

Screen Australia announces 16 titles to be developed

Wednesday 21 November 2018: Screen Australia has announced over \$400,000 of Story Development funding for 16 projects including feature films, television and online series. The slate includes a musical comedy about moral corruption in the advertising industry called *The Agency*, a comedic horror *Gnomes* centered on grudge bearing garden gnomes in a fictional regional town, and a thought-provoking feature film *Misfit* to be produced by Bruna Papandrea (*Big Little Lies*).

"The [new development guidelines](#) have now been in action for five months. We drastically reduced eligibility barriers and will now fund projects for any screen platform. We've had a fantastic response from the industry and the number of applications we're receiving per week is steadily increasing," said Nerida Moore, Head of Development at Screen Australia.

"As well as innovative and exciting projects from established practitioners, we are starting to see new and emerging voices from around Australia coming through. In this funding round I'm particularly delighted to see so many emerging female writers."

Of the 16 projects receiving funding 11 projects were funded through the Generate fund, two through the Premium fund, and three were funded through the legacy development program (which is no longer operational).

Among the projects funded for development are:

- ***Blood Sisters*** from Mad Dan Productions: An adventure/drama series for online set in Far North Queensland. This thriller follows three teenage girls on the run, bonded by death and united by truth. *Blood Sisters* has a strong writing team led by acclaimed writer and Story Producer Anthony Mullins (*The Strange Calls*), along with Kodie Bedford (*Mystery Road* TV Series), Daniel Mulvihill and Madeleine Dyer. Madeleine and Daniel co-wrote and produced the 2017 online series *Sexy Herpes*. Stephen Corvini who has worked on dramas including *Safe Harbour* and *Hyde and Seek* is on board as executive producer with Enzo Tedeschi (*Airlock*).
- ***Breathing Sea*** from Midwinter Films: A period melodrama set in a remote Australian coastal town in the 1930's and 40s. The feature film is told as an unfolding mystery shifting between two time periods and follows a couple of fifty years, Marta, a Jewish Immigrant and Jack, an Australian fisherman and soldier, who are confronted by death and challenged by a past secret. Producer Bridget Callow-Wright and director Priscilla Cameron are joining forces once again after *The Butterfly Tree* which was selected to screen at Toronto International Film Festival in 2017.
- ***Finding Sanity*** from Sandcastle Studios: A feature film about the true story of the man who risked his life to discover the world's first treatment for mental illness. Dr John Cade was a young Australian doctor who defied the medical establishment to stir up a miracle that changed the world. This biographical drama is based on the book of the same name by Greg de Moore and Ann Westmore. BAFTA-winning screenwriter Mike Bullen who created and is executive producer on *Cold Feet* is attached as executive producer and AWGIE-winning screenwriter Chris Cudlipp will write and produce this uplifting film.
- ***Gnomes*** from The Two Jons: A character driven comedy with a supernatural twist. The series is written by writer, comedian and actress Tegan Higginbotham (*Oddball*) and Paul Verhoeven (*Steam Punks*), with script editing from Marieke Hardy (*Laid*). Richard Kelly (*Shaun Micallef's Mad as Hell*) and John Molloy (*Molly*) will produce alongside Joel Kohn who will also direct. Joel created the series, which is inspired by his viral short film *Gnomes Attack*.

- **Misfit** from Made Up Stories: A feature length drama written and directed by emerging writer and director Luci Schroder whose short film [Slapper](#) was selected to screen at Sundance Film Festival in 2017. The film follows Heidi, a woman who suffers intensely from trauma-triggered, dissociative identity disorder, and her experience navigating life as she falls through the cracks in a system that is not designed to support her. The film will be produced by Bruna Papandrea, Jodi Matterson and Steve Hutensky who are currently working on the film adaptation of the critically acclaimed crime novel by Jane Harper, [The Dry](#).
- **Splitters** from Arcadia: A feminist conspiracy feature film exploring sexism within the cosmetics industry. The all-female creative team comprises of producer Lisa Shaunessy ([Killing Ground](#)), executive producer Alexandra Burke, script editor Joan Sauers and writer and director Brooke Goldfinch. Brooke wrote and directed the multi award-winning short film [Red Rover](#) and was the recipient of the 2016 Lexus Short Film Fellowship making the short film *Outbreak Generation*, which was also produced by Lisa Shaunessy and Leonie Mansfield.
- **The Agency** from Ambiance Entertainment: An outrageous musical comedy set in a trendy advertising agency, focusing on an artistically-stifled jingle writer Sebastian, his eccentric co-workers and his seemingly endless client list, as he battles for authenticity in a world of facades. The writing team is led by co-creator Joel Slack-Smith ([Orange is the New Brown](#)), and includes Emmy Award-winning British writer Roger Drew (*The Thick Of It*, *Veep*).
- **The Gathering** from Asphodel Films: A six-part teen drama series about a group of disillusioned teens who discover they have been chosen to battle a centuries-old evil simmering within their small town. The series is an adaptation of the successful novel of the same name by author Isobelle Carmody. It is written and directed by Nicholas Verso ([Boys in the Trees](#)) and co-written by Craig Irwin, who worked with Nicholas on the fourth series of [Nowhere Boys](#). Kodie Bedford is on board as a writer and recently co-wrote for the teen drama series [Grace Beside Me](#) and critically acclaimed series [Mystery Road](#).

Funding approvals for feature films are listed [here](#)

Funding approvals for Television and Online are listed [here](#)

Funding approvals for titles funded last financial year including *The Breathing Sea*, *Splitters*, and *Finding Sanity* are [here](#).

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