



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Look Out Hollywood, Here Comes Cloncurry-Wood

*First Survivor and now a legendary bank robbery, Cloncurry in Outback Queensland is rolling out the red carpet for filmmakers*

Have you heard the legendary story of how in 1932 on election night, five daring thieves broke into the strong room of the National Bank in Cloncurry in Outback Queensland and made off with £11,000? They were never caught, and to this day no-one has ever been charged.

Now the story of these five thieves, six stolen keys, slumbering bank managers and the missing money is being told as a short film and, because of the Cloncurry Shire Council's innovative Film Incentive Program, it's been filmed right where it all happened.

Cloncurry is rolling out the red carpet for film makers, encouraging them to make the most of its remarkable outback location by providing important and needed film incentives. Cloncurry Shire Council is one of only two Queensland Council's that is actively collaborating with producers to film in the region.

On the back of being the spectacular location for Channel 10's *Survivor* in 2021, this small Outback Queensland town of some 3,000 people is currently starring in *The Bank Manager*, a short film about the legendary robbery by Quamby Studios' **Luke** and **Madeleine Chaplain**.

Filmmakers, writer, producers and actors, Luke and Madeleine, grew up on Malakoff Station outside Cloncurry hearing about the legend of the bank robbery. They were motivated to capture the story on film, to ensure the folk legend lives on, and to film authentically in the town and on the ground where it happened, rather than on-location elsewhere or in-studio.

In perfect timing, the filmmaker siblings are the first to make the most of the local initiative.

"It's quite revolutionary what Cloncurry Shire Council is doing with their film incentive. It's been a collaborative approach from the very beginning. Their willingness to pivot and adapt is a huge incentive for filmmakers. This problem solving attitude, along with the region's diversity of architecture and landscapes, makes it the perfect filming location," said Luke Chaplain who now splits his time between Cloncurry and Brisbane, where his sister lives.

*The Bank Manager* is a comedic drama that tells the story of the 1932 Cloncurry bank robbery. The film storyline is based on real events, and will focus on key moments that led to the successful robbery.

The all Queensland cast and crew have just spent five days filming in Cloncurry, with some \$40,000 spent directly in the region, in addition to the indirect economic injection the production represents. Fifty extras and 10 crew were all sourced locally.

The cast includes Logie award-winning **Gyton Grantley** (*Underbelly*, *House Husbands*), **Jason Wilder** (*Kidnapped* 2021, *Great White* 2021, *We Were Tomorrow* 2021), **Paula Nazarski** (*The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power*, *The Second*), fellow North Queenslander **Jordan Abbey-Young** (*Thor: Ragnarök*, *Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan*), and the filmmakers themselves in Madeleine and Luke Chaplain, who have been told by family they are related to some of the alleged robbers, although unlike the robbery, nothing has been proven!

Luke and Madeleine are 2022 AATCA Pitch: Regional Landscapes finalists for the screenplay.

Unlike the Cloncurry Bank Robbers, Cloncurry Shire Council does not want its landscape and community to remain a mystery.

Cloncurry Shire Council Mayor **Greg Campbell** said to have *The Bank Manager* film in Cloncurry was a boon to the region, economically, but also culturally as it is a legend of the region.

"There are not many backdrops as dramatic as the rugged outback landscape of Cloncurry. The red ranges, spinifex and waterways have already played host to Channel 10's *Survivor* in 2021, and now in a wonderful serendipity, we have *The Bank Manager*, written and produced by two brilliant Outback Queensland-born creatives, and starring some of Australia's best known actors," he said.

"Cloncurry has a truly unique landscape and is one of few places that can offer extraordinary terrain, open plains and waterways all in one location. It also offers a range of local businesses that are able to support film making in the region"

"We are the **only** small local government offering financial incentives to film in the Shire, and as a Council we are committed to this program as we can see the benefit it brings to our community."

"We welcome any film makers to consider Cloncurry as a film location and encourage them to make the most of Council's support."

**Dr Belinda Burns**, Chief Creative Officer of Screen Queensland said Screen Queensland was committed to working with regional councils to bolster Queensland's reputation as a film-friendly state and Cloncurry Shire Council was a shining example of how this could be achieved.

"The introduction of the film incentive cements the Council's readiness to engage with screen producers to bring economic and employment benefits to the people of Cloncurry. It builds on the positive experiences the screen industry has enjoyed in the region, established through productions like *Australian Survivor*, and Screen Queensland is pleased to support opportunities for more filmmaking to take place in the Cloncurry shire," Dr Burns said.

Council welcomes all film makers to the area and encourages enquiries. The Film Incentive Program is available to film makers wanting to capture their short film, feature film, pilots or series in the Shire of Cloncurry. For more information contact the local Council on 07 4742 4100 or [council@cloncurry.qld.gov.au](mailto:council@cloncurry.qld.gov.au).

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## **MEDIA CONTACT**

**Ella Thompson | Media and Public Relations Officer**

**Cloncurry Shire Council**

**M: 0429 389 610 | Ph: 07 4742 4100**

**E: [ella.thompson@cloncurry.qld.gov.au](mailto:ella.thompson@cloncurry.qld.gov.au)**

## **About Cloncurry**

Few places can claim to be as influential in shaping Australia as Cloncurry; birthplace of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and destination of the first Qantas flight. It is a community that celebrates outback life - the true Australian way.

- Cloncurry is located 780 kilometres west of Townsville, 120 kilometres east of Mount Isa and 1700 kilometres north west of Brisbane, nestled on the banks of the Cloncurry River
- Key industries in Cloncurry include transport, mining, pastoral and tourism.
- Population in the Cloncurry Shire is 3,200 people
- Main township in the Shire is Cloncurry, with Dajarra a small indigenous community 170 south west from Cloncurry and hamlets of Burke and Wills (three ways), Kajabbi, Duchess and Quamby

## **About the Cloncurry Shire Council Film Incentive Program**

- Cloncurry Shire Council has committed to supporting filming within the Cloncurry Shire and have put funding aside to assist film makers wanting to film in the outback town of Cloncurry.
- Funding is available to eligible film makers wanting to capture their short film, feature film, pilots and series in the shire of Cloncurry
- One of only two local governments in Queensland that offers film incentives for filming in their respective shires.
- Council has committed to increasing other industries in the Shire and economic growth in the region

## **About *The Bank Manager* short film and its creators**

The comedy/drama short film tells the story of the 1932 Cloncurry Bank Robbery. Based on real events, *The Bank Manager* focuses on a key moment that led to the success of the robbery. This moment takes place on the Cloncurry River, where a party is thrown by the alleged robbers. The purpose of the party is to charm the uptight bank manager into going swimming so, they can gain access to his keys that permanently reside in his jacket pocket. While he swims, a covert operation is underway to steal the keys, take imprints then return them to his jacket pocket before he emerges from the water. Luke and Madeleine Chaplain from Quamby Studios are the 2022 AATCA Pitch: Regional Landscapes finalists for their screenplay of *The Bank Manager*.

## **About the Cloncurry bank robbery**

In 1932, on state election night, thieves broke into the strong room of the National Bank and made off with £11,000 and also stole £3,000 from the nearby Bank of NSW. A daring feat by the thieves who were never caught. To this day no one was ever charged with the crime, but this did not stop speculation about who did it and how it happened. Most of the story is considered folklore. The alleged story goes:

- Six keys held by three men were stolen and copied
- There were allegedly five men involved in the robbery
- One set of keys were borrowed and copied while the bankers were swimming
- The other two sets were borrowed and copied while the two bankers slept after a Saturday night at the pub

## About Quamby Studios

Quamby Studios was formed by brother and sister, Luke and Madeleine Chaplain. They grew up in the Cloncurry Shire, on Malakoff Station. Over the years they have heard about the legend of the Cloncurry bank robberies – and it is said that their ancestors were involved in this sophisticated robbery; however, no one was ever caught. Luke and Madeleine's motivation to make *The Bank Manager* short film is to ensure that this outrageous and rather humorous folktale is never forgotten.

Luke is not only a promising filmmaker, but also a farmer, entrepreneur and rodeo champion. Originally from a cattle station in northwest Queensland, Luke travelled to Melbourne to study at The Australian Film & Television Academy. He boasts a list of film and tv credits including 'Lawless: The Real Bushrangers' [Actor], 'Total Control' [Actor] and Composure [Executive Producer].

Upon graduating QUT with a Bachelor of Fine Arts [Acting] Madeleine moved to Sydney where she performed in short films such as Anna McGahan's 'Gingers'; and in commercials such as for Samsung. From Sydney to Melbourne, Madeleine's first writing project was a co-written play entitled 'I don't know yet'; which made its debut at the 2015 Melbourne Fringe Festival. From Melbourne to LA, Madeleine has trained with The Groundlings and was accepted into the American Film Institute for screenwriting in 2020.

She recently shot the proof-of-concept for her series 'COMPOSURE'. A project she wrote, co-directed and acted in. Whilst pitching 'COMPOSURE' to the industry, Madeleine has been working as an assistant director for commercials as well as series such as 'Young Rock' and feature films such as 'Ticket to Paradise'. These experiences have undoubtedly made her a better writer, director and industry professional.