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## AUSTRALIAN PRODUCER AND WRITER SHANE BRENNAN GIFTS SUPPORT TO SOUTH AUSTRALIAN EMERGING SCREENWRITERS

May 30, 2023

The Mercury, Scripted Ink. and the Australian Writers' Guild (AWG) are thrilled to announce today the creation of a Writers' Room at The Mercury in Adelaide, made possible by the generous donation of screenwriter and showrunner Shane Brennan.

Mr Brennan is an Australian television writer and producer best known as the Executive Producer of the worldwide hit police drama *NCIS*, as well as the creator of the *NCIS* spin-off series, *NCIS: Los Angeles*.

The Mercury provides emerging filmmakers with a pathway to a screen career and is home to a screen culture community. The Writers' Room is a key attraction of the revamped business model of The Mercury, a not-for-profit screen body with a newly established board and management.

The model proposes a monthly low-cost subscription that provides subscribers with year-round access to cinema screenings, workshops and upgraded filmmaker facilities. The facilities include a production office, edit suite, colour grade room, sound editing & mixing suite and, thanks to Shane Brennan's significant gift, a purpose-built Writers' Room.

*"The Mercury will be in a position to take emerging filmmakers from script to screen, giving valuable time to the development of screenwriting, and paying professional screenwriters as mentors to give stories the attention they merit, in line with industry standards,"* says The Mercury's General Manager Lisa Bishop.

One of the values of the new board is *collaboration*, which saw Bishop reach out to Sally Hardy, SA representative on the National Executive Council of the AWG, with the idea for a Writers' Room. Sally thought it was the perfect project for Mr Brennan, who has a passion for the development of emerging screenwriters, and Scripted Ink., a joint venture between Mr Brennan and the Australian Writers' Guild aimed at shaping, building and investing in the Australian screen industry and Australian writers.

Mr Brennan says, *"The plans for The Mercury sound promising and I was impressed with the idea of facilitating AWG members to work with emerging screenwriters. Having a supportive filmmaking environment like The Mercury gives stories the best chance of getting to the screen, particularly as writing for screen is never an end in itself."*

Mr Brennan also serves as President of the Australian Writers' Guild, the professional and industrial association for Australian performance writers, whose vision it is to improve rights and opportunities so that screen and stage writers may thrive as a dynamic and integral part of Australian storytelling.

Starting from the 1<sup>st</sup> July, The Mercury will run weekly writing consultations for filmmakers who have draft scripts and story ideas. Coupled with this will be a monthly "Script Club" along the lines of the "Book Club" concept. Bishop says, *"We are looking forward to revealing our new products and services for the emerging sector with a new model effective 1<sup>st</sup> July this year"*.