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Movie industry descends on Dungog

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It may not have the prestige or glamour of the Sydney and Melbourne film festivals, but the Dungog Film Festival can lay claim to having more Australian content than any of its competitors.

On the weekend of May 29-June 1, stars of the Australian film industry will descend on the tiny NSW town of Dungog, 79km north of Newcastle, which has a population 3,000 and the oldest continuously operating cinema in Australia.

Featuring the tagline "Done Sundance, Done Cannes, Dungog", the festival is in its second year and shows only Australian films.

This year 80 Australian films will screen over three days, including 18 features, 10 documentaries and 52 short films.

The opening night film is Peter Duncan's film *Unfinished Sky*, starring William McInnes, and the festival will close to the Australian premiere of *Bitter & Twisted*, starring Noni Hazlehurst, Matthew Newton, Gary Sweet and Leeanna Walsman.

Crocodile-attack thriller *Black Water*, which has been sold to 42 countries but has only got an Australian



William McInnes and Monic Henrickx in *Unfinished Sky*.

release in Darwin so far, will screen at the festival.

Movies that have so far failed to secure a national release, such as *All My Friends Are Leaving Brisbane*, or were only screened for a short time, like *Hey Hey It's Esther Blueburger*, will be shown alongside more successful recent offerings like *The Black Balloon* and *Cactus*.

Other highlights include the world premiere of *The Nothing Men*, directed by Mark Fitzpatrick and starring David Field and Colin Friels.

Festival director Allannah Zitserman said the festival hoped to make a difference by assisting the development of the local film industry.

"Australia deserves a strong local film industry that's proud to tell Australian stories using local actors and drawing on the vast wealth of ideas and talented filmmakers in this country," Zitserman said.

"This event will not only bring filmmakers and creativity to one of Australia's most beautiful valleys, it will expand tourism and address the current imbalance of major cultural events in regional Australia."

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