

Screen Australia announces over \$900,000 in development funding for 31 projects

Thursday 23 November 2023: Screen Australia has announced 18 feature films, 10 television dramas, two online projects and one virtual reality (VR) project that will share in over \$900,000 of story development funding.

Among the funded projects are children's animation series *Wishes*, following five-year-old girl Lucy and her young Guardian-creature Kino; feature film *Dust* from the playwright of the critically acclaimed *Prima Facie*, Suzie Miller; the latest comedy/drama series from Celeste Barber, *Codependent*; and the second iteration of acclaimed virtual reality series, *Lustration 2.0*.

Included in this slate are 16 projects that have been supported through the Generate Fund, 13 through the Premium Fund and two through the Online Development Fund.

Screen Australia Head of Development **Bobby Romia** said, "This diverse slate of projects reflects a rich tapestry of creativity, from animated family adventures to thought-provoking dramas. It presents a wealth of opportunities to showcase and nurture the incredible talent we have here in Australia."

"We're committed to continuing our drive to invest in ambitious, quality content for audiences far and wide and I'm excited to see these teams transform their visions into compelling narratives," said **Romia**.

The projects funded for development include:

- **Codependent:** An eight-part comedy/drama that follows marriage counsellor Darcy (Celeste Barber), a total romantic who lives in a beautiful coastal Australian town and is fully entrenched in her tight-knit community. But Darcy is forced to face her own relationship demons when her husband leaves her for someone new - untangling 15 years' worth of an intertwined life while continuing to share empathetic nods with her troubled clients. Attached is writer/producer Celeste Barber and writer Belinda King whose credits include [Wellmania](#), with Alexandra Keddie ([The Housemate](#)) producing.
- **Dust:** From Bunya Productions and playwright of the critically acclaimed *Prima Facie* Suzie Miller, *Dust* is a feature film set during an environmental crisis on the day a strong wind completely covers Perth with a massive red dust cloud - triggering a wakeup call that forces a group of individuals to look in new directions, grappling with the core of what matters most. The film positions itself as a look into how humanity deals with chaos, how we navigate vulnerability and how it is in reaching toward each other that we find the essence of our humanity. *Dust* is from director John Sheedy ([His for Happiness](#), *Runt*), writer Suzie Miller (*Prima Facie* play) and producers Greer Simpkin and David Jowsey, whose credits include [Limbo](#).
- **Lustration 2.0:** This six-part VR drama fantasy series is a follow-up to the critically acclaimed *Lustration* VR series. This second iteration follows Bardolph and Gallus, who are two protectors of The Between, a realm where the dead go in order to cleanse or 'lustrate' themselves before crossing over to pure happiness. But when an evil target slips through their grasp, everyone and everything in The Afterlife begins to unravel. *Lustration 2.0* is from writer/director/executive producer Ryan Griffen ([Lustration](#), [Cleverman](#)), writer Hannah Belanzsky, producer Carolina Sorensen ([I'm Wanita](#)) and executive producers Nathan Anderson ([Lustration](#), *Awake: Episode One*), Wolfgang Bylsma ([Lustration](#)) and Wadooah Wali.
- **Matriarch:** In this horror feature film, self-made woman Connie (29) moves into her husband Calvin's (35) traditionalist Chinese family home for the third trimester of her pregnancy. As cultural differences and tensions rise surrounding the impending birth of her son, Connie finds herself at the centre of a demented ritual to appease an ancient and decrepit god. *Matriarch* is co-written and directed by Jayden Rathsam Hua ([Sushi Noh](#), *The Key of B*) and co-written and produced by Ivy Mak ([Swift Street](#), *Sydney Sleuthers*).



- ***Metal Fish Falling Snow***: A feature film based on Cath Moore’s award-winning novel follows the story of 12-year-old neurodiverse Dylan, who is driven across the Australian outback to live with her Grandfather William when her adored mother dies suddenly. Accompanied on her journey by her mother’s boyfriend Pat, along the way Dylan struggles with what it means to be of colour, and must confront her fears and falsehoods about the skin she is in. *Metal Fish Falling Snow* is a drama and magic realism film directed/produced by Olivia Peniston-Bird and written/produced by Cath Moore, whose credits include [Graceful Girls](#) and *Sister Song*.
- ***Pick Up***: From Kindling Pictures and inspired by a true story, *Pick Up* follows Koen, a musician on the cusp of fame, battling a chronic illness. Introduced to fecal transplants, he begins an intense daily poo pick up from strangers. As his life grows increasingly public, Koen struggles to maintain his donors’ expectations while navigating the bizarre world of bodily waste, upon which his health now depends. *Pick Up* is an eight-part series about the intricate dance of transaction and intimacy, the complexities of falling in love and the daily demands of a chronic illness. *Pick Up* is created, written and directed by Taylor Ferguson, whose credits include *Fake* and [Year Of](#). Emelyne Palmer and Imogen Banks (*Fake*, [Safe Home](#)) are producing and executive producing respectively.
- ***Senescence***: This eight-part science fiction series follows ambitious 26-year-old dropout Mia as she gets caught in a battle whilst trying to save her mother from a degenerative illness. *Senescence* is written, directed and produced by Madeleine Parry ([The Angels: Kickin’ Down the Door](#)), written by Maddison Connaughton and produced by Peter Hanlon ([The Angels: Kickin’ Down the Door](#)). Joan Sauers is attached as script editor.
- ***What I Like About Me***: This romantic comedy young adult film is told through the eyes of sixteen-year-old Maisie Martin, whose summer is turned upside down when her best friend starts dating her childhood crush. But as plus-sized Maisie pushes herself out of her comfort zone and into the limelight of the local beauty pageant, Maisie realises the things she loves about herself have been there all along. *What I Like About Me* is written by Jenna Guillaume, with Erica Harrison ([A Beginner’s Guide to Grief](#)) attached as script editor. Hayley Adams and Michelle Melky of [Scattered](#) and *Love Songs* are producing and Alex Reid and Tom Maynard are executive producing.
- ***Wishes***: A 26-part fantasy family children’s animation series about a five-year-old girl, Lucy, and her young Guardian-creature Kino. Whenever Lucy feels the struggles of others and wishes she could do something to help, Kino materialises into Lucy’s world of magical solutions, helping her shape them into selfless acts of kindness. *Wishes* is directed by Ana María Méndez Salgado and produced by Carlos Manrique Clavijo whose credits include [My Little Sumo](#), with Colin South ([The Strange Chores](#), [Little J & Big Cuz](#)) attached as executive producer.

For the complete list of development funding approvals refer to [television](#), [online](#) and [feature film](#) breakdowns.

ABOUT STORY DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

Teams with scripted projects for TV and film platforms can apply for development funding from two program strands - the Generate Fund and the Premium Fund.

The [Generate Fund](#) is for lower budget projects with an emphasis on new and emerging talent, or experienced talent wanting to take creative risks. The [Premium Fund](#) is for higher budget projects of ambition and scale from successful screen content makers.

Online projects can receive support through the [Online Development Fund](#), which supports emerging screen creatives in developing the creative materials of their scripted or documentary projects.

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