne, and the Gold Coast in October.

"The film industry needs screenplays -- desperately. They're the backbone of the business," said Bollow, an independent film producer. "But no one here writes them. People think it's too hard, or that they're impossible to sell. So we end up with nothing at all."

It's a big problem, indeed. Insiders estimate less than 600 movie-length screenplays are written annually in Australia, across all skill levels, with less than 1% being commercially-viable. Without quality screenplays, mediocre material gets thrust into production. The result, predictably, is poor word-of-mouth, sagging box office returns, and an industry in the doldrums.

According to figures published by the Australian Film Commission, a paltry 22 films were made in Australia last year, down 33% from the previous year. Despite record box office receipts topping \$865 million, local films took just 3.5% of the total domestic ticket sales -- a five-year low, and among the worst of the past 25 years.

"What everyone seems to ignore," said Bollow, "is that Australians flock to the cinema. We're the third highest per-capita moviegoers on Earth. If we made better local films, audiences would embrace them. If we can conquer the challenges of writing, I really believe we can turn it all around."

It's a quest the L.A. native began four years ago, after a frustrating search for local screenplays turned up empty-handed. Refusing to give up, he began offering screenwriting workshops through his company, Embryo Films, to teach the craft from the producer's perspective. On the strength of feedback from participants, Bollow launched *Screenplay.com.au*, offering a whole range of products and services for would-be movie scribes.

But the time involved has taken its toll, and has taken him away from his true passion: making films. So in February, in an effort to reduce his

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travelling/teaching workload, Bollow began developing a home-study screenwriting course, using his newly-designed FAST System™ approach.

Bollow claims the FAST System is a simple, step-by-step process that can be used on any type of writing project. By breaking the physical act of writing into four distinct phases, writers avoid common problems like writer's block, lack of ideas, and endless re-writes. The F.A.S.T. acronym stands for "Focus, Apply, Strengthen, Tweak", and although the home-study course is not due until 2005, writers can begin using the FAST System™ immediately.

In August, Bollow released a new book about the F.A.S.T. approach called ***Writing FAST: How to Write Anything with Lightning Speed***, which he hopes will widen the net, and get more Aussies to try their hand at screenwriting.

In October, his completely re-designed ***F.A.S.T. Screenwriting Workshop*** is returning to Sydney at UNSW, to Melbourne at Hotel Y, and to the Gold Coast at Bond University. An immersive, surprisingly in-depth course on screenwriting that now includes movie clips and the FAST System™, Bollow's weekend workshop has drawn rave reviews since it's very first offering in mid-2000.

Complete novices, professional screenwriters, directors, producers, actors, radio personalities and best-selling novelists all agree that Jeff's practical hands-on approach and passionate attitude are just the antidote to an industry bogged down by bureaucracy. Over 650 participants aged 15 to 72 have attended, with nearly 100% recommending the small, intimate experience.

"The truth is, I'd much rather be making movies than teaching people how to write. But when you can't find commercially-viable material, you've got to start at square one," Bollow said with a shrug. "We might as well get there as FAST as possible."

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***Screenplay.com.au*** is Australia's Screenplay Development Centre, an initiative of Embryo Films, offering screenwriting resources, workshops, software, assessments, Coverage, submission facility, script editing and mentorships.

***F.A.S.T. Screenwriting Workshops*** are in Sydney (at UNSW) 9 & 10 October, in Melbourne (Hotel Y) 23 & 24 October, and on the Gold Coast (Bond University) 30 & 31 October. They run from 11am - 5pm, Saturday and Sunday, and cost just \$350. Seating is limited. For more information, visit ***Screenplay.com.au*** or ***FASTscreenwriting.com/workshop***

***Writing FAST: How to Write Anything with Lightning Speed*** is available for \$29.95 including GST from writingFAST.com, select bookstores, and Amazon.