



Australian Government



MEDIA RELEASE

Screen Australia announces development funding for 17 projects

Wednesday 7 August 2019: Screen Australia has announced five television series, six online projects and six feature films which will share in over \$675,000 of Story Development funding. The slate is the final funding awarded in the 2018/19 financial year and marks 12 months since the Premium and Generate Funds were introduced. The agency has also announced the return of its Developing the Developer program.

The funded projects include *Musquito*, an adventure film about an Aboriginal warrior from director Dylan River; *Jeremy The Dud*, a TV comedy exploring the moments of challenge and levity when living with a disability; and *Afro Sistahs*, an online series about a group of twenty-somethings who connect at an Afro hair salon.

Nerida Moore, Head of Development at Screen Australia said, “We are pleased to see that our revised Story Development programs are supporting a new wave of Australian storytellers while also supporting mid-career and experienced creators. In 2018/19, 59% of successful applicants* for the Generate Fund had never received Screen Australia Story Development funding before. This is an extraordinary outcome and way beyond our expectations.”

“We’re also pleased to see a much more even spread of our development funding across film, television and online, better reflecting the screen market.”

“The Premium Fund is also proving fit for purpose, with experienced creators taking creative risks and dreaming big in terms of story, audience and potential production values.”

In 2018/19 Screen Australia received 378 Story Development applications across the Premium and Generate Funds, up nearly 76% from 215 applications in 2017/18. In the last 12 months, Screen Australia has provided Story Development funds to a total of 80 projects out of a pool of 296 projects that were creatively assessed during the financial year. This included 48 through the Generate Fund and 32 through the Premium Fund.

*An applicant is the person who submits an application for funding and can be a producer, writer or director.

The latest projects funded for development include:

- ***Afro Sistahs*:** An eight-part online series from the Afro Sistahs Collective centred on an eclectic group of four sistahs whose lives intersect at an Afro hair salon in Western Sydney. The dramedy follows Kabusha, Ayo, Akilah and Trisha as they weave around nosey Aunties and woke baes, and they realise that some knots will take more than coconut oil to untangle. This project is helmed by an all-female team including producers Safia Amadou and Mumbi Hinga (*Survive or Die*), director Hawanatu Bangura (*Inner Demons*) and executive producer Rosie Lourde (*Skin Deep*). Writers Moreblessing Maturure and Rebekah Robertson, performer Ebube Uba and script editor Louise Gough are also attached. This project is co-produced by [I.C.E.](#)
- ***Jeremy The Dud*:** An eight-part television series based on the 2017 [short film of the same name](#), which follows two brothers who live in a world where everyone has a disability, and those who don't are treated with the same prejudice and condescending attitudes people with disabilities face in our own society. This comedy will be directed by Ryan Chamley (*Rostered On*) and produced by Mike Cowap of Princess Pictures. It will be written by Chamley, in close collaboration with Nick Boshier (*Beached Az*) who will reprise the lead role of Jeremy. Daniel Monks whose feature *Pulse* won the Busan Bank Award at the Busan International Film Festival in 2017 and Sam Humphrey (*The Greatest Showman*) join as creative consultants.
- ***Musquito*:** The first feature film from director Dylan River, whose credits include critically-acclaimed teen television drama *Robbie Hood*. Inspired by true events, *Musquito* tells the story of an Aboriginal warrior fighting against colonialism during the Tasmanian Black War. The project will be written by

Media enquiries: Lidia Williams
+61 2 8113 1091 | +61 468 784 170 | lidia.williams@screenaustralia.gov.au
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Nathan Maynard ([Little J & Big Cuz](#)), Jonathon auf der Heide ([Hell's Gates](#)) and Raimondo Cortese, and produced by Tanith Glynn-Maloney ([She Who Must Be Loved](#)) and Chris Brown ([The Railway Man](#)).

- **Over and Out:** A 10-part television series about two parents, Lewis and Freya, who are struggling to survive the trials and tribulations of raising toddlers while being smack bang in the middle of the post-apocalypse. This project sees writers Christian Van Vuuren and Adele Vuko, and producer Bridget Callow-Wright building on their [online series of the same name](#) which won Best Short Form at Cannes Series 2019, and was funded through Screen Australia and Google's [Skip Ahead initiative](#). It will be co-produced by Abi Tabone and Gemma Knight.
- **The Power Of The Dog:** A feature film adaptation of the 1967 novel of the same name by Thomas Savage. This project is presented by an Academy Award-winning team including writer, director and producer Jane Campion ([Top of the Lake](#), [The Piano](#)), and producers Emile Sherman and Iain Canning ([The King's Speech](#), [Lion](#)). Tanya Seghatchian ([Cold War](#)) and Roger Frappier ([Indian Horse](#)) are also on board as producers. This drama centres on two brothers, Phil and George, who co-own the biggest ranch in Montana valley. When George secretly marries Rose, a local widow, Phil is overcome with anger and wages a war to destroy her.

The complete list of development funding approvals for television is [here](#).

The complete list of development funding approvals for online is [here](#).

The complete list of development funding approvals for feature films is [here](#).

Also confirmed today, applications are now open for third iteration of Screen Australia's **Developing the Developer** to be run in November 2019. The intensive workshop was first run in 2017 and has proved successful in enabling story developers from diverse backgrounds to produce the work of other creators. **To view the guidelines and apply [click here](#).**

FUNDING SUMMARY

In July 2018 Screen Australia announced [changes to the Story Development guidelines](#) to make it easier for emerging creators to obtain funding through the Generate Fund and to encourage experienced creators to pursue projects of ambition and scale through the Premium Fund. There was also the intention to increase the development of episodic productions across the board.

The Generate Fund for lower budget projects received 277 applications in 2018/19, of which 68.95% of applicants (191) had never applied for Story Development funding before. A total of \$1,264,511 was distributed across the 48 projects (17.33% of applications), averaging \$26,343.97 per project.

The Premium Fund for higher budget projects from established creators received 101 applications in 2018/19, of which 31.68% (32) were funded. A total of \$1,446,699 was distributed, averaging \$45,209.34 per project.

Historically Screen Australia development has focused on feature films, however the new guidelines have drastically changed this landscape, with 57.5% of projects funded across Generate and Premium having a television or online release in mind.

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+61 2 8113 1091 | +61 468 784 170 | lidia.williams@screenaustralia.gov.au
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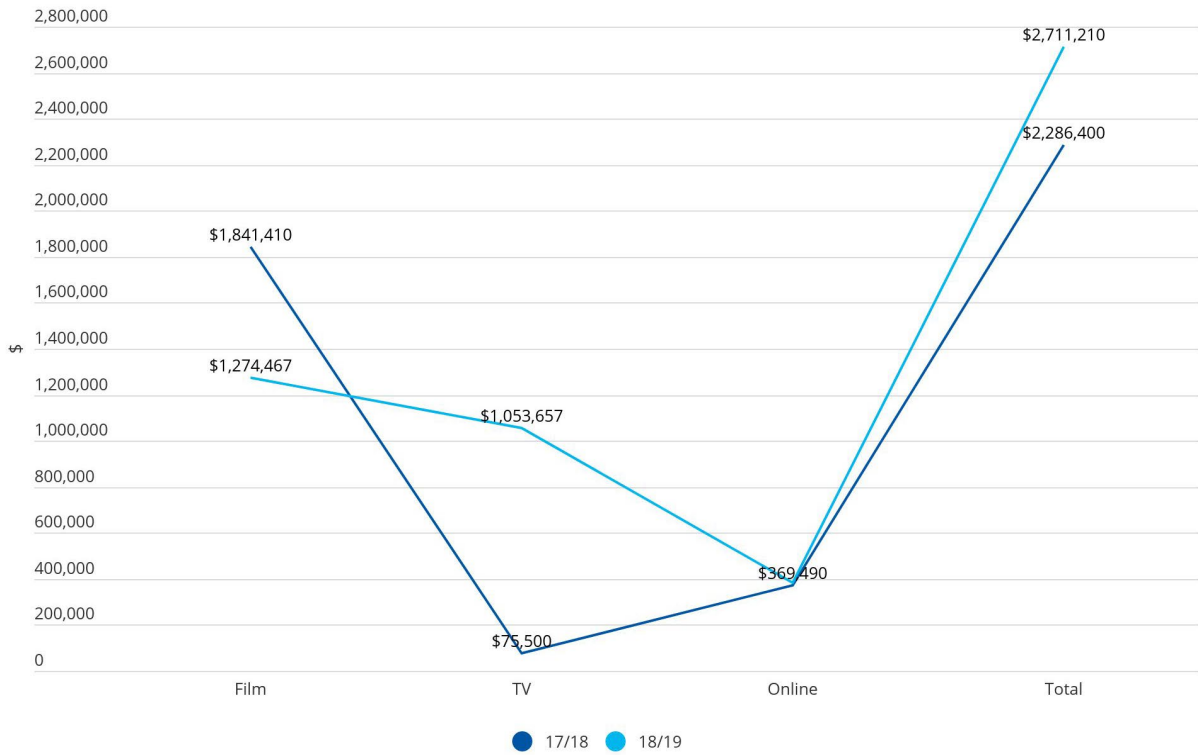


2018/19 SUCCESSFUL STORY DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

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	Generate		Premium		Total Projects	Total Spend
	Projects	Funds	Projects	Funds		
Film	14	\$442,960	20	\$831,507	34	\$1,274,467
Commissioned Platform (TV)	16	\$438,465	12	\$615,192	28	\$1,053,657
Online	18	\$383,086	0	\$0	18	\$383,086
Total	48	\$1,264,511	32	\$1,446,699	80	\$2,711,210

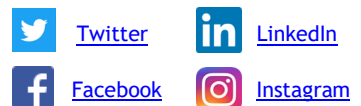
STORY DEVELOPMENT FUNDS: 2017/18 vs 2018/19



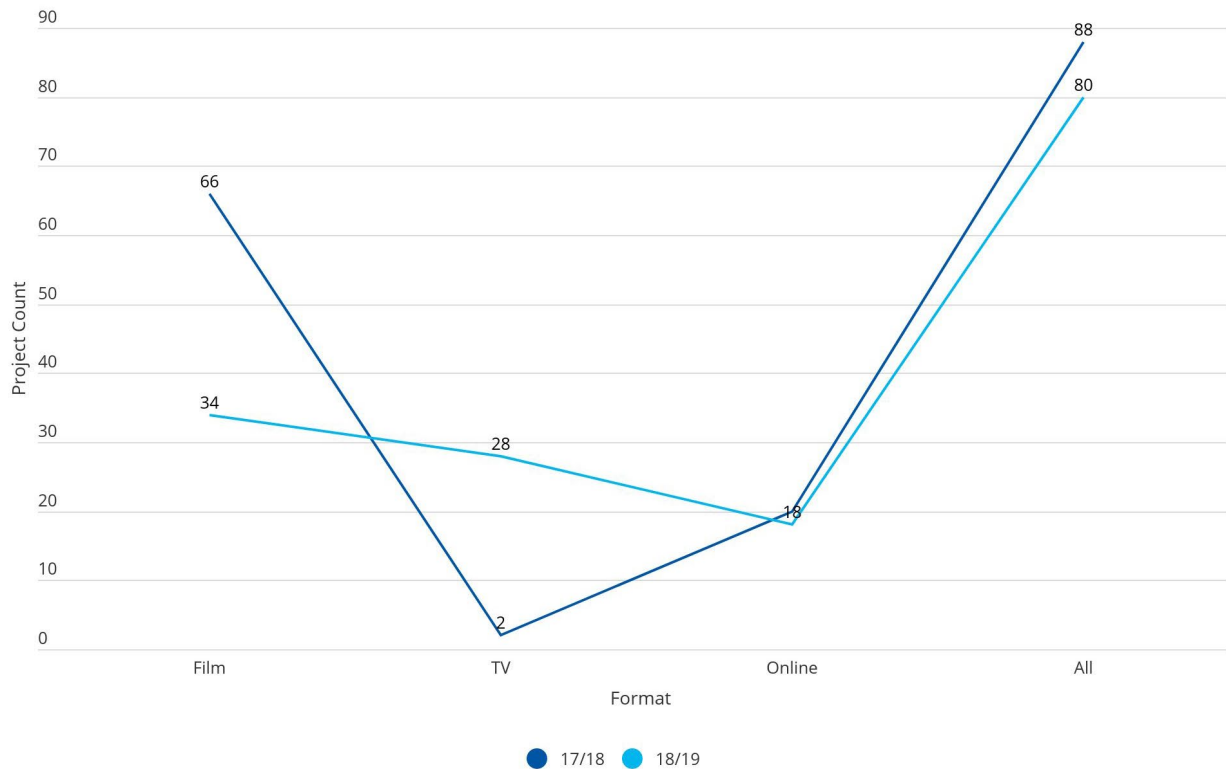
Note: 17/18 Matched Marketplace fund has been excluded as the program did not exist in 2018/19.

[View graph online.](#)

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STORY DEVELOPMENT FUNDED PROJECT VOLUME: 2017/18 vs 2018/19



Note: 17/18 Matched Marketplace fund has been excluded as the program did not exist in 2018/19.

[View graph online.](#)

BACKGROUND

Screen Australia provides [development](#) and [production](#) funding for both narrative ('drama') and documentary content. 'Development' refers to any stage of a project as it travels towards production. It involves anything that will help get a project to the screen, from scripting to filming a proof-of-concept.

The [Story Development fund](#) is open to fictionalised stories of any genre.

Documentary development is provided separately [through the Documentary Department](#).

FURTHER READING

Explore how Australian creators have utilised the new Story Development funds:

- Case Study *Salma and the City*: [How the Generate Fund is supporting new voices](#)
- Case Study *The Gathering*: [How the Generate Fund is putting creators in charge](#)
- Case Study *Over and Out*: [How the Premium Fund is allowing creators to pursue projects of ambition and scale](#)

ENDS