



President
Geoffrey Rush
Ambassador
Cate Blanchett
Patron
Dr George Miller

21 December 2017

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Dear Geoffrey:

This letter comes to you from the Chairman, CEO and Board of AFI/AACTA.

Our letter starts, as it must, with a heartfelt apology.

At a time when you needed and deserved our full support we failed you, our President and our Patron - someone without whom the Australian Academy would not exist.

There are no excuses, other than erroneous judgement on our part. In our attempts to ameliorate the situation and to avoid further opportunities for the media to keep the story going, our intention was to try to protect both you and the Awards from unnecessary exposure. Given the unprecedented nature of the issue and the pressure we were under from all sides to act, daily conference calls were held in the week leading up to the Awards to try to come up with a course of action.

We were acutely aware of the pain you and your family were enduring at the time and were appalled by the unfairness and capricious nature of some sectors of the press, as well as by the apparent misinterpretation of your stepping aside.

In an attempt to correct the misreporting of your and our statements, we had prepared a draft statement for public release pointing out that you had neither resigned nor stepped down but had, in the light of the voracious attempts by the media to grow the story, decided to step aside in order for the Awards to proceed unfettered.

However after the announcement of your intention to sue for defamation, which we fully support, it was decided that to further fuel the situation was inadvisable.

However, if you feel that such a statement would be helpful, we would be happy to draft one with your approval.

Your standing as the "Prez" of AFI|AACTA could not be higher and the Board (joined by its executive) very strongly supports a wish that you return as President, ending the voluntary stepping aside you so graciously adopted.

There is no doubt you have suffered great personal damage at the hands of an irresponsible press and we sincerely hope the redress to which you are entitled awaits you.

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Without the personal investment of your name and talent, which you have always so generously given, the Academy would not exist in its present form and the industry would be much the poorer for it.

We sincerely hope that you will accept our apology for providing what, in hindsight, appears to be only equivocal support. These are new and uncharted waters and we are all trying desperately to navigate the correct course - it's incredibly difficult for all concerned, particularly under such public scrutiny- but most of all for you.

We would like nothing better than to work with you to repair the damage and put in place procedures that would prevent anything of this sort occurring again.

Put simply Geoffrey: We Want You Back and we hope you can find a way to agree, under any terms you may like to propose.

Best wishes,

Alan Finney
AFI | AACTA Chair

Damian Trewhella
AFI | AACTA CEO

AFI | AACTA Board members:

Margaret Pomeranz

George Souris

Bob Sessions

Jennifer Hubby

Noni Hazlehurst

Tony Petani

Mark Morrissey

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