



Media Release

SANTA'S APPRENTICE - FEATURING THE VOICES OF SHANE JACOBSEN, MAGDA SZUBANSKI, DELTA GOODREM AND HUGH SHERIDAN – DASHING INTO CINEMAS IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA – August 30, 2011...

This year's most anticipated animated theatrical release, *Santa's Apprentice* will dash into cinemas in time for the festive season on November 10, 2011.

The heart-warming Christmas animation featuring the voices of Australia's own Shane Jacobsen, Magda Szubanski, Delta Goodrem, Hugh Sheridan and Georgie Parker follows the story of young Nicolas (voice of Jack Versace), a 7 year old Australian boy on his adventure as he struggles with the ups and downs of being the next Santa Claus. It's a big responsibility that would scare even the bravest boy – but Nicolas wants to be the best Santa ever.

So he will have to learn a few lessons along the way. Christmas has a way of making even the biggest mishaps alright and thanks to his loving mentors, Santa (Shane Jacobsen) and Waldorf (Hugh Sheridan), Nicolas learns, as we all do, the true meaning of Christmas!

"*Santa's Apprentice* is a delightful story filled with fun and friendship – a truly heart-warming story! Imagine spending time in the North Pole hanging out with Santa – well *Santa's Apprentice* takes you there. It's a film about the spirit of Christmas and there is something for everyone to take away from this magical tale filled with recognisable and well-loved Australian voices" said Creative Producer, Avrill Stark.

The Avrill Stark Entertainment and Flying Bark Productions animated adventure recently won the special UNICEF award at the largest animation event, the Annecy International Animation Festival in France recognising the best animation which highlights the goals of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Released last year in France – selling over 100,000 tickets in the first week and 650,000 over the life of the release -, *Santa's Apprentice* was ranked fourth in the country on its opening weekend behind Harry Potter and the Deadly Hallows Part 1. *Santa's Apprentice* has already been sold to many countries including Austria, Canada, Greece, India, Russia and the United States of America.

Distributed by Becker Film Group, *Santa's Apprentice* takes you to a place where wishes really do come true and proves that sometimes, happy endings are only the beginning – a film experience for every parent who wants to see Christmas again through the eyes of their child!

A French – Australian Coproduction by **Gaumont**-Alphanim and Avrill Stark Entertainment Pty Ltd with the participation of Flying Bark Productions Pty Ltd, Gaumont, Cartoon Salon and ORANGE CINÉMA SÉRIES. Centre National de la Cinématographie et de l'Image Animée, Bord Scannán na hÉireann / Irish Film Board. With the support of Département de la Charente, de la Région Poitou-Charentes & la Région Île-de-France. Developed with the support of The MEDIA Programme of the European Union.

Directed by Luc VINCIGUERRA. Art Director: Richard DESPRES. Based on an Original Idea, Characters and Designs created by Jan VAN RIJSSELBERGE. Script by Alexandre RÉVÉREND.

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