

SCREEN AUSTRALIA KICKS OFF WITH A FULL SLATE OF PRODUCTION APPROVALS

19 August 2008: Screen Australia's board met in Brisbane yesterday and approved a range of projects in all major areas of production.

In total 25 projects were approved for funding during August, with a production value of \$86 million. This includes four feature films, one adult television drama, four children's dramas, 13 documentaries (four of which are series), one commissioned production and two projects from Screen Australia's Indigenous Branch.

Following a decision by the board, projects requiring funding up to \$1 million can be approved by the Chief Executive Officer of Screen Australia, outside the timetable of board meetings.

"The projects approved in the past month, including those at this board meeting, show the vast range of creativity and ideas the industry has put forward to us," says interim CEO Lyn Maddock.

"We are setting in place a framework we believe will streamline the process of funding projects for the industry while also focussing on the development and marketing sides of the business."

Feature films

Feature films approved for finance yesterday will see two highly experienced directors, Nadia Tass and Simon Wincer, heading into production along with Dean Murphy as well as first-time feature director Brendan Fletcher.

- *The Cup*, with director Simon Wincer, writers Eric O'Keefe and Simon Wincer, producers Jan Bladier, David Lee, Lance Hool and Simon Wincer, tells of the emotional 2002 Melbourne Cup – with young jockey Damien Oliver at the heart of the story.
- *Love and Mortar*, with director Nadia Tass, writers Lynne Renew and David Parker and producers David Parker, Richard Keddie and Nadia Tass, is a love story that defies explanation and breaks all the rules...
- *Mad Bastards* is to be directed by Brendan Fletcher, who also takes a producer role along with Alan Pigram and Stephen Pigram, consultant producer David Jowsey and executive producer Martin Fabinyi. The film is set in Australia's last frontier – the vast and remote Kimberley region of WA. A raw, gutsy character film, it's a meditation on violence, community and the living spirit of contemporary Aboriginal people of the Kimberley.

- *Charlie and Boots* to be directed by Dean Murphy, producers Shana Levine, Dean Murphy and David Redman and executive producers Thomas Augsberger, Andrew Mackie and Richard Payten. Boots McFarland and his estranged dad Charlie head off to Cape York Peninsula to drop a line off the northern most tip of Australia. This film will combine the comic talents of Paul Hogan and Shane Jacobson.

Letters of Intent

Two letters of intent for feature films were approved: one to the *Mad Bastards* team, and the other to producer Ian Iveson, executive producer Michelle Harrison and writer/director Marty Murphy for *End of Anxiety*.

(Films chosen through Screen Australia's evaluation program receive a letter of intent containing the terms and conditions of proposed Screen Australia funding.)

Adult Television Drama

In adult television drama, a second series of *Bed of Roses* was financed, with producers Mark Ruse and Stephen Luby, and writers Jutta Goetze and Elizabeth Coleman. *Bed of Roses* is the story of a woman's search – and a community's search – for a workable identity in the 21st century.

Children's Drama

Children's drama sees funding for a second series of the popular *Dogstar* approved, a third series of *H2O Just Add Water* and *Lockie Leonard series 2*, as well as a new series, *My Place*.

- *My Place* is being produced by Penny Chapman with co-producer Helen Panckhurst, on-line producer David Gurney, script producer Simon Hopkinson and writers Alice Addison, Beth Armstrong, Blake Ayshford, Leah Purcell, Nicholas Parsons, Jacquelin Perske, Tim Pye and Greg Waters; the director is Jessica Hobbs. *My Place* is the story of one spot in Australia, told by the children who live there over 260 years.
- *Dogstar* is from producers Colin South and Ross Hutchens, and writers Doug MacLeod and Phillip Dalkin. In series 2 the Clark kids have located the missing Dogstar, been reunited with their pet dog Hobart, returned all the dogs back to their owners on a rejuvenated earth and defeated the evil robotics tycoon Bob Santino – or so they think.
- *H2O Just Add Water* series 3 is from producer Jonathan M Shiff, executive producers Jonathan M Shiff and Julia Adams, associate producer Stuart Wood, and writers Anthony Morris, Max Dann, Simon Butters, Joss King, Chris Roache, Phillip Dalkin, Sam Carroll and Sam Strauss; directors are Colin Budds and Jeffrey Walker. Cleo and Rikki think they know everything there is

to know about Mako Island, but when water attacks them in a full moon, they realise a new, potentially dangerous force is developing on the mysterious island.

- *Lockie Leonard* series 2 is from producer Kylie du Fresne with executive producers Rosemary Blight, Jo Horsburgh and Bernadette O'Mahony, and writers Keith Thompson, Shelley Birse, Michael Miller, Drew Proffitt, LeeAnne Innes, David Ogilvy, Peter Templeman, Josh Wakely, Wayne Blair, Rhys Muldoon and Matt Ford. Series 2 features the same familiar endearing characters and humour that made the award-winning series 1 such a success, enjoyed by kids, adults and critics alike.

Documentaries

A broad range of documentary projects was approved. Including *Contact*, which looks at the first contact between white and indigenous people in the Great Sandy Desert in 1964, and *China Art*, exploring life and art through the reflections of Chinese contemporary artists.

- *Anatomy of a Massacre* tells the story of the 1991 massacre of an estimated 200 people during an independence march in occupied East Timor. Executive producer is Michael Cordell, directors Andrew Sully and Max Stahl.
- *China Art*, from producers Peter Hiscock and Graham Davis and director Catherine Hunter, combines art and life on screen in spectacular fashion as Chinese contemporary artists reflect on the vast social upheaval that has accompanied China's emergence as a world economic power.
- *Contact*, from producers/directors Martin Butler and Bentley Dean, is being constructed around one of the most extraordinary pieces of footage in Australian history where a group of 20 Martu women and children walked out of the Great Sandy Desert in 1964.
- *For Valour* is being produced by Michael Tear and directed by Serge Ou. On the road from Sydney to Canberra 22 ordinary Australians are remembered for their extraordinary deeds of courage and sacrifice. They are all winners of the Victoria Cross. This is their story.
- *Heartbreak Science*, from producers Ed Punched and Julia Redwood with director Andrea Ulbrick, looks at research into the workings of the human heart and how doctors are searching for answers that could finally unlock the mysteries of the heart and understand an intriguing system of neurons dubbed 'the little brain in the heart'.
- *My Asian Heart* is from producers Carmelo Musca and producer/director David Bradbury and is about contemporary Australian photographer Philip Blenkinsop, who brings us Asia, a world of conflict, life, love and beauty – a unique perspective through his Asian heart.

- *Skippy: Australia's First Superstar* from producers Andrew Ogilvie and Andrea Quesnelle and director Stephen Oliver tells the inside story of a remarkable television series starring a crime-fighting kangaroo who became the emblem of a nation for children the world over.
- *The Ocean's Super Mum – A Sea Lion Odyssey* is a natural history documentary from producer Tina Dalton and director Susan McMillan featuring previously unknown underwater behaviour, and a passionate and engaging scientist whose mission it is to unlock the secrets of the most devoted of all marine mothers – the Australian Sea Lion.
- *Winning World War 1 – The Western Front Diaries* from producers Dr Jonathan King and producer/director Bill Leimbach, is an Armistice Day tribute to the Australian soldiers who fought in the battles of the West Front from Fromelles to Montbrehain and through to Armistice.

Documentary Series

- *Angels in New York*, from producers Gregory Miller and Elizabeth Courtenay and director Chester Dent, tells of two rookie writer/producers from Sydney who take on Broadway with a most unique show, *Angels – the Musical!*
- *Bush Slam*, from producers Matt Scully and Chris Thorburn and executive producer Rick Spence, brings together Australia's top poets, songwriters and comedians in a performance best described as a poetry brawl. Two poets, one town, capturing the heartbeat of the nation in verse.
- *Persons of Interest*, from producers Frank Haines and Gai Steele and series director Haydn Keenan, follows four Australians as they guide us through their ASIO files. Using evidence kept secret for more than 30 years, it is the story of ASIO and the people they spied on.
- *Whatever! The Science of Teenagers* comes from producers Ian Collie and Chris Hilton and director Daniella Ortega, questioning why perfectly loveable children turn into grunting aliens overnight.

Commissioned Production

Tackling Peace, from producer/director/writer Marc Radomsky with executive producer Catriona Hughes, is a one-hour documentary about a combined Israeli-Palestinian Aussie Rules football team who are travelling to Australia in September to compete in the 2008 AFL International Cup.

Indigenous Branch

The two projects approved from Screen Australia's Indigenous Branch are part of the New Black initiative, which is developing and producing 10-minute dramas with emerging directors and producers.

- *Nia's Melancholy* from producer Andrew Arbuthnot and writer/director Sio Tusa Fa'Ae fili tells of a young 'Yalanji' girl who witnesses her sister's suicide. This is the story of her descent into melancholy and her journey of redemption.
- *Ralph* from producer Jessie Mangum, writer/director Deborah Mailman and writer Wayne Blair tells of Madeline, who learns that it takes more than just dreaming to survive; it takes a friend.

Producer Offset

Since the Producer Offset's inception, 142 projects have been issued with provisional certificates. Two final certificates have been issued, with a further seven applications for final certificates currently under assessment.

For a full list of new backed projects, see below:

Feature Films

Letter of Intent

END OF ANXIETY

Agenda Film Productions Pty Ltd

Executive Producer Michelle Harrison

Producer Ian Iveson

Writer/Director Marty Murphy

Synopsis *The End of Anxiety* is an ironic comedy about life, love and the pursuit of happiness in our post 9/11 world.

MAD BASTARDS

Bush Turkey Films Pty Ltd

Executive Producer Martin Fabinyi

Consultant Producer David Jowsey

Producers Alan Pigram, Stephen Pigram

Director/Producer Brendan Fletcher

Synopsis *Mad Bastards* is a feature drama set on Australia's last frontier – the vast and remote Kimberley region, WA. A raw, gutsy character film, it's a meditation on violence, community and the living spirit of contemporary Aboriginal people of the Kimberley. It features performances and stories from real people in the Kimberley rather than actors, all weaved through the music of Broome legendary musicians The Pigram Brothers.

Production Approvals

CHARLIE AND BOOTS

Instinct Entertainment

Executive Producers Thomas Augsberger, Andrew Mackie, Richard Payten

Producers Shana Levine, Dean Murphy, David Redman

Writers Stewart Faichney, Dean Murphy

Director Dean Murphy

Sales and Distribution Instinct Eden Rock International, Transmission

Synopsis Boots McFarland and his estranged dad Charlie head off to Cape York Peninsula to drop a line off the northern most tip of Australia

THE CUP

The Cup Pty Ltd

Executive Producers Kirk D'Amico, Greg Sitch, Joel Pearlman, Omnilab

Producers Jan Bladier, David Lee, Lance Hool

Producer/Director Simon Wincer

Writers Eric O'Keefe, Simon Wincer

Sales and Distribution Village Roadshow, Myriad

Synopsis Probably no race had a more extraordinary effect on the nation than the running of the 2002 Melbourne Cup. At the heart of this true story is a young jockey, Damien Oliver, who having lost his only brother in a tragic racing accident just days before the race, suffers through a series of discouraging defeats, only to triumph in one of the most thrilling finales of all sport.

LOVE AND MORTAR

Cascade Films Pty Ltd

Producers David Parker, Richard Keddie, Nadia Tass

Writers Lynne Renew, David Parker

Director Nadia Tass

Sales and Distribution Fox (Aust/NZ), Content (ROW)

Synopsis A woman struggles with her son's illness and her husband's infidelity, but, after a chance encounter with an Irish sailor and his son, her life is turned upside down in a love story that defies explanation and breaks all the rules.

MAD BASTARDS

Bush Turkey Films Pty Ltd

Executive Producer Martin Fabinyi

Consultant Producer David Jowsey

Producers Alan Pigram, Stephen Pigram

Director/Producer Brendan Fletcher

Sales and Distribution Mushroom Pictures, Hopscotch, Maximum

Synopsis *Mad Bastards* is a feature drama set on Australia's last frontier – the vast and remote Kimberley region, WA. A raw, gutsy character film, it's a meditation on violence, community and the living spirit of contemporary Aboriginal people of the Kimberley. It features performances and stories from real people in the Kimberley rather than actors, all weaved through the music of Broome legendary musicians The Pigram Brothers.

Adult Television Drama

**Media enquiries: Victoria Buchan, The Lantern Group,
victoria@lanterngroup.com.au T: (02) 9383 4033 M: 0408 114 864**

BED OF ROSES – SERIES 2

Southern Star and Ruby Entertainment Pty Ltd

Producers Mark Ruse, Stephen Luby

Writers Jutta Goetze, Elizabeth Coleman

Sales and Distribution Southern Star International

Synopsis Series 2 of *Bed of Roses* is the story of a woman's search – and a community's search – for a workable identity in the 21st Century. It is also a love story. Because whether you're 80, 50 or 17, none of us is immune to that totally infuriating, confusing, heating, frighteningly vulnerable sensation that renders us smiling, crying, despairing, and hopeful, all in the same breath. Particularly when you're not sure which man you're in love with.

Children's Television Drama

DOGSTAR – SERIES 2

Media World Pictures

Producers Colin South, Ross Hutchens

Writers Doug MacLeod, Phillip Dalkin

Sales and Distribution Nine Network, Disney Australia, Daro

Synopsis The Clark kids have located the missing Dogstar, been reunited with their pet dog Hobart, returned all the dogs back to their owners on a rejuvenated earth, and defeated the evil robotics tycoon Bob Santino – or so they think.

H2O JUST ADD WATER – SERIES 3

Jonathan M Shiff Productions

Executive Producers Jonathan M Shiff, Julia Adams

Producer Jonathan M Shiff

Associate Producer Stuart Wood

Writers Anthony Morris, Max Dann, Simon Butters, Joss King, Chris Roache, Phillip Dalkin, Sam Carroll, Sam Strauss

Directors Colin Budds, Jeffery Walker

Sales and Distribution Network Ten, Disney Channel, ZDF, ZDF Enterprises

Synopsis Cleo and Lewis think they know everything there is to know about Mako Island, but when water attacks them in a full moon, they realise a new, potentially dangerous force is developing on the mysterious island. Thankfully they find an ally in Bella, a new girl in town who reveals an equally surprising twist; she too is a mermaid with extraordinary super powers.

LOCKIE LEONARD – SERIES 2

Goalpost Pictures

Executive Producers Rosemary Blight (Goalpost), Jo Horsburgh (Nine Network), Bernadette O'Mahony (ACTF)

Producer Kylie du Fresne

Writers Keith Thompson, Shelley Birse, Michael Miller, Drew Proffitt, LeeAnne Innes, David Ogilvy, Peter Templeman, Josh Wakely, Wayne Blair, Rhys Muldoon, Matt Ford

Sales and Distribution Nine Network, Nickelodeon, BBC, IDM, Australian Children's Television Foundation

Synopsis *Lockie Leonard* is back, with the same familiar endearing characters and humour that made the award-winning series 1 such a success and enjoyed by kids, adults and critics alike.

MY PLACE

Chapman Pictures

Producer Penny Chapman

Co-producer Helen Panckhurst

On-line Producer David Gurney

Script Producer Simon Hopkinson

Writers Alice Addison, Beth Armstrong, Blake Ayshford, Leah Purcell, Nicholas Parsons, Jacquelin Perske, Tim Pye, Greg Waters

Director Jessica Hobbs

Based on the Nadia Wheatley/Donna Rawlins children's book *My Place*.

Sales and Distribution ABC, Australian Children's Television Foundation

Synopsis *My Place* is the story of one spot in Australia told by the children who live there over 260 years.

Documentaries

ANATOMY OF A MASSACRE

Cordell Jigsaw Productions Pty Ltd

Executive Producer Michael Cordell

Directors Andrew Sully, Max Stahl

Sales and Distribution ABC TV, Target Entertainment

Synopsis Tells the story of a forensic investigation into one of the world's most notorious massacres. In 1991, an estimated 200 people were shot and killed by the Indonesian military during an independence march in occupied East Timor. None of the victims' bodies has ever been found. Now forensic pathologists from the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine have been asked to help find and identify the victims.

CHINA ART

Grubstreet Media Pty Ltd

Producers Peter Hiscock, Graham Davis

Director Catherine Hunter

Sales and Distribution ABC TV, Australia Network

Synopsis Art and life combine in spectacular fashion on screen as Chinese contemporary artists reflect the vast social upheaval that has accompanied China's emergence as a world economic power.

CONTACT

Contact Films Pty Ltd

Producers/Directors Martin Butler, Bentley Dean

Sales and Distribution ABC TV, ZDF/ARTE, ABC Commercial

Synopsis *Contact* will be constructed around one of the most extraordinary pieces of footage in Australian history: the moment in 1964 where a group of 20 Martu women and children walked out of the Great Sandy Desert into a new universe of European modernity. The event was only captured on film because scientists were testing the Blue Streak Rocket in the desert at the time. Many of the players on both sides are alive to recreate and tell their story.

FOR VALOUR

Bearcage Pty Ltd

Producer Michael Tear

Director Serge Ou

Sales and Distribution Foxtel History Channel

Synopsis Ordinary people. Extraordinary deeds. On the road from Sydney to Canberra 22 ordinary Australians are remembered for their extraordinary deeds of courage and sacrifice: they are winners of the Victoria Cross. This is their story.

HEARTBREAK SCIENCE

Prospero Productions (2006) Pty Ltd

Producers Ed PUNCHARD, Julia Redwood

Director Andrea Ulbrick

Sales and Distribution SBS, BBC Scotland, BBC Worldwide

Synopsis Could the heart be more than just a pump? Startling first-hand experiences appear to suggest something absolutely incredible – that the heart may be capable of thinking, feeling and remembering. Now, in the battle against heart disease, doctors are searching for answers that could finally unlock the mysteries of the heart and understand an intriguing system of neurons dubbed ‘the little brain in the heart’.

MY ASIAN HEART

CM Film Productions and Frontline Films

Producers Carmelo Musca, David Bradbury

Director David Bradbury

Sales and Distribution SBS TV, SBS Content Sales

Synopsis Contemporary Australian photographer Philip Blenkinsop brings us Asia, a world of conflict, life, love and beauty – a unique perspective through his Asian heart.

THE OCEAN'S SUPER MUM – A SEA LION ODYSSEY

Content Mint Pty Ltd

Producer Tina Dalton

Director Susan McMillan

Sales and Distribution ABC, ZDF Arte, National Geographic Television International

Synopsis A natural history documentary featuring previously unknown underwater behaviour, and a passionate and engaging scientist whose mission it is to unlock the secrets of the most devoted of all marine mothers – the Australian Sea Lion.

SKIPPY: AUSTRALIA'S FIRST SUPERSTAR

Electric Pictures Pty Ltd

Producers Andrew Ogilvie, Andrea Quesnelle

Director Stephen Oliver

Sales and Distribution ABC, BBC, BBC Worldwide, NRK

Synopsis The inside story of a remarkable television series starring a crime-fighting kangaroo who became the emblem of a nation for children the world over.

WINNING WORLD WAR 1 – THE WESTERN FRONT DIARIES

Dunheved Pty Ltd

Producers Dr Jonathan King, Bill Leimbach

Presenter/writer Dr Jonathan King

Director Bill Leimbach

Sales and Distribution Foxtel History Channel, Roadshow Entertainment

Synopsis ANZACS on the Western Front, battle by battle. To celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the end of WWI, this will be an Armistice Day tribute to the

Australian soldiers who fought in the battles of the Western Front from Fromelles (July 1916) to Montbrehain (October 1918) and through to the Armistice. The film is based on the book by Jonathan King "Western Front Diaries - World War 1 Anzac stories battle by battle"(Simon Schuster October 2008).

Documentary Series

ANGELS IN NEW YORK

Angels Television Pty Ltd

Producers Gregory Miller, Elizabeth Courtenay

Director Chester Dent

Sales and Distribution SBS TV, Ovation, SBS Content Sales

Synopsis Two rookie writer/producers from Sydney take on Broadway with a most unique show Angels – the Musical!

BUSH SLAM

Freehand Productions Pty Ltd

Executive Producer Rick Spence

Series Producers Matt Scully, Chris Thorburn

Sales and Distribution ABC TV, BBC Worldwide

Synopsis *Bush Slam* brings together Australia's top poets, songwriters and comedians in a performance best described as a poetry brawl. Two poets, one town, capturing the heartbeat of the nation in verse.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

Smart St Films Pty Ltd

Producers Frank Haines, Gai Steele

Series Director Haydn Keenan

Sales and Distribution SBS TV

Synopsis: Four Australians show us through their ASIO files. Using evidence kept secret for more than thirty years, *Persons of Interest* is the story of ASIO and the people they spied on.

WHATEVER! THE SCIENCE OF TEENAGERS

Essential Media & Entertainment Pty Ltd

Producers Ian Collie, Chris Hilton

Director Daniella Ortega

Sales and Distribution ABC TV

Synopsis Why do perfectly loveable children turn into grunting aliens overnight? Teenagers are in limbo. Not yet adults, but no longer children, they are caught up in a confusing world of intense and rapid change; to their bodies, their emotions and in their relationships with the rest of the world. The stakes are high: problems affecting teenagers are of enormous significance, with profound ramifications for their own future as well as the rest of society – but at last science has some answers to one of life's greatest mysteries.

Commissioned Production

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TACKLING PEACE

Screen Australia in association with Dreamstone Productions & GFN Productions

Executive Producer Catriona Hughes

Producer/Director/Writer Marc Radomsky

Sales and Distribution Screen Australia Promotions and Distribution

Synopsis A one-hour documentary with Network Ten about a combined Israeli-Palestinian Aussie Rules football team that will travel to Australia in September to compete in the 2008 AFL International Cup. But none of the players has ever played this Australian code of football before. Can these traditional enemies sideline decades of conflict to compete together against the world?

Indigenous Branch

NIA'S MELANCHOLY

Lala Pictures Pty Ltd as part of Screen Australia's Indigenous Branch New Black initiative

Producer Andrew Arbutnot

Writer/Director Sio Tusa Fa'Aaefili

Synopsis A young 'Yalanji' girl witnesses her sister's suicide. This is the tale of her descent into melancholy and her journey of redemption.

RALPH

Goalpost Pictures Australia as part of Screen Australia's Indigenous Branch New Black initiative

Producer Jessie Mangum

Writer/Director Deborah Mailman

Writer Wayne Blair

Synopsis Madeline learns that it takes more than just dreaming to survive; it takes a friend.