

Screen Australia announces over \$2.3 million for nine documentaries

Wednesday 10 April 2024: Screen Australia has announced nine documentaries that will share in over \$2.3 million of production funding.

Among the projects is *Our Medicine*, an NITV series that follows First Nations professionals working on the medical front-line as they try to achieve better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and communities; *The Kimberley* explores the extraordinary animals who inhabit the region and the passionate individuals working to protect its unique biodiversity; *Second to None* documents the journey of elite female cycling team, Lidl-Trek, as they compete in the illustrious Tour de France Femmes 2023; and *The Colleano Heart* about the Colleanos, an Indigenous family and self-made entertainers of circus, who escaped oppression and racism to rise to the upper echelons of the world's vaudeville and circus.

Angela Bates, Head of First Nations at Screen Australia said, “*Our Medicine* shines a light on First Nations medical practitioners, and frontline health workers who play a critical role in caring for, and healing Indigenous patients through Western medicine - balanced with individual social, emotional and wellbeing needs. This program also explores a new model that incorporates ancient traditional practices to help address the low life expectancy in our communities, and the many barriers our mob face in the health system. It's an important and timely series and one we are proud to support.”

Screen Australia's Head of Documentary **Richard Huddleston** said, “This slate reflects our determination to support Australian filmmakers who want to tell stories from not just within our nation but further afield; whether it be exploring the brilliant mind of John Clarke, escaping to the majestic Kimberley, interrogating the inner workings of our jury system, following an epic tradition in Mongolia or fighting for the Papua New Guinean environment. They all push boundaries, play with form and reflect the rich, wide range of storytelling approaches we have in the Australian documentary community.”

The project funded through the First Nations Department is:

- ***Our Medicine***: A 6 x 30-minute documentary series for NITV following First Nations professionals working on the medical front-line as they try to achieve better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and communities. The series examines how these professionals navigate the medical system with their culture and identity at the forefront and look at the strategies necessary to close the unacceptable gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous health outcomes. Attached is series director Kimberley Benjamin ([Family Rules](#)), co-director Karla Hart (*Yokayi Footy*, [Family Rules](#)) and post director Jeremy Thomson, with Karla Hart and Sam Bodhi Field of [Our Law](#) producing. It has received major production investment from NITV with support from Screenwest, Lotterywest and the WA Regional Screen Fund.

The project funded through the Commissioned Program is:

- ***The Jury Project***: From Northern Pictures, *The Jury Project* is a four-part series for SBS that puts the jury system on trial and explores the challenges and intricacies of the justice system. *The Jury Project* is directed by Tosca Looby and executive produced by Karina Holden, whose credits include [Asking For It](#) and [See What You Made Me Do](#). It has received major production investment from SBS.

The projects funded through the Producer Program are:

- ***When the Front Fell Off***: This feature-length documentary is an intimate tribute to the life and work of one of the world's greatest satirists, John Clarke, told through the eyes of his daughter, Lorin. *When the Front Fell Off* is a unique look at a very funny man and lifts the lid on a treasure trove of archival material, and personal stories revealing the creative, often hilarious and sometimes not quite as funny struggles and successes of John Clarke. Directing is Lorin Clarke and producing is Richard Keddie ([Ride Like a Girl](#), [Oddball](#), [Hawke](#)). It is financed in association with the Melbourne



Australian Government



MEDIA RELEASE

International Film Festival (MIFF) Premiere Fund, VicScreen, Soundfirm and Rialto Distribution, who are also distributing locally.

- ***Guardians of the River***: A 90-minute documentary that charts the journey of Papua New Guinean activist Manu Peni and his people as they launch an urgent mission to protect the Sepik River from an enormous, nearby mine. In *Guardians of the River*, audiences will witness Project Sepik's work on the ground as they build a powerful indigenous grassroots movement to resist the mine on their own terms, using traditional decision-making structures. The film is written and directed by Lachlan McLeod ([Clean](#)) and Matasila Freshwater (*Vai*). It is produced by Kerry Warkia (*The Legend of Baron To'a*), David Elliot-Jones ([Clean](#)), Maria Tanner (*The Feijoa Club*) and Emmanuel Peni, with Chris Kamen ([Franklin](#)) executive producing. *Guardians of the River* is financed in association with the Pacific Islanders in Communications, The Post Lounge and VicScreen, with support from the Shark Island Foundation and the Three Springs Foundation.
- ***Sand Roads***: This 90-minute film documents the journey of three Sydney boys in their twenties, Valerio, Jamie and Ted, as they set off in 2010 on a great adventure crossing Europe, Africa and Australia on quad-bikes, as an initiation to their adulthood, self-filming their epic journey. But tragically, while in Malawi, a car overwhelms one of the quads and Valerio dies. Weaving archive footage with contemporary interviews, *Sand Roads* is a story of resilience and remembrance - showing how healthily accepting grief and paying heed to loss can heal. *Sand Roads* is from writer/director Gabriele Gianni (*Notes on Stone*), writer/director Lorenzo Conte (*The Era of Giants*) and writer Vittoria Pasquini. Michael Wrenn ([Audrey](#)) from Invisible Republic, Sally Browning ([Muster Dogs](#)) from Emerald Films and Alessandro Borrelli ([Chef Antonio's Recipes for Revolution](#)) from La Sarraz Pictures are producing. It is financed in association with Ministry of Culture Italy, with support from Lazio Film Fund.
- ***Second to None***: A three-part series for Eurosport and DocPlay that follows the journey of elite female cycling team, Lidl-Trek, as they compete in the illustrious Tour de France Femmes 2023. After years of riding in the shadow of men, *Second to None* shines a spotlight on how the team has banded together, overcome the lows, and ridden the highs to show the world that no mountains are high enough when immersed in the heart of their passion. *Second to None* is an original concept created by Sweetshop & Green with Sonia Dager (*The Blues: Another Story of France*) and Renée Mao ([A Beginner's Guide to Grief](#)) attached as directors. Gal Greenspan and Alice Burgin of [The Defenders](#) and Fabrice Estève (*Order of the Occult*) are producing. It is financed by United King in association with VicScreen and co-producer Yuzu Productions.
- ***The Colleano Heart***: A 90-minute documentary about the Colleanos, an Indigenous family and self-made entertainers of circus, who miraculously escaped oppression and racism to rise to the upper echelons of the world's vaudeville and circus, until the next generation of Colleanos knew nothing of their Aboriginal heritage. Generations later, American-born, octogenarian Molly Colleano O'Donnell meets Australian family historian Deb Hescott who helps Molly build a bridge across the oceans on a quest to reclaim identity, connect to ancestors and unearth family secrets - breaking the cycle of the Hidden Generation and reigniting *The Colleano Heart*. A contemporary story of a family's quest to unravel their history in Australia, *The Colleano Heart* is written and directed by Pauline Clague ([Maralinga: The Anangu Story](#)) and written by Ljudan Michaelis-Thorpe. The film is executive produced by Alan Erson and Michael Tear and produced by Bettina Dalton, whose credits include [Every Little Thing](#), [Playing With Sharks](#) and [Rachel's Farm](#). *The Colleano Heart* is financed in association with the Adelaide Film Festival Investment Fund, with support from Screen Canberra. Local distribution will be by Umbrella Entertainment, with WildBear International managing international sales.
- ***The Iron Winter***: A 90-minute documentary providing insight into the rituals and traditions of herders in Mongolia's Tsaikhir Valley who, on the eve of every winter, would assemble thousands of the community's horses into a giant herd - travelling vast distances in search of pastures. *The Iron Winter* will document these young herders as they battle one of Mongolia's most devastating winters on record, testing friendship and faith in a fight to keep the herd alive, and preserve an ancient way of

Media enquiries: Maddie Walsh
+61 2 8113 5915 | +61 400 156 625 | Maddie.Walsh@screenaustralia.gov.au
www.screenaustralia.gov.au



Twitter



LinkedIn



Facebook



Instagram

life. The film is from writer/director Kasimir Burgess ([Franklin](#)) and writer Ed Cavanough, with Morgan Wright ([Puzzle Box](#)) and Ben Golotta ([Lean](#)) of Repeater Productions, Chris Kamen ([Franklin](#)) and Enebish Sengemugaa attached as producers. It is financed in association with the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) Premiere Fund and VicScreen, with development support from VicScreen and the South Australian Film Corporation.

- **The Kimberley:** A 3 x 58-minute series for the ABC covering the land that defies time - a 400,000 square kilometre stretch in the North-Western corner of Australia containing sprawling savannas, towering gorges, rivers, tropical coastlines and desert. This natural history series captures never-before-seen animal sequences as it explores a year in the lives of the unique wildlife that calls the Kimberley home, and follows the missions of the Aboriginal custodians and passionate experts working to save the incredible biodiversity of the region. From the team behind [Australia's Wild Odyssey](#), *The Kimberley* is directed, written and produced by Nick Robinson, written and produced by Peta Ayers and produced by Electra Manikakis, with Mark Coles Smith of [Keeping Hope](#) and [Mystery Road: Origin](#) also writing and producing. It is financed with support from the ABC. The series will also broadcast internationally on Love Nature and Arte. Blue Ant Studios will manage international sales.

The full list of documentary blocklines is available [here](#).

The latest projects funded for documentary development are available [here](#).

ABOUT DOCUMENTARY FUNDING AT SCREEN AUSTRALIA

The [Documentary Producer program](#) is designed to give producers the foundational funding required to leverage their projects creatively and commercially. It must have a clear path to audience but marketplace attachment is not required at the application stage.

The [Documentary Commissioned program](#) is designed to support the production of a diverse range of quality projects for television broadcast, Streaming Video on Demand (SVOD) or similar. It must offer a compelling vision with a clear and enduring cultural value, and have a local presale with a minimum license fee at application stage.

The [Documentary Development program](#) aims to assist documentary makers in achieving planned outcomes for the development of their projects. Screen Australia also supports documentary projects through targeted initiatives such as [Fresh Cuts](#) with the Australian International Documentary Conference (AIDC) and Curious Australia with SBS.

Documentary projects that have a primary release on a social media platform are able to apply for funding through the [Online Department](#).

ENDS