



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian Government Expands Cinema Experience for People with Hearing and Vision Impairments: “Accessible Cinemas”

Australians with hearing and vision impairment will be able to enjoy the latest films like *Mary and Max*, *Wolverine*, *Night at the Museum 2* and *Angels and Demons* – as part of the Australian Government’s expanded Accessible Cinemas plan.

The Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot today officially launched the \$390,000 national program – **Helping Older Australians Enjoy the Movies: Accessible Cinemas** at Cinema Nova in the Melbourne suburb of Carlton.

Mrs Elliot announced that there would be 12 cinemas in various locations around the country that would be installed with the latest equipment, bringing the total of accessible cinemas to 24.

One in two of all Australians aged between 60 and 70 have some hearing loss. This increases to 70 per cent for those over the age of 70. (Nationally, there are some four million people with vision and hearing impairment)

Under the program, the Australian Government has funded new equipment – special ‘audio description’ equipment and captioning and headsets.

Mrs Elliot said: “I want to help throw open even more doors in Australian cinemas to people with hearing and visual impairments.

“For many, it could be their first movie in a cinema in years as many DVDs are now subtitled.

“We recognise that this is a first step – but this is about allowing people to spend more quality time with their families and friends at the cinema,” Mrs Elliot said.

Each cinema will be supported by promotional activities such as:

- A website that is fully deaf and blind accessible and shows the location of the cinemas with accessible screening schedules;
- Community service announcements for radio; and
- Advertising through an in-cinema display in the foyer area of all sites.

The plan also complements a Screen Australia announcement that from 1 July 2007 all Australian features funded by them will be captioned. This means more people would be able to see Australian films.

The Independent Cinemas Association of Australia, Media Access Australia and the Department of Health and Ageing have worked together to select these sites in rural, regional and metropolitan areas.

Information on the locations of all the sites is at www.yourlocalcinema.com.au

All 12 cinemas will soon be ready for operation at:

Palmerston CMAX, Palmerston – NT
Dendy Canberra, Canberra City – ACT
AMC Tweed Heads, Tweed Heads – NSW
Palace Verona, Paddington – NSW
Big Screen Cinemas, Hervey Bay – QLD
Palace Nova East End, Adelaide – SA
Whyalla Twin Cinemas - SA
CMAX, Devonport – TAS
Cinema Nova, Carlton – VIC
Sale Cinema, Sale – VIC
Deakin Cinema, Mildura – VIC
Bunbury Grand, Warwick – WA

The other 12 cinemas already equipped with captions are:

Hoyts, Belconnen, ACT
Greater Union, Parramatta NSW
Greater Union, Sydney
Greater Union, Glendale NSW
Birch Carroll & Coyle, Casuarina, NT
Greater Union, Pacific Fair, Broadbeach Waters, Qld
Birch Carroll & Coyle Maroochydore, Qld
Birch Carroll & Coyle, Brisbane City Myer Centre
Marion Megaplex, Oaklands, SA
Village Hobart
Village Jam Factor, South Yarra
Hoyts Carousel, Cannington, WA

Background Information

The United States and Canada has more than 830 accessible cinema, representing 15 per cent of locations; the United Kingdom has more than 300 accessible cinemas; New Zealand has three.

In 2001, the Australian Human Rights Commission agreed with Hoyts, Greater Union and Village to three sessions a week of captioned films in eight locations nationally. This figure has grown to 12..

Captioning and Audio Description (AD)

Captioning is the reproduction of a soundtrack in text format. Similar to subtitles (which are simply a foreign language translation of the dialogue), captions are a transcription of the entire soundtrack, including sound effects, into the same language.

Audio description (AD) is a service in which additional commentary is provided to narrate the visual elements of a movie. AD guides the listener with concise, objective descriptions of new scenes, settings, costumes, body language, and “sight gags”, all spoken between existing portions of dialogue.

For more information, contact Mrs Elliot's office on (02) 6277 7280