



Australian Government



MEDIA RELEASE

Screen Australia announces \$3.6 million for 18 documentaries

Friday 2 August 2019: Screen Australia has announced documentary funding for five Commissioned and 13 Producer projects. The slate represents the final titles funded in the 2018/19 financial year, with the agency also announcing details of its documentary program update.

The funded projects include a series from Blackfella Films that explores the topic of addiction, a feature from Kriv Stenders about country music icon Joy McKean, as well as a feature centred on the trailblazing women who fought for women's surfing to become an international sport.

Screen Australia's Head of Documentary, **Bernadine Lim** said, "We're delighted to fund a wide range of projects that explore unique aspects of Australian history and put a spotlight on contemporary issues including addiction and migration. It's also exciting to support so many projects that celebrate stories of powerful Australian women and recognise their achievements in sport, music, agriculture as well as building communities among new Australians. I'm confident these projects will not only entertain but also spark conversations."

The projects supported through the Producer Program include:

- **Rosemary's Way (working title):** A feature documentary about community leader Rosemary Kariuki and her work in drawing migrant women out of their suburban isolation to connect with other cultures, so they can better participate in Australian life. Following Kariuki over the course of a year, this film will be written and directed by Ros Horin whose documentary [The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe](#) premiered at the Sydney Film Festival in 2016. Horin teams up with producer Pat Fiske ([Oyster](#)) and executive producer Joe Skrzynski AO ([The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe](#)).
- **Slim & I:** A feature documentary about Australian country music legend Joy McKean, from writer/director Kriv Stenders ([Red Dog](#), [The Go Betweens: Right Here](#)). The film will take viewers into McKean's life, offering insight into her career, her marriage of more than 50 years to Slim Dusty, and her determination to be recognised as a performer and songwriter in her own right. This project will be produced by Chris Brown ([The Railway Man](#)), Aline Jacques ([Living Universe](#)) and McKean's grandson James Arneman. It will be executive produced by Joy McKean. Financed with support from Screen Queensland.
- **The Kids:** A feature documentary about the real-life individuals who inspired Larry Clark's 1995 cult classic film *Kids*, 25 years on from the film's premiere at Cannes Film Festival. The film centred on a group of young people from broken homes in New York who united on the streets and built a unique family. This documentary uncovers the impact on the real kids who were thrust into the limelight, with some thriving and others struggling to cope with the fame. Writer/director Eddie Martin ([Have You Seen The Listers?](#)) is joined by producer Shannon Swan ([Gurrumul](#)) on this project.
- **The Side Show:** A feature documentary presenting the untold story of a band of surfer girls who fought to turn women's surfing into a professional sport in the 1980s. Women including Australian Pam Burrige, South African Wendy Botha and American Frieda Zamba carved a name for themselves in a male-dominated industry, paving the way for future generations and changing the face of international surf culture forever. This film will be written and directed by Christopher Nelius, co-creator of series [Storm Surfers](#), and produced by Michaela Perske ([Black Divaz](#)). It will be executive produced by Rob Galluzo and Michael Hilliard who previously worked together on [Machine](#), as well as Paul Wiegard ([2040](#)). Financed with support from Create NSW.
- **Visible Farmer:** A 15-part online series revealing stories of Australia's female farmers, who often go unrecognised despite the vital roles they play across different types of agriculture. Each episode will give insights into the lives of different farmers, from remote outback stations to urban market gardens. This project is presented by writer/director Gisela Kaufmann and producer Carsten Orlt who previously worked together on [Shark Girl](#).

Media enquiries: Jessica Parry
+61 2 8113 5833 | +61 428 767 836 | jessica.parry@screenaustralia.gov.au
www.screenaustralia.gov.au



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The projects supported through the Commissioned Program include:

- **Addicted (working title):** A three-part observational documentary series from Blackfella Films for SBS exploring addiction in Australia. It will be produced by Darren Dale and written by series producer Jacob Hickey, who previously teamed up on [Filthy Rich and Homeless](#) and [First Contact](#). Financed with support from Film Victoria.
- **Killer Snake Island:** A one-hour wildlife documentary from Western Australian Sea Dog TV International, revealing how a population of tiger snakes on a small island off the coast of Perth came to evolve very differently from their mainland counterparts. Documenting the snakes over one summer, the project will be presented by writer/director/supervising producer Leighton De Barros, producer Jodie De Barros and writer/director Jonathan Rowdon, who together have a proven track record of delivering stunning natural history documentaries including [Dolphin Dynasty](#) and [Birthplace of Giants](#). Financed with support from Screenwest.
- **Come Fly With Me (working title):** A three-part series from WildBear Entertainment for SBS about the hidden history of the aviation industry and how it has changed, ahead of Australia's Centenary of Civil Aviation in 2020. The series will showcase the flight crews, planes and destinations, revealing surprising struggles for equality and acceptance that transformed Australian life, in the air and on the ground. The creative team includes writer and series producer Bernice Toni ([The Crown and Us: The Story of Royals in Australia](#)), writer/director Greg Appel ([Bombora](#)), writer Prudence Black and writer/executive producer Alan Erson ([Barrenjoey Road](#)).
- **Australia in Colour series 2:** A second season of SBS's critically acclaimed series presenting Australia's history through black and white archival footage that has been transformed into vibrant colour. Directors Lisa Matthews and Rose Hesp, producer Jo-anne McGowan and executive producer Jennifer Peedom will return to work on the second series.

The full list of funded projects is available [here](#)

DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM UPDATE

As flagged in January, Screen Australia will soon seek industry feedback on proposed updates to its documentary funding programs. The feedback period will formally begin with the distribution of an issues paper in late September 2019.

"The last time our documentary programs were revised was in 2014/15, and since that time there has been substantial change in screen business models, content creation and audience viewing habits," said Screen Australia Head of Documentary **Bernadine Lim**. "We will be looking to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the sector, and how Screen Australia can best support quality, culture and innovation in the documentary industry."

[Subscribe to the Screen Australia newsletter](#) to receive the issues paper.

DOCUMENTARY AT SCREEN AUSTRALIA

Screen Australia began operating in 2008, taking over the documentary programs from its predecessor agencies the Australian Film Commission (AFC) and Film Australia Limited.

The current Producer and Commissioned Programs became active in January 2015, and all development streams were rolled into a [single fund](#).

The [Producer Program](#) is designed to give producers the foundational funding required to leverage their projects creatively and commercially. The production must have a clear path to audience but a marketplace attachment (e.g. broadcaster, distributor) is not required at the application stage.

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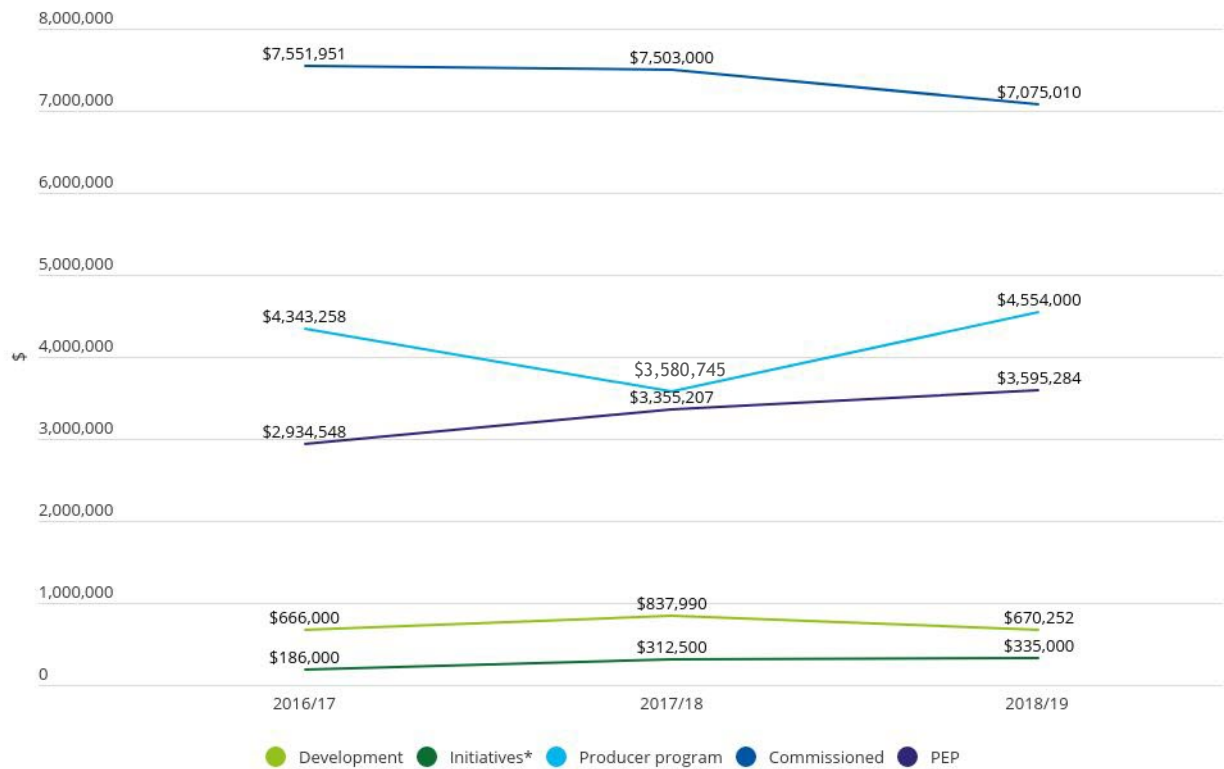
The [Commissioned Program](#) is designed to support the production of a diverse range of quality projects for television broadcast, SVOD or similar. The production must offer a compelling vision with a clear and enduring cultural value, and have a local presale with a minimum licence fee at application stage.

Screen Australia also supports documentaries through special initiatives including ABC Arts Bites, ABC Love Bites, Google Skip Ahead, The Guardian and Whimn’s Doco180.

The [Producer Equity Program](#) (PEP) is the only documentary offering that does not include a creative assessment, but rather a flat 20% contribution to eligible low budget works.

In 2018/19, Screen Australia’s Documentary Department disbursed \$16.26 million in funding, which was slightly higher than the previous two financial years. In 2018/19 funding was provided to 173 projects across development (46), Producer Program (34), Commissioned Program (24), initiatives (7) and PEP (62). Additional funding was provided to SAFC Doculab.

SCREEN AUSTRALIA DOCUMENTARY FUNDING 2016/17 - 2018/19

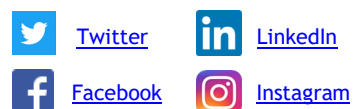


2018/19 sector development funding for SAFC Doculab (\$30K) not included in graph.

*Initiatives - 2016/17: ABC Art Bites, NT Film Office Development, Whimn Doco180, 2017/18: ABC Art Bites, ABC Love Bites, The Guardian, Vice Pitch Australiana, Whimn Doco 180, Windows on the World, 2018/19: 10 Play Out Here, ABC Art Bites, The Guardian, Vice Pitch Australiana

[View graph online](#)

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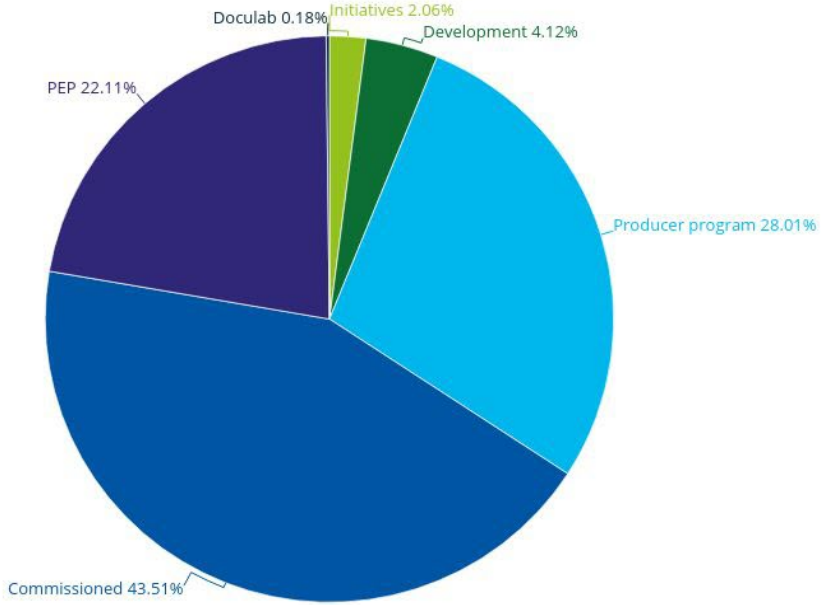


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SCREEN AUSTRALIA DOCUMENTARY FUNDING 2018/19



Financial Year

[View graph online](#)

Beyond the Documentary department, documentaries and documentary makers are also eligible for other Screen Australia funding streams, such as P&A Plus (distribution assistance) and travel grants as well as programs run through the Indigenous Department.

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