



## MEDIA RELEASE

27 November 2009

### **A Statement from Adam Elliot, Filmmaker & The Other Film Festival Patron**

I would like to add my voice to the growing number of people who are feeling rightly concerned by a recent application by the major cinema exhibitors, Village, Hoyts, Greater Union and Reading Cinemas, to the Human Rights Commission requesting an exemption from complaints. Exhibitors are an essential part of the chain that takes films from ideas to the screen. They are the final link that connects the audience to the film in the cinema.

The exhibitors are currently requesting that people with vision impairments and hearing impairments give up their rights to complain about inaccessible screenings for two and a half years in return for a promise of 105 Captioned and Audio Described screenings per week.

Considering there are around 42,000 screenings taking place at their cinemas each week, this seems a pretty poor deal. My nerdy maths friends tell me that 105 screenings amounts to **less than one percent of all screenings**.

Although I am more expert in plasticine than policy, I feel obliged to speak out as an Australian film industry practitioner about what is so obviously a bad deal for everyone. The production team on *Mary and Max* went to enormous effort to ensure that Captioned and Audio Described versions were produced so that all Australians had the possibility to see the film. I have personally received many emails from audience members who have thanked me for the fact that the film was accessible. After going to this effort none of us on the team would be happy if we discovered that less than 1% of the screenings were actually going to be accessible to people with sensory impairments.

I must also speak up as the patron of The Other Film Festival. This festival leads the world in delivering accessible cinema to everyone, regardless of their access requirements. The fact that the festival attracted 2000 people last year demonstrates that there is significant audience of people with disabilities who are keen to go to the cinema. Don't forget we are talking about 20% of the Australian population here.

We all expect the choice to be able to go and enjoy any film, at any session, at any cinema. Offering anything less than this to people just because they have a disability is simply unfair and unacceptable.

I hope you will also voice your concerns regarding this application.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Elliot', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Adam Elliot**



**ADAM ELLIOT**  
P I C T U R E S

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information on the application by Hoyts Corporation, Greater Union Organisation, Village Cinemas and Reading Cinemas for Cinema Access Exemption, visit the Human Rights Commission website:

[http://humanrights.gov.au/disability\\_rights/exemptions/cinema/notice.htm](http://humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/exemptions/cinema/notice.htm)

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