



The Pool

DIVING IN AT BONDI ICEBERGS

SHARK ISLAND PRODUCTIONS IN ASSOCIATION WITH COLD WATER FILMS PRESENTS THE POOL
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SCREENING GUIDE

THEPOOLFILM.AU

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Screening and Discussion Guide

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1. ABOUT THE POOL

Synopsis

Bondi Icebergs is the most photographed pool in the world. For nearly a century this spectacular 50 metre stretch of sparkling blue at the southern end of Bondi Beach has occupied a special corner in the hearts of millions.

This is where generations of children have learnt to swim, where the diehard have braved the frigid waters of one hundred winters, where the young and beautiful have come to bond and bake in the hot sun, and where sightseers from around the world have taken refuge during the scorching heights of endless Australian summers.

Icebergs is at once a meeting place, a resting place, a workout place and a place of romance and ritual. We come to understand that for those who seek it out, and return, it is a symbol of inclusivity, healing and resilience.

THE POOL is a stunning cinematic experience with a soundtrack that harks back to the 1960s and a cast of characters who each have a story to tell; breezy, heart-warming, funny and poignant. It speaks to the enduring power of community and our collective longing to find it, whoever we are and wherever we come from. No matter your background or where you're at — everyone is equal in their swimsuits.

(The film is rated M due to one instance of coarse language, and there are low level themes of illness and dying).

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Director Statement — Ian Darling

I wanted to make a happy film. A film that would speak to people of all ages and backgrounds. A visually stunning film — a cinematic experience for the big screen. A film with an uplifting soundtrack reflecting the spirit of the 60's, with a sound score that immerses viewers in the world of the pool.

THE POOL is largely a film about nothing, but it's also a film about everything. While the central character is the pool itself, it also highlights the importance of community and our yearning for it. It's a film about friendship, and commitment, love and loss, sickness and health, physical and mental wellbeing, routine and security, conquering one's fears and being accepted regardless of who you are or where you are from. At the pool everyone is equal in their swimsuits.

For more than 20 years I've been making and supporting social impact documentaries, dealing with some of the most challenging topics in our community — racism, child protection and abuse, youth homelessness, climate change, domestic violence, and teenage incarceration. I have long believed in the power of documentary for social change. Films that can shape attitudes, behaviour and even laws in this country.

More recently, however, I wanted to make a shift and create a film that might bring great joy and happiness to audiences, one that might put a smile on their faces and allow them to dream a little in their own lives.

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I have typically made films where I have felt a strong connection. THE POOL is one such film. While searching for the next story, I suddenly realised that Bondi Icebergs was right under my nose! Swimming is my main form of exercise. I swim about five times a week — in pools, bays and the ocean, even when the temperature plummets. But my favourite place to swim is at the beautiful Bondi Icebergs pool — the most photographed pool in the world.

This is a time for gentle, poetic, meditative films to also find a place in the canon. We will always need documentaries that highlight injustice, human rights abuses, environmental destruction, and a myriad of other problems. But sometimes we need films that make us feel good about being human again too, and, perhaps, now more than ever.

Ian Darling, Director THE POOL

October 2024





2. PLANNING A SCREENING

To screen in a cinema:

This is the preferred screening environment for the film for large screen and surround sound. There are two options.

A. Contact your local cinema who will give you a quote for the cost of your event. These costs can vary based on the day and time in the week. Friday and Saturday nights are peak times for cinemas, early week can often cost a lot less.

You would pay a fee for the cinema and film and keep any remaining income from selling tickets.

B. You can book a cinema screening via FanForce — a platform that enables you to arrange a cinema screening and promote it in your community without having to cover the cost of the cinema hire yourself. Tickets are made available through FanForce and once a threshold of sales are made the screening is confirmed.

To screen in a non-cinema environment:

If you want to screen at your club or other venue as a fundraiser, reach out to Melissa Acker melissa@madman.com.au The fee for a club fundraiser is \$250 + GST for a digital MP4 stereo sound file.

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Below are some tips to help you plan your screening:

- Think about your audience: this will help determine the type of screening you are hosting. For example, if you're hosting a screening at a sporting club, what age are most of the participants? What messages will they take from the film?
- Think about seating and technical arrangements. How are you planning to screen the film? Do you need a screen? A projector? Speakers? How are you planning to seat film viewers and if needed, panel members?
- How will you introduce the film? Do you need a host to briefly explain the context, and why the film was made?
- Will you have a question-and-answer session after the film? If you are inviting people to be part of a panel discussion, invite them well in advance, and speak to each other about what points you want to discuss or what questions you might ask them.



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Promoting your screening

To help you with this, The Pool team will provide you with access to a digital marketing kit, which includes a digital poster and social media tile template.

- Invite people via email.
- Use social media accounts to spread news of your event.
- Post notices around your workplace, school or sporting community.
- Contact local media outlets and ask them to interview you or a community member about the screening and why you are hosting it.
- Ask your panellists and community/club membership to share your social media posts.

How you promote your film will depend on who you want to come and join the screening and discussion — e.g. is it a closed event, or open to the wider public?



On the Night/Day

- Do a technical check. Make sure the film is playing smoothly and the sound is working, set a good audio level.
- If you're intending to take photos that you might later publish or post on social media, seek the consent of participants or create a sign informing guests that this is your intention.
- At the start of the event it's appropriate do an 'Acknowledgment of Country' (for anyone) or a 'Welcome to Country' (for traditional owners only) to pay respect to the Aboriginal people of that land. For more information see: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Welcome-to-and-Acknowledgement-of-Country.pdf>
- Briefly introduce the film, it may be best not to make too many comments about how you felt about the film — let the audience feel what they will feel, with no expectations and save discussion for afterwards.
- Show the film.
- After the film, you can host a post-screening discussion. This can either be formal, with invited panel members and a Q and A style format, or more informal, with audience members engaged in a more relaxed discussion.

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Setting up the discussion

There are several ways you can run the post-film discussion, from a formal panel to a relaxed group chat.

- If you choose to have a moderated panel and a question-and-answer session select panellists and invite and confirm them well in advance.
- If you decide to have a panel discussion, it is important to think about who will be interesting, knowledgeable and/or passionate in speaking about the themes in the film, and about water safety.

The topics covered and the depth of the discussion will depend on the make-up of your audience. Think about questions and discussion points that are relevant to your audience, whether that is a swim squad, or a community group of senior citizens.

If you would like to know more about the filmmakers and the making of the film to inform your discussion, visit THE POOL website at thepoolfilm.au. You can find content there about the process of making the film to share with your audience or direct them to further reading if interested.

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Suggestions for discussing THE POOL

It may help to pose a starter question to get your group talking. There are some suggested more in-depth talking points below.

- What did you learn? What was most enjoyable/surprising to you?
- Have you swum at the Bondi Pool? Why might it be an 'iconic' destination?
- Have you participated in any environment where you have experienced the same kind of feeling of escape, belonging, community, or endorphin rushes, as those who speak throughout the film?



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In the Director Statement, Ian Darling says:

THE POOL is largely a film about nothing, but it's also a film about everything. While the central character is the pool itself, it also highlights the importance of community and our yearning for it. It's a film about friendship, and commitment, love and loss, sickness and health, physical and mental wellbeing, routine and security, conquering one's fears and being accepted regardless of who you are or where you are from. At the pool everyone is equal in their swimsuits.

- “Everyone is equal in their swimsuits” What do you think this phrase means and how is it borne out in the film?
- The film may seem unconventional in focussing on the Pool itself rather than individual characters — why do you think the filmmakers chose this way of portraying the swimmers?
- Swimmers using the Pool are thematic representations of the diversity of the community at the Pool — discuss the ways in which community is important in your group.
- The film is both poetic and meditative with sequences of vision and sound — which sequences speak to you and why?





EDUCATION

The film's education resource (ATOM Guide) and film will be available through theeducationshop.com.au and via our website in mid 2025. The film is available in Australia and New Zealand through Madman Distribution.

OUTREACH

Float To Survive Australia

Shark Island Productions and The Pool film are proud to partner with Bruce 'Hoppy' Hopkins and Float To Survive.

The Shark Island Productions philanthropic support is a three-year commitment, enabling the message and activities of Float To Survive to expand nationally. The philanthropic partnership between The Pool film and Float To Survive will not only encourage more people to swim but will aim to keep them safe in the water too.

In an emergency water situation, the most important thing to remember is to stay calm.

Floating helps you conserve energy and breathe easily while waiting for help.

FLOAT TO SURVIVE

Learn more at <https://www.floattosurvive.au/>

These five simple steps can be lifesaving in an emergency.

The key is to stay calm, let the water support you, and focus on floating until help arrives.

By mastering these five simple steps, you're giving yourself the best chance to survive.



1. Lean your head back and float

Gently tilt your head back (with your chin lifted) so that your face is above the water. This position keeps your airway clear and helps you breathe more easily. Don't worry if your ears go underwater—that's normal.



2. Control your breathing and keep calm

Focus on slow, deep breaths. Breathing calmly will help you reduce fear and stay afloat. The calmer you are, the easier it is to float.



3. Spread your arms and legs for balance

Extending your arms and legs distributes your weight evenly, helping you stay stable while floating.



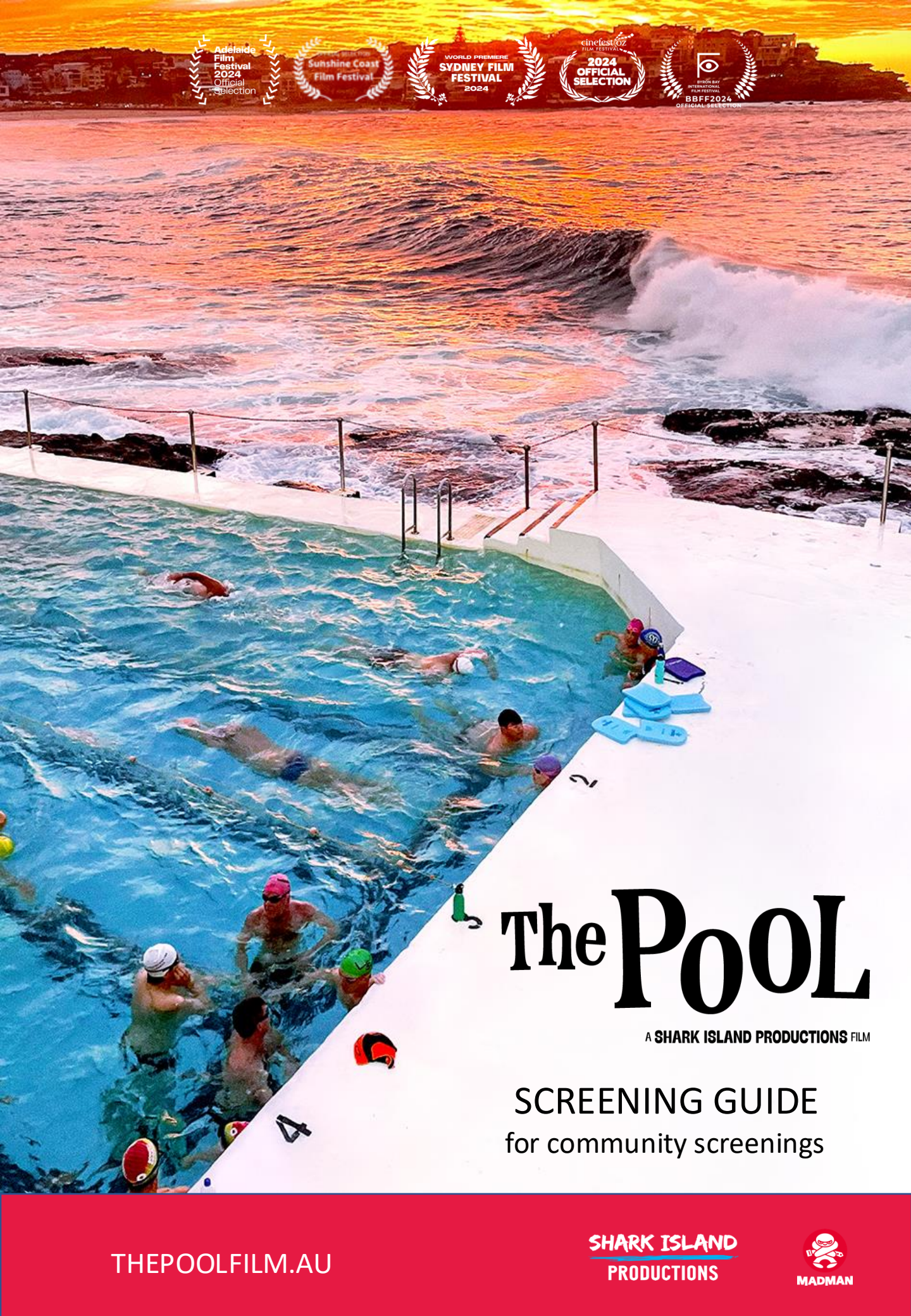
4. Use a circular motion to maintain buoyancy

Use gentle movements to help you balance and stay afloat. Slowly move your arms and legs in a sweeping motion.



5. Signal for help

Once you're stable in the water, try to attract attention. Raise one arm above your head, waving it slowly back and forth while keeping your head tilted back to stay afloat. Shout for help if someone is close by.



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