



Australian Government



MEDIA RELEASE

Screen Australia announces development funding for 42 projects

Wednesday 5 August 2020: Screen Australia has announced 14 feature films, eight online projects and 20 television dramas that will share in \$1.6 million of Story Development funding.

The latest slate includes Toni Collette’s directorial debut with feature film *The Best Of*, and an anthology of Shakespeare’s works re-imagined by teams of creators including Leah Purcell, Elise McCredie and Anchuli Felicia King called *Shakespeare Now*.

Screen Australia’s Head of Development **Nerida Moore** said, “While this has been a turbulent, challenging time for many in the industry, it hasn’t stopped the drive, passion and imagination of Australian creative teams. In fact we have continued to see applications coming through with really strong and distinctive content, with application numbers across March-June this year up 76% on the same period last year.”

“It’s exciting to see re-imaginings of well-loved stories such as *Shakespeare Now* and an animated series inspired by *The Sapphires*. And we continue to support storytelling on all platforms, with two online series from comedians Gabriel Willie (better known as Bush Tucker Bunjie) and Chloe Black who are each creating their first scripted narrative comedies.”

This slate is the final funding awarded in the 2019/20 financial year. During this period Screen Australia received 534 Story Development applications across the Premium and Generate Funds, up 41% from the 378 applications received in 2018/19. In the last 12 months, Screen Australia has provided funds to a total of 110 projects out of a pool of 508 projects that were creatively assessed. This included 50 through the Generate Fund for lower budget projects and 60 through the Premium Fund for higher budget projects from established creators.

Moore continued, “We are really pleased to see more ambitious television projects in the pipeline, with 32 television projects funded through the Premium stream in the past 12 months, up from 12 projects last year.”

In April 2020 Screen Australia launched the Premium Plus Fund to provide late-stage development funding to high-budget projects with firm market interest that were impacted by COVID-19. In this time, the agency funded 17 projects. Recipients include ABC drama *The Newsreader* and feature film *You Won’t Be Alone*. The fund closed on 31 July 2020.

The latest projects funded for development include:

- A six-part online series from popular YouTuber Bush Tucker Bunjie (Gabriel Willie) called ***Bush Tucker Bunjie Gold Coast Adventures***. This comedy follows the over-confident, multi-talented Bunjie take up a variety of ‘fish out of water’ jobs with his mob of annoying cousin in-laws, as he tries to build his bank balance to match his Gold Coast lifestyle. Written by Willie and Angelina Hurley, this project will be produced by EJ Garrett ([Gumbi Gumbi](#)) and Dena Curtis ([Grace Beside Me](#)) with Mark O’Toole ([Black Comedy](#)) on board as story producer.
- Television comedy ***Colourful Faces***, an eight-part series about a crew of misfit actors and their manipulative agent who try to exploit the industry’s thirst for diversity on their road to success. Led by an Aboriginal actor who won’t take Aboriginal roles, a fallen Bollywood Diva and a Chinese comedian who isn’t funny, this band of hustlers set out on a chaotic and politically incorrect quest to get ahead. The creative team features writer/producers Bjorn Stewart ([Killer Native](#)) and Rami Fischler ([Spread the Word](#)), and producer Amanda Reedy ([Superwog](#)).

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- A six-part television comedy called **DNA Dad (working title)**, centred on neurologically diverse young man Michael who discovers his biological father is UK actor Ben Miller, and travels to London to meet him. The connection leads both men to discover the true meaning of family. The creative team includes writer/director Darren Ashton ([Hardball](#)), writer/producer Ben Miller, producer Joanne Weatherstone ([Hardball](#)) and executive producer Catherine Nebauer ([Hardball](#)).
- Six-part dramedy **New Animal**, from writer Marieke Hardy ([Laid](#)), based on the upcoming debut novel by Ella Baxter. The television series follows 28-year-old oddball Amelia who works as a cosmetician at a family funeral parlour. After the sudden death of her mother, she is drawn into the local BDSM community in an attempt to deal with her grief. *New Animal* will be produced by Jason Stephens and Helen Bowden of Lingo Pictures ([Lambs of God](#)).
- **Shakespeare Now**, an anthology of adaptations of Shakespeare's works for television, including *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard III*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night*. The works are led by teams of all-female creatives including Anya Beyersdorf (*It's Me*), Corrie Chen ([Five Bedrooms](#)), Lucy Coleman (*Hot Mess*), Elissa Down (*Feel the Beat*), Anchuli Felicia King (play *White Pearl*), Michelle Law ([Homecoming Queens](#)), Claire McCarthy (*The Luminaries*), Elise McCredie ([Stateless](#)), Leah Purcell ([The Drover's Wife: The Legend of Molly Johnson](#)), Amelia Roper (*The Great*), Sarah Scheller ([The Let Down](#)), Nadine von Cohen, Vivienne Walshe (*Everything's Gonna Be Ok*), and Rachel Ward ([Palm Beach](#)). This project is executive produced by ABC's Sally Riley; Lucky Chap Entertainment's Margot Robbie, Brett Hedblom, Tom Ackerley and Josey McNamara (*Maid*); and Tracey Robertson, Nathan Mayfield and Kerrin McNeil of Hoodlum Entertainment ([Harrow](#)). It will be developed with the support of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.
- Toni Collette's directorial debut with **The Best Of**, a feature film based on the novel by Graeme Simsion (*The Rosie Project*) and written for the screen by comedian and writer Mark Watson. This romantic comedy follows amateur musician turned IT specialist Adam Sharp who has a stable, unexceptional life with his matter-of-fact wife Claire. But when his first love, Angelina, gets in touch with an offer of reuniting, Adam must choose between the fantasy of a life un-lived and the reality of his marriage in its quiet beauty. This project will be produced by Collette and Christopher Simon (*Miss You Already*), and co-produced by Jen Turner.
- **The Sapphires Animation**, a television series inspired by hit Australian film [The Sapphires](#). This series re-imagines Gail, Julie, Cynthia and Kay growing up in today's world, as they follow their musical dreams and learn about life, love, and who they are in the process. A celebration of sisterhood, sass and sweet grooves, this project will be written by Kodie Bedford ([Mystery Road](#)) and produced by Rosemary Blight and Kylie du Fresne with Tony Briggs, who worked on the original film.
- Online animated comedy **Transferred** about Alex, a 35-year-old transgender woman in her first week back at work after announcing her transition. Faced with encounters ranging from unwavering encouragement to cringe-worthy questions, Alex knows that this first week is going to be a mountain, but if she can tackle this, she can get through anything. This six-part series is written by comedian Chloe Black and will be directed by Adele Vuko ([Over and Out](#)), with Wendy Hanna attached as script editor. The producers are Alicia Rackett and Paul Moran who recently collaborated on [Moments of Clarity](#).

For the complete list of development funding approvals, refer to [television](#), [online](#) and [feature film](#) breakdowns.





2019/20 SUCCESSFUL STORY DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

MEDIA RELEASE

	Generate		Premium		Premium Plus		Totals	
	Projects	Funds	Projects	Funds	Projects	Funds	Projects	Funds
Film	13	\$449,800	28	\$937,606	3	\$103,100	44	\$1,490,506
Commissioned Platform (TV)	17	\$534,907	32	\$1,582,012	14	\$1,054,484	63	\$3,171,403
Online	20	\$515,878	0	0	0	0	20	\$515,878
Total	50	\$1,500,585	60	\$2,519,618	17	\$1,157,584	127	\$5,177,787

ABOUT DEVELOPMENT

The [Story Development Fund](#) is for fictionalised stories of any genre and is open for applications year-round.

‘Development’ refers to any stage of a project’s creation as it travels towards production. It can involve everything and anything that will help get a project to the screen, from various stages of scripting to filming a proof-of-concept, such as a short film or series pilot. It can take many years for a project to reach the screen, and each project’s timeline from development to release is different due to many factors including financing, cast, locations and festival timing.

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