



## ABC and Screen Australia to explore national identity with three new documentary series

The ABC and Screen Australia today announce funding for three original documentary projects, *Dark Emu*, *Gun Ringer*, and *Miriam Margolyes: Almost Australian*.

*Dark Emu*, will bring Bruce Pascoe's acclaimed book about the history of First Australians to the screen. *Gun Ringer* follows the extraordinary life and work of cattle ringers in the outback. And much-loved actor Miriam Margolyes will go on a journey across the country to uncover what it means to be Australian.

Head of Indigenous at Screen Australia, **Penny Smallacombe** said, "*Dark Emu* promises to be one of the most important documentary series the Indigenous Department has funded. It's a chance to challenge the myth of pre-colonial Indigenous Australians being just hunter gatherers. We have sophisticated systems and knowledge that isn't appreciated by all Australians, and in the hands of Blackfella Films, and director Erica Glynn, this significant story has the power to change that."

Head of Documentary at Screen Australia, **Bernadine Lim** said, "When we fund through our Commissioned Program, we're looking for compelling, true Australian stories that will be told exceptionally well, and reach a broad audience. Both *Gun Ringer* and *Almost Australian* stood out as distinctive concepts, which will offer insightful perspectives on our sense of identity, and our environment. I'm really pleased to add these projects to the significant slate of Australian documentaries on the ABC."

ABC's Head of Entertainment and Factual, **Josie Mason-Campbell**, said: "We continue to look for new and innovative ways to tell the stories of our nation and I am delighted to welcome both of these documentaries from production partners Ronde and Southern Pictures, to our award-winning slate. *Gun Ringer* broadens our understanding of some of the most remote regions of Australia through timely analysis of its economic, cultural and ecological history. *Miriam Margolyes*, who now calls Australia home, will be digging deep under the skin of our people and places. In the process, she will be venturing far out of her comfort zone, and in her own inimitable way, she'll take us all with her as she asks the question what does it mean to be Australian?"

ABC's Head of Indigenous, **Kelrick Martin**, said: "The significant contribution and unique, rich culture of Indigenous Australia is largely taken for granted in this country. *Dark Emu* offers a revelatory context for future generations of Australians and ABC Indigenous is proud to work alongside Bruce Pascoe and Blackfella Films to correct these stereotypes."

The funded projects are:

- ***Dark Emu***: A documentary from Blackfella Films based on the award-winning book of the same name, written by Bruce Pascoe. The series will take audiences on a revelatory and inspiring journey across Australia to present a very different history of our nation and the First Australians. The series is written by Bruce Pascoe ([Black Chook](#)) and Jacob Hickey ([First Contact](#)). It will be directed by Erica Glynn ([She Who Must Be Loved](#)), and produced by Darren Dale ([First Australians](#)) and Belinda Mravivic ([Black Chook](#)). The series received principal production investment from Screen Australia's Indigenous Department in association with the ABC. Financed with support from Screen NSW with Film Victoria.

- ***Gun Ringer***: A ten by half hour series from Ronde Productions, which follows the men and women of the Australian Outback, who risk life and limb catching feral bulls and buffalo. Every dry-season, against the iconic backdrop of remote regional Australia, they rely on grit, cunning, and self-belief to stay alive and turn a profit. The series will expand on the [short form series](#) of the same name released in 2017. The series is created by Executive Producer Ben Davies ([Bondi Rescue](#)) and Producer Tom Lawrence. Liam Taylor is series producer, and Maria Handas is directing. The series received principal production investment from Screen Australia in association with the ABC. Financed with support from Screen NSW with Screen Territory.
- ***Miriam Margolyes: Almost Australian***: A three by one hour observational documentary series from Southern Pictures that follows internationally award-winning actor and new Australian Miriam Margolyes as she embarks on an investigation of what it means to be Australian in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In her 50 years as an Australian resident she has witnessed Australia's transformation. Now, as a new citizen Miriam interrogates who we are and what we stand for as she grapples with her sense of being 'almost Australian'. Using her wit and wisdom, Miriam will take viewers on a timely state-of-the-nation enquiry to uncover if the traditional Aussie values that attracted her as a young migrant still hold true. Liz Allen ([Love Me As I Am](#)) is directing the series with series producer Ross Wilson ([The Mosque Next Door](#)) and story producer Allan Clarke ([Cold Justice](#)). Laurie Critchley ([Hawke: The Larrikin & The Leader](#)) and Aline Jacques ([Living Universe](#)) are on board as executive producers. The series received principal production investment from Screen Australia in association with the ABC. Financed with support from Screen NSW with Screen Territory.