

## Screen Australia announces \$800,000 in development funding

**Embargoed until 8AM Tuesday 31 July 2018:** Screen Australia has announced Story Development funding for 20 feature films, 10 online series, one television drama and four talent development placements, totalling over \$800,000.

Highlights include an adaptation of Charlotte Wood's critically acclaimed novel *The Natural Way of Things* into a feature film; a family film *Monster Nanny* with Ridley Scott attached to co-produce; an absurdist New Zealand co-production *Nude Tuesday* written by Jackie van Beek (*The Breaker Upperers*); and feature film *Agaat* set in the apartheid era, helmed by acclaimed writer and director, [Jocelyn Moorhouse](#) (*The Dressmaker*).

Development funds allow works to continue through the creative process, such as allowing the writer to work on further drafts, with the aim to get the title ready for production.

This is the last slate of Story Development projects to receive funding under Screen Australia's previous development guidelines which [were replaced on 1 July 2018](#).

"This slate encompasses a wide range of genres, from comedy to family drama, featuring both adaptations and originals. It's great to see popular Australian children's and fiction novels being adapted for the screen and some excellent comedies emerging from online creatives including *Bin Chickens* centred on Sydney's ibis community and *The Racka* from renowned YouTubers [Danny](#) and [Michael Philippou](#)," said **Nerida Moore**, Senior Development Manager at Screen Australia.

"The [new story development guidelines](#) have opened up funding opportunities to creators across all platforms with a more streamlined application process and flexible eligibility requirements. We're really looking forward to seeing how the industry takes advantage of these new opportunities to grow their creativity, their businesses, and create new content that resonates with audiences."

Among the projects funded for development are:

- [Bronte Pictures](#) will produce *Agaat* with [Jocelyn Moorhouse](#) (*The Dressmaker*, *Proof*) on board to write and direct. Based on the international award-winning novel by Marlene van Niekerk, this soaring drama spanning across 50 years, follows a young black girl adopted into a white apartheid era family in South Africa. Cast aside into the servant's quarters by the woman she considered her mother, *Agaat* fights to forge an identity not defined by her skin colour.
- The online series *Bin Chickens* is a social satire set in the tourist heart of Sydney, Darling Harbour. This adult animation created by Dave Carter and Nikos Andronicos (*Fish with Legs*), follows three ibises - Derek, Janice and Clive - as they are forced to take on a daily and never-ending parade of imbecile humans and their ludicrous civilisation, laws, technology, social mores and horrific taste in architecture. Having previously received funding via the [2017 ABC Fresh Blood initiative](#), the project will now continue to develop with the creators drafting a script and teaser for a complete online series.
- [Bain Stewart](#) of Tahlee Productions, [David Jowsey](#) and [Greer Simpkin](#) (*Mystery Road*, *Sweet Country*) and Alison Owen (*Elizabeth*, *Suffragette*) will produce *The Drover's Wife - The Legend of Molly Johnson*, a searing cinematic reimagining of [Leah Purcell's](#) award-winning Belvoir St Theatre play and Henry Lawson's classic short story *The Drover's Wife*. Set in the Snowy Mountains, this Australian revenge Western with love, family, survival, misogyny and racism at its heart, will ask the question how far do you go to protect the ones you love? Having received previous development funding from Screen Australia, Purcell and the team will now draft a fourth screenplay for this feature film production.
- Director [Corrie Chen](#) (*Homecoming Queens*, *Mustangs FC*) is developing her first feature film titled *Empty Empire*. This bittersweet coming-of-age tale will be co-written with [Penelope Chai](#) (*Other People's Problems*) and directed by Chen. The project formally titled *Strangers* was one of 45



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projects to receive development funding through [Gender Matters: Brilliant Stories in 2016](#). This funding enabled them to further develop their script, making it both distinctive and culturally authentic. The film will follow a biracial Australian woman as she travels to a mysterious city in China to track down her long-absent father. Both writers will continue to develop their script with a third draft currently in motion.

- Emerging writer-director [Vanessa Gazy](#) has teamed up with [Goalpost Pictures](#) ([Upgrade](#), [Holding The Man](#), [The Sapphires](#)) to create a compelling new high concept sci-fi feature titled *Highway*. Based on Gazy's internationally acclaimed [short film](#) of the same name, the film will follow Hester, a mysterious young woman who wakes up on the side of a highway with no memory of who she is, and soon finds herself fighting for her life in a slippery and dangerous world of looping time and fatal prophecies.
- Alison Lester's much beloved Australian children's book *Magic Beach* will be reimagined as a unique mix of live action entwined with extraordinary animated stories from 10 leading Australian animators. [Robert Connolly](#) and Liz Kearney of [Arenamedia](#) ([Paper Planes](#), [Spear](#)) will produce this alternative children's offering with a number of brilliant writers contributing to this film adaptation.
- Ridley Scott (*Alien*, *Blade Runner*, *Gladiator*) of Scott Free Productions and [Sylvia Wilczynski](#) ([The Rocket](#)) of [Red Lamp Films](#) are working to adapt *Monster Nanny* with [Kim Mordaunt](#) ([The Rocket](#)) on board to write and direct. The two production companies are also working alongside [Zareh Nalbandian](#) of [Animal Logic Entertainment](#) with the aim of *Monster Nanny* becoming an Official Co-production between Australia and the United Kingdom. The film will be an action packed family adventure romp based on the bestselling Finnish book by Tuutikki Tolonen.
- The feature film *Nude Tuesday* is also on the path of becoming an Official Co-production between Australia's [Good Thing Productions](#) ([The Australian Dream](#)) and New Zealand's Firefly Films. Written by Jackie van Beek (*The Breaker Upperers*) and directed by Armagan Ballantyne (*The Strength of Water*), *Nude Tuesday* is an absurdist comedy about a couple that spends a week at a new-age retreat in a bid to save their marriage. [Nick Batzias](#), [Virginia Whitwell](#) and Emma Slade are on board to produce the comedy.
- Charlotte Wood's critically acclaimed feminist novel *The Natural Way of Things* will be adapted for the screen by [Katia Nizic](#) and Emma Dockery of [Generator Pictures](#) ([Homecoming Queens](#), [Paper Trails](#)) with [Sue Maslin](#) ([The Dressmaker](#)) on board as executive producer. This bold and distinctive film tells the story of 10 women who wake up in a makeshift prison in the bush; their crime: being involved in sex scandals with high-powered men.
- YouTube sensations [Danny Philippou](#) and [Michael Philippou](#) of RackaRacka Productions will develop a 6 x 22 minute comedy series titled *The Racka* alongside Emmy award-winning [Ludo Studio](#). RackaRacka and Ludo previously developed the one hour short *RackaRacka: Live* as part of the Screen Australia and [YouTube Australia Skip Ahead Initiative](#). *The Racka* will reveal what happens when social media stars – famous for their juvenile behaviour – are rewarded with their first Hollywood movie, and make up for their incompetence with dangerous improvisation. [Charlie Aspinwall](#) and [Daley Pearson](#) are the executive producers on the series, with twins [Danny](#) and [Michael Philippou](#) to star, creatively lead and direct.

Four talent development placements have been issued through Screen Australia's Industry Placements program. In this last round **Candice Bowers** was offered a placement with [Arenamedia](#) ([The Slap](#), [The Warriors](#), [Paper Planes](#)). **Bali Padda** has been given the opportunity to work in drama development at [Jungle Entertainment](#), **Fatima Mawas** will shadow producer [Sheila Jayadev](#) ([Ali's Wedding](#)) of [Matchbox Pictures](#) on a new miniseries, and **Ana Tiwary** will spend three months at [See-Saw Films](#) undertaking a producer's attachment.

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