

Indigenous Department announces \$1.5 million in special funding

Wednesday 1 August 2018: Screen Australia's Indigenous Department has announced the 20 recipients of a range of special funding programs. Two web series have been funded through the [Black Space initiative](#), eight short films will be developed through [Short Blacks](#), three documentaries about the Indigenous response to climate change will go into production through [State of Alarm](#) and seven enterprises are being supported via [Indigenous Screen Business](#). A further documentary project also received production funding and a web series received development funding outside of these programs.

Successful projects include Hunter Page-Lochard ([Cleverman](#), [Spear](#)) and Carter Simpkin's [Short Blacks](#) film *Closed Doors*; *Kutch's Carpool Koorioke* created by [Black Space](#) recipient [John Harvey](#), as well as [Indigenous Screen Business](#) funding that has been provided to production company [BUNYA](#) ([Mystery Road](#), [Sweet Country](#), [Goldstone](#)) to grow their current business model.

The funding has been awarded as part of the [Indigenous Department's 25th anniversary celebrations](#).

"Supporting Indigenous screen story tellers is as vital as supporting the Indigenous businesses behind them. This funding is being distributed across a diverse group of strong Indigenous production companies who will use the financial support to strengthen Indigenous business planning as well as assist slate development through the employment of key business personnel." said Penny Smallacombe, Head of Indigenous at Screen Australia.

"For 25 years the Indigenous Department has put our people in control of their own stories. The funding model has been incredibly successful and has even inspired other countries to do the same for their Indigenous creators. It is our key focus to ensure Indigenous people continue to be seen and heard across a variety of storytelling platforms, and most importantly that Indigenous screen businesses are being invested in to continue producing such significant work."

The anniversary year will be marked by Screen Australia on Thursday 30 August with a formal ceremony in Sydney, with Indigenous creators joining from across the country. Later in the year, the Indigenous Department will release its blueprint for the next 25 years of Indigenous screen stories.

FUNDING RECIPIENTS:

The [Short Blacks](#) initiative aims to launch the careers of new filmmakers by funding the development of a short film up to 10 minutes in duration. Recipients include:

- *Closed Doors*, a thriller centered on a modern couple who face a number of challenges in the bush when their paranoia forces their car to peel off the road. Created by Hunter Page-Lochard ([Cleverman](#), [Spear](#)) and Carter Simpkin's production company Djalihouse Productions (*Djali*). The pair will write, direct and produce this short film.
- *Father Jericho* is a noir revenge thriller written and directed by [Shane Salvador](#) (*Shanks*, [Deadlock](#)). Produced by [Noble Savage Pictures](#), the story surrounds an Aboriginal man of God with a heart-breaking past. Hayley B Johnson will produce with [Majhid Heath](#) (*Brown Lips*, *A Chance Affair*, [Shock Treatment](#)) working as executive producer alongside genre specialist Ross Grayson Bell (*Fight Club*, *Under Suspicion*). Highly experienced filmmaker [Greg McLean](#) (*Wolf Creek*, *Jungle*) will also come on board as a directing mentor for [Shane Salvador](#).
- *Shed*, a compelling and significant short about a young Aboriginal girl, Mary, who is enslaved on a cattle station in western Queensland. This short will be written and directed by Chantelle Murray and produced by the experienced [Dena Curtis](#) (*8MMM Aboriginal Radio*, [Grace Beside Me](#)).

The remaining five [Short Blacks](#) projects and complete blocklines for all can be found [here](#).

[Black Space](#) fosters Indigenous talent with production-ready, episodic online concepts. The recipients are:



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- ***Anchoring Mob*** inspired by *Anchorman* will showcase comedic Indigenous talent set against the backdrop of a community TV morning show. This 5 x 5 minute short series will be written and produced by [Shakara Walley](#) (*Aussie Rangers*) and directed by [Kelli Cross](#) (*Aussie Rangers*). The creative duo Walley and Cross will embed the Indigenous experience into each episode whilst delivering the news with Indigenous razzle dazzle.
- ***Kutcha's Carpool Koorioke***, a 4 x 4 minute web series that follows prominent Indigenous musician, Kutcha Edward's driving the hottest Indigenous talent to where they need to go through the streets of Fitzoy. It's a chance for a song and a yarn and passing on a bit of the real history. [John Harvey](#) (*Spear*) of [Brown Cabs](#) will write, direct and produce alongside [Anna Grieve](#) (*Carry the Flag*, *Big Stories*, *Small Towns*) and Danielle Maclean (*Croker Island Exodus*, *Carry the Flag*) of Tamarind Tree Productions who are both working as producers on the project.

[Jetzak Productions](#) also received development funding for their online web series ***Bush Tucker Bunjie Does Gold Coast***. This proposed 3 x 5 minute online series follows the outlandish misadventures of Bush Tucker Bunjie, a larrikin of the Gold Coast. Gabriel Willie of the Wulli Wulli nation forms as the series creator and has written the original script with [Benjamin Southwell](#) (*Damari & Guyala*) directing and [E.J. Garrett](#) of the Darumbal and Wulli Wulli nations (*Gumbi Gumbi*) producing.

The complete blocklines for [Black Space](#) are available [here](#).

The complete blocklines for online development are [here](#).

State of Alarm was a special documentary initiative for Indigenous screen practitioners developing screen content aimed at global audiences. A total of [eight projects received development funding](#) and now three projects have been selected to receive production funding to begin shooting.

Applicants were asked to develop stories surrounding traditional practices of Indigenous people and how they can combat climate change with an aim to not only challenge the status quo, but provide insights and provoke thought about Indigenous solutions to the global issue of climate change. The recipients are:

- ***Saving Seagrass*** from writer-director [Gary Hamaguchi](#) (*Black Comedy*), producer [Jodie Bell](#) (*Characters of Broome*) and writer Bessy-May Taylor of [Ramu Productions](#). This short documentary will investigate the plight and importance of seagrass. Seagrass is disappearing at the rate of a football field every hour yet it is 35 times more efficient at capturing CO2 than a rainforest. The [Ramu Productions](#) team will work to see if Indigenous people and scientists can collaborate in time to save it.
- ***Shark Dreaming*** will investigate the controversial battle between humans and sharks. Produced by [Chili Films](#) including writer-director Ashley Gibb and producer [Penelope McDonald](#) (*Black Sheep*, *My Country*), *Shark Dreaming* will follow Gibb as he becomes a shark eco-warrior and gains an understanding of the deep relationship that some Indigenous people have with the oceans, sharks and seascapes that surround them. Gibb investigates the knowledge of traditional owners surrounding marine wildlife and how this intersects with the science projects that measure, manage and mitigate the impact of climate change on marine life.
- ***Warburdar Bununu - Water Shield*** will be developed by [Brown Cabs](#) with [Jason De Santolo](#) (*A First Step*, *Desperate Measures*, *We Paint We Belong*) on board to write and direct with [John Harvey](#) (*Spear*, *The Warriors*) producing. This documentary will follow Scott McDinny, a young Garrwa song man from Borroloola who is determined to shield his Gulf Country homelands from mining, using ancient song and dance.

Production funding has also been provided for ***She Who Must Be Obeyed*** ([Since 1788 Productions](#)) written and directed by [Erica Glynn](#) (*In My Own Words*, *Knot at Home Project*). This feature documentary is about the life and experiences of Indigenous film pioneer, [Alfreda Glynn](#) (Freda). Non-linear in its narrative, the film blends observational and archival footage from Freda's time at the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) and Imparja in Alice Springs in the 1980s. This narrative will mark the significant



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contributions Freda made to Indigenous media in Australia. [Tanith Glynn-Maloney](#) ([Ward One](#)) is producing the film and NITV and Adelaide Film Festival have both invested in the production.

The complete blocklines for documentary production funding are [here](#).

The [Indigenous Screen Business Fund](#) is a special initiative aimed to help build business capacity within the Indigenous screen production sector. The aim is to provide Indigenous screen businesses with the funds to consolidate or expand the scale and ambition of their production activity, and provide employment to enhance and/or diversify a range of business activities. The recipients are:

- [BUNYA Productions](#) made up of Australian screen creatives [Ivan Sen](#) ([Beneath Clouds](#), [Toomelah](#)) and [David Jowsey](#) ([Mad Bastards](#), [Jasper Jones](#)). The company aims to create a business hub to unite other Indigenous creative companies and engage two new personnel including an experienced Line Producer and Junior Indigenous Producer.
- [Inkey Media](#) helmed by company director [Dena Curtis](#) ([Grace Beside Me](#)). The funding will go towards refining [Inkey Media's](#) business model, setting up an office and bringing on board experienced Production Manager, Tara Wardrop.
- [Mitchell Stanley's](#) ([Servant Or Slave](#)) production company [No Coincidence Media](#) (NCM). Funding will allow [NCM](#) to engage a business advisor to refine their business plan and transition their slate toward narrative drama production. Additionally, the funding will enable NCM to employ Toni Stowers as a Junior Development Executive to work across their upcoming television, documentary and online projects.
- [Majhid Heath](#) ([A Chance Affair](#), [Brown Lips](#)), company director of [Noble Savage Pictures](#). Majid will use the funding to bring on board Hayley B Johnson as a Development Producer for the company. Both Hayley and Majhid will work on a large slate of projects in development.
- [Bain Stewart](#) and [Leah Purcell](#) of [Tahlee Productions](#) have secured Indigenous Screen Business Funding to go towards building a business plan. With Tahlee in late stage development of Leah's first feature film as writer/director, *The Drover's Wife - The Legend of Molly Johnson*, the funding comes at a perfect time to develop their strategy for the next 3-5 years.
- [Tamarind Tree Pictures](#) ([Croker Island Exodus](#), [Carry the Flag](#)) comprising of [Danielle MacLean](#), [Steven McGregor](#) and [Anna Grieve](#). The team will use their funding to consolidate production, set up an office and have [Danielle MacLean](#) transition to being a dedicated producer for the company.
- [Tony Briggs](#) ([The Sapphires](#), [The Warriors](#)) and Damien Pradier of [Typecast Entertainment](#). Typecast will use their funding to engage a consultant to assist in developing a detailed business plan.

The complete blocklines for [Indigenous Screen Business](#) are available [here](#).

ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS DEPARTMENT

2018 marks 25 years since the Indigenous Department at Screen Australia was established, resulting in some of the nation's most beloved films, television shows and documentaries. Since the Indigenous Department at Screen Australia was established, it has provided over \$35 million in funding for development, production and talent escalation, with over 160 titles produced in that period. The work of the Department and its partners is credited with forever changing Indigenous representation on screens, and ensuring Indigenous people can tell their own screen stories. The model has been so successful it has recently inspired the Canada Media Fund to create their own Indigenous Film Fund.

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