



Screen Australia funds seven new documentaries including the first in virtual reality

Wednesday 18 January 2017: Screen Australia today announced \$1.6 million in production investment funding for seven compelling documentaries through the Documentary Producer and Commissioned programs.

The projects include the first virtual reality (VR) film to receive production funding from Screen Australia's documentary unit; an investigation into our growing obsession with vitamin supplements presented by YouTube star Dr Derek Muller; and a nature documentary about the secret sex life of prehistoric 16-legged spiders residing in the caves of Tasmania.

Liz Stevens, Senior Manager of Documentary at Screen Australia, said: "Funding such a broad range of projects from both established and emerging talent points to a promising future for our local documentary industry. Australians are passionate documentarians and we are confident these projects will offer Australian and international audiences important, entertaining insights into our world."

The successful Documentary Commissioned project is *My Year 7 Life* from Melbourne outfit [Princess Pictures](#) for ABC Me. It follows the lives of 16 children during a formative period of their lives as they transition from primary school to high school. From the same team behind *My Year 12 Life*, which airs in February 2017, this series will be composed of self-shot 'vlogs' and will provide insight into the perspective and lived experiences of young Australians today. This project has also received Film Victoria funding.

The six successful Documentary Producer projects are:

- *Vitamina - The Sense and Nonsense of Vitamins and Minerals*, an investigative look at the science and history of the \$90 billion global supplements industry, hosted by Dr Derek Muller whose YouTube channel [Veritasium](#) boasts an impressive 3.5 million subscribers. Emmy award-winning producer [Sonya Pemberton](#) will executive produce, write and direct the project which will be broadcast on SBS in Australia and on Arte in France and Germany. It has also received Film Victoria support.
- Feature *Sanctuary*, an examination of the current global refugee policies mapped against the individual experience of a young Iraqi man whose harrowing life has taken him to the Netherlands, Malaysia, Australia and back again. From [Bunya Treehouse Productions](#), it will be directed by [Kaye Harrison](#), produced by [Greer Simpkin](#) and executive produced by [David Jowsey](#).
- *I Used To Be Normal - A Boyband Fangirl Story* will take a look at the multi-generational phenomenon of boy-bands and the devoted fan-girls whose lives are consumed by an intense obsession with their idols. Producer [Rita Walsh](#) is collaborating with emerging filmmaker [Jessica Leski](#) who will produce, direct and write the feature-length documentary to be distributed by [Madman Entertainment](#), with Film Victoria support.
- Contemporary artist [Shaun Gladwell](#)'s VR project *Storm Rider*, produced by [Leo Faber](#) for SBS. Gladwell, best known for his piece [Storm Sequence](#), will document through VR his quest to teach a young British Muslim woman how to skateboard. Faber and Gladwell recently had their VR film *Orbital Vanitas* selected for Sundance's New Frontier 2017 program.
- Natural history documentary *Sixteen Legs*, a feature-length extension to the critically acclaimed short of the same name, from producer/writer/director and scientist [Niall Doran](#) and [Media Stockade](#). Doran was a 2016 recipient of SPA's Ones to Watch program and has already secured two festival screenings in Santa Barbara and Washington D.C. for this documentary. After the festival circuit, it will also screen in two parts on French broadcaster Arte.



- ABC Arts documentary *You See Monsters*, where six Muslim-Australians artists will share their experience of using artistic expression - including painting, poetry and music - to articulate and reclaim a sense of identity in a climate of anti-Islam sentiment. Written by [David Collins](#) and produced/directed by [Tony Jackson](#), it has also received funding support from Film Victoria.

[Click here](#) to see further information about this round of successful projects.

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, VOD 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.

[Click here](#) for more information about these programs.