

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday August 15, 2019

Production commences in Brisbane on Young Adult feature film **SWIMMING FOR GOLD**

Shooting has commenced in Brisbane this week on the Young Adult feature film *Swimming for Gold*, starring U.S. actor Peyton List (*Jessie*, *Bunk'd*) in the lead role. List plays Claire Carpenter, a 17-year-old elite swimmer who is reluctantly sent to Australia to coach a boys' swim team, following a jet ski accident that left her with a fear of the water. Susie O'Neill, Australian swimming icon and winner of 8 Olympic medals, Ariarne Titmus, member of the Australian Dolphins swim team, and Australian Paralympic swimmer Ellie Cole will also appear in cameo roles.

Peyton List is best known to audiences for her portrayal of Emma Ross on the popular long-running Disney series *Jessie* and its spin-off *Bunk'd*, a character she played from 2011-2018. Some of her recent credits include the Hulu supernatural thriller *Light as a Feather*, and the Karate Kid spin-off series, *Cobra Kai*, where List received positive praise from the media for her role as Tory. List is also a recording artist, and has a significant social media presence with over 16 million Instagram followers.

List comments, "I've visited Australia with my family, and I'm really excited to return but this time to work alongside a new cast with such an exciting script! My character Claire goes on a journey of self-discovery throughout the film, to overcome her fears. I'm looking forward to sharing this heart-warming and inspiring story with young audiences."

Swimming for Gold is the third film by The Steve Jaggi Company for the Young Adult market, the first two features *Rip Tide* and *Back of the Net*, screening to huge global audiences following their Australian theatrical release. The Steve Jaggi Company relocated from Sydney to Brisbane in early 2019 to join the thriving Queensland film sector. The business has expanded its post production capabilities and now supports other Queensland productions through their state-of-the-art facilities in Teneriffe.

Steve Jaggi comments "we're thrilled to be shooting our latest feature here in Brisbane. We've been welcomed by the local industry with open arms and hope this is the first of many productions we film here."

Screen Queensland CEO Tracey Vieira comments "The Queensland Government through Screen Queensland is proud to be investing in *Swimming for Gold* that will employ more than 65 local crew and cast throughout the 4-week shoot and inject over \$2 million into the local economy."

"This feature film will also provide key training opportunities through industry attachments in hair and makeup as well as assistant director roles demonstrating how our investments continue to grow the local capability and upskill the next wave of screen industry crew."

"It's also a clear demonstration of our commitment to gender parity in the screen industry giving the talented Hayley MacFarlane her first feature film directing credit, a step closer to redressing the imbalance of women in this key creative role which currently sits at a mere 16 per cent for Australian feature films."

Director Hayley MacFarlane said “I instantly felt connected to this story of young athletes training competitively at the top of their game. With intelligent female characters and compassionate male roles, *Swimming for Gold* is an uplifting story that will inspire courage and friendship in viewers both young and old. Having directed projects around the world, I’m delighted to be shooting my first feature back on home soil in beautiful Brisbane.”

Swimming for Gold is produced by Steve Jaggi and Spencer McLaren, executive produced by Fernando Szew (MarVista Entertainment), Phil Hunt (HeadGear Films), Lionel Hicks (Liquid Noise) and written by Eric Bergemann.

The film will be released exclusively through Event Cinemas in 2020. As part of the company’s continued growth, The Steve Jaggi Company is adding domestic distribution to its portfolio and will be handling the film’s theatrical release in Australia.

International sales and distribution is being handled by MarVista Entertainment out of Los Angeles, California.

Ends.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

ABOUT THE FILM

17-year-old Claire Carpenter (Peyton List) was an elite swimmer and social media darling until a jet ski accident left her with a fear of the water. Tired of seeing his daughter with no ambition or purpose, Claire’s father sends her to Australia to coach an elite boys swim team, much to Claire’s irritation. Upon arriving at the swim camp, Claire is further horrified to find she will be sharing a room with her long-time rival and sworn enemy Mikayla Michaels (Lauren Esposito).

When Claire shows no interest in training the boys, or even being there, Liam (Daniel Needs) – the captain of the boys’ team – challenges her, explaining that if they don’t win the swim meet, the camp will close. Claire sees in Liam the passion she once had for swimming and steps up to prove him wrong.

With the girls siding with Mikayla and her new gruelling training techniques upsetting the boys, Claire wants nothing more than to go home, but with a signed a contract committing her to the camp, and the weight of winning the swim meet resting heavily on her shoulders, Claire must overcome her fear, and put aside her past differences with Mikayla.

CAST

Peyton List (Claire Carpenter): 21-year-old Peyton List is known for her portrayal as Emma Ross on Disney’s long-running fan-favourite series’ *Jessie* and *Bunk’d*. Peyton appeared in the CBS series, *Happy Together*, and also starred in the recently released Hulu supernatural thriller, *Light as a Feather*. Upcoming film credits include, *The Thinning: New World Order*, *Anthem of a Teenage Prophet*, *Then Came You*, and MGM’s musical remake of the cult classic, *Valley Girl*. List also appeared in the films *27 Dresses* and *Remember Me* and in two instalments of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* franchise. Peyton also released her first music single titled, "Liar Liar", which released on Dirty Canvas, home to American Authors and Young Rising Sons. Peyton enjoys a substantial social media presence. She currently has over 16 million followers on Instagram and millions more followers on Facebook and Snapchat.

Lauren Esposito (Mikayla Michaels): Lauren Esposito is a 21-year-old Australian actress born in Adelaide. Growing up, she appeared in numerous leading roles for musicals including *Aladdin*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Annie* and *Guys and Dolls*. Lauren had the leading role in the Australian feature film *The Five: Earth* and appeared in James Wan’s blockbuster *The Conjuring 2*. Lauren also played the regular role of Cynthia on the popular Channel 9 series *Love Child*.

CREW

Hayley MacFarlane, Director: Hayley MacFarlane is an award-winning Australian director who grew up in Cairns. Her first short film *Hummingbirds* (2012) gained great success both nationally and internationally, and put Hayley on the world map from a young age. Hayley's follow up short film, *Growing Young* (2015) saw similar success screening at festivals around the world. Fresh out of film school, Hayley signed with Brisbane production company Two Little Indians where she has directed campaigns and commercials for clients such as Discovery Kids Network, Village Road Show and Tourism QLD. After moving to London in 2014 Hayley began directing reality TV which has led her around the world directing some of the UK's and Australia's hottest reality shows. <https://www.hayleymacfarlane.com/>

Steve Jaggi, Producer: Since founding his company 8 years ago, Jaggi has established his brand as synonymous with quality, globally focused Young Adult content. Best known for *Rip Tide*, a commercial and critical success (one of the 10 grossing Australian films on 2017, Netflix global release and trending on the carousel in numerous territories; official selection at the 2017 Sydney Film Festival and CinefestOz), Jaggi's other successful Y.A. titles include *Ambrosia* (multi-platinum soundtrack) and *Back of the Net* (one of the top 10 grossing Australian films to date in 2019, acquired by Disney in North America). Other notable titles include the divisive festival hit *Chocolate Oyster*, which Jaggi directed, family film *Find Your Voice* starring Academy Award nominee Keisha Castle-Hughes and springboard films *Zelos* and *Skin Deep*. A graduate of the Griffith University Film School, Jaggi recently returned to Brisbane with his company headquartered in Teneriffe.

<https://www.stevejaggi.com/>

Spencer McLaren, Producer: Since graduating from Sydney's National Institute of Dramatic Art, Spencer has pursued a diverse producing career across both live performance and filmed content under the banner of his company McLaren House. Content to date includes award winning live theatre shows playing 80 to 8000 seats as well as both short and feature films. Notably Spencer spent the last three years contracting to TEG as General Manager of their family division Life Like Touring. In this role he oversaw the development and global roll out of theatrical product with a strong focus on direct to market sales. His tenure saw the business grow its international product by over 40% with much of this content developed in conjunction with underlying IP holders Disney, Nickelodeon, Aardman and eOne. Recent works have toured through ANZ, UK, Russia, China, Singapore, Sweden, Spain, Portugal and the UAE. It is this global experience in the family space that provides a unique perspective that Spencer brings to his productions in both the film and live spaces.

<https://www.mclarenhouse.com/>

About Screen Queensland: Screen Queensland is a Queensland Government owned company that invests in talent and production to grow a creative, innovative and successful screen industry with a focus on stories and audience, secures production and post, digital and vfx to Queensland, and delivers an active screen culture through festivals and events funding across the state. Screen Queensland invests in stories and talent through a range of mechanisms including development, production investment, initiatives, sqhub and mentorships. Screen Queensland is deeply committed to increasing diversity in the screen industry to reflect the Australian community. For more information visit screenqld.com.au

About MarVista Entertainment: Founded in 2003, Los Angeles-based MarVista Entertainment is a leading independent entertainment studio that produces, acquires and distributes premium film and television content worldwide. With a library showcasing nearly 2,500 hours of content, and with approximately 50 new movies per year added to the company's distribution pipeline, MarVista has become one of the largest suppliers of movies to the worldwide marketplace. MarVista has an expansive distribution footprint spanning more than 125 global territories, and has grown to become a pre-eminent supplier of programming to major cable networks in the U.S., including Disney Channel/Disney XD, Lifetime, Hallmark Channel, NBC Universal, Nickelodeon, Viacom Networks, as well as key international broadcasters, cable networks and digital platforms including Netflix. MarVista's recent projects include *Bitch* and *Corpse Tub*, the first two films in a multi-project partnership deal with Elijah Wood's Company X/Spectrevision; *Rebel*, the dramatic series from executive producer John Singleton that premiered on BET; *King Kong Skull Island*, a live-action series currently in development with Global Road Entertainment; and the original limited series *Best Worst Week Ever* for Netflix.