

Screen Australia announces over \$6.5 million of production funding for 8 projects

Friday 24 September 2021: Four feature films, three television dramas and one virtual reality project will share in over \$6.5 million of production funding from Screen Australia.

The projects include a second season of Foxtel’s AACTA Award-winning series *Upright* from Tim Minchin, and an adaptation of Markus Zusak’s best-selling novel *The Messenger* for the ABC. Funding has also been announced for a new feature film from Rolf de Heer called *The Mountain*; and Gracie Otto’s feature film directorial debut *Seriously Red*, executive produced by Rose Byrne.

Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts, **The Hon Paul Fletcher MP**, said, “Government funding via Screen Australia plays a critical role in supplying targeted support to the development and production of quality Australian screen content, and we congratulate these successful applicants, reflecting the talent and diversity of the local screen sector.”

Screen Australia’s Head of Content **Sally Caplan** said, “We are proud to announce this impressive slate from some of Australia’s most celebrated talent including Rose Byrne and Tim Minchin, as well as fresh new voices. Shot all over the country and showcasing a range of genres including relationship drama, mystery, crime, science fiction and comedy, these projects are set to bring engaging and uniquely Australian stories to both big and small screens.”

“This year is proving to once again be incredibly challenging but it’s heartening to see there is no shortage of fantastic ideas that we are thrilled to support and help bring to life. We are impressed by the sustained resolve of the Australian industry through the pandemic, and it’s encouraging to see work continuing on screen projects across the country.”

The feature film projects are:

- **Photo Booth:** The debut feature film from writer/directors Spencer and Lloyd Harvey, based on their original screenplay which won a prestigious Academy Nicholl fellowship. This relationship drama centres on Jean Bouchet, a renowned performance artist past her prime childbearing years who desperately wants to be a mother - so much so that she is willing to adopt the baby born of her husband’s infidelity. Jean invites the expectant Millie to move in with the couple during her pregnancy, spiralling the three into a complex and morally grey dynamic, which forces them to confront their pasts. The film is produced by Carver Films’ Sarah Shaw and Anna McLeish ([Relic](#)), and Treeline Films’ Cathy Konrad ([Walk The Line](#)). *Photo Booth* is financed with support from Screen NSW and Align, with local distribution by Transmission Films and international sales by Bankside Films.
- **Of An Age:** A feature film from the team behind upcoming feature [You Won’t Be Alone](#) - writer/director Goran Stolevski collaborating with producers Kristina Ceyton and Samantha Jennings of Causeway Films ([Cargo](#)). Set in Melbourne in the summer of 1999, *Of An Age* follows an unexpected and intense 24-hour romance between a 17-year-old Serbian ballroom dancer and his best friend’s older brother. A decade later the pair meet for a bittersweet reunion. This project is financed with support from Film Victoria, with local distribution by Bonsai Films and international sales by Bankside Films.
- **Seriously Red:** A feature film starring Krew Boylan, Rose Byrne, Bobby Cannavale, Celeste Barber and Thomas Campbell. The story centres on Red, a vivacious, but at times misguided red-head who pours herself a cup of ambition and trades her 9 to 5 career in real estate, for a life under the spotlight as a Dolly Parton impersonator. Written by Boylan ([Schapelle](#)), *Seriously Red* is directed by Gracie Otto ([Under The Volcano](#)) and produced by Robyn Kershaw ([Bran Nue Dae](#)) and Jessica Carrera ([EagleHawk](#)). Byrne (*Bridesmaids*) is also executive producing with Sonia Borella ([Go!](#)) and Timothy White ([I Am Mother](#)). Featuring a catalogue of classic Dolly Parton hits (and some new ones), *Seriously Red* is the debut feature film from Dollhouse Pictures, founded by Boylan, Byrne, Carrera



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and Otto with filmmaker Shannon Murphy ([Babyteeth](#)). Roadshow Films will distribute the film in Australia. Arclight is handling International sales.

- **The Mountain:** A feature film written, directed and produced by award-winning filmmaker Rolf de Heer ([Charlie's Country](#)). *The Mountain* tells the story of BlackWoman, who is abandoned in a cage in the middle of the desert. Following her escape, she travels across lands and walks through pestilence and persecution, to find those who left her to die. Julie Byrne ([Gold](#)) will produce alongside de Heer, and Ari Harrison ([2067](#)) will co-produce. A Vertigo Productions and Triptych Pictures joint venture, it is financed in association with the South Australian Film Corporation and the Adelaide Film Festival. Umbrella Entertainment will distribute the film in Australia and international sales will be handled by Fandango Sales.

The blocklines for feature film production funding are available [here](#).

The television projects are:

- **Anyone's Daughter:** A four-hour miniseries for the Seven Network about the police investigation into the disappearance of young women, written by Michael O'Brien ([Mystery Road](#)) and Justin Monjo ([The Code](#)), and directed by Peter Andrikidis ([Eden](#)). The producers are Kerrie Mainwaring ([Informer 3838](#)), Peter Andrikidis ([Catching Milat](#)) and Jamie Hilton ([Long Story Short](#)).
- **The Messenger:** An eight-part adaptation of Markus Zusak's best-selling novel of the same name for the ABC, from Lingo Pictures. The drama follows Ed Kennedy, whose life is one of peaceful routine until playing cards inscribed with cryptic tasks start to arrive in the mail. Ed makes his way through town helping and hurting (when necessary) until only one question remains - who is behind Ed's mission? *The Messenger* is written for the screen by Sarah Lambert ([The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart](#)), Kirsty Fisher ([Creamerie](#)), Kim Wilson ([Total Control](#)) and Magda Wozniak ([Mustangs FC](#)). It is produced by Jason Stephens ([Lambs of God](#)), and executive produced by Helen Bowden ([The Secrets She Keeps](#)), Markus Zusak, Dominika Zusak and Sarah Lambert. This project is financed with support from Screen NSW and All3Media International is managing international sales.
- **Upright Series 2:** An eight-part second series for Foxtel and Sky UK, with Tim Minchin and Milly Alcock returning as Lucky and Meg. Trading the desert for the steamy tropics of Far North Queensland, Lucky and Meg hit the road - and the river - on a mission. Lingo Pictures' Jason Stephens ([Lambs of God](#)) returns as producer, with Meg O'Connell ([Robbie Hood](#)) also producing, and Lingo Pictures' Helen Bowden ([The Secrets She Keeps](#)) as executive producer. Writers on the series include Niki Aken ([The Hunting](#)), Ian Meadows ([Seachange](#)) and Natesha Somasundaram ([The Unlisted](#)), with Minchin also writing and executive producing. This project is financed in association with Screen Queensland, with finance from Screen NSW, with Cutting Edge. Entertainment One (eOne) is managing international sales.

The blocklines for television production funding are available [here](#).

The online series is:

- **Lustration VR:** An animated four-part virtual reality series for Facebook Reality Lab's Media Studio. The story is set in The Between, a realm where the dead go to cleanse or 'lustrate' themselves before crossing over to pure happiness. When Malcolm slips into The Between, past the protectors who guard it, he puts everything there at risk. *Lustration VR* is adapted from a comic of the same name published by Gestalt Comics and is created, written and directed by Ryan Griffen ([Cleverman](#)) with Nayuka Gorrie ([Thalu](#)) also attached as writer. It is produced by Carolina Sorensen ([I'm Wanita](#)) and Taryne Laffar ([KGB](#)) and executive produced by Nathan Anderson ([Awake: Episode One](#)), Wolfgang Bylsma ([The Deep](#)) and Griffen. This project has been developed and produced with the assistance of Screenwest and Lotterywest, with support from Screen NSW.

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The blocklines for online production funding are available [here](#).

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