

Report on flaws in *Stolen* handed to Minister Garrett

The Federal Government will today be presented with a damning critique of the Australian film *Stolen* and asked to disassociate itself from the film.

The critique uncovers serious misleading and deceptive practice on the part of the film makers and, on this basis alone, the Australia Western Sahara Association said, the Commonwealth crediting should be removed before its MIFF screening tonight.

Lyn Allison, President of AWSA said "The credibility given by the Commonwealth crest to the false claims of widespread slavery in the Saharawi camps should be of great embarrassment to the Minister and Screen Australia.

"The film was funded as a documentary but turned out to be a fiction. Now the real story behind its production needs to be told."

The critique, collated by AWSA, documents untruths and basic errors identified by independent translators, witnesses and individuals used in the film. It cites "... questionable methods and unethical practices from pre- to post-production."

The full critique is at: http://awsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/critique_finalversion1.pdf

"Australia's standing as a trusted producer of documentary work is challenged by *Stolen* carrying the Government's seal of approval and its \$300,000 of support."

The critique details statement retractions, payments for false statements, a lack of release forms and standard interview permission documentation, manipulation of subjects, contradictory translations, fictitious scenes and questionable funding arrangements.

"AWSA offers this analysis of *Stolen* in defence of the dignity of the Saharawi people."

"Unfortunately, *Stolen* does not help Australians understand or care about the plight of the Saharawis or their legitimate struggle for self-determination," said Ms Allison.

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For background: <http://www.awsa.org.au>