

Screen Australia announces \$4.6 million for 21 documentaries

Thursday 23 February 2023: Screen Australia has announced two documentaries through the First Nations Department, 12 documentaries through the Producer Program and seven projects through the Commissioned Program that will share in \$4.6 million of production funding.

This includes feature documentary *Rose Gold* following the star-studded Australian “Boomers” basketball team, *Breakaway Femmes* about the women’s Tour de France, *Devil’s Last Stand* on the realities faced by Tasmanian Devils, plus a second season of NITV’s *Our Law* narrated by Deborah Mailman.

Screen Australia’s Head of Documentary **Alex West** said, “We’re pleased to announce this latest mix of documentaries which explore various chapters of Australia’s history, highlight where we may be headed in the future and shine a light on Australians making a difference. In doing so, I hope this extensive offering will also provide viewers with insights on topics including art, health and science, our environment, gender and multiculturalism - which can help add to important contemporary conversations.”

Angela Bates, Head of First Nations at Screen Australia said, “We are proud to support two experienced teams in their mission to deliver compelling documentaries, *Rebel with a Cause* and *Our Law* season 2. *Our Law* will continue to provide an honest insight into the challenges First Nations police officers face as they aim to change the system from within, while *Rebel with a Cause* celebrates four outstanding trailblazers in Queensland, who have each left lasting legacies in their respective fields”.

The projects funded through the First Nations Department:

- ***Rebel with a Cause***: A 4 x 51-minute documentary series for NITV that celebrates the personal journey of four outstanding First Nations trailblazers from Queensland - poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal, teacher and barrister Pat O’Shane, radio presenter Tiga Bayles and Senator Neville Bonner - who against the odds created amazing pathways for future generations. Douglas Watkin ([Ella](#)), Jill Robinson ([Sistas in Mining](#)) and Sio F. Tusa and EJ Garrett of [Elements](#) are directing, with Dena Curtis ([Grace Beside Me](#)) and Citty Williams ([Yellow Fella](#)) producing. From Inkey Media, *Rebel with a Cause* is financed with support from Screen Queensland.
- ***Our Law Season 2***: An 8 x 30-min series for NITV which provides intimate and candid access to First Nations police officers, recruits, and cadets as they attempt to break the cycle of Indigenous incarceration and repair deeply troubled Aboriginal-police relationships, while giving a rightful voice to the First Nations communities being policed. Following on from the success of season 1, *Our Law*’s second season expands nationwide with unparalleled access to the Western Australian Police and now new access to other Australian police jurisdictions. From the creative team behind [season 1](#), including director Perun Bonser and producers Taryne Laffar and Sam Field, this series is a Pink Pepper Pty Ltd and Periscope Pictures Pty Ltd production and is financed in association with NITV with support from Screenwest and Lotterywest.

The First Nations Department production funding blocklines are available [here](#).

The projects funded through the Commissioned Program are:

- ***A Forgotten Cure (working title)***: A 54-minute documentary for SBS which follows teams of scientists in Melbourne and Sydney as they test a largely forgotten and experimental therapy on three critically ill superbug-infected patients - a therapy that involves injecting them with trillions of viruses. For the first time, filmmakers follow the patients, doctors, and scientists in nail-biting real time, revealing the extraordinary science and history of ‘phage therapy’; a 100-year old treatment that promises to not only save these patients’ lives but also give hope to the world. Writing/directing is Emma Watts (*Invisible Wars*), with Anna Mantzoros attached as producer and



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Sonya Pemberton ([Carbon: An Unauthorised Biography](#)) as producer and executive producer. It is financed by SBS in association with VicScreen.

- **Designing a Legacy Season 2:** Comedian and architecture enthusiast Tim Ross travels the country in this two-part documentary from SAM Content and Modernister for the ABC - visiting structures that reveal surprising ways to read Australian history and explore our sense of identity in the architecture around us. He explores how buildings can leave a legacy of respect, create community, forge common identity and offer visions for our future. Ross, whose credits include [Streets of your Town](#), is executive producing alongside Sally Aitken ([The Pacific in The Wake of Cook with Sam Neill](#)), with Aline Jacques ([Miriam Margolyes: Almost Australian](#)) producing and Chris Eley ([The Accused: Guilty or Innocent](#)) directing. This project is financed in association with the ABC.
- **Devil's Last Stand:** A 55-minute documentary for the ABC from the director of [Quoll Farm](#), Simon Plowright. Returning to the spectacular landscape of far north-west Tasmania, this film follows Plowright as he immerses himself in the daily life of another remarkable animal, the often-misunderstood Tasmanian Devil. For a year he will live with devils, revealing the epic struggle this unique marsupial is facing against both a fatal disease and the impacts of human encroachment. *Devil's Last Stand* is directed by Plowright, produced by Simon Nasht ([The Kingdom: How Fungi made The World](#)) and is financed in association Screen Tasmania.
- **Dolphins: Is Our Love Too Deep?:** This ground-breaking, investigative hour-long film for the ABC explores the impact humans are having on wild dolphins through hand feeding tourism programs in Australia. The documentary will uncover the tenuous balance between our all-consuming desire to get back to nature and the stark reality that our love for dolphins could be too deep. *Dolphins: Is Our Love Too Deep?* is from director/producer Leighton De Barros and producer/executive producer Jodie De Barros whose credits include [Rottnest Island Kingdom of the Quokka](#) and [Jaimen Hudson: From Sky to Sea](#). It is financed in association with the ABC with support from Screenwest and Lotterywest.
- **Lessons from the Unknown:** This feature-length documentary for SBS follows principal investigator Dr Paul Likhaitzky as he stages world first trials at Australia's first clinical psychedelic laboratory at Monash University - asking the question on whether psychedelic drugs hold the answer to the mental illness epidemic. Exclusive access tracks the progress of the trials and the participants who hope that psychedelic therapy is finally the answer to their anguish. *Lessons from the Unknown* is from writer/director Chris Phillips ([Lost Rambos](#)), and co-writer/producer Jacob Hickey and producer Darren Dale of Blackfella Films ([Deep Water: The Real Story](#) and [Step into Paradise](#)). It is also executive produced by Jennifer Peedom ([River](#)) and financed in association with SBS and VicScreen.
- **The Nameless 'Nazi' (working title):** This 60-minute documentary for SBS traces the story of Melbourne's Alex Kurzem, a Jew who cheated death in the Holocaust by joining a Latvian battalion before emigrating to Australia in 1949 - hiding his secret for 50 years. With four false names, two mistaken family reunions and years of his life searching for his true identity, thanks to DNA he is now on the cusp of getting some questions answered on his deathbed. *The Nameless 'Nazi'* (working title) is written, directed and produced by Dan Goldberg and executive produced by Adam Kay, whose credits include [The Bowraville Murders](#), [Finding the Archibald](#) and [Great Southern Landscapes](#). It is financed in association with SBS.
- **War on Waste Season 3:** This three-part series for the ABC will put the critical issue of waste back on the agenda and highlight the connection between waste and climate change. With passionate planet advocate and prankster Craig Reucassel at the helm, *War on Waste* will champion waste heroes and build on its previous success holding villains to account, set new challenges for corporations, councils and communities and conscript entire communities as part of a national plastic audit - to vividly highlight the problems lurking in our very own homes. Director Jodi Boylan, producer Craig Reucassel and executive producers David Galloway and Leonie Lowe are attached, whose credits include [Fight for Planet A: Our Climate Challenge](#), with Mariel Thomas ([Judged](#)) also producing. The series is financed by the ABC.

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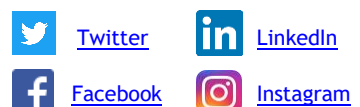


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The projects funded through the Producer Program are:

- **After School (working title):** This documentary for the ABC is a humorous and heart-warming coming of age story that unfolds when a cast of neurodiverse teenagers confront their own challenges, dreams and desires as they prepare for their first high school musical. With unique and unprecedented access to Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School, this film is a poignant insight into the emotional worlds of these students. *After School (working title)* is directed by Thomas Hyland (*How to See Through Fog*), with Catherine Bradbury attached as producer alongside producers and executive producers Jim Wright (*Goodnight Sweetheart*) and Head of Unscripted at Fremantle Media Australia, Josie Mason Campbell. It is financed in association with the ABC, VicScreen and the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) Premiere Fund.
- **Breakaway Femmes:** This feature-length documentary is about how, for six glorious years during the 1980s, the Tour de France held a women’s race alongside the men’s race - smashing societal expectations, battling discrimination, injuries, financial hardship while also finding an inner strength and a bond of sisterhood. Their race should have heralded a brave new age of equality in sports, but instead the women’s Tour disappeared for more than three decades and the women never stopped fighting. *Breakaway Femmes* is the story of the rise and fall and rise of the women's Tour de France. This project is written and directed by Eleanor Sharpe and produced by Nickolas Bird, whose credits include *Remembering the Man* and *Phil Liggett: The Voice of Cycling*. It is financed in association with VicScreen and will air on SBS.
- **The Carnival:** This documentary for SBS captures the intimate moments of the six-generation carnival family, the Bells. The documentary will follow the Bells as they haul their convoy of 30 trucks and rides across the country with their workers, where they’ll face the elements, shutdowns and bushfires - battling to keep their family business running and on the road. Writing, directing and co-producing is Isabel Darling (*Corey the Warrior*), with Tom Zubrycki (*Ablaze*) producing. With a feature-length and hour-long version, this documentary is financed in association with the Shark Island Foundation, with support from JOTZ Productions and Documentary Australia.
- **Dead by June:** This feature documentary tells the story of the meteoric rise, heartbreaking fall and the unfathomable comeback of motorcycle racing’s five-time World Champion, Mick Doohan, who the press nicknamed “Dead by June Doohan”. On the eve of what was to be his first World Championship victory, Mick came dangerously close to fulfilling the media’s prophecy of being willing to die to win - suffering a high speed crash that shattered Mick’s world as he knew it. This is a story of second chances, finding strength in suffering and the remarkable resilience of the human spirit. *Dead by June* is written, directed and produced by Robert Coe and Madeleine Ross who previously collaborated on *Blind Ambition*, with Paul Wiegard (*River, Gold*), Josh Pomeranz (*Seriously Red, Hearts and Bones*) and television presenter and journalist Karl Stefanovic executive producing. It is financed in association with Spectrum Entertainment.
- **KillJoy:** A feature documentary that begins with the unravelling of a middle-class family 38 years ago, which ends in a family homicide. It is told from the unique point of view of the child, Kathryn Joy, who grew up with their father - the man who killed their mother. This film grapples with pressing dilemmas; how does a child reconcile the love they have for their only living parent, who is capable of both genuine kindness and killing and a legal system that decided it was in their best interests to be raised by that same person. *KillJoy* is from writer/director Vincent Lamberti (*Intervention: Stories from the Inside*), producer Lisa Albert (*Rapping it Up*), project adviser Ivan O’Mahoney (*Firestarter: The Story of Bangarra*) and associate producer Jess Hill (*See What You Made Me Do*). It is financed in association with Fringe Dweller Films and the Shark Island Foundation, with support from The Post Lounge.
- **The Love of My Life:** A 28-minute documentary centred on a transgender love story which will premiere on 2 April on ABC TV and ABC iview as part of ABC’s Compass series. It follows Gail and Lisette who waited 60 years to live their lives and love freely. Finally, after four marriages and three children, they were able to marry for the first time as their true selves - two women in love. In the

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director's chairs are Francesca Rizzoli (*Italian Dressmaker in Melbourne*) and Trevor J Graham ([Chef Antonio's Recipes for Revolution](#)). Graham is also producing with Catherine Barret attached as executive producer. It is funded in association with the ABC, as part of their World Pride programming.

- **Rose Gold:** A 90-minute feature documentary which follows the story of the star-studded Australian "Boomers" basketball team as they try to bring home an international medal after decades of coming agonisingly close. Featuring insider interviews with high-profile Australian and NBA players (including Patty Mills, Joe Ingles, Andrew Gaze, and Andrew Bogut), coaches, and commentators, the film tracks the evolution of basketball culture in Australia, its successes, near misses, and how a team comes together to make history. Attached is writer/director Matthew Adekponya (*Building Titans*), creative consultant Kriv Stenders (*Bump*) and co-writer Allan Clarke (*The Bowraville Murders*). The film is produced and executive produced by Wooden Horse's Richard Finlayson and executive produced by Jude Troy, co-producers of [Stuff the British Stole](#). It has been commissioned by the ABC and is financed with support from Screen NSW. Theatrical distribution by Madman Entertainment, with Escapade Media managing international sales.
- **Songs Inside:** This feature-length documentary follows singer-songwriter Nancy Bates on her journey to teach women in prison how to write songs, sing and play the ukulele - helping to prepare these women to get out of prison, and stay out. An ensemble of 10 prisoners will work intensively with Nancy for six months and then stage a first-of-a-kind performance in the Prison alongside the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. As well as following these women's musical journeys, *Songs Inside* will shed light on their personal stories around incarceration and reveal how music can be a powerful tool for change and healing. From writer/director/producer Shalom Almond ([Prisoners and Pups](#)), the film is produced by Katrina Lucas ([The Art of the Game](#)), Lauren Drewery ([Pop-Ability](#)) and is co-produced by Nancy Bates.
- **Turning the Tide:** A 27-minute documentary for the ABC's Compass series which follows Captain Sarah Parry who takes a group of teenagers from refugee and Aussie backgrounds on a remarkable, life-changing voyage aboard *Windeward Bound*, the tall-ship she built in Tasmania. Taken out of their comfort zone (without a smartphone in sight), challenged daily, discovering qualities they didn't know they had, all the kids find themselves becoming part of a new interdependent community where everyone plays a vital role to sail the ship. This project is directed by Franck Dubuc and written by Francesca Partridge, whose credits include *Shariat al-Dhaid*. Partridge is also attached as producer alongside Steve Thomas ([Death or Liberty](#)) and it is financed in association with Screen Tasmania.
- **Watandar, My Countryman:** This 67-minute documentary is told through the eyes of Muzafar Ali, a former Afghan Refugee, new Australian and photographer. Discovering that Afghans have been an integral part of Australia for over 160 years, he searches to define his own Afghan-Australian identity and begins to photograph Afghan Cameleer descendants living in Australia. Jolyon Hoff and Muzafar Ali whose credits include [The Staging Post](#) are attached as writer/director/producer and writer/producer respectively, alongside producer Hamish Gibbs Ludbrook (*No Distinguishing Features*). This project is financed in association with LSAF Investment, with support from Elements Post Production and the Adelaide Film Festival Fund.
- **The Weeping Tree:** A 60-minute documentary that explores the collision of art, science, palawa connection to country, and intimate storytelling to shine a light on an iconic Tasmanian tree critically threatened by the effects of climate change, the Cider Gum (*Eucalyptus gunnii*). It will explore arts' place in our relationship with the natural world which is currently undergoing great change - helping audiences to reconnect and re-adjust. Attached as director is Matthew Newton (*Convoy*), producer Catherine Pettman ([There Is No 'I' in Island](#)) and executive producer Andry Sculthorpe (*Returning patrula/Fire*). *The Weeping Tree* is financed in association with the Purves Environmental Fund and Purryburry Fund. It has received previous development support via Screen Tasmania's Proof of Concept initiative.

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- **Woven Threads: Stories from Country:** This 8 x 5-min animated documentary series for NITV is dedicated to telling stories of shared humanity - looking at the effect of colonisation past and present on Indigenous Australian communities, exploring themes of identity, youth justice, mental health, disability, employment, LGBTQI related issues and out of home care. *Woven Threads* gives the people involved the opportunity to share their stories and experiences with a public audience - aiming to increase awareness around these challenges, as well as engender hope and courage in those who are struggling. The series is directed by Tony Briggs ([Elders](#)) and produced by Michi Marosszeky, who was also behind [Woven Threads: Stories from Afar](#) and [Woven Threads: Stories from Within](#). It is financed in association with NITV with support from Lifeline.

The full list of documentary blocklines is available [here](#).

The latest projects funded for documentary development are available [here](#).

ABOUT DOCUMENTARY FUNDING AT SCREEN AUSTRALIA

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, SVOD 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.

The [Documentary Development program](#) aims to assist documentary makers in achieving planned outcomes for the development of their projects. Screen Australia also supports documentary projects through targeted initiatives such as Fresh Cuts with the Australian International Documentary Conference (AIDC) and Curious Australia with SBS.

Documentary projects that have a primary release on a social media platform are able to apply for funding through the [Online Department](#).

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