



MEDIA RELEASE

Ian Thorpe and other Australian Sports Legends Come Out for MGFF

Panel Announced for Out to Win Screening: Sunday 28 Feb

11 February 2016: Ian Thorpe, Matthew Mitcham, Sally Shipard, Daniel Kowalski, Shelly Gorman-Sandie and Casey Conway will form a panel discussion about being elite gay athletes as part of the Mardi Gras Film Festival screening of **OUT TO WIN**, co-presented with ACON and Pride in Diversity on Sunday, 28 February at 7.30pm at Event Cinemas, George Street. Tickets are on sale at queerscreen.org.au or through the Mardi Gras Film Festival app.

This high profile panel of Australian athletes will discuss the impact their sexuality has had on their careers and personal lives. The panel will follow the screening of Malcolm Ingram's documentary examining the lives of aspiring and professional gay and lesbian athletes, featuring interviews with Billie Jean King, Jason Collins, John Amaechi, Martina Navratilova, Michael Sam and many more.

"We are thrilled to host so many Australian sporting legends at our screening and highlight one of our key themes this year which is a focus on LGBTIQ and equality in sport," explains Festival Director Paul Struthers. "With the visibility of LGBTIQ athletes continuing to rise, and many deciding to come out during their careers, we are celebrating by presenting four excellent LGBTIQ sporting documentaries highlighting diversity at all levels of sporting competition."

The screening is presented by ACON, NSW's leading HIV prevention, HIV support and LGBTI health organisation. As part of ACON and Pride in Diversity's newly launched Pride in Sport program that includes the world-first LGBTI Pride in Sport Index, hosting the OUT TO WIN panel is an important step in addressing homophobia and the exclusion of LGBTI people in sport.

"Many of Australia's sporting organisations are recognising positive steps need to be taken to ensure your sexuality, gender identity or intersex status does not impact your ability to play, watch or be involved with sport at any level," said Andrew Purchas, Vice President of ACON and a co-founder of the Pride in Sport Index. "The Pride in Sport Index will provide sporting organisations with the opportunity to annually benchmark their inclusion efforts and promote equality in sporting opportunity. OUT TO WIN highlights, in many aspects, the USA currently leads Australia in this regard."

Other sports documentaries in the Festival's Focus on Sport program include BACK ON BOARD: GREG LOUGANIS chronicling the American diver's career and retirement; Australian-made SCRUM following the players fighting to get a position on the Sydney Convicts Rugby Club for the 2014 Bingham Cup; and GAME FACE exploring the lives of LGBTIQ athletes including transgender lesbian MMA fighter Fallon Fox and basketball Terrence Clemens.

Tickets for all films are on sale now including flexi passes to 5 or 10 films. Visit queerscreen.org.au or the Mardi Gras Film Festival app to book or call



(02) 9332 4938 to become a Queer Screen member for discounted tickets and priority entry.

Note to Editors:

- Media passes will be available for the event
- Pre-event interviews may be available upon request
- Images of athletes, film stills and screeners of the films may be available upon requests

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ABOUT THE PRIDE IN SPORT INDEX:

The Pride in Sport Index is an initiative of the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Australian Sports Commission and a legacy of the Bingham Cup, Sydney. Following the release of the *Out on the Fields* study in May 2015, the largest international study examining homophobia in sport, these organisations commissioned Pride in Diversity to develop a Pride in Sport Index. The PSI is a benchmarking instrument to measure, comment on and make recommendations to create an inclusive and equitable environment for LGBTI players, supporters, and participants.

An advisory group has been established to assist Pride in Diversity in the development of the Pride in Sport Index. The advisory group includes; the National Rugby League (NRL), the Australian Football League (AFL), the Australian Rugby Union (ARU), Football Federation Australia (FFA), Cricket Australia, Swimming Australia, Waterpolo Australia, Basketball Australia and Golf Australia. Pride in Sport Index is expected to launch in March 2016.