

George Miller's action masterpiece flies flag for Aussies

# MAD MAX ON ROAD TO OSCARS GLORY



Mad Max: Fury Road

THE torturous two decades George Miller spent in development hell on *Mad Max: Fury Road* has been rewarded with a record-breaking 10 Academy Award nominations — the most for any Australian film.

The film will compete for both best picture and director honours at the 88th Oscars in February, as well as for a slew of technical awards.

The post-apocalyptic road movie was topped only by wintery survival drama *The Revenant* with 12 nominations.

Miller, 70, said he was “doing happy jigs” at his home in Sydney, along with wife of 21

**ANDREW FENTON**

years, Margaret Sixel, who was nominated for film editing.

“If you had told me this a month ago I would have said it was a very, very low possibility,” Miller said. “It’s fantastic so many of us are being invited to the party.”

*Mad Max’s* haul outshines previous Aussie nominations record-holder *Moulin Rouge*, which scored eight in 2002.

University of Sydney senior film lecturer Dr Bruce Isaacs predicted Miller would take home the best director statuette, saying: “Everyone would

have expected *Mad Max’s* technical awards, but you don’t expect a straight genre film to pick up the major nominations.”

Cate Blanchett received her seventh nomination for 1950s lesbian romance *Carol*. If she wins a third to go with her Oscars for *Blue Jasmine* and *The Aviator*, she will equal Meryl Streep and close in on Katharine Hepburn, who won four.

But she faces stiff competition from favourite Brie Larson, the breakout star of imprisonment drama *Room*; Saoirse Ronan (*Brooklyn*); previous winner Jennifer Lawrence (*Joy*), who is now the youngest

person to receive four Oscar nominations; and veteran actor Charlotte Rampling (45 *Weeks*).

The betting markets don’t favour Blanchett or Miller.

*Spotlight* and *The Revenant* are tipped to battle it out for best picture, for which *Inside Out* and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* were snubbed.

The new *Star Wars* film did pick up five nominations, including for composer John Williams, bringing his record career total to 50 nominations.

Leonardo DiCaprio is considered by most a lock to win his first best actor Oscar over

last year’s winner, Eddie Redmayne, as a transgender pioneer in *The Danish Girl*.

Other *Fury Road* Aussie nominees are Oscar-winning cinematographer John Seale, who came out of retirement; production designers Colin Gibson and Lisa Thompson; sound mixer Ben Osmo; sound editor David White; Andrew Jackson and Dan Oliver, for visual effects; and hair and makeup artists Lesley Vanderwalt, Damian Martin and Elka Wardega. The film’s 10th nominee, Jenny Beavan for costume design, is English.

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**AUSSIE NOMINATIONS**

**BEST PICTURE**

George Miller and Doug Mitchell (*Mad Max: Fury Road*)

**BEST DIRECTOR**

George Miller (*Mad Max: Fury Road*)

**BEST ACTRESS**

Cate Blanchett (*Carol*)

**EDITOR**

Margaret Sixel (*Mad Max: Fury Road*)

**CINEMATOGRAPHY**

John Seale (*Mad Max: Fury Road*)

**PRODUCTION DESIGN**

Colin Gibson and Lisa Thompson (*Mad Max: Fury Road*)

**SOUND MIXING**

Ben Osmo (*Mad Max: Fury Road*)

**SOUND EDITING**

David White (*Mad Max: Fury Road*)

**MAKEUP AND HAIRSTYLING**

Lesley Vanderwalt, Elka Wardega and Damian Martin (*Mad Max: Fury Road*)

**VISUAL EFFECTS**

Andrew Jackson and Dan Oliver (*Mad Max: Fury Road*)



Cate Blanchett in Carol



Leonardo DiCaprio in The Revenant

## Astronomical find a real blast

ASTRONOMERS have found a distant supernova 20 times brighter than the Milky Way.

A global network of small telescopes spotted the exploded star last June.

It is about 3.8 billion light-years away, in a galaxy roughly three times the size of the Milky Way, scientists wrote in this week’s issue of *Science*.

“It didn’t look like any of the other 200 or so supernovas we had discovered,” wrote as-

tronomer Subo Dong, from the Kavli Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics at Peking University in China.

It is more than twice as bright as any previously discovered supernova.

If the supernova, known as ASASSN-15lh, is at the centre of its galaxy it could have been triggered by a huge black hole.

Black holes are believed to exist at the centre of most, if not all, large galaxies, includ-

ing at the centre of the Milky Way itself.

Another theory is that the supernova was spawned by a magnetar — a rare, rapidly rotating neutron star with an extremely powerful magnetic field, according to Ohio State University astronomer Todd Thompson.

“Like many mysteries in astronomy, it may take years, if not decades, to unravel it,” Mr Dong said.



Chris Hemsworth

## HEMSWORTH TO SPRUIK OZ

HEART-throb actor Chris Hemsworth is set to follow in the footsteps of Paul Hogan and Lara Bingle as Australia’s next tourism ambassador.

The Aussie hunk, now promoting his new film, *In the Heart of the Sea*, will front the \$45 million Tourism Australia coastal and aquatic experiences campaign.

He’ll attend the campaign launch in New York on January 25 and perform other duties to promote the country

he still calls home. “It wasn’t a hard decision to move back to Australia because this part of the world is such a special place,” said Hemsworth of his return to Byron Bay last year.

“This is the place I want my kids to grow up.”

The emphasis on coastal and aquatic experiences particularly resonated with Hemsworth, a keen surfer.

“Being in the water or near to it, is a way of life for us,” Hemsworth said.