

THE AUSTRALIAN

Printed June 02, 2008 06:30pm AEST

Aussie assault at De Niro filmfest

Michael Bodey | April 05, 2008

FOUR diverse new films are set to take unexpected views of Australia to this month's Tribeca Film Festival in New York.

Director Jody Dwyer will foist a horror film, *Dying Breed*, based on the legends of the Tasmanian tiger and penal colony escapee and cannibal Alexander Pearce, upon unsuspecting New Yorkers, while producer Naomi Wenck will present the teen surf drama *Newcastle*.

"No, it won't follow the formulaic cliché of 'Australia equals flat outback and red dust'," Dwyer said of his film.

Dying Breed was shot primarily in western Tasmania and stars Bille Brown, Leigh Whannell and Nathan Phillips.

"We were conscious of going against that stereotypical image of Australia," he said. "It's not parochial in that sense. It's international in its appeal."

Newcastle is atypical of many grander Australian movies in that it has already secured a Japanese release in June, before its likely local premiere this summer.

"It's very exciting for us but also for the Australian film industry for a film to be bought by a company like Sony Japan," Wenck said.

Dying Breed and *Newcastle* will be joined in New York by Christopher Weekes's drama *Bitter & Twisted* and Faramarz K-Rahber's documentary about an Aussie goth falling in love with a Pakistani Muslim, *Donkey in Lahore*.

The four Australian films are among 121 selections from 31 countries that were chosen from 2329 entries at the increasingly influential event Robert De Niro created to return confidence to Lower Manhattan after 9/11.

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