

# THE OSCARS GO GREEN!

The 79th Annual Academy Awards ceremony, held in February in Los Angeles, will be remembered as the Green Oscars.

MARGARET AMBROSE



HE'S A REASONABLY SIZED GOLD MAN with a whole heap of kudos – and now a very tiny footprint. At this year's Academy Awards, Oscar showed the world that beneath the gold, he's all green, with the ceremony in which organisers slashed carbon emissions and a film named *An Inconvenient Truth* picking up a coveted award.

"Cleaner cars, energy efficient homes, and green buildings help reduce greenhouse gas emissions," actor and environmentalist Leonardo DiCaprio told reporters as he stepped out of his hybrid car. Not the sort of comment one is used to hearing on the red carpet, but then these were no ordinary Academy Awards.

The Toyota Prius is the most popular hybrid car on the US market and is powered by electricity and gasoline. Other celebrities who ditched traditional gas-guzzling stretch limos for the Prius included Penelope Cruz, Forest Whitaker, Nicole Kidman, Kirsten Dunst and Gwyneth Paltrow.

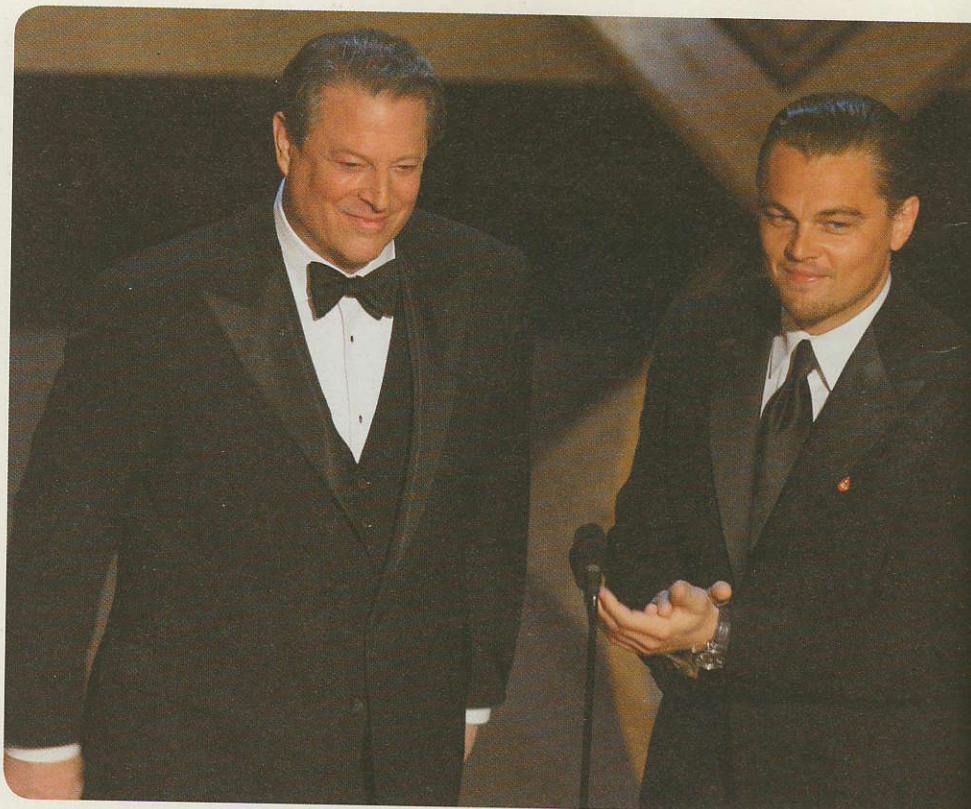
Whilst Hollywood's biggest stars talked climate change and environment, the night belonged to the biggest name to take the climate change message to the world – former Vice President Al Gore, whose film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, was up for an Oscar in the category of Best Documentary Feature.

Early in the award ceremony, Al Gore and Leonardo DiCaprio took the stage to announce the Academy Awards had 'gone green'.

They explained the environmentally sensitive methods incorporated by the Academy and advocacy group Natural Resources Defense Council, into every aspect of putting on the show, including reusing recycled paper, conducting an energy audit for the Kodak Theatre and serving organic food at the Governors Ball.

There had been rumours that should he win, Al Gore would use his speech to announce his intention to run for President, but Gore ruled that out with a well-timed joke that was met with rapturous applause from the audience.

"Even though I honestly had not



planned on doing this, I guess with a billion people watching, it's as good a time as any," he said with mock solemnity. "So, my fellow Americans, I'm going to take this opportunity right here and now to formally announce..."

The former Vice President was suddenly drowned out by loud music from the orchestra pit, the kind they use to halt too-long acceptance speeches. Smiling, Gore and DiCaprio walked off stage arm-in-arm.

The next time Gore was on stage was later on in the night when, before a world-wide audience of around 100 million, the words rang out: "And the Oscar goes to... *An Inconvenient Truth!*"

"My fellow Americans ... people all over the world, we need to solve the climate crisis," Gore said to a cheering crowd. "It's not a political issue, it's a moral issue.

"We have everything we need to get started, with the possible exception of the will to act. That's a renewable resource.

Let's renew it!"

Later on in the evening, song-writer Melissa Etheridge, also picked up an Oscar for her song "I Need to Wake Up", which appears in *An Inconvenient Truth*.

"I have to thank Al Gore for inspiring us, inspiring me, showing that caring about the Earth is not Republican or Democrat," Etheridge said in her acceptance speech.

"It's not red or blue, we are all green," she continued. "This is our job. Now we can become the greatest generation, the generation that changed, the generation that woke up and did something and changed. I love you all."

ABOVE: Hollywood goes green: Al Gore and Leonardo DiCaprio announce the measures taken to ensure the Oscars deliver maximum excitement with a minimal ecological footprint  
PHOTO: AAP

