

## Screen Australia announces \$2.9 million for 10 documentaries

**Tuesday 17 July 2018:** Screen Australia today announced \$2.9 million in production funding for 10 projects through the Documentary Producer and Documentary Commissioned programs. The slate of projects includes a new feature for the ABC about the Black Saturday bushfires titled *Aftermath-Beyond the Firestorm*, a new three-part series for SBS by Blackfella Films called *First Wars*, and *The Australian Dream* written by Stan Grant about AFL legend Adam Goodes, with a focus on race, identity and belonging.

It has also been announced that Liz Stevens who has been with Screen Australia and predecessor agency Film Australia for 15 years will be leaving Screen Australia to explore a number of creative opportunities.

“Documentary is one of the most powerful, significant and necessary forms of storytelling available to us. Documentaries have the ability to educate, inform, entertain, redress injustice and spark national conversations. I’m reminded of all those qualities when I look at the impressive titles and teams in this round of funding, one of my last whilst leading the documentary unit at Screen Australia,” said **Liz Stevens** Senior Manager of Documentary at Screen Australia.

“Over the last 10 years working at Screen Australia I have been impressed by the dedication and skill of Australian documentary filmmakers. I have seen the great care and craft they’ve used to record a snapshot of our shared history. Sometimes fearless, sometimes beautiful but always informative, Australian audiences are so lucky to have such a diverse range of stories on offer. Collectively we can be proud that we have contributed to funding these documentaries, through Screen Australia, because it speaks to the value we place on recording our nation, its people and our home.”

Screen Australia CEO **Graeme Mason** said: “Liz Stevens has been a fierce advocate for documentary and is one of those rare people who embrace change in her chosen art form. Her legacy is literally a catalogue of true Australian stories, having overseen countless memorable and significant documentaries from the landmark *Uranium - Twisting the Dragon’s Tail*, blue chip *Life on the Reef*, to the confronting and international Emmy award-winning *Go Back to Where You Came From*, the touching *Matilda and Me* and hit social-change titles like *War on Waste*, *That Sugar Film* and *Embrace*.”

In total \$1.5 million was allocated through the Producer program, and \$1.4 million through the Commissioned program.

The Documentary Commissioned projects are:

- Renegade Films one-hour documentary *Aftermath-Beyond the Firestorm*, for the ABC. This project comes from the same award-winning team that created *Inside the Firestorm* for the ABC in 2009 - [Lucy Maclaren](#), [Joe Connor](#) and [Ken Connor](#). Directed by [Tony Jackson](#), it will delve into the aftermath of the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires and tell a story of recovery, re-birth, and the resilience of the human spirit following one of Australia’s worst natural disasters.
- Blackfella Films three-part series *First Wars*, for SBS which tells the story of Australia’s frontier conflicts. The series was written by [Jacob Hickey](#) (*First Contact*), and will be produced by [Darren Dale](#) (*First Australians*), and directed by [Rachel Perkins](#) (*First Australians*).
- A second series of SBS series *Marry Me, Marry My Family* from CJZ. This three-part series about love, heartbreak, colour and chaos will uncover new amazing stories of cross-cultural weddings in Australia. It will be produced by [Sophie Meyrick](#) (*Emedded*) with [Andrew Farrell](#) (*Working Class Boy*) on board as executive producer.

The Documentary Producer projects are:

- Good Thing Productions and Passion Pictures, *The Australian Dream*, written by Stan Grant. This theatrical feature and official co-production with documentary specialists and Academy Award-winning UK production company Passion Pictures will use the remarkable and inspirational story of AFL legend Adam Goodes as the prism through which to tell a deeper and more powerful story about



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race, identity and belonging. It will be directed by BAFTA Award winning documentary film director Daniel Gordon (*Hillsborough*) and executive produced by [Paul Wiegard](#) (*Mountain*) and [Andrew Ruhemann](#), with Sarah Thompson, [Nick Batzias](#) (*That Sugar Film*), John Battsek (*Searching for Sugar Man*), and [Virginia Whitwell](#) (*All for One*) all producing. This documentary is financed with support from Film Victoria.

- A short animated online documentary, *Bright Lights - The Perils of the Pokies*, written, directed and produced by Charby Ibrahim which explores the negative impact of gambling addiction through personal anecdotes of an addict. It will be executive produced by [Helen Gaynor](#) who produced the documentary series [Addiction](#), and [Jennifer Peedom](#) (*Mountain*). This is the third animated documentary by Ibrahim, his previous title [The Jolly Swagman](#) was selected to screen at the Antenna Film Festival, and his most recent project [The Holiday Inn-Side](#) had its world premiere at Sheffield Doc Fest earlier this year.
- Immersive Virtual Reality documentary *Future Dreaming*, which will bring to life the future dreams of four Australian Aboriginal youth by using VR tools to prototype their future. The documentary will be written, directed and produced by Sutu (aka Stuart Campbell) who has extensive experience in creating interactive narrative experiences both in AR and VR. Experienced producer [Robyn Marais](#) who produced [Connection to Country](#), will produce this series.
- A 20-30-minute Virtual Reality documentary *Rone*, written and directed by Lester Francois and produced by Erinn Stevenson and Anna Brady. This project is a distinctive portrait of the street artist Rone, whose stunning large-scale portraits of women’s faces can be found adorning soon to be forgotten spaces. The VR film and the prototype for this documentary were supported with the assistance of Film Victoria.
- Artemis Media’s *Storm in a Teacup*, an intimate portrait of renowned Western Australian Artist Leon Pericles as he embarks on his biggest retrospective exhibition to date, juggling his roles of artist, husband and carer to beloved wife Moira. This one-hour documentary for the ABC is written and directed by Nia Pericles, and executive produced by [Celia Tait](#) (*Who Do You Think You Are?*), with finance support from Screenwest.
- Robot Army & Ruby Entertainment’s *The Hunt*, a one-hour observational documentary about the controversial sightings of Big cats in the Australian bush. *The Hunt* is driven by rich characters who have dedicated their lives to proving these creatures existence, despite the many naysayers, who liken their pursuit to ‘chasing bigfoot’. Written, directed and produced by emerging filmmaker [Stu Ross](#) (*Rostered On*), with the experienced team of [Stephen Luby](#) (*The Secret River*) and [Mark Ruse](#) (*Kath and Kim*) also producing.
- A 90-minute feature *The Victoria Project* (working title), by DNX Media. This documentary is written and directed by Jennifer Peedom (*Mountain, Sherpa*), executive produced by [Stuart Menzies](#), and produced by Ruth Cross, Simon Nasht, John Smithson, and Jennifer Peedom. Synopsis details about this project will be revealed at a later date.

Find more information about this round of successful projects [here >](#)

#### 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.

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