

Screen Australia announces production funding for 12 new projects

8AM Wednesday 19 September 2018: Screen Australia today announced production investment funding for five films, five television series and two online series totalling over \$9 million. The latest slate features a mix of emerging and experienced creatives, telling diverse stories that range from frontier tales to animated features and comedies, including a one-off Christmas special based on Stan’s original series [No Activity](#).

“It’s fantastic to see such a variety of stories being funded across multiple platforms, which will not only develop careers, but provide Australian and international audiences with engaging, thought-provoking, content that can cut through in this marketplace,” said **Sally Caplan**, Head of Production at Screen Australia.

“Promoting diversity and inclusion in Australian screen stories is imperative and I’m thrilled the projects in this slate have embraced these values. We relish the opportunity to support the development of emerging screen talent, and this slate includes a feature debut from Roderick MacKay who will direct *The Furnace*, a project with strong multicultural characters and themes.”

“I’m also delighted to see Brisbane-based production company Like A Photon, led by [Kristen Souvlis](#) and [Nadine Bates](#), creating authentic Australian animation stories for younger audiences. Both *The Wishmas Tree* and *Combat Wombat* will bring real opportunity for growth in the animation industry in Australia.”

The funded feature film projects include:

- A new animated feature film *Combat Wombat* from Queensland based production team Like A Photon led by [Nadine Bates](#) and [Kristen Souvlis](#). *Combat Wombat* will offer a fun and furry spin on the classic “recluse becomes reluctant hero” tale. The adventure revolves around Maggie Diggins, a wombat turned Wonder Woman, who unintentionally becomes the city’s superhero after she begrudgingly saves a rookie caped crusader from certain doom. The film will be directed by Like A Photon’s Ricard Cusso Judson alongside Matt Everitt as consulting animation director (*The Lego Batman Movie*). Screen Queensland has invested in the production.
- An Australian feature titled *I Met A Girl* from the team behind the award winning web series [High Life](#) including producer [Adam Dolman](#), writer [Glen Dolman](#) and director [Luke Eve](#) with producer [Melissa Kelly](#) ([Hounds of Love](#)). *I Met A Girl* is a comedic drama that follows the exploits of Devon, an aspiring musician with schizophrenia as he searches for his missing love interest, Lucy. *I Met A Girl* is an exciting progression from this creative team who previously dealt with the complexities of mental illness in the series [High Life](#). Screenwest, Create NSW and Soundfirm have invested in the production.
- *The Furnace*, set in Western Australia’s 1890s gold rush, grapples with multiculturalism, greed and the search for identity in a new land. Writer and director Roderick MacKay’s first feature, produced by [Timothy White](#) and [Kelvin Munro](#) ([I Am Mother](#)), follows a young Muslim Afghan who forms an unlikely partnership with a bushman on the run with Crown gold. Together, they must outwit zealous troopers in a race to reset the gold bars at a secret furnace. *The Furnace* spotlights the forgotten history of Australia’s ‘Ghan’ cameleers, predominantly Muslim and Sikh men from India, Afghanistan and Persia, who opened up the Nation’s desert interior, and formed unique bonds with local Aboriginal people.
- *The Wishmas Tree*, the first film to go into production from Like A Photon. Ricard Cusso Judson will direct the film and [Peter Ivan](#) ([Oddball](#)) has written the screenplay. The film will follow a young possum’s misguided wish for a white Wishmas that not only freezes her entire hometown of Sanctuary City, but also threatens the lives of all those who live there. Before the magical Wishmas Tree dies, she must undertake a perilous journey, battling self-doubt, ghostly predator gangs and ultimately-extinction itself, to reverse the damage she has caused and save Sanctuary City. Screen Queensland has invested in the production.

A further film project will be announced in the coming weeks.



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The full list of funded feature films blocklines can be found [here >](#)

The funded television drama projects include:

- **No Activity: The Night Before Christmas**, a Christmas special based on the Logie-nominated Stan Original Series [No Activity](#). Uniting some of Australia's best comedic actors including [Patrick Brammall](#), [Darren Gilshenan](#), Harriet Dyer, Genevieve Morris, Dan Wyllie and David Field, the story will follow officers Hendy (Brammall) and Stokes (Gilshenan) who are tasked with a Christmas Eve stakeout. Writer-director [Trent O'Donnell](#) returns with [Bridget Callow-Wright](#) serving as series producer and [Chloe Rickard](#) and [Jason Burrows](#) as executive producers on this next installment for Stan.

A further four projects will be announced in the coming weeks.

The full list of funded television drama blocklines can be found [here >](#)

The funded online projects include:

- **Lucy and DiC**, a new 1 x 60 minute/8 x 7.5 minute comedy show produced by We Made a Thing Studios and based off a short film from 2017 starring emerging live performer Lucy Gransbury and the voice of popular YouTuber Ethan Marrell (from Ozzy Man Reviews). The short film received over 1.5 million views across YouTube and Facebook. The show is created by Tom Phillips and Jeremy Kelly-Bakker and follows a girl named Lucy who is always on the lookout for simple ways to improve her life. Lucy's partner in crime is D.i.C, her talking support drone who even with all the knowledge in the world, can be both outdated and outspoken. Adelaide Film Festival and South Australian Film Commission have also invested in the production. The project will have its first two episodes premiere at the Adelaide Film Festival in October.
- **Internment**, a 6 x 10 minute web series about two girls, Helena and Pippa, stuck in an internship from hell. That is, if hell was a trendy inner city office where no one was doing anything or being paid. It's written by Helena Ruse, Andrew Mills and Pippa Mills, and directed by Andrew Mills - who together have been making comedic videos on their channel [LEFTOVERS](#) since 2015. For this project the creative team, who are also alumni of the [Fresh Blood](#) initiative, will receive support from experienced production company Ruby Entertainment who are producing the series.

The full list of funded online blocklines can be found [here >](#)

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