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## Screen Australia announces over \$3.7 million for 13 documentaries

**Wednesday 3 November 2021:** Screen Australia has announced six documentaries through the Producer Program and seven projects through the Commissioned Program that will share in \$3.7 million of production funding.

This includes a feature documentary from Stranger Than Fiction ([Mountain](#), [Australia in Colour](#)) that follows an Indigenous figure skater from Western Sydney, Harley Windsor, on his quest to compete in the Winter Olympics; a series going inside the Sydney Opera House for the ABC; and a feature documentary about a grandmother with dementia who became an internet sensation in *Everybody's Oma*.

Screen Australia's Head of Documentary, **Alex West** said, "We were impressed by the broad mix of applications and these documentaries are a testament to the talented filmmakers creating local stories with great impact. These projects will explore contemporary social issues including how First Nations artist Richard Bell's work uses art to effect change in *War & Order*, as well as the complexities of teen parenting in *Kids Raising Kids*. They are also set to celebrate Australian icons like the Sydney Opera House and the Tasmanian Tiger, and I look forward to seeing them hit our big and small screens."

The projects funded through the Producer Program are:

- ***Everybody's Oma***: A feature documentary from director/producer Jason van Genderen (*Mankind is No Island*), who makes home videos about his ageing mother 'Oma' who is living with dementia. Quite accidentally, Jason turns Oma into an internet sensation, creating a love fuelled battle for identity that played out in front of 100 million people. The film charts the family's playful, moving and ultimately hopeful journey in the public spotlight and behind the scenes. van Genderen is joined by producer Ros Walker (*Into the Deep*), editor/co-director Gavin Banks ([Lockout](#)), co-producer Olivia Olley ([Solus](#)) and composer Angela Little ([Australia](#)). This project has been developed with support from Screen NSW and will be distributed by Bonsai Films.
- ***Israel Folau (working title)***: A feature documentary about Australia's most gifted and controversial athlete, and how a social media post landed him at the heart of culture wars, derailing campaigns and careers in the process. A homophobic bigot to some, a persecuted freedom warrior to others, this will be the first time Israel Folau's story is examined in all its multilayered complexity. The creative team features director Nel Minchin ([Firestarter - The Story of Bangarra](#)), associate director Vanilla Tupu, and producer Ivan O'Mahoney ([Firestarter - The Story of Bangarra](#)) of In Films. This project is developed with support from Screen NSW.
- ***Harley & Katya***: A feature documentary from Blayke Hoffman and Stranger Than Fiction about Indigenous Australian figure skater Harley Windsor, who was the poster boy for the Australian Winter Olympic Team. Paired with Russian skater Katya Alexandrovskaya, this unlikely duo achieved unprecedented success on the ice before meeting with great tragedy. This film follows Harley on a journey of triumph, loss and transformation. Writer/director Selina Miles ([Martha: A Picture Story](#)) teams up with producers Blayke Hoffman ([Viva the Underdogs](#)), Jo-anne McGowan ([Mountain](#)) and Aayliah-Jade Bradbury, and executive producer Jennifer Peedom ([Sherpa](#)). The project is supported by Screen NSW and will be distributed internationally by MGM/K2.
- ***Tiger on the Rocks***: A one-hour documentary about the Tasmanian Tiger which once roamed throughout Australia, leaving lasting connections with the land and its First Peoples. Featuring insights from Indigenous artists, rangers and custodians, biologists, bone hunters and archaeologists, this project explores the connection between human and animal, culture, nature and country. *Tiger on the Rocks* is written and directed by Cathryn Vasseleu ([De Anima](#)) and produced by Pat Fiske ([Rosemary's Way](#)). It is financed with support from Screen Territory.
- ***The Last Daughter***: A feature documentary about Brenda Matthews, a Wiradjuri woman whose earliest memories are of growing up in a white foster family, until she was placed back with her

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biological family, leaving her feeling disconnected with both sides. Directed by Matthews, *The Last Daughter* follows her mission to uncover the truth of her past, find a deeper connection to her culture and her story, and ultimately reconcile the two sides of her family. The film is also directed by Nathaniel Schmidt and is produced by Simon Williams and Brendon Skinner who previously collaborated on short documentary [Ice Ball](#). The executive producers are Kyle Slabb ([Surfing the Healing Wave](#)), Michael Tear ([Hating Peter Tatchell](#)) and Taryn Brumfitt ([Embrace](#)).

- **War & Order:** A feature documentary about 50 years of First Nations activism in Australia, shown through the lens of contemporary Australian Aboriginal artist Richard Bell. Director Larissa Behrendt ([Maralinga Tjarutjta](#)) teams up with producers Charlotte Wheaton ([Off Country](#)), Nick Batzias ([The Australian Dream](#)) and Josh Milani. It will be executive produced by Richard Bell and Virginia Whitwell ([The Australian Dream](#)). Madman and NITV will be bringing *War & Order* to Australian audiences.

**The projects funded through the Commissioned Program are:**

- **The Family Court Murders (working title):** A four-part series for Network 10 from Easy Tiger Productions in association with SAM Content which will examine the family court murders in 1980's Sydney which resulted in several family court judges and their families being targeted by domestic terrorist attacks. This series will expose a chapter of Australian life that has frightening relevance today. Director/producer Sally Aitken ([Playing with Sharks](#)) teams up with producers Ian Collie and Rob Gibson whose credits include [Lindy Chamberlain: The True Story](#), and Aline Jacques ([Miriam Margolyes - Almost Australian](#)). This project is financed with support from Screen NSW and Fremantle International will manage international sales.
- **Inconceivable:** A one-hour documentary for SBS's Australia Uncovered strand, in which investigative journalist Sarah Dingle embarks on a deeply personal journey to uncover the truth about her origins, and in doing so exposes the secrets of a multi-million dollar fertility industry. In this emotional whodunnit, based on her book *Brave New Humans: The Dirty Reality of Donor Conception*, Dingle confronts questions around her identity within the ethical morass of donor conception. For SAM content, *Inconceivable* is directed and produced by Sally Aitken ([Playing with Sharks](#)) with producers Aline Jacques ([Big Deal](#)) and Marianne Leitch (*Foreign Correspondent*) who is also writing. It is financed with support from Screen NSW.
- **Inside The Opera House:** For the first time, cameras will go behind the scenes to reveal what it takes to run one of the world's greatest performing arts centres, the Sydney Opera House, in this three-part documentary series for the ABC. Produced by Barking Mad Productions and Fremantle Australia, this project is executive produced by Steve Bibb ([Great Southern Land](#)) and Chris Oliver-Taylor ([Glitch](#)) and is financed with support from Screen NSW. ABC Commercial holds worldwide distribution rights.
- **Keeping Hope:** A one-hour documentary for NITV from Joined Up Films, exploring the hidden complexities of living in the magical Kimberley. The remote region renowned for its stunning tourist destinations has become a place with high rates of suicide among young Indigenous people, and in this documentary actor Mark Coles Smith goes on a deeply personal journey to investigate why this is happening and what can be done about it. The creative team also features director Tyson Mowarin ([Connection to Country](#)), producer Marlikka Perdrisat and executive producers Jacqueline Willinge and Dan Brown whose most recent projects include [The Truth About Anxiety with Celia Pacquola](#) and [What Does Australia Really Think About....](#). This documentary is financed with support from Screenwest.
- **Kids Raising Kids:** A one-hour documentary for SBS's Australia Uncovered strand created by award winning journalist and broadcaster Patrick Abboud's production company Only Human. Gaining exclusive access inside Canberra College, a one a kind high school for teenage parents, the documentary explores the complex lives of its students who are also overcoming family trauma, abuse, drug dependency and constant setbacks while navigating a complex system. What unites



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them is a will to transform their lives - to get an education, to stay on the right side of the law, and be the best parents they can be. The creative team features director/writer/producer Patrick Abboud, producer Marie Maroun ([Boys in the Trees](#)), executive producer Sally Aitken ([Playing with Sharks](#)) and associate producer Marta Jelec ([Addicted Australia](#)). The film is financed with support from Screen NSW and Screen Canberra.

- ***The Eagle and the Ant (and Everything In Between)***: A three-part natural history series for the ABC that follows the flow of water across the continent to explore the incredible connectivity that links organisms and ecosystems, and makes life on earth possible. The creative team features writer/director Nick Robinson, writer/producer Peta Ayers and executive producer Electra Manikakis, who all previously collaborated on [Australia's Ocean Odyssey](#). This project is financed with support from Screen NSW.
- ***Multicultural History Series (working title)***: A celebratory three-part series for SBS, featuring well-known personalities from different faiths, countries and cultural backgrounds exploring the history of their community. This documentary series is produced by Tony Jackson of Chemical Media ([You See Monsters](#)) and is financed with support from Film Victoria.

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

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

#### 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.

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.

Since 1 July 2021, documentary projects that have a primary release on a social media platform are able to apply for funding via Screen Australia's Online Production fund. Applicants with documentary projects designed for release on other platforms, including on SVOD services, should continue to apply through the Documentary funding programs. More information is available [here](#).

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