



## **emma Government calls ‘*action!*’ on filming in Sydney**

**EMBARGOED 5AM:** March 9, 2008

The emma Government will transform the NSW film industry – slashing red tape and giving movie-makers easier access to prime locations.

Premier Morris emma said a package of initiatives would attract blockbusters to the state, and reinvigorate our film and television industry.

“Location filming is part and parcel of a vibrant global city like Sydney,” Mr emma said.

“And our country locations provide the unique settings that film and TV productions desire.

“Some of the biggest films of recent times – like Star Wars, Superman Returns, Happy Feet and The Matrix Trilogy – were lured to NSW by our skills and resources.

“But it’s true that excessive fees and complex approval processes by local councils and some government agencies can drive film-makers away. That must stop.

“This package is a kick in the pants to all involved, with a message to get on board with this vibrant industry, which belongs right here in NSW.

“Creative media and design is one of the State’s five key sectors, and this package is about giving practical, commonsense assistance to one of our most high-profile industries.

“The cornerstone of the package is a requirement for councils and government agencies to approve film projects unless there are compelling reasons not to.

“We want to eliminate any reluctance by local players, who think it’s ‘just too hard’ to get involved.

“We will also work with the Property Council to make it easier for film-makers to access privately-owned sites.

“I want councils and government agencies to do everything in their power to encourage filming. I want them to remove any barriers that might stop crews from choosing Sydney or somewhere else in NSW as a location.”

The measures contained in the package include:

- Creating a presumption that filming activities will be allowed on community land, Crown reserves and National Parks, provided heritage and environmental values are preserved;
- Requiring local councils to approve filming-related applications unless exceptional circumstances exist;

- Requiring councils to give written reasons for refusing a film application;
- Ensuring fees associated with filming are limited to a transparent cost-recovery basis;
- Exempting short-term filming activities on public or private land from requiring development approval;
- Streamlining the approvals process for temporary structures used in filming such as catering tents or sets;
- Exempting large vehicles from the one-hour time limit when parked in connection with permitted filming activity;
- Issuing new RTA guidelines to give local councils a clear and consistent framework for managing film-related road closures and parking; and
- Applying a revised *Local Government Filming Protocol* to all councils (developed in consultation with councils and the film industry).

As part of the package, Mr lemma will also issue a Premier's Memorandum requiring all State Government agencies to respond positively to film industry requests.

"We are asking local councils to respond better, so it's only fair we impose the same requirement on State government agencies," Mr lemma said.

The Premier's Memorandum will include the following guidelines:

- Applications to use public sector locations and services will be processed promptly;
- Access to public sector locations will not be unreasonably withheld;
- If access to locations or services is refused, the film maker must be immediately provided with reasons, confirmed in writing;
- Fees will be kept to a minimum and should only reflect marginal costs;
- Each NSW Government agency must nominate a Film Contact Officer;
- Film Contact Officers will assist film makers in obtaining the necessary approvals, support and access to agency services; and
- Each NSW Government agency must have film access policies, fee structures and filming application forms available on their websites.

Mr lemma said he would also establish a code of conduct, to be drawn up by the State Government, the Local Government and Shires Association and the screen industry.

"Most film-makers behave responsibly when they are filming in towns and neighbourhoods across NSW, but there are instances where this does not occur. Professionalism is paramount and the screen industry also wants to showcase best practice", Mr lemma said.

"The code of conduct will help ensure film-makers keep local residents and businesses informed, reduce any disruption and tidy up after themselves."