

PAPER PLANES

PRESS KIT



arenamedia

ONE LINE SYNOPSIS

An imaginative family film about a young Australian boy's passion for flight and his challenge to compete in the World Paper Plane Championships in Japan.

ONE PARAGRAPH SYNOPSIS

Paper Planes is a family film that tells the story of a young Australian boy's passion for flight and his journey to compete in the world paper plane championships in Japan.

Eleven-year-old Dylan meets the junior Japanese champion Kimi in the national paper plane championships in Sydney, Australia. They develop a close bond, challenging each other to create a plane that has never been seen before.

Directed by one of Australia's leading filmmakers Robert Connolly, the film is set in iconic locations, with engaging characters and a powerful story of friendship between two countries. It stars globally renowned cast including Sam Worthington (*Avatar*, *Clash of the Titans*), and Ed Oxenbould (Disney's *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*).

RUNNING TIME: 96 minutes 23 seconds

KEY CAST LIST

JACK:	Sam Worthington
DYLAN:	Ed Oxenbould
MAUREEN:	Deborah Mailman
KIMI:	Ena Imai
JASON:	Nicholas Bakopoulos-Cooke
KEVIN:	Julian Dennison
GRANDPA:	Terry Norris
MR HICKENLOOPER:	Peter Rowsthorn
PATRICK:	David Wenham



KEY CREW LIST

DIRECTOR:	Robert Connolly
WRITERS:	Robert Connolly Steve Worland
PRODUCERS:	Robert Connolly Maggie Miles Liz Kearney
ORIGINAL MUSIC:	Nigel Westlake
CINEMATOGRAPHER:	Tristan Milani ACS
FILM EDITOR:	Nick Meyers ASE
CASTING:	Jane Norris CSA
PRODUCTION DESIGNER:	Clayton Jauncey
COSTUME DESIGNER:	Lien See Leong
MAKE-UP & HAIR DESIGNERS:	Hayley Atherton Karen Sims
VISUAL EFFECTS AND ANIMATION:	John Francis, Surreal World
SOUND DESIGNER:	Chris Goodes
2 ND UNIT DIRECTOR:	Denson Baker
PAPER PLANE CONSULTANTS:	Dylan Parker James Norton
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS:	Andrew Myer Jonathan Chissick Gary Hamilton Ying Ye Bernadette O'Mahony Eric Bana



INVESTORS

SCREEN AUSTRALIA

SCREENWEST & LOTTERYWEST

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SALES

ANZ SALES: VILLAGE ROADSHOW

INTERNATIONAL SALES: ARCLIGHT

INTERVIEW WITH WRITER/DIRECTOR ROBERT CONNOLLY



On the story of Paper Planes:

Paper Planes is the story of an 11 year old boy from the bush who discovers one day that he has the genius skill of making paper planes and how far that takes him. He goes to Sydney – he’s never been to Sydney before and beyond that he ends up in Tokyo competing in the World Junior Paper Plane Championships.

It’s the story of his friendship with a young Japanese girl Kimi, who is the Japanese Paper Plane Champion and what she shows and teaches him about Japan and this other world.

But at the heart of it for me is that it’s a story of a young boy and his dad, trying to make a life. It’s a great relationship and a great dynamic, that kids have with their parents – challenging, fun, there’s a bit of conflict, there’s love and I think for me, looking at the film now, that friendship - of this little fella and his dad - is at the heart of the story.

On why he made Paper Planes:

I wanted to make Paper Planes as a kids film initially for my own kids. I'm a filmmaker with an 11 year old and a 9 year old and I thought 'I've got to make a film for them' and wanted to take them to films that were Australian, where the heroes of the film were Australian kids.

There was an era of cinema that I loved and grew up with in Australia and I thought maybe there's an audience for that today. So I set about on this adventure over the last 4 years that's led me here now to having made Paper Planes.

On what kids look for in a film:

From seeing a lot of films with my kids, what they look for are heroes in the film that are kids. They don't want to watch films led by adults, they don't want to live their life led by adults – they want to go to the cinema and see a hero who is like them, driving the story.

I showed one of the earlier drafts of the script for Paper Planes to my 11 year old and I asked her what she thought and she said 'I really like it but it needs to be funnier' and I think she was right, kids want comedy, they want a good laugh, they want to be entertained by a bit of play. So I brought on another writer – Steve Worland, who's a novelist and a good friend, to write up the comedy and have a bit more fun with it and its been fantastic to see that comedy come through because kids really enjoy laughing in the cinema. They like to be scared, they like to feel excited but I think a good kids film has to have humour at the heart. We had a lot of fun writing three lead kids who were 11 -12 years old, and making them drive this story, not the adults.

On how much drama can you put in to a kids film:

It's always challenging writing a kids film – how much danger and tension and how much light and shade can you put in to the film. If I think of the films I loved as a kid they all take you somewhere emotionally – they make you laugh, they make you cry, they make you scared and I think its really important not to patronize kids, they love emotional range, they love to feel the ebb and flow of life on the screen.

I've thrown a lot of that in Paper Planes, it's a safe place for little kids, its not pushing the boundaries too much, but there is an emotional journey in there for the kids which is pretty exciting. I think it is important to take kids on a really visceral journey, where they enjoy the challenges of the story as well as the fun and the comedy of it.

On the Australian kid's films that influenced him:

I remember as a kid our whole school going to see the Australian kids film “Storm Boy” – it changed my life, I would still say to this day that it is my favourite Australian film. Its profoundly moving, its funny, its sad, its got an amazing pelican in it, amazing performances – it’s a delightful film.

And after that, as I got a bit older, there was a whole generation of them. I remember seeing “Fatty Finn” – a delightful film, people would laugh at me for thinking this, but I remember loving it when I saw it, and also “BMX Bandits” an early film with Nicole Kidman.

There was something fun as kids about going to the cinema and seeing Australian kids up there, having a crazy adventure. Those films created in me a love of Australian cinema and here I am, over 30 years later, making a kids film, here I am working in that industry because I saw what Australian films could be like at a very young age.

My hope is that Paper Planes is part of a whole new movement of films that show Australian kids and Australian stories at the cinema.

On the relationships in Paper Planes:

The key relationships in Paper Planes are between the kids. Its Dylan’s relationship with Kimi, the new friend he makes, his relationship with Kevin, his best mate back home, with Jason, his rival. Watching my own kids and looking at the dynamics between kids and the world that they inhabit and the friendships and the competition and the complexity of it all is a lot of fun and in the film I really worked with that.

The other relationships are between the kids and the adults. A young boy and his dad – it’s a young boy looking at his dad and realizing that his dad is suffering from some form of depression and that he hasn’t come out of his shell since the loss of his wife.

Dylan’s friendship with his grandfather is amazing (played by Terry Norris). I think one of the things that’s a huge part of 21st century life, because most adult are working, is the relationship kids form with their grandparents – I think its extremely close and influential and I hope we’ve captured this in the film – that grandparents can play the mischievous playful parent role, they don’t have to do all the disciplining which is why I think young kids have that great relationship with their grandparents.

On directing child actors:

Directing the kids in *Paper Planes* was one of the great highlights of my career. Their performances are honest, they're fun. Generally speaking, I think kids just don't get it wrong, they're like people who can't sing out of tune, they can't fake it and when you call action, they're not starting to act.

We have amazing young actors in this film and they just kind of inhabited these characters and they kept surprising me. I love that sense of calling action and not quite being sure of what they would do as the camera was rolling and I loved watching their ability to improvise and to try new things.

All of them had to learn how to make an amazing paper plane and they all make a different paper plane – a signature plane. If you watch through the film you can see the different techniques they all use to try and win the world championship.



On working with Ed Oxenbould:

Ed Oxenbould is an amazing young actor, he's going to have a huge career ahead of him, he's already done two films in America, he's got a lead in a television show here in Australia – I can't believe my luck to work with him.

Bizarrely the short film that launched my career in 1994 starred his parents, which I think is just one of those amazing convergence of strange things in your life, that 20 years down the track I'm working with their son.

Ed is such an intelligent actor, all of the choices he makes are based on character and understanding the dialogue. The banter on set is fun because he's pushing the material and being playful and cheeky. Ed has this amazing ability to feel it - whether he's laughing, crying, sad or happy and somehow the camera catches it without him having to do too much. It's a real gift - it's a quality that movie stars have. I really look forward to seeing what he does next.

On working with Sam Worthington:

I loved working with Sam Worthington. It was an absolute joy. I was looking for someone who was a real Aussie bloke, dealing with a tragedy in his life, trying to bring up a young boy, having a bit of fun with him, still having a little child within him that could be unlocked through the story.

Incredibly we ended up filming about 20 minutes from where Sam grew up. So Sam coming back to Australia and doing this film was really a return for him, to his own childhood and I tapped into that with him.

There's a wonderful moment in the film where I kind of tricked him, where he gets a phone call from his son in Japan. On the day I hadn't let Sam hear the call and while we were filming I played the call to him for the first time – it was his son saying 'I love you Dad' and Sam's performance there kind of unlocked something emotionally in him, I think it's a delightful moment of performance, he's a wonderful actor and I was very lucky to work with him.

On Nigel Westlake's musical score:

For Paper Planes I wanted a big orchestral score. I love orchestral scores, particularly in kids films. If you think of all the great kids films – the Disney films, the Pixar films, the Dreamworks films - they're all driven by these big scores.

The greatest Australian composer in my view, for film music like this, is Nigel Westlake. His score for the film "Babe" is amazing, but even more than that I fell in love with his music in the scores for the big Imax films,

“Antarctica” is incredible, “The Edge” about the Blue Mountains is another terrific orchestral score and “Solarmax”, the list goes on.

I approached Nigel and in a partnership with the ABC and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra we’ve had a chance to create a big orchestral score with this terrific composer.

On why kids love making Paper Planes:

One thing I’ve found in making this film is that kids love making paper planes. They all have different skills and different techniques. The joy I have seen in kids who have never made one before - making a plane and throwing it for the first time. Once you teach them a few tricks too, about getting a bit of weight in the head, how you fold the wings and then the planes go further, its even better.

In some ways Paper Planes is a film for the 21st century – filled with so much technology. It is a film about the joy that you can have with a mere sheet of paper.

My feeling is, having shown the film to a lot of kids already and involving hundreds of kids in making it, that making paper planes is a universally fun thing to do. They teach you about aerodynamics and creativity – there’s a myriad of permutations of how to make them.

I think the pleasure in unlocking the secrets of how to make the perfect paper plane is something kids love, so I’ve put a few clues in the film. Kids who watch the film will learn a few tricks about how to make that great paper plane.

ROBERT CONNOLLY – DIRECTOR / WRITER



Robert Connolly is the writer and director of the feature films *THE BANK* (2001), *THREE DOLLARS* (2005), *BALIBO* (2009), and *UNDERGROUND: THE JULIAN ASSANGE STORY* (2012) as well as one of the featured directors on the ABC mini series *THE SLAP* (2011).

Robert also produced, together with John Maynard, the award-winning films, *THE BOYS* (1998) and *ROMULUS, MY FATHER* (2007), starring Eric Bana.

Robert also produced, together with Maggie Miles, *THE TURNING*, an acclaimed innovative feature film compendium of short stories based on Tim Winton's acclaimed novel. He also acted as executive producer on *THESE FINAL HOURS* directed by Zak Hilditch debuting this year at the Cannes Film Festival in Director's Fortnight.

In 2014, Robert joined forces with John Edwards and Imogen Banks from Endemol Australia to produce the eight part epic mini-series *GALLIPOLI*, due to air in 2015 for the 100th anniversary celebration of the Gallipoli campaign.

Robert has won three AFI awards for screenwriting for *THE BANK*, *THREE DOLLARS* and *BALIBO*, and Best Film for *ROMULUS, MY FATHER*. As a director, he has screened his films in over thirty major international film festivals including the Berlin, Toronto and San Sebastian International Film Festivals.

Robert received a Centenary Medal for services to the Australian Film Industry in 2001 and is a former board member of Screen Australia.

MAGGIE MILES

Previously based in the Northern Territory Maggie was senior producer with Burrundi Pictures where she oversaw The Audition Event and was closely involved with the feature film *Yolngu Boy*. Maggie's first feature, *Van Diemen's Land*, was distributed by Madman Entertainment in 2009, and had its International Premiere at the Edinburgh International Film Festival. Maggie recently produced *The Turning* for Arenamedia alongside Robert Connolly, distributed by Madman Entertainment and CinemaPlus and premiering at the Melbourne International Film Festival and screening as a gala event at Berlin in 2014. After producing Paul Cox's *The Dinner Party* Maggie is on the producing team for Paul's feature *Force of Destiny* and is playing a key role in the release in partnership with distributor CinemaPlus.

LIZ KEARNEY

Paper Planes is Liz's second feature film as producer having recently produced *These Final Hours* which was selected for competition in Cannes 2014 as part of Director's Fortnight and premiered at the 2013 Melbourne International Film Festival. *These Final Hours* was acquired for distribution in Australia by Village Roadshow and by Wellgo in the US.

CO-WRITER - STEVE WORLAND

Steve has worked extensively in film and television in Australia and the U.S.A. He has written scripts for Working Title and Icon Productions, worked in script development for James Cameron's *Lightstorm* and wrote Fox Searchlight's *Bootmen*, which won five Australian Film Institute Awards. Steve also wrote the New Line action-comedy telemovie 'Hard Knox', the bible and episodes of the television series *Big Sky* and the Saturn award winning *Farscape*. He is the author of the action adventure novels *Velocity* and *Combustion*. He is currently writing his third book.

COMPOSER - NIGEL WESTLAKE

Nigel Westlake is an Australian composer, performer and conductor who's career in music has spanned more than 3 decades. His feature film credits include *Miss Potter*, *Babe*, *Babe – Pig in the City*, *Children of the Revolution* and IMAX films including *Antarctica*, *Imagine*, *The Edge* and *Solamax*. His work has been performed by John Williams, London Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the New York Percussion Quartet and many more.

EDITOR - NICK MEYERS ASE

Nick Meyers is an award winning editor who has worked in the Australian Film Industry for almost 20 years. Nick has edited both feature films and documentaries including award winning projects such as *The Rocket* (which won awards at both Berlin and Tribeca Film Festivals), *Sleeping Beauty* (which was selected for Cannes in 2011), *The Boys* and *Mrs Carey's Concert*. Nick also has a long standing relationship with director/producer Robert Connolly having edited three of Robert's feature films – *Balibo*, *The Bank* and *Three Dollars*.

CINEMATOGRAPHER - TRISTAN MILANI ACS

Tristan is an Australian-born cinematographer who currently resides and works in Los Angeles, CA. Throughout his career, Tristan has garnered accolades for not only his feature film work, but also his commercial cinematography. Milani's highly regarded work on MTV Networks' "Welcome Snoop" Campaign in 2008 won a number of awards, including a Cannes Silver Lion, a Cannes Gold Lion, two Silver Clio Awards, a Bronze Clio Award, a New York Festival Silver Award. Tristan has completed shooting 9 feature films, an IMAX film (SOLAMAX, dir, John Weiley), and over 40 short films. In 2001 Tristan was awarded with his ACS accreditation and has been nominated for 7 Australian Film Institute (AFI) awards for Cinematography and won 11 Australian Cinematographers Society Awards (ACS) both state and national.

TITLE TRACK PERFORMER - DAMI IM

Dami Im is a South Korean-born Australian singer who is best known as the winner of the 2013 Australian X-Factor. She has subsequently signed with Sony Music Australia and released her winner's single "Alive" which debuted at number one on the Australian charts, her self titled album *Dami Im* also debuted at number one in Australia. She became the first X Factor contestant in Australia to follow up a number one single with a number one album.

PAPER PILOTS – DYLAN PARKER & JAMES NORTON

Paper Planes the film is inspired by real life Paper Pilots Dylan Parker and James Norton who met by chance at an Australian regional paper plane competition in 2008. The pair have represented Australian in the World Paper Plane Championships in Austria in 2009 with Dylan scoring a 3rd world ranking at the competition with a throw of 42 meters.

CAST

Sam Worthington – JACK

Sam is the star of Hollywood blockbusters such as *Avatar*, *Clash of the Titans* and *Terminator Salvation*. Sam is currently preparing to film *Avatar 2*, *3* and *4* with James Cameron.



Ed Oxenbould – DYLAN

Has appeared in the television series *Puberty Blues* and *Underbelly* and recently finished filming on the Disney feature *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* with Steve Carell and Jennifer Garner and the M Night Shyamalan film *Sundowning*.



Deborah Mailman – MAUREEN

Deborah Mailman is one of Australia's most popular and successful actors. Her film credits include *The Monkey's Mask*, Phillip Noyce's *Rabbit Proof Fence*, Ana Kokkinos' *The Book of Revelation* and most recently Rachel Perkins' *Bran Nue Dae* and Wayne Blair's 2007 hit *The Sapphires* .



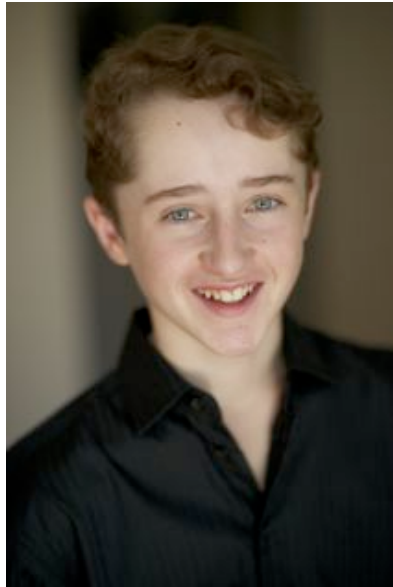
Ena Imai – KIMI

An exciting newcomer who is fluent in Japanese. Ena has experience in commercials and television. *Paper Planes* is her first film role.



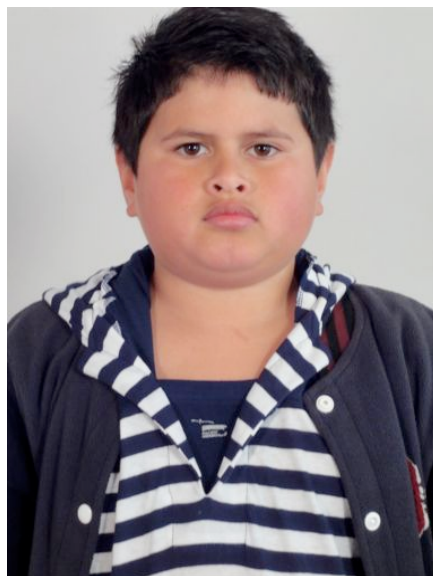
Nicholas Bakopoulos-Cooke - JASON

A rising talent who has experience in theatre, commercials and has appeared in television series such as *Crownies* and *My Place*.



Julian Dennison – KEVIN

Julian is a New Zealand based rising talent most recently seen in *Shopping* which was selected for competition at the Sundance Film Festival 2013 and which won Best Feature Film at the Berlin International Film Festival.



Terry Norris – GRANDPA

Terry Norris is a veteran of Australian film and television. His film credits include *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (starring Tilda Swinton), *Romulus My Father* (starring Eric Bana and Franka Potente) and *Irresistible* (starring Susan Sarandon and Sam Neill).



Peter Rowsthorn – MR HICKENLOOPER

Peter is an Australian actor and comedian best known for his role as Brett in *Kath and Kim* and has featured in many Australian television series such as *Thank God You're Here*, *Let the Blood Run Free* and *The Comedy Company*.



David Wenham - PATRICK

David is an actor and producer best known for his roles in Hollywood films such as *300*, *The Lord of the Rings* Trilogy and *Van Helsing*. David has also starred in many Australian films including *The Boys*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Three Dollars* and *The Proposition* and television series such as Jane Campion's *Top of the Lake*, *Killing Time* and *Better Man*.



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