



Australian Government



MEDIA RELEASE

Screen Australia announces over \$10 million of production funding for nine projects

Monday 25 September 2023: Screen Australia has announced six feature films, two television dramas and one children's project that will share in over \$10 million of production funding.

The projects include *The Fox* which stars Jai Courtney ([Storm Boy](#), [Suicide Squad](#)) and is from the producers of supernatural horror film and worldwide box office hit, [Talk to Me](#); *An Ideal Wife* about the story of Oscar Wilde's wife Constance Lloyd from writer/director/producer Sophie Hyde (BAFTA-nominated [Good Luck To You](#), [Leo Grande](#)) and starring Emilia Clarke ([Game of Thrones](#)); reimagined television drama *Ladies in Black*, adapted from the original novel *The Women In Black* by Madeleine St John; and season three of ABC's popular children's show [Ginger and the Vegesaur](#).

Minister for the Arts, **Tony Burke** said, "These projects speak to the incredible breadth, quality and relatability of Australian stories. Australia's screen sector is something we should all be proud of. Australian stories allow us to learn more about ourselves, come to understand each other and let the world get to know us. The Australian Government is proud to support an empowered and innovative Australian screen industry."

Screen Australia's CEO **Graeme Mason** said, "This latest slate announcement presents an exceptional line-up of feature films and television series that have the ingredients to surprise, entertain and translate on a global scale. These high calibre projects speak to the remarkable talent within the Australian film industry, and the international appeal that Australian stories hold."

"This funding underscores Screen Australia's commitment to nurturing local talent, showcasing their creativity with audiences worldwide, and supporting innovative stories that resonate. Whether you love crime drama, comedy or period dramas — there really is something for everyone in this unique mix of projects," said **Mason**.

In 2022/23FY Screen Australia supplied over \$40 million of production funding for feature films, television dramas and children's programs.

The funded feature films are:

- ***An Ideal Wife*:** This drama tells the story of Oscar's Wilde's wife Constance Lloyd, leader of the dress reform movement that led to women's widespread rejection of corsets. Told from Constance's point-of-view, audiences follow her discovery of her husband's relationships with men as she wonders if there is another, more progressive way for them to live - leading to her own sexual awakening and transformation. Starring Emilia Clarke ([Game of Thrones](#)), *An Ideal Wife* is from writer/director/producer Sophie Hyde ([Animals](#), BAFTA-nominated [Good Luck To You](#), [Leo Grande](#)) and writers Matthew Cormack ([52 Tuesdays](#)) and Claire Barré ([Night Shift](#)). Matthew Gledhill ([Far From Men](#)), Olivier Delbosc ([Stars at Noon](#)) and Chris Curling ([The Miracle Club](#)) are also producing. It is financed in association with the South Australian Film Corporation with support from the Adelaide Film Festival Investment Fund. International sales by Embankment.
- ***The Fox*:** After Nick, an affable heir to a vineyard dynasty discovers his fiancé Kori is cheating on him, a rogue, talking fox that Nick captures offers him a trade-off to fix the problem: if Nick lets the fox live, the fox will help him save his relationship. All he has to do is push Kori into a magic hole with the power to change her into the perfect partner. But after following the fox's advice, the re-emerged Kori's new quirks make him question his decision. *The Fox* is a dark comedy feature film from Causeway Films that stars Jai Courtney ([Storm Boy](#), [Suicide Squad](#)) and is from writer/director Dario Russo and producers Samantha Jennings and Kristina Ceyton, whose credits include [Talk to Me](#). It is financed in association with the South Australian Film Corporation, with support from KOJO Studios and the Adelaide Film Festival Investment Fund. Madman Entertainment is distributing locally and international sales are managed by Protagonist.

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- ***He Ain't Heavy***: Needing to take drastic measures to protect her family, 30-year-old Jade puts her drug-addicted brother Max into a home-made rehab in their empty grandparents' house in this drama/thriller feature film. But Jade's plan quickly deteriorates when her mum, Bev, unexpectedly arrives and they discover Max is wanted for a crime. *He Ain't Heavy* is written and directed by David Vincent Smith and produced by Jess Parker whose credits include [Featherweight](#) and [I'm Not Hurting You](#). Kristina Ceyton ([The Babadook](#), [You Won't Be Alone](#)) is executive producing, with Bonsai Films distributing locally. It is financed in association with Screenwest and Lotterywest.
- ***Inside***: After being transferred from juvenile to adult prison, Mel is taken under the wings of Mark Shepard, Australia's most despised criminal, and Warren Murfett, a soon-to-be-a-paroled inmate, in this crime thriller. But when Warren is forced to remove Shepard from the picture to pay his debts, he finds a surprising accomplice in the guilt-ridden Mel - with the paternal love triangle that develops between them being their undoing. Charles Williams is writing/directing and is a Cannes Films Festival Palme d'Or winner for [All These Creatures](#). Marian Macgowan ([The Great](#)) and Kate Glover ([The Phantom of the Open](#)) are attached as producers, with Bonsai Films handling local distribution and international sales by Goodfellas ([Wild Bunch](#)). *Inside* is financed with support from the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) Premiere Fund and Screen NSW.
- ***My Melbourne***: Set in Melbourne, this feature film is a collection of diversified stories told by writers and actors forming the future of the Australian film industry. This comedy/drama anthology of four stories addressing race, gender, sexuality and disability provides insight into diversity and inclusivity based on authentic multicultural migrant experiences in one feature film. *My Melbourne* is directed by Kabir Khan, Rima Das, Imtiaz Ali, Onir, Puneet Gulati, Samira Cox, Tammy Yang and William Duan. William Duan, Samira Cox, Monique Nair, Nazifa Amiri and Shivangi Bhowmick are attached as writers, with Mitu Bhowmick Lange and Leanne Tonkes producing. It is financed in association with VicScreen with support from Soundfirm and is developed with assistance of Mind Blowing Films. Mind Blowing Films are distributing locally.
- ***Runt***: Set in the country town of Upson Downs, this family feature film tells the story of ten-year-old Annie Shearer and her best friend, an adopted stray dog called Runt. The film follows Annie and Runt as they try to save their family's farm from drought and hardship by winning the Agility Course Championship at the Krumpets Dog Show in London. *Runt* is directed by John Sheedy ([H is For Happiness](#)), written by Craig Silvey ([Jasper Jones](#)) and produced by Jamie Hilton ([Sting](#)) and Jessy Rolleston Palmer. It is financed in association with Screenwest, Lotterywest and the WA Regional Screen Fund, with support from the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF) and Screen NSW. Studiocanal are distributing locally and handling international sales.

The funded television dramas are:

- ***Ladies in Black***: A six-part drama for the ABC about a group of women who fling open their shop doors to the fabulous 60s. Directing all six episodes is Gracie Otto, whose credits include [The Clearing](#), [Heartbreak High](#) and [Artful Dodger](#). The writing team includes script producer Greg Waters ([Riot](#), [The Twelve](#)), Joan Sauers ([The Principal](#), [Rake](#)), Sarah Bassiuni ([The Heights](#)) and Randa Sayed ([Halal Girls](#)). The series is produced by Sophia Zachariou ([The Office Australia](#), [The Moth Effect](#)), Angela Littlejohn ([Cleverman](#), [In Limbo](#)), Greer Simpkin and David Jowsey, whose credits also include [Mystery Road: Origin](#), [True Colours](#). Sue Milliken and Allannah Zitserman, who produced the [Ladies in Black feature film](#), are attached as executive producers with Louise Smith executive producing for the ABC. It has received major production investment from the ABC and is financed with support from the South Australian Film Corporation and Screen NSW. ABC Commercial manages worldwide distribution.
- ***The Newsreader season 3***: A six-part third instalment of the ABC series that digs behind the indelible images of the 1980s for a compelling, intimate, vital look at an era of great change. From [The Newsreader season 2](#) is returning team, director/executive producer Emma Freeman, writer/producer Michael Lucas, writers Niki Aken and Adrian Russell Wills, producer/executive producer Joanna Werner and executive producer Stuart Menzies. Season 3 is also written by Christine





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Bartlett ([Five Bedrooms](#)). It has received major production investment from the ABC in association with VicScreen. International sales are managed by eOne.

The funded children's projects are:

- ***Ginger and the Vegesaurs season 3***: Following on from the popular first two series', *Ginger and the Vegesaurs* season 3 continues the adventures of young Tricarrotops, Ginger in this 20-part adventure comedy series for the ABC. Season 3 sees Ginger and her trio of baby Pea-Rexes meet the giant but timid Pumpkinsaurus during the Spooky Forest's honeysuckle harvest, and revisit familiar friends they have met in their travels. They will also witness natural phenomenons like thermal-air geysers and even a crazy snowstorm, which all the Vegesaurs must brave together. *Ginger and the Vegesaurs* season 3 is created by Gary Eck and Nick O'Sullivan. Eck, Sylvie van Dijk, Rebekka Schafferius, Bruce Griffiths and Angus Woodiwiss are writing, with Celine Goetz and Amanda Spagnolo attached as producers and Patrick Egerton and David Webster as executive producers. It is funded in association with and developed with the assistance of the ABC. It is financed with the support from Studio100 who are also managing international sales. Post, digital and visual effects are supported by Screen NSW.

For the full list of blocklines refer to the [television](#) and [feature film](#) breakdowns.

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