

# LAUNCH LAB



## AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND FILM FESTIVAL STRATEGY

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**Saturday 13 September 2025 |  
The Mercury**

COMPILED BY NICK HAYES IN  
COLLABORATION WITH THE MERCURY

DATE: 2<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025

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# LAUNCH LAB – AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND FILM FESTIVAL STRATEGY

SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2025 | THE MERCURY  
10.00AM – 4.00PM | NETWORKING UNTIL 5.00PM

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## PROGRAM

**9.30am – 10.00am**  
**DOORS OPEN + COFFEE!**

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**10.00am – 11.15am**  
**WELCOME + PANEL DISCUSSION: Meet the Programmers**

Acknowledgement of Country + Introductions by Head of Industry Programs, The Mercury

Panel moderated by **Nick Hayes, Film Industry Executive**

### Panelists

- **Mat Kesting** – Adelaide Film Festival, CEO & Creative Director
  - **Justin Martyniuk** – Sydney Film Festival, Head of Programs
  - **Kate Fitzpatrick** – Melbourne International Film Festival, Senior Programmer
  - **Lisa Rose** – Former Director, Queer Screen
  - **Hudson Sowada** – Fantastic Film Festival Australia, Artistic Director & Lead Programmer
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**11.15am – 11.30am**  
**MORNING TEA BREAK**

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**11.30am – 1.00pm**

## **WORKSHOP: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE + ON-SET MARKETING**

Presenter: **Nick Hayes**

### **Know Your Audience**

- Why it matters: audience insight shapes every stage of a film's journey.
- Defining core, secondary, and community audiences.
- Tools for understanding who your audience really is.
- Speaking to them: tone, channels, messaging, visual cues.
- Audience pathways: from festival to release to long-tail life.

### **On-Set Marketing**

- Planning hero stills and BTS coverage.
- Social media capture: vertical video, Q&As, behind-the-scenes moments.
- Integrating marketing into production design, wardrobe, and location scouting.
- Budgeting for trailers, posters, and content capture as part of the production plan.

### **Interactive Exercises**

- Positioning a film: identifying audiences and refining loglines.
  - Micro-targeting brainstorm: channels, communities, and outreach ideas.
  - Logline writing: sharpening messaging for audience resonance.
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**1.00pm – 2.00pm**

## **LUNCH BREAK**

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**2.00pm – 2.40pm**

## **PRESENTATION: Film Festival Strategy**

- Why a festival strategy matters.
  - Tiering: A-list global festivals, national showcases, regional and specialised.
  - Premiere status, rules, and programming considerations.
  - Support from Screen Australia and SAFC.
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**2.40pm – 3.10pm**

**ZOOM IN CONVERSATION: Case Study – *Last Cab to Darwin***

**With Lisa Duff, Producer**

- Festival positioning and awards journey.
  - Regional tour screenings and direct audience engagement.
  - Results: cultural impact and 13 AACTA nominations.
  - Lessons for short-form filmmakers.
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**3.10pm – 3.30pm**

**Discussion + Q&A**

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**3.30pm – 4.00pm**

**VIEWING: Award-Winning Shorts from Across the Globe**

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**4.00pm – 5.00pm**

**NETWORKING in the Foyer**