

Diversity and inclusion initiatives receive Development funding alongside 18 projects

Friday 4 August 2017: Screen Australia has today announced more than \$700,000 in funding through the Story, Talent and Sector Development programs. Included in the slate are fifteen features and three online series; supported placements for two [Developing the Developer](#) participants, and sector initiatives led by CuriousWorks, Information Cultural Exchange (I.C.E.) and MEAA's Equity Foundation.

"In line with our commitment to the Screen Diversity & Inclusion Network (SDIN) Charter, we are incredibly proud to be supporting initiatives that focus on inclusivity," said **Nerida Moore**, Senior Development Manager at Screen Australia. "We believe that I.C.E. and CuriousWorks' grassroots approach to upskilling writers and producers from diverse backgrounds will play a substantial long-term role in improving the range of representations we see on screen. This work will be complemented by MEAA, who are seeking to expand the talent pool so that it more accurately reflects contemporary Australian society. These are highly targeted, industry-led initiatives that show the sector is actively coalescing around this issue."

Throughout 2016/17, over \$2.5 million has been distributed through the Story, Talent and Sector Development funding streams. Story Development accounts for the majority at just under \$2 million for 65 projects, including eight web series and two high-end television projects. Several of these progressed through from Gender Matters: Brilliant Stories such as *How to Please a Woman*, *News Junkies* and *Relic*. Other projects - such as *Jirga* and *Slam* - have gone on to be fully financed for production.

"In this round we are particularly pleased to see projects led by emerging talent such as Matt Devine, Sophie Miller, Renee Webster and Tasmanian duo Franz Docherty and Belinda Bradley," said **Moore**. "Looking ahead, we want to see more projects that engage in the low-budget space in recognition of the opportunities they represent for career development. We also want projects and teams that represent the diversity and uniqueness of the Australian experience, and more online projects. Above all, we are looking for authentic voices that will engage with audiences - whatever the genre."

Included among the projects funded through this round of Story Development are:

- An adaptation of Kenneth Cook's novel *Fear is the Rider* penned by [Belinda Chayko](#), with [Kriv Stenders](#) attached to direct. A co-production between Triptych Pictures and Lingo Pictures with [Kristian Moliere](#) and [Helen Bowden](#) producing, it follows a chance meeting of two travellers in an outback pub who end up being pursued across the desert by a man intent on killing them.
- Psychological thriller *Honey Trap* about a dangerous friendship between two teenage girls that leads to a murder, which fractures their close bond. It's written and directed by *The Family Law* producer [Sophie Miller](#) in what would be her feature film debut, and produced by [Sheila Jayadev](#).
- An adaptation of Adelaide screenwriter [Ann Turner](#)'s suspenseful novel *The Lost Swimmer*, about an archaeology professor who comes face to face with the consequences of love and trust. Turner is writing the screenplay with [Sue Maslin](#) producing.
- Award-winning TVC director Matt Devine's debut feature project *Panyee FC* from RevLover Films, produced by [Martha Coleman](#) and written by [Natasha Pincus](#). Based on a true story, this feel-good sports movie is set on the man-made floating island of Koh Panyee in Thailand.
- Dramey *The Vanity Unit* about a dinner party in a retirement village, which ends in a mystery that will reveal more than 'who dunnit'. Based on a story concept created by producer/director [Clayton Jacobson](#) and writer/producers Belinda Bradley and Franz Docherty, with Gil Alder also producing.
- Animated film *When The Birds Aren't Free To Be Buried* - writer [Osamah Sami](#)'s follow up to *Ali's Wedding*, which won the 2017 Foxtel Movie Audience Award at Sydney Film Festival. Produced by [Sheila Jayadev](#) and [Lynn Norfor](#), it is based on Sami's childhood as an Arab refugee living in Iran during the Iran-Iraq war.



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Through Talent+, writers Mithila Gupta and Martine Delaney were supported to undergo attachments at Blackfella Films and Roar Films respectively; and producer Brendan Fletcher has been funded to create a Business Development Plan with Wendy Mather at Generate.

Through Sector Development: CuriousWorks were supported for their Breakthrough Program; I.C.E. for their Screen Cultures Program for 2017 - 2018; and MEAA's Equity Foundation for their national Diversity Showcase.

For more info and the full list of projects funded please visit the following links:

- [Story Development - Features](#)
- [Story Development - Online & Interactive](#)
- [Talent Development](#) and [Sector Development](#)