

Screen Australia announces \$1 million of story development funding for 33 projects

Monday 15 August 2022: Screen Australia has announced over \$1 million of development funding for 19 feature films, 13 television dramas and one feature-length project to be released online. The projects include the first feature film from Auntie Donna's production company Haven't You Done Well Productions with *The Alien Abduction of Emily Hill*; the producers of *Nude Tuesday* teaming up on dark dystopian comedy *The Border*; and a young-adult dramedy about out-and-proud teenager Terry facing his bullies in *The Outrageously Fabulous World of Terry Logan*.

Also announced today are the seven successful teams to receive development funding through SBS, NITV and Screen Australia's Digital Originals initiative for 2022, with more information below.

Screen Australia's Head of Development **Louise Gough** said, "We're pleased to announce this exciting mix of projects from experienced creatives on track to take their premium and distinct Australian stories global, as well as from up and coming talent with bold concepts with the potential to cut through."

"Knowing your audience is fundamental to a project's success, and we're pleased to see applications coming in with bespoke pathways to engage viewers for niche and wide audiences. We'd love to see more projects being conceived and developed for a range of ages, especially stories for children, families and young adults. We encourage online creators to engage with us for development funding as they move their projects towards production."

This slate includes the remainder of projects funded in the 2021/22 financial year during which Screen Australia supplied \$2.4 million of story development funding.

Among the titles receiving funding are five projects that came through Screen Australia and Australians in Film's Untapped initiative in 2021: *Deadname*, *How Did We F*ck This Up*, *Pasa Faho*, *Unloveable* and *Salty*. More information about these projects is [available here](#). The successful practitioners and projects for [Untapped 2022](#) will be announced in the coming months.

The projects funded for development include:

- ***The Alien Abduction of Emily Hill***: A comedy from writers Michelle Brasier ([Why Are You Like This](#)) and Sam Lingham (*Auntie Donna's Big Ol' House of Fun*) and the first feature film from Auntie Donna's production arm Haven't You Done Well Productions alongside Pacific Electric Picture Company who previously collaborated on *Auntie Donna's Big Ol' House of Fun*. This sci-fi rom-com follows Emily whose fiancé, mid marriage ceremony, is abducted by a beam from the sky, and when it makes the news Emily finds herself sucked into her own bright spotlight of fame. Niki Aken ([The Hunting](#)) is attached as executive producer and story editor, with Christiaan Van Vuuren ([A Sunburnt Christmas](#)) contributing in the writers' room.
- ***Bear the Dog***: A feature film from writer Stuart Beattie ([Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan](#)) about a dysfunctional wildlife ranger, Ash, who is paired up with an equally dysfunctional rescue Koolie named Bear, to help rehome koalas. With a bushfire threatening the local koala population, together they learn that the things that make them different are actually their superpowers. Beattie teams up with producer Tracey Vieira (*A Perfect Pairing*) and executive producers Tracey Robertson, Tracey Vieira and Nathan Mayfield who previously collaborated on [Christmas on the Farm](#), along with executive producers Susan Cartsonis, Brent Emery and Suzanne Farwell (*True Spirit*).
- ***The Border***: A feature film from writer/director Eryk Lenartowicz and writer Yvette Underwood, whose short film [Dots](#) screened at Cannes Film Festival in 2018. *The Border* is a dark comedy set in a dystopian, over-populated city surrounded by a forest inhabited by a terrifying creature that feeds off human sacrifices. In a world where population is strictly controlled and unsanctioned procreation is punishable by death, hopeless romantic Matylda discovers that she is unlawfully pregnant after an awkward one-night stand with Vincent. They are forced to make a choice between the rules of the



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city and the creature in forest. *The Border* will be produced by Virginia Whitwell and Nick Batzias of Good Thing Productions ([Nude Tuesday](#))

- **Two Nations:** A feature film inspired by the true story of journalism’s most audacious sting. A small town Australian dog food entrepreneur is recruited as a fake pro-gun lobbyist to infiltrate the world’s most powerful gun lobby, the NRA. This grounded, comedic thriller is the story of one man searching for a purpose, one nation understanding how much dirty money is in its political system, and how two nations are irrevocably intertwined. This film is written and directed by Trent O’Donnell ([No Activity](#)), produced by Jungle Entertainment with Bridget Callow-Wright ([Big Deal](#)) a producer on the project and Jason Burrows ([Wakefield](#)) as executive producer.
- **Wildflowers:** The second feature film from writer/director Thomas Wilson-White (*The Greenhouse*) about Will Beckett, a listless wallflower, who takes a job as an assistant on an international period film shooting in Tasmania and falls into a love affair with the famous male lead. Losing themselves in a gentle and profound romance, the lines between fact and fiction blur and both men are confronted with reality when their time together abruptly comes to an end. Anna Seifert-Speck (*Ammonite*) is on board as script editor.
- **The Outrageously Fabulous World of Terry Logan:** An eight-part television series about smart, funny 14-year-old Terry Logan who is out and proud at school but is bullied mercilessly for it. Terry finds the courage to face up to a world of bullies with his very own brand of outrageous fabulousness. This dramedy is created and written by John Davies ([Crash Palace](#)) and produced by Miriam Stein ([Hey Hey It’s Esther Blueberger](#)).
- **Barren By Choice:** A six-part comedy series about three female friends who are remaining childless by choice, as they try to find love amid social and cultural pressures and their desperate-to-be-a-grandma mothers who will do anything to unearth their maternal instincts. Writer/director Jo-Anne Brechin ([Paper Champions](#)) teams up with writers Jo Gowda, Michelle Law ([Homecoming Queens](#)) and Kirsty Webeck, and producer Janelle Landers ([Rams](#)).

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

DIGITAL ORIGINALS PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT

Screen Australia, SBS and NITV have selected seven projects from this year’s Digital Originals initiative to receive development funding. The projects, which were selected from [the 12 teams who took part in workshops in June](#), will be developed further with up to three moving into production for SBS platforms and NITV.

The successful projects are:

- **Confinement** (QLD): A new migrant mother must battle postpartum depression and a tyrannical confinement nanny with seemingly nefarious intentions. Team: Jacqueline Lim, Lark Lee, Daniel Stevenson.
- **Dark Matter Don’t Matter** (NT/SA): After the mass evacuation of Earth, a small Aboriginal community is left behind and decide to take matters into their own hands... by launching themselves to the stars. Team: Tamara Whyte, Isaac Lindsay, Warren Milera, Philip Tarl Denson.
- **Earshot** (VIC/NSW): A seemingly happy Indian-Australian actress is asked to record the last messages of a missing immigrant woman for a true crime podcast. Embodying one of the justice system’s forgotten victims causes her to obsess over the case - and unravel the course of her own life. Team: Vidya Rajan, Alistair Baldwin, Renée Marie Petropoulos.

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- **Moni** (NSW): Moni, now in his mid-30s, still single, Samoan, and gay, is alone. Truly alone. That is until his parents return from the dead as their 20-something selves, to help their son make peace and seek the life he kept hidden from them. Team: Taofia Pelesasa, Eliorah Malifa, Alana Hicks.
- **Moonbird** (TAS): An 11-year-old pakana boy takes on the responsibilities of an adult when his father drowns on a remote Mutton Bird Island in Bass Strait. Team: Nathan Maynard, Adam Thompson, Matthew Newton, Catherine Pettman, Courtney Gibson.
- **Ned** (NSW/VIC): An awkward serial killer takes a couch surfing cult survivor under his wing and agrees to teach her the dark art of murder so she can enact her revenge on the evils of the world, and all he wants in return is a Sunday night scrabble partner. Team: Samuel Paynter-Nuggin, Andrew Arbuthnot.
- **Warm Props** (WA): 8 hour call. 40 degree heat. Culturally clueless crews and locals who haven't spoken to each other in decades. What could possibly go wrong with this casting call? Team: Jub Clerc, Jodie Bell.

The Digital Originals initiative aims to develop exciting and innovative short-form drama projects to premiere as a single episode program on SBS platforms and NITV, from screen creatives who are currently under-represented in the sector. This includes people who identify as culturally and linguistically diverse, First Nations Australians, people with disability, female and gender diverse, LGBTIQ+ and those who are located in regional and remote areas.

Across an impressive slate of projects, including [The Tailings](#), [Iggly & Ace](#), [Homecoming Queens](#), and [Robbie Hood](#), Digital Originals continues to be a proven career pathway for creatives. Alumni includes Dylan River ([Mystery Road: Origin](#)), Corrie Chen ([New Gold Mountain](#)), and Stevie Cruz-Martin who comes off the back of directing [The Tailings](#) for SBS On Demand, to direct SBS and Screen Australia's new drama series, [Safe Home](#). The next Digital Originals series set to premiere is South Australian drama [A Beginner's Guide to Grief](#).

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