

## Screen Australia and Australians in Film announce recipients of Talent Gateway and Global Producers Exchange Initiatives

**Thursday 8 February 2024:** Screen Australia and Australians in Film (AiF) are pleased to announce the recipients for Talent Gateway and the Global Producers Exchange 2024. These joint initiatives aim to support established Australian screen creatives by elevating their skills for an increasingly global market, including providing access to a range of industry roundtables with leading US executives and creatives, as well as individual script and pitch coaching and mentoring with some of the world's best professionals.

**Talent Gateway** provides established Australian writer/directors who have demonstrated a high level of recent international success with the knowledge, access, and relationships necessary to succeed in the global market. The program aims to help these creatives to refine and market their slate, and engage international partners for projects.

**Global Producers Exchange** provides Australia's leading producers with new skills, knowledge, access, and relationships. The program aims to provide Australian cultural stories with the opportunity to be developed with internationally based collaborators who possess a global outlook and a proven track record of success with international audiences.

Screen Australia CEO **Deirdre Brennan** said, "Screen Australia congratulates this year's participants for Talent Gateway and the Global Producers Exchange, supporting them to further develop their craft and foster meaningful business and creative connections internationally. We wish them every success as they embark on this exceptional program, created to assist Australian voices resonate with global audiences."

Australians in Film Executive Director **Peter Ritchie** said, "For a variety of reasons, it is always exciting to see the names of the very talented individuals and companies who participate in Talent Gateway and Global Producers Exchange each year. In some cases, it's just their first toe tip into the LA market, and AiF - with the extraordinary support of Screen Australia - is so thrilled to champion, connect and inspire them as they take their most brilliant stories and businesses to one of the most competitive markets in the world."

Supporting Partners for these programs include Screen NSW, Screen Queensland, South Australian Film Corporation and VicScreen. Industry Partners are Australian Directors' Guild, Australian Writers' Guild, Screen Producers Australia, Screen Canberra, Screen Tasmania, Screen Territory, Screenwest and Screenworks.

### The recipients of Talent Gateway are:

- **Aaron Fa'Aoso:** A Torres Strait Islander film producer, director, screenwriter and actor known for his roles in [RAN: Remote Area Nurse](#), [East West 101](#), [The Straits](#), [Black Comedy](#), and as the presenter of several food and travel programs. He is the founder and managing director of film and television production company, Lone Star. Lone Star's projects include documentary series [Blue Water Empire](#), about the history of the Torres Strait Islands, and the unscripted series [Strait to the Plate](#). Fa'Aoso currently serves on the board of SBS, the board of Screen Queensland and co-chairs the interim body responsible for establishing legislation, processes and institutions for First Nations truth-telling and treaties within Queensland. He also worked with the Queensland Government and other key stakeholders to secure \$15 million to create a Far North Queensland film studio in Cairns and is working towards its implementation. Fa'Aoso holds a Masters Degree of Screen Business and Leadership, from the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS) and in 2022, Pantera Press published Aaron's memoir, *So Far So Good*.
- **Lou Sanz:** An award-winning writer, producer and performer. Her debut feature, [Audrey](#), directed by Natalie Bailey will have its world premiere in competition at SXSW in 2024. Her TV credits include [How To Stay Married](#), [Life Support](#) and [The PM's Daughter](#) for which she received her second AWGIE nomination. Sanz has also worked in the script departments on beloved Australian dramas including [Offspring](#) and [The Doctor Blake Mysteries](#). Sanz will follow up [Audrey](#) with her debut feature as



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writer/director with miscarriage tragicomedy *Insufferable* (inspired by actual experience). Sanz and her partner, John Kachoyan, participated in Talent USA (NY) after winning AACTA/Screenworks Pitch: Regional Landscapes with their film *Land's End*. Sanz is currently working on film and TV projects in Australia, Europe and the USA including with MediaPro (Spain), Wee Beastie Productions (AU), Ipso Facto (UK) and Gambit Media (AU) and a slate of projects with her newly formed production company, Sanzipants.

- **Stef Smith:** An award-winning writer and director who recently directed the Stan Original Film [Jones Family Christmas](#) starring Heather Mitchell and two episodes of the Truce Films AACTA nominated series [Monologue](#). Smith is the creator, producer, series director and a writer on AACTA-nominated, AWGIE-winning television miniseries [It's Fine, I'm Fine](#), debuting on SBS after its world premiere at Canneseries and a sold out Australian premiere at Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF). Her multiple award-winning, Iris Prize-nominated short film [Joy Boy](#) screened internationally, including at Palm Springs International Film Festival and the AmPav Emerging Directors Showcase at Cannes Film Festival. Smith has won an Australian Directors Guild Award and has received four nominations. She is currently the creator/writer of an original drama series with eOne UK, has recently completed writing feature film *Anna Robi and The House of Dogs* with Maxine Mellor and is an established commercial director with Photoplay Films.
- **Andrew Undi Lee:** A queer, Australian-born Korean director, writer and producer. Lee is the recipient of the AFTRS Kenneth B Myer Award for Exceptional Talent and the Young Australian Korean Filmmaker Award from the Korean Consulate of Australia. His Film and TV writing credits include [Melon Grab](#) (Screen Australia's Hot Shots Short Film Fund), [Troppo](#) (ABC), [Born To Spy](#) (ABC) and the Korean Australian horror series, [Night Bloomers](#) (SBS) - a show he created through the Screen Australia, SBS and NITV's Digital Originals Initiative that premiered at SXSW Sydney. Lee was also the Korean consultant for [The Newsreader](#) (ABC), [After The Verdict](#) (Nine Network) and Samantha Strauss' writer's assistant on *Apple Cider Vinegar* (Netflix AUS).
- **Matt Vesely:** A South Australian writer and director, working across TV and film who works as a story producer, writer and development executive with award-winning South Australian collective Closer Productions ([Aftertaste](#), [The Hunting](#), [F\\*%#Ing Adelaide](#)). His latest short film *System Error* was selected for the 2020 Tribeca Film Festival and opened the 2021 St Kilda Film Festival. His debut feature film, the science fiction thriller [Monolith](#), starring Lily Sullivan (*Evil Dead Rise*) and written by Lucy Campbell, was selected to have its international premiere at SXSW in 2023 before screening at the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival (BIFAN) (South Korea), Sitges Film Festival (Spain) and Frightfest UK. It was nominated for Best Indie Film at the AACTA Awards and Best Debut at the Australian Director's Guild Awards.
- **Nick Watson:** A queer, non-binary writer/producer whose work blends animated comedy with sci-fi, fantasy and the supernatural. He wrote for adult animated series *Final Space*, was the showrunner on kids' animated series *Arpo: Robot Babysitter*, and was a development executive at Moonbug Entertainment, as well as a script analyst for ABC-Disney and NBC-Universal. Watson created the popular screenwriting podcast, *Paper Team*, and taught screenwriting at the University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts. In 2020, he was nominated for an Australian Writer's Guild Award and was also named the Victorian College of the Arts 'Artist in Residence' at AiF's dedicated work and networking space in Los Angeles, Charlie's.

The recipients of Global Producers Exchange are:

- **Haven't You Done Well Productions (HYDWP) - Georgia Mappin and Max Miller:** HYDWP are an award-winning, comedy specialist production company in the intersection of online and traditional entertainment. The company aims to amplify Australian alternative comedy for the international stage through their direct connection to audience and in depth understanding of comedy consumption across all platforms. Developing and producing comedy for Film, TV and Online, executive producers Mappin and Miller oversee three development slates including *Aunty Donna* and *Grouse House TV*.

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HYDWP credits include *Aunty Donna's Big Ol' House of Fun* for Netflix and *Aunty Donna's Coffee Cafe* for the ABC, and online projects [Fairbairn in the City](#), *Descent* and [Finding Yeezus](#).

- **Highview Productions - Lisa Scott:** Founder of Highview Productions, Scott is a multi-award winning producer, whose recent productions include the hybrid feature documentary [Speedway](#), which previewed at Adelaide Film Festival 2023, short film *Blame The Rabbit* which premiered on opening night at the festival and shared the audience award for Best Short Film, [A Sunburnt Christmas](#) for Stan, and the Stan, BBC1 and HBO Max series [The Tourist](#) which smashed ratings records on BBC in 2022 and won three awards at the Monte Carlo Television Festival, including Best Series. She has also produced other multi-award nominated productions [The Hunting](#) (SBS), [Pine Gap](#) (Netflix/ABC), [ANZAC Girls](#) (ABC) and three seasons of [Janet King](#) (ABC).
- **Inkey Media - Dena Curtis:** Inkey Media, founded by Dena Curtis, is an Aboriginal production company dedicated to amplifying Indigenous narratives. Inkey's [Rebel with a Cause](#) premiered at Melbourne International Film Festival. Curtis has collaborated as co-producer with WildBear Entertainment on TV series [Shadow Trackers](#) and feature film [Ella](#), which premiered at the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) and Guangzhou International Documentary Film Festival. She has also collaborated with See-Saw Films/AMC Network on *Firebite* and as producer with Blackfella Films on [First Weapons](#). Her collaboration with Magpie Pictures on [Grace Beside Me](#) earned nominations at Prix Jeunesse, the Logies and the AACTA Awards, accompanied by a Screen Producers Australia Award and First Nations Media Award.
- **Lazy Susan Films - Hannah Ngo:** Lazy Susan Films is an independent production company that helps bring original and significant projects into being. Founded by Hannah Ngo and grounded in uplifting communities close to home, Lazy Susan produces for diverse voices to tell socially relevant stories. Over the past three years, Lazy Susan has produced a catalogue of award-winning programs that have screened at top festivals around the world including Series Mania, C21 International Drama Awards, Warsaw International Film Festival, AACTA and Cinefest Oz. These programs include series [Latecomers](#) (SBS/CBC), [Iggly & Ace](#) (SBS), [Me & \(Her\)pes](#) (OML) and most recently *Bird Drone*, an animated short film that has screened at 63 Festivals and counting. In 2024, Lazy Susan will continue to make space for authentically driven narratives centred around people whose cultural and racial identity are only one part of their story.
- **Orange Entertainment Co. - Dan Lake and Stephanie Westwood:** Orange Entertainment Co. creates compelling stories with ground breaking talent. Since launching in 2019, Orange produced ABC comedy series [Retrograde](#) alongside Unless Pictures, executive produced the Network Ten documentary [Lindy Chamberlain: The True Story](#) with Easy Tiger, and produced Nine Network true crime documentary series [Missing Persons Investigation](#) with Southern Pictures. In 2024, Orange will release two new productions - dark comedy feature [Audrey](#) starring Jackie van Beek, co-produced with Invisible Republic and premiering at SXSW Film and TV Festival, and ABC comedy series [White Fever](#) (with Black Sheep Films and Unruly Productions), created by Ra Chapman.
- **Stranger Than Fiction Films - Jennifer Peedom and Sarah Noonan:** Founded in 2015 by Jo-anne McGowan and Jennifer Peedom, Stranger than Fiction has gained renown in the non-fiction world, achieving Emmy and AACTA awards and screening at A-list festivals, and has recently branched out into developing narrative projects. Projects include Jennifer Peedom's [Mountain](#) (Australia's second-highest-grossing documentary released theatrically in 27 countries) and [River](#) (2021 Telluride Film Festival, 2022 AACTA Award), [Harley & Katya](#) (2023 International Emmy winner, top 10 in six countries on Netflix release) and [David Stratton: A Cinematic Life](#) (2017 Cannes Classic, 2018 International Emmy Nominee).

Global Producers Exchange, Talent Gateway and [Untapped](#) are part of a suite of initiatives developed to support the advancement of scripted Australian projects - and to ensure Australian stories resonate more competitively internationally, as well as locally.

### Supporting Partners

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