

Screen Australia announces over \$7.4 million of production funding for 9 projects

Monday 20 February 2023: Screen Australia has announced five feature films, two television dramas and two children's projects that will share in more than \$7.4 million of production funding. The projects include dramedy *Audrey*, the debut feature from director Natalie Bailey, featuring actor and disability activist Hannah Diviney ([Latecomers](#)) which started production last week; plus family feature films *Drone Racers* and *Whale Shark Jack*.

Also receiving funding is *One Night*, a thriller for Paramount+; season 2 of Channel Seven's *RFDS* and new ABC children's series *Galaxy Girl*.

Screen Australia's Head of Content **Grainne Brunson** said, "It's fantastic to kick the year off with such a strong pipeline and wide mix of projects coming through. These distinct local stories, whether it's uniquely Australian comedy, suspenseful thrillers or exciting family adventures, highlight how much high quality drama is being created in our sector at the moment."

"We're committed to supporting children's content to ensure Australian kids are able to see themselves reflected onscreen, and we're pleased to announce two television shows and two family films that are set to engage young audiences. There is a strong appetite for Australian children's content around the world which was evident at MIPCOM last year, so we're thrilled to see more exciting projects coming through in this space."

The funded feature films are:

- ***Audrey*:** A dramedy following self-appointed Mother of the Year, Ronnie Lipsick, who is living a life she never wanted, with a derailed career, a husband whose love for life has gone limp and two daughters who she struggles to connect with. When an accident lands her eldest daughter Audrey in a coma, Ronnie gets a second chance at life by taking on her daughter's identity - only she's not the only one in the family who sees Audrey's comatose state as an opportunity. Directed by Natalie Bailey ([Bay of Fires](#)) and written by Louise Woodruff Sanz ([The PM's Daughter](#)), the film features actor, writer and disability activist Hannah Diviney, whose drama [Latecomers](#) has been selected for Seriesmania 2023. *Audrey* is produced by Michael Wrenn ([6 Festivals](#)), Dan Lake ([Early Winter](#)), Shannon Wilson-McClinton ([Hearts & Bones](#)) and Diya Eid with Executive Producers Kurt Royan ([Retrograde](#)) and Roxana McMullan ([How to Please a Woman](#)). It is financed in association with Screen Queensland with support from the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) Premiere Fund. International sales will be managed by Bankside Films with Rialto distributing in Australia and New Zealand.
- ***Drone Racers*:** This family feature is about unruly tween Esme who discovers a talent for the fun, futuristic sport of drone racing. Working with her tech-nerd cousin, she takes her new skills from the beaches, bush and burbs of their outback town, all the way to the world championships. Alison James (director of award-winning short film [Judas Collar](#)), is directing from a screenplay by Jules Duncan ([Rams](#)). The film is produced by Janelle Landers ([Rams](#)), Aidan O'Bryan ([Girl Like You](#)), James Grandison ([Blueback](#)) and Jessica Mitchell ([Yardbird](#)). *Drone Racers* is financed with support from Screenwest, Lotterywest and the Western Australian Regional Screen Fund. The film is being released internationally by Universal.
- ***Fear Below*:** From director Matthew Holmes ([The Legend of Ben Hall](#)) and writer Gregory Moss ([The Cost](#)), this 1940s-set thriller is about a team of professional divers whom when hired to locate a sunken car from a river are thwarted by a deadly bull shark. When they discover they are working for ruthless criminals trying to recover their stolen gold bullion, their situation becomes even more dangerous. *Fear Below* is produced by Blake Northfield ([Wormwood: Apocalypse](#)) and Michael Favelle ([Combat Wombat](#)), with Sandra Tahmasby and Clement Dunn ([Sissy](#)) executive producing. It is financed in association with Screen NSW and Odin's Eye Entertainment who are also managing international sales. Studio Canal is distributing the film in Australia.



- **Whale Shark Jack:** This family feature, set at the breathtaking Ningaloo Reef, centres around 11-year-old Sarah, whose parents research whale sharks. Sarah’s best friend is a whale shark named Jack, who she rescued as a pup. Following a tragic accident, Sarah and her dad move to the coastal town of Exmouth. Sarah wants to return to her old life at sea and pegs all her hopes on Jack’s anticipated annual migration. But when Jack fails to return, Sarah embarks on a risky mission to find him. Written by Kathryn Lefroy (*Library of Love*), *Whale Shark Jack* will be directed by Miranda Edmonds and Khrob Edmonds, whose credits include [Tango Underpants](#). Edmonds is producing alongside Timothy White ([I Am Mother](#)). Also producing are Kelvin Munro and Philip Wade. The film is financed in association with Screenwest, Lotterywest and the Western Australian Regional Screen Fund, the Australian Children’s Television Foundation and Filmology Finance, with support from Wade Brothers Films, Minderoo Pictures and Ulladulla Films.
- **The Rooster:** A mysterious drama that follows a sole police officer in a small town, Dan, who feels responsible for the death of his childhood friend. Grieving, Dan camps out in the bush at the site of his friend’s death where he meets an older hermit who may have been the last person to see his friend alive. As Dan uncovers the truth about how he died, he faces some difficult truths about himself as an unlikely friendship develops with the old man and he realises that all is not as it seems. A debut feature written and directed by Mark Leonard Winter (*The Greatest Love of All*) and produced by MahVeen Shahraki ([Ellie & Abbie \(and Ellie’s Dead Aunt\)](#)) and Geraldine Hakewill ([Young Labor](#)), *The Rooster* is funded by Mind The Gap in association with the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) Premiere Fund and distributed in Australia by Bonsai Films. It received funding through Screen Australia’s Enhancement Fund.

The funded television dramas are:

- **One Night:** A six-part drama for Paramount+ about three women whose bond was all but destroyed by the traumatic events of one night 20 years ago. Now 20 years later, one of the friends Simone has written a book - the one story she could never get out of her mind, and her debut manuscript has become an unexpected overnight success. But it soon becomes apparent that the devastating story the book tells doesn’t exclusively belong to her. *One Night* is produced by Easy Tiger’s Ian Collie, Rob Gibson and Ally Henville ([Colin From Accounts](#), [The Twelve](#)) with Motive Pictures’ Simon Maxwell (*The Woman in the Wall*, *Get Millie Black*) as executive producer and Harriet Creelman, co-executive producer. Created and written by award-winning Emily Ballou ([The Slap](#), *Taboo*), who also serves as executive producer. The series is directed by Catherine Millar ([The Twelve](#), [The Secrets She Keeps](#)) and Lisa Matthews ([Doctor Doctor](#), [The PM’s Daughter](#)). It is financed in association with Paramount+ and Fifth Season is managing international sales.
- **RFDS Season 2:** Following on from the success of season 1, *RFDS* returns to the Seven Network with another eight-part season. This gripping medical drama based in Broken Hill follows the modern-day heroes of the Royal Flying Doctor Service as they navigate private lives as turbulent and profound as the heart stopping emergencies they attend. Directing season 2 are Jeremy Sims (*Last Cab To Darwin*), Adrian Russell Wills ([The Warriors](#)), and Rachel Ward ([Rake](#)) and the writers are Ian Meadows ([Upright](#)), Claire Phillips ([Offspring](#)), Adrian Russell Wills, Kodie Bedford ([Mystery Road](#)) and Magda Wozniak ([Bad Behaviour](#)). The series is produced by Ross Allsop (*The Artful Dodger*), co-produced by Ian Meadows and executive produced by Sara Richardson and Imogen Banks (Kindling Pictures). The series is financed in association with Seven Network with support from Screen NSW and EndemolShine Australia. International sales are managed by Banijay Rights International.

The funded children’s projects are:

- **Space Nova Season 2:** A 15-episode second series for the ABC following the space faring Aussie Nova family who, on the brink of their greatest mission ever - travelling to the homeworld of the elusive Stardustians - almost destroy their starship, throwing them off course and stranding their new Stardustian friend Ziggy in parts unknown. Now, to find Ziggy and unravel an ‘imbalance in the universe’, the Novas will have to challenge everything they thought they knew about space: see the



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unseeable, know the unknow-able, and find the unfindable. The creative team sees the return of series director Pablo de la Torre and head writer Thomas Duncan-Watt, producers Suzanne Ryan, Yasmin Jones and executive producer Suzanne Ryan. Joining for season 2 is writer/episode director Chantelle Murray ([Shed](#)). The series is financed in association with the Australian Children's Television Foundation and is co-produced by Giggle Garage, Malaysia. International sales are managed worldwide by ZDF Studios, excluding Australia and New Zealand, which is being handled by ACTF.

- **Galaxy Girl:** This 10-part series for the ABC is a coming-of-age sci-fi comedy about an extraterrestrial and all-round extra sparky human being called Lulin, whose Astoradian powers suddenly kick in, complicating her world and making her the target of hostile intergalactic invaders! Lulin must learn to control her powers before they lead to serious Year 6 uncoolness. *Galaxy Girl* is written by Melanie Sano ([Neighbours](#)), Jessica Paine ([Neighbours](#)), Michael Drake ([The Wonder Gang](#)), Megan Palinkas ([Heartbreak High](#)) and Vidya Rajan ([How to Stay Married](#)), teaming up with producer Pennie Brown ([How to Stay Married](#)) and executive producers Emma Fitzsimons ([Koala Man](#)) and Gillian Carr ([KuuKuu Harajuku](#)). Produced by Princess Pictures and Moody Street Kids with finance from the ABC in association with VicScreen, ABC Commercial is managing international sales.

For the full list of blocklines refer to the [television](#) and [feature film](#) breakdowns.

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Media enquiries: Lidia Williams
+61 2 8113 1091 | +61 468 784 170 | lidia.williams@screenaustralia.gov.au
www.screenaustralia.gov.au



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