



## **THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP**

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

27 November 2020

#### ***Thirteen Lives*, based on the Thai caves rescue, to film in Australia**

The Morrison Government will provide \$13 million to Imagine Entertainment and MGM to shoot the live-action feature film *Thirteen Lives*, about the incredible Thai caves rescue, in Queensland.

The production, to be directed by legendary film-maker Ron Howard, will commence filming in March. The Gold Coast hinterland will double for Thailand.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said the production is expected to inject more than \$96 million into the economy, directly creating around 435 jobs for cast and crew, as well as an equivalent 3400 background extra days.

“*Thirteen Lives* will tell the remarkable story of the effort by many volunteers, including Australians, to undertake an incredibly complex rescue. And I am proud to say that this story will be told here in Australia,” Minister Fletcher said.

“In addition to recording this remarkable story for posterity, the production itself will create vital job opportunities and will engage the services of an estimated 300 Australian businesses.

“I understand this project will also undertake a significant amount of cutting-edge visual effects work here, a great opportunity for our local post, digital and visual effects companies.”

Directed by Academy Award-winner Ron Howard, and produced by Academy Award-winner Brian Grazer, P.J. van Sandwijk, Gabrielle Tana and Karen Lunder, *Thirteen Lives* follows the true story of the 2018 Tham Laung cave rescue of a boys’ soccer team, trapped in a cave by heavy rain and flooding. After the team was stuck for days with no supplies and falling oxygen levels, a group from all over the world came together to work with the people of Thailand to save the boys. Among those experts were a group of divers from the United Kingdom and Australia.

Ron Howard has thanked the Government for the support of the Location Incentive program and notes he is thrilled to be working in Australia.

Mr Howard said, “Over the years, I’ve both enjoyed and creatively benefitted from collaborations with Australian artists and technicians in front of and behind the camera, from Cate Blanchett, Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe and Chris Hemsworth to John Seale, Donald McAlpine and Andrew Rowlands and many others.”

“From *Thirteen Lives* to the animated projected I am directing with Animal Logic in Australia, I am

excited about the opportunity to film and work in Australia and dramatically expand on that list of collaborators whose sensibilities and work ethic I have long admired and respected.”

MGM’s President of Physical Production, Michele Imperato said, “We thank the Federal Government and Minister Fletcher for their great support and for welcoming the *Thirteen Lives* production to Australia.”

*Thirteen Lives* is supported under the Morrison Government’s \$400 million boost to the Location Incentive to create a pipeline of international projects, which will generate tens of thousands of Australian jobs in the screen industry over the next seven years.

You can view Ron Howard’s video welcoming the support of the Australian Government [here](#).

For more information on the Location Incentive Program please visit: [www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/screen/australian-screen-production-incentive](http://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/screen/australian-screen-production-incentive).

Imagine Entertainment and MGM’s *Thirteen Lives* will be distributed in Australia by Universal Pictures International.

**Media contact:** Imre Salusinszky | 0432 535 737 [Imre.Salusinszky@communications.gov.au](mailto:Imre.Salusinszky@communications.gov.au)