

Gala evening in aid of Save Fiordland

Te Anau is gearing up for a gala evening at the Fiordland Cinema on Sunday 7 October. Tickets for New Zealand's first cinema release screening of the documentary **Yakel**, have sold out a week prior to the event.

The film tells the story of Vanuatu's Chief Kowia who struggles to protect the simple existence of his people from materialism, commercial development and the trappings of the modern world.

The message conveyed in the Speargrass Films Ltd documentary has strong parallels with the Save Fiordland campaign to stop environmental destruction by commercial projects in Te Wahipounamu World Heritage Area.

Director Rachael Wilson and post-producer Graham McArthur (who will both be present at the screening in Te Anau), are donating all proceeds from the event to the Save Fiordland campaign.

It's not a coincidence that the documentary is having its first New Zealand release at a tiny cinema in Te Anau. Kim Hollows, Fiordland Cinema owner and producer of Ata Whenua documentary, and Rachel Wilson have met through their involvement in filmmaking. They both share a passion for the environment.

In a pre-screening interview Rachel Wilson said:

"Te Anau was the obvious choice for the New Zealand release because of the real tie-up to the story. In Yakel the 108-years-old narrator talks about his remote tribe's dependence on the jungle for survival and his fight to stop jungle exploitation. I hope his voice and passion inspires all Save Fiordland supporters to carry on with their fight."

Through his friendship with Rachel Wilson, Kim Hollows heard about the tribe and travelled to visit them. Rachel Wilson says: "It was through Kim that I became aware of Save Fiordland and their cause, and I support their fight wholeheartedly. Having the film release in Te Anau comes down to what we believe in, rather than the financial gain we could get by staging it in a bigger city."

"As a filmmaker I've had the opportunity of travelling to some of the world's most remote places and I am acutely affected by the possibility of Fiordland National Park being tampered with in such an ill-considered manner. It's our last bastion of real wilderness."

The organisers are planning the evening to be a red carpet, formal dress affair with drinks and supper provided after the documentary screening. Fiordland Cinema is donating the theatre and staff for the night with local businesses supplying food and wine. Save Fiordland chair Daphne Taylor said: "We are thrilled and very grateful that this prestigious event is happening in Te Anau, and that the proceeds will go to the Save Fiordland campaign. It will be a great night and generate much-needed funds for our fight against the monorail and the tunnel."

For queries about the documentary, Yakel:

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