

## Screen Australia announces over \$6.9 million of production funding for 11 projects

**Thursday 14 December 2023:** Screen Australia has announced five feature films, one television drama, one children’s program and four online projects, including a virtual reality (VR) experience, that will share in over \$6.9 million of production funding.

Among the projects greenlit for production is *The Correspondent*, the latest feature film from acclaimed director Kriv Stenders, known for his work on [Red Dog](#) and [Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan](#). This film delves into the challenges faced by an Australian journalist reporting in Egypt. Beloved children’s program *Spooky Files* returns with season 2, continuing the escapades of the Spooky Crew as they embark on a new adventure through another dimension. VR experience *Heroes* sheds light on the confronting realities faced by four children living in a war zone. Rounding out this dynamic line up is the highly anticipated second season of *Last King of the Cross* on Paramount+.

Screen Australia’s Director of Content **Grainne Brunsdon** said, “We’re delighted to unveil this latest slate of productions, with each project exemplifying the power of storytelling and brilliant filmmaking across a range of genres and platforms. From diverse voices to innovative visions, these narratives showcase the boundless creativity at the heart of our thriving screen industry, and we can’t wait for audiences to immerse themselves in these extraordinary tales.”

### The funded feature films are:

- **Kangaroo:** A heart-warming family comedy about ex-tv personality, Chris Masterson who becomes stranded in an outback town after a car accident on his way to Broome. There, he forms an unlikely friendship with 11-year-old Indigenous girl Charlie. In *Kangaroo*, Chris and Charlie work together to rescue and rehabilitate orphaned joeys in the remote but stunning outback community - an endeavour that proves to be life-changing for them both. Kate Woods (*The Lincoln Lawyer*, *The Umbrella Academy*, [Looking for Alibrandi](#)) is directing and Harry Cripps (*The Dry*) is writing, with additional writing by Melina Marchetta ([Looking for Alibrandi](#)). Also attached are producers David Jowsey ([True Colours](#)), Greer Simpkin ([Sweet Country](#)), Rachel Clements ([Maverix](#)) and Trisha Morton-Thomas ([8MMM Aboriginal Radio](#)). Executive producing is Anna Marsh, Ron Halpern, Elizabeth Trotman and Marcus Gillezeau from STUDIOCANAL and Louise Smith and Marian Macgowan. It is financed in association with Screen Territory with support from Screen NSW. STUDIOCANAL are distributing locally and managing international sales.
- **One More Shot:** On New Year’s Eve 1999, Minnie discovers a bottle of time travelling tequila that takes her back to the start of the night in this time loop comedy. Armed with this mysterious bottle of tequila, she hopes to win the heart of on-again-off-again-old-flame Joe, but no matter what she does, she can’t escape herself. *One More Shot* is directed by Nicholas Clifford ([Monologue](#)) and written by Alice Foulcher and Gregory Erdstein, whose credits include [That’s Not Me](#). Nick Batzias and Virginia Whitwell of [Nitram](#) and [Nude Tuesday](#) are producing alongside Jim Wright and Elise Trenorden of [Monologue](#) and [This is Going to be Big](#). It is financed in association with the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) Premiere Fund and VicScreen. Handling local distribution is Madman Entertainment, and it has been developed with the assistance of Scripted Ink and Screenwest.
- **Red Rock Run:** This family feature film follows 10-year-old Lucy who is forbidden from attending the 1978 regional athletic trials as punishment for racing a delivery plane on a remote dirt airstrip. But with the help of her grandmother, she defies her Vietnam veteran father and enters the first kids’ team into the Red Rock Run, a gruelling 120km outback marathon race. The film is directed by Cathy Randall ([Hey, Hey, It’s Esther Blueburger](#)), written by Meg Shields and produced by Miriam Stein ([Hey, Hey, It’s Esther Blueburger](#)). *Red Rock Run* is financed in association with Screenwest and Lotterywest, Screen NSW and Spectrum Entertainment. Icon Film Distribution is handling local distribution, with international sales managed by Parkland Pictures. The film is developed with the assistance of Screenwest and Lotterywest, Icon Film Distribution and Screen NSW.



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- **Spit:** In the sequel to the award-winning crime comedy, [Gettin' Square](#), ex-junkie John Spitiere returns to Australia, only to find himself locked up in an Immigration Detention Centre with a massive target on his back. But as old enemies come looking for him, determined to settle old scores, he also makes new friends amongst the detainees, teaches them his version of mateship and what it means to be truly Australian. *Spit* is from director Jonathan Teplitzky, writer Chris Nyst and producers Greg Duffy ([Last Cab to Darwin](#)) and Trish Lake, whose credits include [Gettin' Square](#). Also producing are Felicity McVay and David Wenham ([The Furnace](#)). Faramarz K-Rahber ([Journey Beyond Fear](#)) and Sofya Gollan ([Swallowing](#)) are attached as consultants. It is financed in association with Screen Queensland. Local distribution is by Transmission Films and international sales are managed by Moviehouse Entertainment.
- **The Correspondent:** December 2013, in the shadow of the Great Pyramids of Egypt, Australian journalist Peter Greste is confronted with the brutal realities of reporting from one of the most dangerous cities on earth. Accused of terrorism, Greste becomes a pawn in the middle of a deadly game full of corrupt officials and ancient rivalries - with only his wits keeping him alive. *The Correspondent* is directed by Kriv Stenders ([Red Dog](#), [Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan](#)), written by Peter Duncan ([Operation Buffalo](#), [Rake](#)) and produced by Carmel Travers ([One Four - Against All Odds](#), [My Freaky Family](#), [Alien TV](#)). It is financed in association with Screen NSW with support from Jovial Planet Productions, Spectrum Films, Dreamlight Studio and the Adelaide Film Festival Investment Fund. Maslow Entertainment is distributing locally, with Moviehouse Entertainment managing international sales.

The funded television drama is:

- **Last King of the Cross season 2:** Following on from season 1, John Ibrahim sets his sights on capturing a new kingdom after returning to Sydney - the glittering prize of Oxford Street. With it comes new challenges and enemies, along with the relentless scrutiny of Liz Doyle and the full force of the Sydney police. Freshly released from jail, Sam builds the largest bkie chapter in Australian history, putting John on a collision course with the entire criminal world. *Last King of the Cross* season 2 for Paramount+ is directed by Grant Brown and Ian Watson of [Last King of the Cross season 1](#) and Tori Garrett ([Doctor, Doctor](#)). It is written by Sam Meikle ([Wakefield](#)), Sarah Smith ([Amazing Grace](#)), Fin Edquist ([Maverix](#)), Jane Allen ([In Our Blood](#)), Tim Pye ([Bali 2002](#)) and James Pope ([Last King of the Cross season 1](#)). Alexandra Doering and Mark Fennessy of [Last King of the Cross season 1](#) are producing and executive producing respectively, with Rick Maier from Paramount also executive producing. It has received major production investment from Paramount Australia and is financed with support from Screen NSW. International sales are managed by Cineflix Rights, with post, digital and visual effects supported by Screen NSW and Screen Queensland.

The funded children's project is:

- **Spooky Files season 2:** In this second iteration of the popular ABC and BBC series, the funny and spooky adventure continues. After closing a portal to a spooky dimension in season 1, the Spooky Crew has their work cut out for them when the portal reopens six months later in Season 2. They must regroup to save their town from Spooky mayhem yet again, whilst learning there's a big difference between the fears that keep you safe and the ones that hold you back. Returning from [Spooky Files season 1](#) are creators/writers Guy Edmonds and Matt Zeremes, and writers Marisa Nanakhorn Brown, Emma Gordon, Clem Bastow, alongside Tim Williams ([The Heights season 2](#)) and Alexander Andreotti. From the makers of hit shows [Hardball](#) and [Nowhere Boys](#), the series is a Tony Ayres Productions (TAP) and Megaboom Pictures production. It is produced by Paul Watters and executive produced by Tony Ayres and Andrea Denholm, whose credits include [Spooky Files season 1](#). TAP is backed by Matchbox Pictures and Universal International Studios, a division of Universal Studio Group. The series is financed in association with the ABC, BBC and VicScreen, with international sales being managed by NBCUniversal Global Distribution.

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The funded online projects are:

- **Cooking for Seamus:** This 10-part documentary series for YouTube follows old time sing song man and animal lover Archer, who attracts celebrity chefs to a paddock in Central Victoria where their culinary creations are judged by Seamus, a six-year-old disabled Angus Bull whose passion is food. In *Cooking for Seamus*, Archer's casual charm and astonishing singing ability with Seamus's immense wobbly salivating enthusiasm for food disarms all - with unique personal stories and experiences emerging from each 'chef' encounter. The series is directed by Matthew Walker ([I'm Wanita](#)) and produced by Carolina Sorensen ([Lustration](#)) and Clare Lewis ([There Goes Our Neighbourhood](#)). It is financed with support from philanthropy via Documentary Australia.
- **Descent:** A five-part, genre-bending science fiction comedy series for YouTube following three self-described 'scientists' on a perilous mission to the bottom of the ocean, desperate to find a new home for humanity and save everyone from climate doom. As the crew of the UHM Hope submarine descends deeper into the uncharted abyss, they are forced to confront unforeseen dangers and encroaching madness in their search for the mysterious long-fabled Eel City. From Haven't You Done Well Productions, *Descent* is directed by Liam Fitzgibbon ([Hot Department: Dark Web](#)) and written by Millie Holten (*The Undergarment Odysseys*), Madi Savage (*The Candyman*) and Ella Lawry ([We Never Asked For This](#)), who is also creative director. Producing is Monique Mulcahy (*The Most Upsetting Guessing Game*) and executive producing is Max Miller and Georgia Mappin, whose credits include [Aunty Donna's Coffee Cafe](#). It is financed in association with VicScreen.
- **Heroes:** In this 20-minute virtual reality (VR) experience, four children from diverse backgrounds find refuge in an abandoned school building, in the middle of a war zone. Through sharing and listening to each other's stories, taken from interviews conducted with survivors of war, they connect and find resilience to endure the horrors of global conflict. *Heroes* is written, directed and produced by Peter Hegedüs and produced by Bobbi-Lea Dionysius, whose credits include [Sorella's Story](#) and [To Never Forget](#). It has received principal production funding from the Queensland Holocaust Museum, with support from Griffith University.
- **Long Head:** Based on a webcomic, this six-part comedy animation series for TikTok tracks the adventures of Long Head, a man with a long head, a big heart and nothing behind the eyes. Long Head may be an idiot, but he's an unlovable idiot. Starring Sam Campbell, Tom Walker and Kate Dehnert, the series is from writer/director/creator Millie Holten and director Annabelle Ots, with Dan Ilic ([At Home Alone Together](#)) attached as producer.

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

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