

**BIG
STORIES
BIG SCREEN
2025
Season**



We screen our films on Sundays at 7pm at the Gala cinema, Warrawong. Short films screen before some features. Entry by membership only—join here.



No IFS screenings due to school/public holidays:
13, 20 & 27 April, 8 June, 6 & 13 July, 28 Sep & 5 Oct

Community partnerships



The Illawarra's only independent, locally-owned cinema



Enjoy a meal on IFS nights at the Open Hearth Hotel and get 10% off—just show your ticket.

ifs.org.au



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Pawel Czerwinski on Unsplash

9 February

Drama

OSCAR AND LUCINDA

M | 132 mins | Gillian Armstrong | 1997 | Australia

Rebellious 19th Century heiress Lucinda (Cate Blanchett, extraordinary in her first leading role) and guilt-ridden naïf priest Oscar (Ralph Fiennes) are inveterate gamblers and lifelong misfits. Drawn to one another, they cannot resist a final all-or-nothing bet about a beautiful, improbable church made of glass, in this unconventional romantic drama.

Beautifully shot/Notable score/Acting masterclass

16 February

Doco

AQUARELA

M | 90 mins | Victor Kossakovsky | 2018 | Russia

This immersive, sometimes heart-stopping spectacle from the director of Gunda demands to be seen on the big screen. It has no narration, instead letting the incredible visuals and audio tell the story of water in all its forms, from life-giving rain to gigantic waves and the sensory overload of calving icebergs.

Beautifully shot/Notable score/Thought-provoking

23 February

Comedy/Drama

LA CHIMERA

M | 130 mins | Alice Rohrwacher | 2023 | Italy

Rohrwacher's multilayered worlds linger long after the end titles. This is the beguiling, poetic, strange, magical story of a lost-soul archaeologist turned tomb-raider (Josh O'Connor) in 1980s Italy and those around him, including the comical, sometimes ruthless petty criminals who lean on his talents, and the mother of his absent love (Isabella Rossellini).

Beautifully shot/Notable soundtrack

2 March

Drama

RADICAL

M | 125 mins | Christopher Zalla | 2023 | Mexico

This based-on-a-true-story drama, about a teacher in a dangerous, impoverished town who refuses to accept that its kids have no futures, hits all the familiar notes of the genre — and is no less powerful for it. Eugenio Derbez (*Coda*) is matched by strong young co-stars as events build to an emotional climax.

Charming/Gritty/Moving/Uplifting

9 March

Drama

AMERICAN ANIMALS

MA+ | 116 mins | Bart Layton | 2018 | USA

A 'true-crime' story like you've never seen, this is the brilliantly told story of how four U.S. college students decided to steal books worth millions and what happened next. An exciting, sure-handed, frequently surprising cinematic experience, it stars *Saltburn*'s Barry Keoghan in one of his first major roles.

Thrilling/Unpredictable/Notable soundtrack

16 March

Doco

KEDI

G | 79 mins | Ceyda Torun | 2016 | Turkey

Istanbul is famed for many things, including its street cats. This documentary reveals the city's life and heart through seven of its distinct feline characters, and the people who interact with them.

Beautifully shot/Notable soundtrack/Travel inspo

23 March

Drama

SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS

PG | 96 mins | Alexander Mackendrick | 1957 | USA

A never-better Tony Curtis and Burt Lancaster are cast against type as a desperate press agent and a monstrous gossip columnist in 1950s New York. Just as good are James Wong Howe's B&W shots of rain-slicked streets and nightclub interiors and Elmer Bernstein's smoky jazz score.

Must-see classic/Criterion Collection/Letterboxd Top 250

30 March

Doco

ENNIO

M | 150 mins | Guiseppe Tornatore | 2021 | Italy

A must for film-lovers, as the director of *Cinema Paradiso* explores the career of cinema composer Morricone. Richly entertaining, with memorable clips from *The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*, *The Mission*, *The Hateful Eight* and many more, as the maestro himself and some of film's biggest names reflect on his work.

Cinema history/Who's who cast/Notable score

6 April

Drama

UNCLE BOONMEE WHO CAN RECALL HIS PAST LIVES

M | 114 mins | Apichatpong Weerasethakul | 2010 | Thailand

Meditative, fantastical, slyly funny, philosophical and free of plot as we know it, this has a calmly dying man visited by spirits and visions of his own many pasts. Ambient jungle noise forms the soundtrack for most of the film.

Beautifully shot/Notable soundtrack/Contemplative

4 May

Drama

DINGO

M | 109 mins | Rolf de Heer | 1991 | Australia

Jazz great Miles Davis' only starring feature role was this early film from de Heer, who would go on to direct everything from *Bad Boy Bobby* to *Charlie's Country*. Davis plays a legendary trumpeter whose unexpected Outback appearance changes the life of John 'Dingo' Anderson (Colin Friels). Davis & Michel Legrand composed the soundtrack.

Notable score/Australian cinema history

11 May

Drama

CHUNGKING EXPRESS

M | 102 mins | Wong Kar-wai | 1994 | Hong Kong

A movie for people who love movies from a director described as 'the most romantic filmmaker in the world'. Stylised, stylish and seductive for those prepared to surrender, it is the seemingly separate, cleverly connected and mirrored stories of two lovelorn cops in bustling, colourful Hong Kong before its hand-back to China.

Beautifully shot/Notable soundtrack/Letterboxd Top 250

18 May

Drama

MASTER AND COMMANDER

M | 138 mins | Peter Weir | 2003 | USA

Come for a never-better Russell Crowe, for Weir's cinematic artistry, for deeply thrilling, you-are-there naval battles (unequalled on film, says historian Dan Snow), for the friendship and leadership, or for the music by Wollongong's own Richard Tognetti — just come and see this epic the way it should be seen, on the big screen.

Beautifully shot/Notable score/Thrilling/Moving

25 May

Comedy/Drama

TEHRAN TAXI

M | 83 mins | Jafar Panahi | 2015 | Iran

Banned from making films by Iran's rulers, the director of *The White Balloon* mounted cameras in a cab and drove around collecting passengers supposedly at random — though it's soon clear more is afoot in this briskly paced 'docudrama'. Both a love-letter to cinema and a revealing look at the country and its people.

Human drama/Comedic/Thought-provoking

1 June

Doco

AGENT OF HAPPINESS

94 mins | Arun Bhattarai and Dorottya Zurbó | 2024 | Bhutan

Bhutan is famed for measuring Gross National Happiness, and at first this seems like a straightforward Nat Geo-style portrait of endearing census-taker Amber. But the filmmakers have tapped into something much deeper and more affecting, taking us on an unexpected journey, thanks to both Amber and the people he encounters.

Unexpected/Heartwarming/Moving/Travel inspo

15 June

Thriller

WAGES OF FEAR

PG | 153 mins | Henri-Georges Clouzot | 1953 | France

Remarkably, more than 70 years on, this remains one of the most suspenseful films ever made. And we're seeing a brand-new 4k remastered version! Yves Montand stars, as two teams of desperate men in South America compete to deliver a truckload of highly unstable nitro-glycerine, with the potential for obliteration at every turn.

Heart-racing/Must-see classic/Letterboxd Top 250

22 June

Drama

PERFECT DAYS

PG | 124 mins | Wim Wenders | 2023 | Japan

A film about a man whose days are all seemingly the same as he goes about his job cleaning toilets in Tokyo may not sound promising, but in the hands of Wim Wenders and his star, Koji Yakusho, it is a beautiful, gently uplifting Zen meditation on fulfilment, meaning and simple joys.

Heartwarming/Notable soundtrack/Letterboxd Top 250

29 June

Drama

SEPTEMBER

M | 85 mins | Peter Carstairs | 2007 | Australia

In 1968 W.A., Ed (Xavier Samuel) and Paddy (Clarence Ryan) are best mates. But new laws requiring white farmers like Ed's dad to start paying wages to Aboriginal workers like Paddy's family change everything. Features a young Mia Wasikowska, a dreamlike score by Roger Mason and visuals paying homage to Terrence Malick.

Thought-provoking/Moving/Australian lives

20 July

Doco

THE HEART DANCES
—THE JOURNEY OF THE PIANO: THE BALLET

M | 98 mins | Rebecca Tansley | 2018 | New Zealand

A fascinating backstage view of the unexpected challenges for creators and performers when Czech dance luminaries Jiří (choreographer) and Otto (stage designer) Bubeníček are asked by the Royal New Zealand ballet to create a full-length ballet from their short work based on the film *The Piano*.

Beautifully shot/Notable soundtrack/Great to discuss

27 July

Drama

ALL WE IMAGINE AS LIGHT

M | 115 mins | Payal Kapadia | 2024 | India

A beautiful, universally relatable story of what it is to be human, told through the hopes, dreams and loves found and lost of nurses living in Mumbai, where privacy is a luxury and loneliness is found throughout the relentlessly crowded metropolis.

Moving/Heart-warming/Beautifully shot

3 August

Doco

I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO

M | 93 mins | Raoul Peck | 2016 | USA

As brilliant and blistering as writer James Baldwin, around whom it is built, this Oscar nominee tells the story of race in America, from its beginning to now. It includes remarkable archival footage and Samuel L Jackson's narration. This is a U.S. story, but much of it is also directly relevant to Australia.

Thought-provoking/Powerful/Great to discuss

10 August

Comedy/Drama

PRIDE

M | 119 mins | Stephen Beresford | 2014 | UK

This is star Bill Nighy's favourite of the films he's made, and no wonder. Based on the true story of how gay activists ended up supporting striking Welsh coalminers in 1984, it'll make you laugh a lot, and likely shed a tear. The stacked cast includes Imelda Staunton, Dominic West and Andrew Scott.

Belly laughs/Heartwarming/Moving/Notable score/Inspiring

24 August

Comedy

LIMBO

M | 103 mins | Ben Sharrock | 2020 | UK

There is wonderful absurdist humour as Syrian musician Omar and three other asylum-seekers mark time on a remote Scottish island while their applications are assessed. But there is heartache and loss too. Sharrock tenderly weaves a memorable and uplifting tapestry of humanity.

Beautifully shot/Funny/Moving

31 August

Doco

MY NAME IS GULPILIL*M | 101 mins | Molly Reynolds | 2021 | Australia*

David Gulpilil was one of the most charismatic performers in Australian film history, but this is far from a standard career retrospective. Instead it is an unhurried, intimate portrait of a man who described himself as living in two worlds, created in collaboration with its subject as he approached the end of his extraordinary life.

Cinema history/Australian lives

7 September

Comedy/Drama

FUNNY BONES*M | 128 mins | Peter Chelsom | 1995 | UK*

Up for offbeat, occasionally dark comedy? Then this might be the funniest film you've never heard of. Oliver Platt as a failed stand-up seeking inspiration in his Blackpool birthplace, Jerry Lewis as his father, Oliver Reed, Leslie Caron and Richard Griffiths—are all terrific, but it's physical comedy genius Lee Evans you can't stop watching.

Offbeat/Belly laughs/Hidden gem/Who's who cast

14 September

Drama

CORSAGE*M | 116 mins | Marie Kreutzer | 2022 | Austria*

'Corsage' is French for corset; in her gilded cage, Empress Elisabeth of Austria is laced tight. Vicki Krieps (*The Phantom Thread*) is magnetic as the rebellious royal who must decide how long she can bear it. Carefully deployed anachronisms remind us these 18th Century people are not so distant from us after all.

Acting masterclass/Beautifully shot/History reimagined

21 September

Drama

NOTORIOUS*M | 102 mins | Alfred Hitchcock | 1946 | USA*

Shot in sublime B&W (those frocks! that kiss!), this marked a new artistic height for Hitchcock. Ingrid Bergman stars as the daughter of a German war criminal, enlisted by Cary Grant's U.S. government agent to cosy up to Claude Rains and infiltrate a nest of Nazis in South America post-WWII— but at what cost?

Must-see classic/Notable soundtrack/Criterion Collection

12 October

Comedy/Drama

PROBLEMISTA*M | 104 mins | Julio Torres | 2024 | USA*

For those willing to dive into the surreal world of creator and star Torres, this uber-quirky film is a deliriously joyous experience. He plays a Salvadoran toy designer in NYC, where Tilda Swinton's unhinged art critic holds the key to the visa he needs to stay. RZA and Greta Lee co-star, Isabella Rossellini narrates.

Offbeat/New voices/Belly laughs

19 October

Doco

THE POOL*M | 95 mins | Ian Darling | 2024 | Australia*

Bondi Icebergs is the most photographed pool in the world. But in this gorgeously shot documentary, Ian Darling (*The Final Quarter*) shows there's still much left to be revealed beneath its surface as we meet the diverse community for whom the pool is a place of strength, challenges, solace, meditation, rebuilding and life-enhancing connection.

Beautifully shot/Notable soundtrack/Australian life

26 October

Drama

AFTER THE STORM*PG | 118 mins | Kore-eda Hirokazu | 2016 | Japan*

A divorced father, scraping by as a private detective, gets stuck at his mother's house along with his son and ex-wife as they sit out a typhoon. Kore-eda somehow captures both life's natural humour and the most profound thoughts and feelings in small, still moments and quiet exchanges beautifully observed.

Thought-provoking/Moving/Life-enhancing

2 November

Comedy

WHAT'S UP, DOC?*G | 94 mins | Peter Bogdanovich | 1972 | USA*

A glorious love-letter to screwball movies with more laughs in every scene than most comedies have in their entire run-time. Ryan O'Neal plays against type as an absent-minded musicologist, Barbra Streisand is a gorgeous, brilliant agent of chaos, Madeline Kahn is perfection in her film debut, and the supporting cast is peerless.

Must-see classic/Belly laughs/Stacked cast

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are advised some of these films contain images and voices of people who have died.