Welcome to the 11th National & International Benalla Short Film Festival 2025. Benalla Shorts embraces national and international film makers across all age groups and walks of life.

DIRECTORS MESSAGE

We are so honoured and excited to have been Nominated for the Victoria Community Achievement Award for 2 years in row. This our 11th year bringing Benalla and district unique thought provoking short films.

Screen culture tells stories that allow us to connect with one another, and to better understand ourselves and each other.

We are thrilled to welcome back our fantastic judges, Krista Vendy and Bruce Hunt-Hughes for another exciting year.
They have navigated a busy season with many film entries.
Out of the 87 films submitted, we are delighted to bring you the top 10 films to enjoy.

The Benalla Shorts Team would like to thank the local businesses that have contributed and the local community for their continued support for allowing us to grow for the last 11 years.

Written by Anna Smith

<u>Meet our amazing team.</u>

Assistant Director / Projectionist Peter Maddock
Master of Ceremony / Treasurer Paul Smith
Graphic Designer Sarah Perrett
Website Adviser Bev Lee
Photographer Rene Martens
Videographer – Michael Raso
Media/Publicity Noelle McCracken
Ushers: Sue Ellis, Marcia Christofas and Trudi Nichol's

SHORT FILM EVENT PROGRAM

1. Welcome by Master of Ceremonies Paul Smith

2. Invite Deputy Major, Benalla Rural City-Justin King to Dias, for Acknowledgement of Country.

3a. Short Film Screenings

3b. Premiere Screening at 3.00 PM-110 min with Awards

3c. Second Screening at 6.00 PM-90 min

Note — after the screenings there will be **Voting for People's Choice**

Please place Voting Slips in the ballot box in the foyer for counting. The winner of the People's Choice Award will be announced after the 6.00pm screening.

THANK YOU

We would like to thank the many people who have contributed and assisted in making the Benalla Short Film Festival successful.

Benalla Rural City Council, Alison Angus-Benalla Information Centre, Lois Smith, Jake Bowtell and the Benalla Cinema team, Kate Nolan Benalla Festival Coordinator and Ian Philips Cinema IT Assistant.

Let Us Entertain You Inc. (LUEY) Committee.
Lorraine Monshing OAM, Cheryl Laurien, Ross Bootes, Anna and Paul Smith.

Benalla Shorts Awards 2025

Student Award $500

Local Award $250

Best Documentary $500

Kevin Perry Encouragement Award $250

LAURIE WATTERS & ASSOCIATES

Best Performance $200

north east podiatry

Peoples Choice Award $250

BENALLATRAVEL
[EXCEPTIONAL GLOBAL TRAVEL]

Best International $500

Anna Greenhalgh
ESTATE AGENT

Judges Award Best Australian $1000

BENALLA BUSINESSES

History of Benalla Shorts

The Inaugural Benalla Festival in 2014 initiated by two Benalla locals, Anna Smith and Bernice Vance.

The Premiere event was officially opened by Australian actor and entertainer Mr. Tom Burlinson (The Man From Snowy River) via a video presentation. And well wishes from (MASTERCHEF) Judge Matt Preston.

The Festival has gone from strength to strength with every year with Kevin Perry ESM joining the team in 2017 and his amazing technical skills.

Covid-19 restrictions interfered and we saw our 2020 event screened online. This action ensured we honoured our long commitment to our film makers and sponsors to have their work judged, screened. and supported financially.

An Australia Day Achiever Award was given to Anna Smith in 2021 for her contribution to the Arts in Benalla.

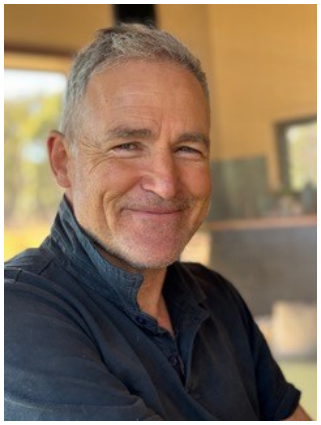
In 2022 it was decided to go International with our 1st Award Winner from Italy.

Benalla Shorts have been nominated in 2023 & 2024 for the 7 NEWS Victoria Community Achievement Award.

While Peter Maddock has been a valuable member of the Benalla Shorts team, his role expanded significantly in 2024 when he took on the duties of Assistant Director.

We have been honoured by the attendance of our esteemed Judges past and present Frank Bruzzese, David Forster, Matt Scholten, Polly Staniford, Tom Long, John Orcsik, Krista Vendy, Tony Bonner AM and Bruce Hunt-Hughes.

BENALLA SHORTS 2025 JUDGES



BRUCE HUNT-HUGHES

Bruce holds a Bachelor Arts from the University of Western Australia and is also a graduate of the National Institute of the Dramatic Arts (NIDA). He is a highly-regarded facilitator and coach, who bases his work on more than 20 years of experience as a professional actor.

His extensive experience working in theatre and on screen, includes a season with “The Streetcar named Desire” in London.

Bruce is a mainstay of Australian television and is known for his roles in “A Country Practice”, “Halifax F.P”, “HOWZAT Kerry Packer War” , “ The Portable Door” and many more.

KRISTA VENDY

Krista Vendy has balanced her acting and modelling with a lifelong interest in charity, which is evident by her commitment as judge, now returning for her 6th gig. Krista is an Australian actress known for her roles on TV shows including Neighbours, where she played teacher Teresa "Tess" Bell. Since Neighbours she has guest starred in television roles in Australia and the United States including, Blue Heelers, Shock Jock, Nightmares and Dreamscapes, Leverage and Mental. Her Film credits include The Writer, Fat Pizza, Horseplay, The Incredible Hulk and Matching Jack.

Vale Kevin Perry ESM

Kevin Perry retired from the Victoria State Emergency Service in July 2007 after 31 years dealing with emergency situations and natural disasters.

Without Kevin's generous spirit, big heart and enormous efforts the Benalla Short Film Festival would not exist today.

KP was not only my friend but he was my mentor, he shared my dedication and passion in creating an international event and together we worked through all the issues that would arise. Nothing would stand in his way, not even COVID 19 when he suggested we take the Festival online. As usual he was absolutely right. This decision meant that we could proceed and fulfil all our obligations to the film makers and sponsors.

Kevin was diagnosed with MND (Motor Neurone Disease) 2023 and passed away in May 2024. He was determined to do all he could for as long as he could.

Kevin would champion the little guy and he was a firm believer in reward for effort. That's why we have created this Category The Kevin Perry Encouragement Award in his honour.

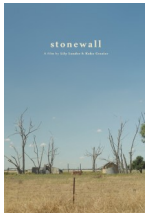
Written by Anna Smith

LAURIE WATTERS & ASSOCIATES

BENALLA Shorts FILM FESTIVAL

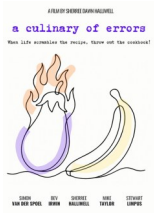
WOMEN OF THE WAVES (5:06). Women of the Waves celebrates the impact of community in breaking barriers to access for female surfers. It showcases the ocean as a safe, empowering place for women to connect with others and find strength. **Han Soo Yoo, Victoria.**

THE POMEGRANATE (13:40). A mother hands a small pomegranate tree to her seven-year-old son and says, when it bears fruits, I'll be back home. She is in prison now accused of murdering her husband. The boy carries the pot everywhere, causing inconvenience for his paternal grandmother, now his custodian. **Mehrdad Jalali, Iran.**

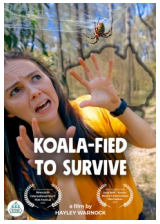


STONEWALL (5:00). A young woman returns to her regional hometown to make peace with the death of her estranged mother. **Lily Lunder & Koko Crozier, Victoria.**

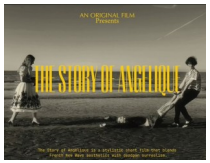
THE MEDIATOR (11:45). It's 2009, Mick Gatto is at the height of his powers. If you take his business card at face value, he's arguably one of the world's best negotiators. He's also the last-man-standing after Melbourne's brutal gangland wars. What did he have to do to survive the carnage? And what has he had to do to stay alive? **Roman Anastasios, Victoria.**



A CULINARY OF ERRORS (6:33). Dawn, daydreams of being a chef, despite being at the bottom of the food-chain at Bannaman's Bistro. But when a freak accident sidelines the restaurant's pretentious head chef, Dawn steps up - just as Australia's most feared food critic walks through the door. What follows is a heartwarming tale of courage, chaos, and culinary serendipity. **Sherree Dawn Halliwell, Queensland.**



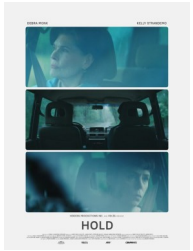
KOALA-FIED TO SURVIVE, (12:17). Amidst the snakes, spiders, and wacky phenomena of Australia, one outdoor enthusiast is determined to unravel the truth behind the country's infamous reputation for danger. Koala-fied to Survive offers a lighthearted guide that just might save you on your next adventure. **Hayley Warnock, Victoria.**



THE STORY OF ANGELIQUE (3:24). The Story of Angelique is a comedic, stylistic short film that blends French New Wave aesthetics with deadpan surrealism to explore the complexity of personal identity—and how imagination shapes the futures we create for ourselves. The film follows Angelique, an unusual young woman who feels disconnected from the world around her, quietly observing life from the margins. **Jessica Cross, Queensland.**

AURORA AUSTRALIS (3:05) Video of the Aurora that appeared in Northeast Victoria 3 times that was visible to the naked eye from May 2024 to Jan 2025

Rene Martens, Victoria.



HOLD (14:45). An early morning phone call propels a mother and daughter on a path toward connection and the mysteries held in the act of letting go.

Josiah Junqueira Spencer, U.S.A.

HUMAN RESOURCES (12:03). A struggling musician's first 'real job' is revealed to be a corporate nightmare, where employees are forced to feign happiness or end up as prey to their evil boss.

Joel Stephen Fleming, Queensland.

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