

## Screen Australia announces \$2.7 million for 14 new documentary projects

**Embargoed until 8AM Monday 22 October 2018:** Screen Australia today announced production funding for 14 documentary projects through the [Documentary Producer](#) and [Commissioned](#) programs. This latest slate includes *Revelation*, a three-part series commissioned by the ABC where award-winning journalist Sarah Ferguson investigates the forces behind child abuse inside the Catholic Church and the extraordinary cover-up that took place; *Firestarter - The Story of Bangarra*, a feature documentary that tells the story of iconic Indigenous performing arts company Bangarra; and an online series *States of Consent* that focuses on a victim of sexual assault trying to get justice against all odds.

“Documentary continuously works as a platform to amplify marginalised voices and ideas, and there are a variety of stories in this slate from multicultural, transgender and Indigenous perspectives that will enrich and enlighten viewers,” said **Sally Caplan**, Head of Content at Screen Australia.

“The documentary art form allows us to unravel and explore complex and often challenging topics, and these projects take on some difficult and topical subject matter including death, abuse and consent. These are important Australian stories that will be recorded as part of our shared national history.”

In total \$1.3 million was allocated through the Producer program, and \$1.4 million through the Commissioned program.

### The Documentary Commissioned projects are:

- **Business As Usual:** A one-hour documentary that will provide a sneak peek into the world of Manjits - a thriving but often chaotic family-run event business in Western Sydney. [Jennifer Cummins](#) of [Heiress Films](#) (*Man Up*) will produce the project alongside Bruce Permezel (*Man Up*, *The Larrikin & The Leader*) who will direct. The creative team will follow the charismatic Gujral family as they engage with multicultural and multi-faith families during some of the most significant occasions of their lives. SBS have commissioned the project as part of their Untold Australia series and Create NSW have provided production investment.
- **Revelation:** A three-part documentary series that will unite an experienced, multi-award winning creative team including Gold Walkley-winning journalist Sarah Ferguson (*Trump/Russia*), director [Deborah Masters](#) (*The Killing Season*), and [In Films](#) producer [Nial Fulton](#) (*Hitting Home*) and executive producer [Ivan O'Mahoney](#) (*The Queen & Zak Grieve*). After years of resistance, The Royal Commission finally broke the silence of the Catholic Church and unveiled the legacy of abuse of those in its care. In *Revelation*, Sarah Ferguson will piece together the forces at play in one of the most profound stories in Australia's history and the extraordinary drama that brought it to light. This project has been commissioned by the ABC. Commissioning Editor is Stephen Oliver. Head of Factual is Steve Bibb.
- **Secret Life of Death:** A one-hour documentary that will open a window into the hidden world of two family-owned funeral homes in Sydney, following two young women: one who works with the living; the other who works with the dead. The experienced production company [Mint Pictures](#) is coproducing with Tangerine Pictures, and will deliver this documentary written and directed by [Dan Goldberg](#) (*The Archibald*), produced by [Nia Pericles](#) (*Storm in a Teacup*) and executive produced by [Adam Kay](#) (*Strictly Jewish*) and [Gary Russell](#), who is also the Director of Photography (*Go Back To Where You Came From S2 and S3*). SBS have commissioned the project as part of their Untold Australia series and Create NSW have also invested in the project.
- **Trans Mission:** A one-hour documentary that will follow transgender truck driver Holly Conroy in her bid to stage a Mardi Gras in Australia's No. 1 Christian town: Wagga Wagga. Holly will attempt to win over priests, pastors and politicians as she seeks acceptance for the trans community, all while she continues the process of her gender affirmation surgery. The team at [Mint Pictures](#), including



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writer [Dan Goldberg](#) (*Food Fighter*) and executive producer [Adam Kay](#) (*The Archibald*), with producer and director Catherine Scott (*Backtrack Boys*), will bring audiences this local story with global appeal. SBS has commissioned the project as part of its Untold Australia series and Create NSW has also invested in the project.

- **Young, Dateable and Disabled** (working title): A one-hour documentary from writer-director Liz Allen (*Andrew Marr: My Brain and Me*) and producer Dominique Pile – executive produced by [Laurie Critchley](#) (*The Mosque Next Door*, *Hawke*). Straight-talking relationship counsellor Liz Dore is on a mission to help six young people with neurological diversity and intellectual disabilities find love. For people with disabilities, love and relationships can be seen as taboo, but for Liz’s six clients it’s a deeply held personal goal. Against the odds, these unique and diverse individuals are determined to learn as much as they can to find a romantic partner. SBS have commissioned the project as part of their Untold Australia series and Create NSW have also invested in the project.

The Documentary Producer projects are:

- **The Bamboo Bridge**: A one-hour television documentary written and directed by anthropologist Juan Francisco Salazar, Executive Producers Pat Fiske and geographer Katherine Gibson, and produced by Matadora Films comprising of [Claire Fletcher](#) and [Alejandra Canales](#). This documentary looks at the stories that take place around a unique 1.5 kilometre long bamboo bridge that for generations has been built every year following the rhythms of nature across the Mekong River to join the rural community of Koh Paen to the city of Kampong Cham in Cambodia. In 2017 the bamboo bridge was dismantled for the very last time and replaced by a huge government funded concrete bridge that put an end to this architectural masterpiece and triggered rapid change to the local way of life. This documentary illustrates the complexities of environmental and social change as witnessed by three generations of bridge builders who tell stories of this unique sustainable structure and the local community it sustains. Western Sydney University have supported the project.
- **Bone To Pick**: A new feature documentary from writer-director [Jo-Anne Brechin](#) (*Zelos*) and producer [Danny Lachevre](#) of [FanForce](#) Films. Brechin’s film will follow a dedicated pet owner who switches his beloved rescue dog from eating processed food to a raw diet, in an effort to cure his chronic illnesses. His dog’s dramatic recovery surprises everyone, and together he and his owner embark on a journey to end the global epidemic of sick pets.
- **Cryptopia - Bitcoin, Blockchain and the Future of the Internet**: The second documentary film from the creative team behind *Bitcoin: The End of Money as We know It* (2015). Co-directors Torsten Hoffmann and Michael Watchulonis return to investigate Blockchain, the technology underlying Bitcoin, and its potential to reinvent the future of the Internet. This film will explore if technology can really provide a robust alternative to current systems, prevent financial meltdowns and keep our private information safe. This documentary follows the most influential figures and outspoken critics of this new controversial trillion-dollar industry. Studio Hamburg Enterprises is the German co-production partner and the project is currently also crowdfunding on Kickstarter.
- **Firestarter - The Story of Bangarra**: A feature documentary co-written and co-directed by [Nel Minchin](#) (*Making Muriel*, *Matilda & Me*) and [Wayne Blair](#) (*Cleverman*, *The Sapphires*) alongside multi-award winning producer [Ivan O’Mahoney](#) (*Hitting Home*, *The Queen & Zak Grieve*) of In Films, and executive producer [Nial Fulton](#) (*Making Muriel*, *Hitting Home*). Marking its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year, *Firestarter* will tell the story of one of Australia’s most iconic performing arts company: Bangarra Dance Theatre. Through the eyes of its celebrated artistic director, [Stephen Page](#), it tells a tale of unparalleled success in the face of adversity and pain. Interweaving exclusive and intimate behind-the-scenes footage, *Firestarter* uncovers the roots of Stephen’s artistic activism and the socio-political context from which he and Bangarra have grown. This project was financed with support from ABC, and Create NSW. Icon Films are on board as the Australian and New Zealand distributor.

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- **Heart of the Queen:** A new feature length documentary from first time director [Matthew Walker](#) being produced by [Carolina Sorensen](#) and [Clare Lewis](#)' company People Productions with [Tait Brady](#) of Acme Film Co. as the Executive Producer. This documentary tells the story of Wanita, a chaotic and talented singer from Tamworth who risks it all to take one last glorious stab at her lifelong dream: to become a country music great in Nashville.
- **Martha:** A feature documentary from director [Selina Miles](#) (*The Wanderers*), producer [Daniel Joyce](#) (*Barbecue*) of [Projector Films](#) and acclaimed executive producer [Jennifer Peedom](#) (*Sherpa*, *David Stratton: A Cinematic Life*). In the 1980s, as the boroughs of New York City burned, Martha Cooper was one of the handful of photographers documenting the first vivid images of a fledgling graffiti scene. Twenty years later, her book *Subway Art* would become one of the most sold (and stolen) art books of all time. Martha's images catalysed a global movement, revealing humanity and empowerment in a culture otherwise defined by race, crime and poverty. Now in her seventies, Miles's documentary follows Martha as she continues to document the beauty in otherwise neglected communities and begins to question her own place in a world now dominated by selfies and Instagram art.
- **States of Consent:** A short 20 minute online documentary from director Blue Lucine (*The Eviction*) and producer [Mariel Thomas](#). This documentary will look at the fear, shame and intimidation that prevents most sexual assault victims from ever taking legal action. *States of Consent* will follow the story of one woman trying to get justice against all odds when she is sexually assaulted working as an entertainer. Faced with old-fashioned clichés, this woman fights against the legal system in a Supreme Court battle in Australia. This project has been produced with the support of Guardian Australia.
- **Uluru & the Magician:** A feature documentary that follows the incredible journey of Dave Welsman, a Sydney kids' magician determined to reboot his life with a grand illusion to make Uluru disappear. As Dave works alongside the Rock's traditional owners and Indigenous Custodians to pull off this spectacular stunt, he discovers the profound cultural and spiritual significance of Uluru, and his own illusions about fame and success begin to disappear. Multi-award winning documentary filmmaker [Anna Broinowski](#) (*Forbidden Lies*, *Aim High in Creation*) will write and direct the film alongside producers [Rachel Clements](#) and [Trisha Morton-Thomas](#) of [Brindle Films](#), who produced *The Song Keepers*. *Uluru & the Magician* was the only Australian project to be selected for the Pitch Forum at the 2018 Hot Docs International Documentary Festival.
- **Virtual Yagan VR:** A ground-breaking new project that blends accurately generated landscapes, 3D animation and interactive tasks along with traditional documentary techniques to give audiences a firsthand experience of pre-contact Whadjak Noongar culture. This 6 x 5 minute VR narrative will immerse viewers in the time of Yagan; an Indigenous Noongar warrior who lived between 1795 and 1833 and resisted colonial settlement in the area surrounding what is now the city of Perth. This documentary explores the pre-contact relationships of Noongar people to land, ecology and identity before examining the dramatic changes and events set off by the moment of first contact. [Alice Wolfe](#) (*Behind the Blue Line*) of [Periscope Pictures](#) will produce the project with [Sam Bodhi Field](#) (*Beneath the Waves*) and [Karla Hart](#) (*Family Rules*) co writing and directing, and Brett Leavy working as the VR artist.

#### 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.





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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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