

NEW LEE TAMAHORI FILM SHOOT COMPLETE

THE PATRIARCH (working title), directed by Lee Tamahori, finished filming on Friday (May 22) after a successful 35 day shoot across 12 Auckland locations.

The film is based on *Whale Rider* author Witi Ihimaera's novel, *Bulibasha*. Set in 1950's and 1960's New Zealand, Ihimaera's story follows two families, the Mahanas and the Poatas, who battle for supremacy in the shearing sheds, on the sports fields and in their own hearts.

Actor Temuera Morrison returns to the screen to play Tamihana; the figurehead and leader of the Mahana family. Nancy Brunning is cast as his wife Ramona, and young Augs Keefe was chosen to play Simeon.

"Watching them, and the rest of the cast and crew putting their hearts into the film has been both thrilling and humbling and I think they have made a movie that the country will be proud of" says Ihimaera.

The film reunites the team behind iconic Kiwi film *Once Were Warriors* including Tamahori, Morrison, and Producer Robin Scholes.

This is Tamahori's first New Zealand film since *Once Were Warriors* twenty years ago.

"Lee's exceptional talents as a film maker were evident in Once Were Warriors and from that moment on the offers flowed in for bigger and bigger budget films. It's very rare for people to return, let alone to a film with a much lower budget than anything he's done, since Warriors. We have Witi to thank for this. His book, Bulibasha, really appealed to Lee because it's about the people he knows and loves and wants to see portrayed in film" says Scholes

After the huge success of *Once Were Warriors*, Tamahori was offered a career working with some of the world's most prestigious studios.

Since 1996 Tamahori has directed the James Bond film *Die Another Day*, the stylish LA noir thriller *Mulholland Falls*, an episode of *The Sopranos* and nearly a dozen other Hollywood blockbusters. He has worked with international actors such as Anthony Hopkins, Pierce Brosnan, Morgan Freeman,

Nicolas Cage, Alec Baldwin and Jennifer Connolly. Tamahori's most recent release is the hyper-kinetic real-life Iraq War thriller *The Devil's Double*, which opened at the Cannes film festival. His film *Emperor*, made in Prague and starring Adrien Brody, will be releasing internationally this year.

Scholes credits the successful shoot to Tamahori and the production team.

"From a production point of view, the shoot was managed by a very professional team, including, off set Co Producers Janine Dickins and Unit Production Manager Honor Byrne; on set, Luke Robinson, 1st Assistant Director and Heads of Department like Designer Mark Robins, Director of Photography Ginny Loane, Wardrobe Liz McGregor - and at the heart of it all, and driving it with energy and vision, was Lee. We ended, on time, on budget and with everything we wanted in the can." says Scholes

The film is funded by New Zealand Film Commission, New Zealand On Air, Māori Television, Hopscotch eOne, Wild Bunch, and private equity investors, including a selection of 200 individuals who put in funding via the Snowball Effect equity crowd funding platform, a first for a New Zealand feature film.

The film is now in post-production and is expected to hit screens in 2016.

Production facts:

35 Shoot days
390 hours shooting
37 cast members
300 extras (approx.)
110+ Crew members
500 full-wool sheep... and then 500 shorn sheep
1 cow
5 chickens
6 horses
12 Auckland Locations
22 Vintage cars

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