



Media release

May 21, 2015

Releasing the devil and following the eagle – two new films premiere

The highly controversial but very serious proposal to release Tasmanian devils on mainland Australia and the first ever attempt to satellite track the iconic Wedge-tailed eagle are the subjects for two new documentaries that are being screened for the first time next month by the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute.

A year in the making, “Battle of the Bush” has been filmed, edited and produced by multi-award winning filmmaker, Daniel Hunter, who decided to make this film about his PhD research into the role of top order predators, based in the forests of the Blue Mountains region.

Daniel’s research is carried out at the University of New South Wales Centre for Ecosystem Science and is partly sponsored by the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute.

“Where we’re eradicating dingoes to protect livestock, foxes and cats run rampant without an apex predator to keep their numbers in check,” Daniel said.

“My research is echoing findings from similar studies that suggests the dingo performs a vital function in Australia’s ecosystems as a top order predator and yet it’s widely considered as an enemy of the farmer.

“The Tasmanian devil has great potential to fulfill that role as one of the mainland’s top predators, that can compete with foxes and cats while not threatening livestock.

“It is possible the Tasmanian devil inhabited the mainland as late as 500 years ago. There’s an increasing number of scientists who believe releasing it onto the mainland would have a net benefit of controlling the fox and the feral cat which has devastated small native species as well as caused millions of dollars in damage to farmers across the country.

“As the film shows, there is wide-ranging support from experts on the potential benefits that releasing the devil might have for mainland Australia,” Daniel said.

“Where do Eagles Dare?”, which was produced by ornithologist Simon Cherriman over 3 years in the Central Western Australian desert, charts the first ever attempt to use sophisticated satellite technology to track the Wedge-tailed eagle.

The feature length film follows Simon’s quest and reveals just what it takes to gather information about where Australia’s largest bird of prey travels.

“I have always been fascinated by eagles and it was a boyhood dream to one day track their movements and learn more about just where they go,” Simon said.

The Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute has organised for the “Battle of the Bush” and “Where do eagles dare?” to be premiered at the Fairmont Resort in Leura on June 13 (Sat evening).

Tickets are available through
<https://www.stickytickets.com.au/26474>

Daniel Hunter Ph: 0413 886 942 E: daniel.hunter@unsw.edu.au