

\$1 million for documentaries about Leunig, prehistoric birds and racing in the desert

Wednesday 12 April 2017: Screen Australia today announced over \$1 million in production investment funding for seven new documentaries through the Documentary Producer and Commissioned programs.

The projects include a futuristic look at the preservation of our planet, how young Australians are coping with housing affordability, cartoonist Michael Leunig reflecting on a full life, and insights into native title and human rights.

Liz Stevens, Senior Manager of Documentary at Screen Australia said: "With this slate we welcome back talented creatives like Damon Gameau who proved with *That Sugar Film* that brand new voices to the genre can be incredibly compelling, and *Buckskin* director Dylan River who will make his feature-length documentary debut. This is an exciting line up of documentaries that shows Australian people, places and histories are a perennial source of interest and worthy of investigation."

The funded Documentary Producer projects are:

- *2040*, an unconventional feature documentary set in the future from the team behind the third highest grossing Australian documentary ever, *That Sugar Film*. Director/writer Damon Gameau will read a letter to his hypothetical daughter on her 21st birthday in 2040 as a narrative device to discuss seminal moments in the time since her birth (2019) when humanity introduced solutions to improve the planet's wellbeing. An inspired and accessible way to touch on issues including climate change, technology, gender equality, social justice and more, this Madman Productions documentary produced by Nick Batzias and Anna Kaplan has also secured Good Pitch² and Film Victoria funding.
- Feature-length documentary *Finke*, which promises to be a thrilling ride taking audiences behind the scenes of one of the world's longest and most dangerous off-road motorsports races - the Finke Desert Race in the Northern Territory. Produced by Brindle Films, the team includes producer Isaac Elliott and director Dylan River, both of whom have competed in the race multiple times. Using their knowledge and experience of the race to gain unprecedented access, *Finke* will explore what motivates competitors to undertake such an extraordinarily risky physical and psychological challenge. Rachel Clements, Trisha Morton-Thomas and Meredith Garlick will also produce.
- Film Camp's *Leunig: A Tale in 16 Parts*, a portrait of one of Australia's most celebrated and iconic cartoonists - Michael Leunig. The feature-length documentary will see Leunig, who is recovering from an almost-fatal brain seizure, reflecting on the formative experiences, fears, hopes and dreams that have fed into a lifetime of artistic expression. Produced by Philippa Campey, written and directed by Kasimir Burgess, *Leunig* will be distributed by Madman Entertainment and has also received Film Victoria support.
- Feature-length documentary *Displaced*, which will follow prominent Australian human rights barrister and advocate Julian Burnside as he interrogates the current state of human rights laws that underpin the principals of Western democracy. Through a series of interviews with global leaders, Burnside will use his legal training to examine, contextualise and challenge current Australian and international policies. Written and directed by Judy Rymer who will also produce alongside Lois Harris, *Displaced* has already pre-sold to BBC Scotland.

The funded Documentary Commissioned projects are:

- Wildlife documentary *Dino Bird* produced by WildBear Entertainment for National Geographic, which will provide a glimpse into the secret life of 'Bertha', a southern cassowary residing deep in the Daintree Rainforest. Descended from dinosaurs, this endangered species is the world's most dangerous and second largest land-based bird, native to New Guinea and north eastern Australia.
- The second season of *Housemates*, which has been commissioned by ABC2 following the huge success of the first season which was the fourth-most viewed factual documentary program on iView in 2016. Produced by Mashup Pictures, season two will continue to look at how young Australians combat

housing affordability by share-housing and will introduce audiences to four unique living arrangements from around the country.

- NITV commissioned one-off documentary *Wik vs. Queensland* which will offer a uniquely Indigenous perspective on the landmark 1996 High Court decision that brought into focus the fundamental role played by land rights in safeguarding Indigenous culture in Australia. Produced by Bacon Factory Films, Bent 3 Land Productions and Freshwater Productions with support from Screen Queensland, it will air on NITV in December 2017. [MEDIA RELEASE](#)

[Click here](#) to see more information about this round of successful projects.

ABOUT SCREEN AUSTRALIA'S DOCUMENTARY FUNDING

The [Documentary Producer](#) program is designed to give producers the foundational funding required to leverage their projects creatively and commercially. It must have a clear path to audience but marketplace attachment is not required at the application stage.

The [Documentary Commissioned](#) program is designed to support the production of a diverse range of quality projects for television broadcast, VOD or similar. It must offer a compelling vision with a clear and enduring cultural value, and have a local presale with a minimum license fee at application stage.

[Click here](#) for more information about these programs.