

SOUTH AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL OPENS 21 JUNE ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

*33 films. Six cities. One month. In
Cinemas & Online.*

*Embracing Mandela Month & 30 Years of
South African Democracy.*

SYDNEY, NSW, AUSTRALIA, May 24,
2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Press Pack](#)
[Available HERE](#)

Interviews Available



The South African Film Festival 2026

(SAFF 2026) leads into Mandela Month, with a landmark program of major festival selections and internationally celebrated South African films - screening in cinemas and online across Australia and New Zealand between 21 June and 26 July.

Festival Director Ricky Human said, "Having our festival screen during Mandela Month is the perfect moment for these stories. South Africans, Australians and New Zealanders share deep historical and cultural parallels, and a hunger for impactful, creative cinema."

Headlining the festival is internationally acclaimed *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, the directorial debut of Embeth Davidtz, adapted from the bestselling memoir set in Zimbabwe during the 1980 Independence War. Named among *The Guardian* and *IndieWire*'s Best Films of 2025 after premieres at Toronto and Telluride, it screens as the Festival Closing Film with an inaugural SAFF Gala event at Liverpool Powerhouse, Sydney, on 19 July.

Further festival highlights include the Australian premiere of *Pangolin: Journey to Freedom*, a wildlife documentary that follows an orphaned pangolin named Kosha revealing groundbreaking insights on the world's most trafficked animal; *The Heart Is a Muscle*, South Africa's 2025 Academy Awards submission and winner of the Ecumenical Jury Prize at Berlin; *Lucky Fish*, Opening Film of the 2025 Durban International Film Festival; and box-office smash *My F*k Marelize*, born from a viral 2019 video and now the highest-grossing Afrikaans film in more than a decade.

Music runs through the program with *Squashbox*, a five-time winner at Sydney's SF3 Festival,

including Best Film and Best Cinematography, tracing an unlikely duo reviving the traditional sounds of Maskandi music, which will open the festival with Lucky Fish. Opera lovers can enjoy a filmed AIDA featuring an all-South African cast and the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra in a futuristic reimagining of Verdi's classic in the online program.

Now in its eighth year, SAFF launches a new category spotlighting emerging Australian-South African filmmakers connected to both countries. The official Sydney Opening and Closing Gala events on 21 June and 19 July respectively, feature South African food and wine experiences.

Entirely volunteer-run, SAFF is a not-for-profit known as "The Festival with a Conscience", with proceeds supporting Education Without Borders and its youth education and mentorship programs in South Africa.

[***South African Film Festival Press Pack and Images Available HERE](#)

EVENT DETAILS

Festival Dates: 21 June – 26 July 2026

Festival Program & Ticketing: <https://saff.org.au/>

Tickets On Sale: 25 May 2026

Get 20% off your Early Bird Festival Passes until 8 June

Opening & Closing Gala Events in Sydney: 21 June The Ritz Randwick | 19 July Liverpool Powerhouse

Online Festival Program: 26 June - 26 July | Streaming across Australia & New Zealand

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