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GOLDEN GLOBE WINNER JOANNE FROGGATT TO STAR IN THRILLING NEW STAN ORIGINAL SERIES ‘*THE COMMONS*’

Created by Shelley Birse, the powerful drama series by Playmaker will film in Sydney and premiere in 2020

June 26, 2019 – Stan and Screen Australia, in association with Create NSW today announced a new Stan Original series ‘*The Commons*’, which will commence production in Sydney and its surrounds next week. The series will be produced by Playmaker in association with Sony Pictures Television who will also handle worldwide sales of the series.

The series will star Golden Globe Winner and three-time Emmy Nominee, Joanne Froggatt (*Liar, Downton Abbey, A Crooked Somebody*), as well as Damon Herriman (*Once Upon A Time in Hollywood, Judy and Punch, Stan’s Perpetual Grace, LTD*) in a supporting role.

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The eight-hour drama was created by showrunner Shelley Birse (*The Code*) and written by Shelley Birse, Matt Ford (*House Husbands*, *Hiding*), Michael Miller (*Pulse*, *Cleverman*) and Matt Cameron (*Secret City*, *Bloom*).

Set in the very near future, *'The Commons'* is a character-driven thriller which plays out at the intersection of climate change and the cutting edge of biotechnology. Part mystery, part relationship drama, it puts a very human face on what's coming down the road and the heroism that lies inside us all when our backs are against the wall.

Executive produced by Playmaker's David Taylor and David Maher (*Reckoning*, *Bloom*, *The Code*), Stan's Nick Forward, Graham Yost (*The Americans*, *Sneaky Pete*, *Justified*) and Fred Golan (*Sneaky Pete*, *Justified*, *Roswell*), and Shelley Birse, *'The Commons'* is being produced by Diane Haddon (*Reckoning*, *The Code*, *Friday On My Mind*) with Jeffrey Walker (*Lambs of God*, *Modern Family*, *Riot*) as set up director.

"The pairing of Shelley Birse and the legendary Graham Yost is such an exciting prospect. And with actors of the calibre of Joanne Froggatt and Damon Herriman joining the cast, alongside a stellar creative team, *'The Commons'* continues to demonstrate our ambition as the home of original Australian productions. Thank you to Screen Australia, Create NSW and our partners at Playmaker and Sony Pictures Television for helping us bring Shelley's incredible vision to the screen." said Stan's Chief Content Officer Nick Forward.

Screen Australia's Head of Content Sally Caplan said "We're thrilled to see creator Shelley Birse, following on from the success of her series *The Code*, team up again with Playmaker, as well as an experienced team of writers to deliver this timely drama. Putting a spotlight on the challenges of climate change, ethical boundaries, and the place of motherhood in saving the planet, *'The Commons'* is set to be a compelling and original series and I can't wait to see it."

Create NSW's Executive Director, Investment & Engagement Elizabeth W. Scott said "I'm thrilled that the strength of the NSW screen industry has again attracted another significant production to the State. Thanks to an incentive from our Made in NSW Footloose Australian TV Drama Fund, *'The Commons'* will provide over 290 jobs across cast, crew and for post-production. With an instantly recognisable cast and experienced crew I know Playmaker's new production will thrill audiences at home and worldwide."

"*The Commons* is a great example of how we look to collaborate across Sony to bring exciting new projects to audiences around the world," said Wayne Garvie, Sony Pictures Television's President of International Production. "It's terrific that Shelley and the Playmaker team are working with Graham Yost and our colleagues from SPT's US arm to produce this riveting drama."

"We are delighted to once again be working with Shelley and an extraordinary team of creatives to bring this exciting and powerful drama to life," said Playmaker's Taylor and Maher.

'*The Commons*' is a Stan Original Series produced by Playmaker with major production investment from Screen Australia in association with Create NSW. Financed with support from Stan, Sony Pictures Television will handle worldwide sales of the series, which is set to premiere in 2020.

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About Stan

Stan is the unrivalled home of original Australian productions. From the AACTA Award-winning and TV Week Logie Award-nominated series *No Activity*, with its US adaptation produced by Will Ferrell's production company Funny Or Die, the critically acclaimed AACTA Award-winning and TV Week Logie Award-nominated drama series *Wolf Creek*; the critically acclaimed and Logie-Award winning drama series *Romper Stomper*; to the recently multi Logie-nominated *Bloom*, starring Jacki Weaver, Bryan Brown, Phoebe Tonkin and Ryan Corr, and *The Second*, a Stan Original film featuring Susie Porter who was also recently nominated for a Logie for her performance. Vicki Madden's *The Gloaming* starring Emma Booth, Ewen Leslie and Aaron Pedersen; and *The Other Guy: Season 2* with Matt Okine, Harriet Dyer, Claudia Karvan and Lily Sullivan with Gracie Otto on directing duties, are also currently both in production. For more information, visit Stan.com.au

About Screen Australia

Screen Australia is the Australian Federal Government agency charged with supporting Australian screen content through development, production and promotion across television, film, documentary and digital originals. The agency administers Australia's official co-production program, in addition to the Producer Offset tax rebate which assists eligible television, film and online works to be made. Screen Australia provides a range of resources and opportunities to the industry including access to research, market intelligence plus special initiatives such as its highly successful Gender Matters program. For more information visit screenaustralia.gov.au

About Create NSW

Based in Sydney, Create NSW is the New South Wales State government's integrated agency for arts, screen and culture. Create NSW offers incentives to attract footloose production and post-production to NSW and offers location and production liaison services to eligible productions considering locating in NSW.

For more information, please visit create.nsw.gov.au

About Playmaker

Playmaker specialises in authored primetime drama. With a track record of producing high quality, award-winning network series in Australia, some of their recent titles include *Reckoning* (Sony Pictures Television Networks), *Bloom* (Stan.), *The Wrong Girl* (TEN Network), *Love Child* (NINE Network), *House Husbands* (NINE Network), *The Code* (ABC), as well as recent mini-series *Friday On My Mind* (ABC) and the Mandarin-language version of thriller *Chosen*, made in Australia for China's largest streaming service iQiyi. Playmaker is a Sony Pictures Television company.

About Sony Pictures Television

Sony Pictures Television (SPT) is one of the television industry's leading content providers, producing, distributing and carrying programming worldwide in every genre and for every platform. In addition to managing one of the industry's largest libraries of award-winning feature films, television shows and formats, SPT is home to a thriving global content business, operating 24 wholly-owned or joint-venture production companies in 12 countries, as well as linear and digital channels around the world. Sony Pictures Television is a Sony Pictures Entertainment Company.

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About Joanne Froggatt

Golden Globe winner and three times EMMY nominee Joanne Froggatt is much loved for her performance as lady's maid *Anna Bates* in **Downton Abbey** and will return later this year for the highly anticipated feature film of the beloved period drama. Last year she once again won acclaim for her 'Meryl-Streep level performance' in **Liar** for Sundance TV and ITV and will return for its second series which she is currently filming (Indiewire).

Joanne has just completed a long-awaited run on stage in '*the mother of all roles*', leading the cast in Nicholas Hytner's *Alys, Always* at The Bridge Theatre in London (Hytner) and winning acclaim for her performance with The Times citing her as a '*West End star*' where you '*really can't take your eyes off her*'.

Joanne won a British Independent Film Award for her film debut in **In Our Name**. In the last year alone, her film credits have included a key role in the 'terrific' independent feature **A Crooked Somebody** with Ed Harris and Rich Sommer, Haifaa Al-Mansour's **Mary Shelley** with Elle Fanning, Maisie Williams and Bel Powley and **One Last Thing** with Wendell Pierce. Her further credits include Sony Picture's adaptation of the international bestseller **A Street Cat Named Bob**, alongside Luke Treadaway and she took on a supporting role in the adaptation of Irvine Welsh's **Filth** opposite James McAvoy and Jamie Bell.

Joanne has added a further string to her bow as she set up her production company **Run After It**, with numerous projects in development.

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