



New web series captures Torres Strait Islands stories on screen

Two exciting new factual web series from the Torres Strait Islands will be funded as part of *Straight out of the Straits*, an Australian-first partnership between Screen Queensland, Screen Australia and ABC iView.

Dinghy Gurls, directed by Sylvia Tabua and Shanice Tabua, is a four-part factual series while the series *Yatha Pathayk: Coming of Age* will be directed by Jimi Bani about the cultural journey of 15-year-old Dmitri Ahwang from Mabuig Island in the Torres Straits.

Queensland Premier and Arts Minister Annastacia Palaszczuk said *Straight out of the Straits* was an opportunity for early career practitioners to gain valuable experience and new skills while also creating Torres Strait Island stories for the screen.

“It is important to celebrate the stories and culture of Queensland’s first peoples, especially in this NAIDOC Week,” Ms Palaszczuk said.

“*Straight of the Straits* is another success for multi-talented actor, and now director, Jimi Bani who will also perform in the world premiere of *My Name is Jimi* as part of next week’s Cairns Indigenous Art Fair.”

Screen Queensland CEO Tracey Vieira said, “*Straight out of the Straits* is a first in giving Torres Strait Islander screen practitioners the opportunity to author and craft their own community stories and develop authentic local content.”

“*Straight Out of the Straits* delivers on Screen Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy 2016 – 2019 to advance the state’s distinct storytelling voice, and reflect its unique culture in diverse screen stories shared through traditional and new platforms,” she said.

“The Torres Strait Islands are culturally rich with their own characters and stories, which we haven’t seen on our screens to date,” said Penny Smallacombe, Head of Indigenous at Screen Australia. “We are incredibly proud to be continuing the work of our Indigenous Unit with the *Straight out of the Straits* initiative, supporting these teams to bring their unique perspectives to audiences around Australia.”

“*Straight out of the Straits* is another example of the exciting work that ABC continues to explore, in partnership with Screen Queensland and Screen Australia,” said ABC TV Head of Indigenous Kelrick Martin. “Both *Dinghy Gurls* and *Yatha Pathayk – Coming of Age* promise to be fresh, entertaining online experiences for our ABC audience, and will be the perfect complement to our upcoming, landmark Torres Strait Island documentary series *Blue Water Empire* in 2018.”

Dinghy Gurls, and *Yatha Pathayk: Coming of Age* will be delivered for digital platform iView, and will be produced by Aaron Fa’Aoso from Lonestar Productions.

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