

Screen Australia celebrates emerging creatives and cultural icons in documentary funding slate

Monday 11 August 2025: Screen Australia has announced 30 documentaries that will share in \$2.5 million of production and development funding, shaping the next chapter of Australian factual storytelling. The diverse slate highlights a new wave of documentary makers and offers intimate portraits of iconic Australians including Jimmy Barnes, George Miller, Henrietta Marrie AM and Ken Done.

Among the projects are social impact documentaries *Liyan: Guided by Horses* (working title) and *It Starts With Us*, both of which shine a light on transformative programs for young Australians.

Head of Documentary at Screen Australia **Richard Huddleston** said, “From regional Australia to global war zones, these rich, intimate and unflinching stories open windows into new worlds, explore our rich cultural landscape and help us understand shared challenges — moving us in ways that only documentary can.

“The calibre of talented emerging creatives we’ve been able to support has been impressive, as is the way many of them are joining forces with more experienced practitioners to achieve their aims. Our sector is ever evolving and this kind of collaborative community, coupled with innovative approaches to distinct Australian storytelling, is why our documentaries resonate with audiences here and around the world.”

Over the 2024/25 financial year, Screen Australia funded \$11 million across 104 documentary projects for production and development. The agency supported a myriad of content that found critical acclaim over the past 12 months. These include [Midnight Oil: The Hardest Line](#) and [Mozart’s Sister](#) winning two AACTA-Awards, [Songs Inside](#) winning the Documentary Australia Award at Sydney Film Festival, [Spreadsheet Champions](#) screening at Hot Docs Festival in Canada and SXSW in Austin and [Maqqie Beer’s Big Mission](#) winning Best Host at the C21 International Format Awards in Cannes.

On 1 July, Screen Australia launched its updated [Documentary Funding Programs](#) tailored to meet industry needs, support practitioners and foster ground-breaking content for years to come.

Some of the supported projects include:

- **Axis of Impersonators:** This feature documentary from director/producers Nicholas Coles and Alexis Spraic of *The World According to Allee Willis* tells the true story of how a Kim Jong-Un impersonator teams up with a Putin impersonator to rescue a Zelensky impersonator from Kyiv after the invasion of Ukraine. Produced by Laura Waters ([My Year 12 Life](#)) and Executive Producer Emma Fitzsimons ([Together](#)), it is financed in association with VicScreen and the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) Premiere Fund with support from private investment. Local distribution by Mushroom Studios and international sales lead by CAA Media Finance.
- **Bukal Bukal:** A feature documentary from director Rhoda Roberts AO ([In the Gutter? No Way](#)). Written by Roberts and Julie Nihill, *Bukal Bukal* centres on Yidinji activist Henrietta Marrie AM who reformed the Australian Government and UN to benefit billions of Indigenous people and is now fighting the British Museum to reclaim her family’s stolen artefacts. Produced by Nihill and Yale McGilveray (*Changing Tides*) with Executive Producers Henrietta Marrie, Susie Montague, Shaun Miller, John Anastasiou and Mitch Stanley, *Bukal Bukal* is financed with support from philanthropy directly and via Documentary Australia.
- **It Starts With Us:** A 30-minute documentary from emerging director Amelia Tovey that follows a group of teenagers in a ground-breaking high-school program for kids at risk of family violence. With mentors such as Rosie Batty, the program uses art to unpack social pressures that lead to violence. The documentary is produced Sophia Marinos ([Namatjira Project](#)), with producer Larissa Behrendt ([One Mind, One Heart](#)) and Executive Producers Genevieve Dugard and Deanne Weir ([The Wolves Always Come at Night](#)). It is financed with support from WeirAnderson Foundation, Shark Island Foundation, Nelson Meers Foundation and Respect Victoria. Developed with support from Screen NSW.

- ***Mad Max and the Genius of George Miller***: A feature film from Serendipity Productions in association with Yuzu Productions that tells the improbable story of how a 1970s Australian film grew into the country's biggest ever cultural export. Produced by Margie Bryant ([Knowing the Score](#)) and directed by Chris Eley ([Australia: An Unofficial History](#)) it captures how George Miller's singular cinematic vision influenced global cinema and set him on an unlikely journey to the pinnacle of Hollywood success. It is financed with support from Screen NSW, who also supported post, digital and visual effects.
- ***Liyan: Guided by Horses (working title)***: Set against the breathtaking backdrop of the Kimberley, this feature documentary from director Sean O'Reilly ([Intersection](#)) is a heartwarming and timely story of reconnection. At the heart of it is a group of young people, nurtured within a one-of-a-kind sanctuary using horses as powerful guides, pioneered by Aboriginal researcher Professor Juli Coffin. This documentary is produced by O'Reilly with Professor Juli Coffin and Sophy Crane. It is executive produced by Hunter Page-Lochard, Huna Amweero, Daniel Gordon, Mark Coles Smith and Stephen Page.
- ***A Year at Yumburra***: A feature documentary from writer/director Grace McKenzie ([In the Land of Wolves](#)) based on *Dark Emu* author Bruce Pascoe's book – *Black Duck: A Year at Yumburra*. The film is produced by Tom Zubrycki ([Ablaze](#)) and chronicles the seasons of Yumburra farm in Gippsland where Bruce and his partner run Black Duck Foods. It is financed in association with VicScreen. Local distribution from Madman Entertainment.
- ***The Northern Run***: A feature documentary from GoodThing Productions directed by Rhian Skirving ([Off Country](#)) and Bill Bleakley about six young Australian bull riders as they travel to North West Queensland to compete for a spot in the largest and richest rodeo in the southern hemisphere. The project is produced by Charlotte Wheaton ([Spreadsheet Champions](#)) and Nick Batzias ([Ellis Park](#)) and is financed in association with VicScreen with support from Screen Queensland.
- ***Working Class Man***: A feature documentary from CJZ commissioned by the Seven Network that tells the wild journey of one of Australia's true rock'n'roll legends Jimmy Barnes. Directed by Andrew Farrell who worked as executive producer on [Working Class Boy](#) and written by Anthony Griffis ([Mythbusters](#)) this follow-up to *Working Class Boy*, is an honest reflection on success, fame, addiction and family told through Jimmy's eyes with his trademark honesty and insight. Farrell and Griffis are producing with Executive Producer Matt Campbell ([Working Class Boy](#)). Post, digital and visual effects are supported by Screen NSW.
- ***Ken Done***: From director and producer Ivan O'Mahoney ([Unbreakable – The Jelena Dokic Story](#)) and award-winning journalist Gabriella Coslovich comes this feature documentary from In Films centred on the renowned artist's life, career and transformation from an award-winning adman to an artist who helped shape the world's view of Australia. *Ken Done* is financed with support from Screen Queensland and Shark Island Foundation.
- ***Replica***: An observational feature documentary from writer/director Chouwa Liang ([My AI Lover](#)) exploring the growing trend of Chinese women turning to AI chatbots for romance and companionship. The film is co-directed by Shannon Owen ([Left Write Hook](#)) and produced by Andy Huang ([My AI Lover](#)), and co-produced by by Christilla Huillard-Kann and Liang, with Stephen Luby ([The Hunt: In Search of Australia's Big Cats](#)) on board as Executive Producer. *Replica* is developed with support from Screen Queensland.

Funding was also provided to Mint Pictures' series for the ABC - *When The War is Over* - previously announced by the broadcaster and presented by Rachel Griffiths.

The full list of documentary blocklines is available [here](#). The latest projects funded for documentary development are available [here](#).

ENDS

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About Screen Australia

Screen Australia is the Australian Federal Government agency charged with supporting the development, production and promotion of Australian narrative, documentary and children's content, across television, feature films, online and games. Screen Australia also administers Australia's Official Co-production program, in addition to the Producer Offset incentive. The agency provides a broad range of resources and opportunities to the industry including access to research, market intelligence and special initiatives. For more information visit www.screenaustralia.gov.au.