



Learning Partner



## Creators and Shapers announced for Impact Australia 2 with the innovative accelerator program launched today

**MELBOURNE** - Tuesday 14 September 2021 – Impact Australia 2 is officially underway, with the offshoot of the successful US program created by Brian Grazer, Ron Howard and Tyler Mitchell commencing today.

Launched by [Impact](#) and [Gentle Giant Media Group](#), Impact Australia 2 is an eight-week accelerator program which aims to discover, cultivate, and empower Australian screenwriters. With principal funding from Screen Australia and Film Victoria, the program is supported by Learning Partner the University of Melbourne and Australian state and territory screen agencies. This is the second year in a row that the program has run in Australia, with Impact Australia first launching in 2020. While Impact Australia 2 was intended to be in-person on the Victorian College of the Arts' Southbank campus at the University of Melbourne, due to current COVID-19 restrictions, it has pivoted to begin as a virtual program.

The program kicks off this morning with a welcome event, with Impact founders Brian Grazer and Tyler Mitchell along with Gentle Giant Media Group's Greg Basser bringing together all the Creators, Shapers, the Impact Team, representatives from Screen Australia, Film Victoria and the Victorian College of the Arts.

Following a call-out for [submissions in June](#), an exciting group of local 'Creators' have been selected for the program. Each 'Creator' has been paired with a 'Shaper', a world-class screenwriting mentor, who will help craft their project and prepare them for Pitch Day with the goal of selling their project.

Nine Australian 'Creators' have been selected for Impact Australia 2:

- Jessie Hughes (QLD): *Head Above Water* (TV Series - Half Hour)
- John Kachoyan (VIC): *Gaia* (Feature Film)
- Drew Macdonald (QLD): *Only One Survives* (TV Series - Hour)
- Julia Moriarty (NSW): *Stony Rise* (TV Series - Hour)
- Elena Pavli (NSW): *The Clinic 2200* (TV Series - Half Hour)
- Felicity Price (NSW): *Bird Island* (TV Series - Hour)
- Bradley Slabe (VIC): *Owner's Manual: Operation and Maintenance of the Human Body* (Feature Film)

- Ramon Watkins (VIC): *Daddies* (TV Series - Half Hour)
- Harvey Zielinski (VIC): *Sweet Milk Lake* (Feature Film)

You can learn more about the Creators [here](#).

The class of 2021 will be mentored by nine award-winning Australian and international writers in their role as ‘Shapers’:

**Stuart Beattie** is an Australian director, screenwriter, and producer. He began his career writing screenplays for Australian independent films, then branched into Hollywood with *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* and the Tom Cruise thriller, *Collateral*. Stuart followed that with three adaptations: *Derailed*, starring Clive Owen and Jennifer Aniston; *30 Days of Night*, starring Josh Hartnett and Melissa George; and *3:10 To Yuma*, starring Russell Crowe and Christian Bale. Stuart also wrote the original screenplay for Baz Luhrmann's epic, *Australia*, starring Hugh Jackman and Nicole Kidman. After that, he wrote Stephen Sommers' blockbuster action film *Gladiator*. Stuart finally got the chance to direct one of his own screenplays with the adaptation of the best-selling Australian book *Tomorrow, When the War Began*. Stuart's follow-up film, which he wrote and directed, was *I, Frankenstein*, starring Aaron Eckhart, Bill Nighy, and Yvonne Strahovski. Stuart's latest film that he wrote and produced is the acclaimed Australian war drama *Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan*. In television, Stuart wrote one of four award-winning episodes of the Australian mini-series, *Deadline Gallipoli*, starring Sam Worthington. He also wrote the original bible and pilot for *Halo* at Showtime. And in theatre, Stuart wrote the book for Jim Steinman's smash hit musical, *Bat Out Of Hell*.

**Mark Bianculli** is a TV and feature writer/producer living in Los Angeles. Most recently, he was the co-creator and co-showrunner of NBC's *Lincoln Rhyme: Hunt for the Bone Collector*, and writer on Amazon's *Hunters* (produced by Jordan Peele and starring Al Pacino). Mark began his career in features, co-writing *The Good Neighbor* starring James Caan, which premiered at the South By Southwest Film Festival. He has since sold feature scripts to multiple studios and has had two screenplays featured on the Black List. In television, Mark was the creator/writer of the pilot *Self-Promotion* (MTV), and co-wrote and produced two additional network pilots (with frequent collaborator VJ Boyd): *The Jury* (ABC) and *Doomsday* (ABC). He is currently writing the pilot for *Grand Passion* at Paramount+ (based off James Robinson's graphic novel of the same name) and developing multiple TV projects under his development deal at Sony.

**Dana Calvo** is a screenwriter and television producer. Her most well-known credits include creating Amazon's critically-acclaimed feminist drama, *Good Girls Revolt*, and launching and running the writers' room of *Narcos*, the international smash hit on Netflix about drug kingpin Pablo Escobar. The feature she wrote for Participant Media is scheduled to begin principal photography this year, with Nicole Kassell directing. Before her career in Hollywood, Calvo was an award-winning journalist, domestically and internationally, for the Los Angeles Times, the Tribune and The Associated Press. She covered presidential elections, drug-trafficking, culture, business and really big hurricanes. Calvo graduated from Swarthmore College with a B.A. in English Literature. Currently, she lives in Los Angeles with her husband, teenage daughter and two rescue dogs.

**Hunter Covington** is a writer and producer based in Los Angeles. He ran *Alone Together* for The Lonely Island and Freeform and has previously staffed on *BlackAF*, *The Carmichael Show*,

*It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, *Community*, and *My Name Is Earl*. He is two inches short of technically being a giant, and as a disruptor in the truest sense, Hunter has nearly destroyed his life by creating/procuring a wife, an ex-wife, four children, two cats, two dogs, nine snakes and probably a bunch of other stuff that now sits in his garage. Scorpio.

**Shaun Grant** is a highly-acclaimed screenwriter whose films have premiered at the world's most prestigious film festivals; including Cannes, Toronto and Sundance. Recently, Shaun's sixth feature film *Nitram*, had its world premiere In Competition at the Cannes Film Festival, the first Australian film to do so in a decade, where it won the prize for Best Actor. In 2020, Shaun won his fifth AWGIE Award (Australian Writers' Guild Award) for Best Adapted Screenplay for *Penguin Bloom*. Prior to this, *True History of the Kelly Gang* premiered at the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival. The much-anticipated film saw Shaun reuniting with Justin Kurzel after their debut feature film *Snowtown*, which was selected for Cannes' Critic Week in 2011 and went on to win the AACTA Award (Australian Academy Award) for Best Adapted Screenplay. Shaun's work on *Jasper Jones* and *Berlin Syndrome* gave him two further AACTA nominations and an AWGIE win for Best Adapted Screenplay. In television, Shaun has written for multiple series, securing another AWGIE win and AACTA nomination for his work on the mini-series, *Deadline Gallipoli*. More recently, Shaun wrote the finale of Netflix's *Mindhunter* for which he, and the show's writing team, received a Writers Guild of America nomination for Best Drama. Shaun currently has several film and TV projects in development in Australia and the US.

**Sarah Lambert** is an Award-winning writer and producer working globally in film and television. She was the writer and showrunner of the television adaptation of Marele Day's *Lambs of God*, a mini-series starring Ann Dowd, Jessica Barden and Essie Davis. *Lambs of God* was in official competition at Series Mania in 2019 and was nominated for 18 AACTA Awards, winning nine including Best Telefeature or Mini Series. It also won the ATOM Award for Best Fiction Telemovie or Miniseries and the Screen Producers Award for Mini Series Production of the Year and was nominated for an AWGIE award for Best Television or Miniseries in 2020. Sarah is currently writing and showrunning the television adaptation of *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* by Holly Ringland for Bruna Papandrea's *Made Up Stories*. She also created, wrote and produced *Love Child*, which was the number one drama in Australia in 2014 and enjoyed four seasons. Sarah has written on some of Australia's top drama series including the critically-acclaimed and award-winning *Love My Way*; *Dance Academy*, for which she was nominated for an AWGIE for Best Children's Screenplay; *The Alice*, which garnered her a QLD Premier's Literary Award Nomination; *A Place to Call Home*; and ABC's ratings winner *The Doctor Blake Mysteries*. In the US, she has worked on *Clone Story*; *God In Government* (PBS); *14 Million Dreams* (Sundance); *New Type Of Jazz*; *Directors On Directing*; and *The Play's the Thing* for PBS, for which she was recognised with an Emmy nomination. She co-created teen show *Aliens Among Us* for the ABC and C5 in the UK, writing and directing over 30 episodes. Sarah is in high demand both in Australia and internationally. She is currently developing a series with Blumhouse Productions and Joel Edgerton in the US and has a global series in development with Simon Maxwell's Motive Productions in the UK. She is also working on another literary adaptation with Lingo Pictures and a film with Easy Tiger.

**Eric Pearson** began his professional career at Marvel Studios in their writers' program. Along with several screenplays, he wrote a majority of the short films from the *Marvel One-Shot* series, including *Agent Carter* which went on to become a TV series of the same name on ABC. Eric wrote on both seasons of the series. Continuing his relationship with Marvel Studios, Eric contributed pre-production and/or post-production writing on *Ant Man*, *Spiderman*:

*Homecoming*, *Avengers: Infinity War*, and *Avengers: Endgame*. Marvel Studios brought Eric on to write *Thor: Ragnarok* at the end of 2015 and then sent him to Australia to continue his work on the script throughout production. Disney released *Thor: Ragnarok* in the US on 3 November 2017, and the film's worldwide box-office take was over \$850 million. At the beginning of 2019, Marvel Studios brought Eric on to write *Black Widow* and then sent him to London (as well as other locations) to continue his work on the script throughout production. *Black Widow* was released on 9 July 2021. On 31 March 2021, Legendary Entertainment released *Godzilla vs. Kong* through Warner Bros. Opening during the pandemic, *Godzilla vs. Kong* made over \$430 million at the worldwide box-office. Eric has a screenplay by credit on the film. At the moment, Eric has multiple projects in various stages of development for Imagine Entertainment & Universal Pictures, Atomic Monster & Universal Pictures, and Sony Pictures. Eric has also twice been on Hollywood's Black List: once for his script *Perfect Match* (co-written with Morgan Schechter) and again for his script *Out of State*. Eric graduated from New York University where he studied screenwriting at the Dramatic Writing Department in their Tisch School for the Arts.

**Stacy Traub** came out of AFI with ambitions to be a cinematographer, but moved into writing as an assistant on *Mad About You* which led to writing stints on *Suddenly Susan*, *Spin City*, and *What I Like About You*, before moving up to creator and executive producer of such series and pilots as *Kitchen Confidential*, *Notes from the Underbelly*, *Middle Age Rage*, *Other People's Kids* and *Dirty Blondes*, while writing on *Glee* and *Trophy Wife*. That led to EP stints on *The Real O'Neals* and *black-ish*. Most recently, Stacy just started work on Amazon's *Daisy Jones and the Six*.

**Kai Wu**, who is Taiwanese-American, was most recently a co-executive producer on *Paper Girls* at Amazon. Prior to that, she was a co-executive producer on Amazon's *Carnival Row* and the creator and head writer of *The Ghost Bride*, an International Original series at Netflix. Her previous credits include: Producer on *Deception* (ABC), Co-Producer on *Time After Time* (ABC), Executive Story Editor for *The Flash* (The CW) and writer for *Hannibal* (NBC). Currently, Kai has a pilot in development at Amazon.

Impact CEO **Tyler Mitchell** said, "We are incredibly excited to have a record nine Shapers onboard for Impact Australia 2, dedicating their time to fostering the talent of nine Australian writers whose voices and ideas leapt off the page during our democratized review process. I have high hopes what these collaborations will bring and am excited introduce these Creators and projects to the industry-at-large at Pitch Day."

Chairman and CEO of Gentle Giant Media Group **Greg Basser** said, "It is fantastic to see this year's group of talented Australian writers following on the heels of the outstanding projects for global audiences that emerged from the inaugural Impact Australia in 2020. I can't wait to see what our Creators come up with at the end of Season Two."

Screen Australia CEO **Graeme Mason** said, "We are thrilled that Impact Australia is underway for another year, with an impressive new cohort of Australian Creators offered the opportunity to develop their projects with the support of world class Shapers. In an increasingly global industry, the relationships formed through these programs and opportunity for Creators to connect with these Shapers and pitch to international buyers at the Pitch Day is invaluable."

Film Victoria CEO **Caroline Pitcher** said, “We’re proud to bring Impact Australia back in 2021. Victoria is home to exceptional creative talent and it’s great to be able to give some of our most exciting local writers access to this mentoring opportunity and connect them with the global screen industry.”

Impact Australia is financed with principal funding from Screen Australia and Film Victoria.

The program is also supported by Learning Partner the University of Melbourne, Screen NSW, Screen Queensland and Screen Territory.

For more information about Impact and Impact Australia, visit [here](#).

## **ABOUT IMPACT**

Founded by Brian Grazer and Ron Howard and led by CEO Tyler Mitchell, Impact is a technology company that was founded to solve problems for the entertainment industry. In its accelerator programs, Impact discovers, cultivates and empowers creative storytellers around the world through its innovative talent discovery and mentoring systems, which enable promising writers to create their best work and break into the industry in a matter of months. Impact’s talent identification system is able to rapidly evaluate thousands of submissions and ensures that all creators are given equal access, opportunity, and transparency, while removing any barriers to entry. Since 2018, Impact has built a robust network of more than 60,000 writers across over 125 countries and developed 71 projects - a rate of three, high-quality pieces of original IP per month - from 86 diverse writers: 44 men and 42 women, 33 BIPOC, 10 LGBTQIA+-identifying individuals, and 14 writers over 40. Impact boasts an impressive track record with 36 of the writers coming into Impact with no representation being signed by signed at top tier agencies and management companies, including Verve, CAA, WME, UTA, Lit, 360, 3Arts, Anonymous, Grandview, Circle of Confusion, M88 and Writ Large and, Impact has set up 35 of the 71 projects developed in their eight-week accelerators at: Netflix, Sony, FX, Warner Bros., Amblin, Chernin, eOne, Village Roadshow, Legendary, Scott Free, Midnight Radio and more. During the pandemic, 33 Impact alums either sold a new project or were hired to staff on shows at Netflix, Apple, Amazon, Disney+, HBO Max, CW, FX, Nickelodeon, Hulu, and BET, and their alumni have also had had six movies greenlit, a series order at AMC and a pilot order at ABC.

In addition, Impact is working with Netflix to source and develop original feature film content and Skydance Television to source TV pitches from the next generation of screenwriters. They’ve also partnered with Imagine Entertainment to source an emerging writer to pen an original family basketball film, worked with Screen Queensland to source crew attachments for Ron Howard’s in-production feature *Thirteen Lives*, and also launched their first international accelerator program in Australia in association with Gentle Giant Media Group and Screen Australia. Impact also recently launched The Impact Network, a market-network designed for entertainment industry professionals that aims to make the process of discovering, developing, staffing, and crewing television and film projects fun and efficient. The Impact Network is used by industry producers and executives from over 350 companies, including ABC, Amazon, CBS, Disney, HBO, Netflix, NBC, Paramount, Universal, Amazon, and

Warner Brothers. Lastly, Impact has also launch “IMPACT: The Podcast,” which is an outgrowth of its speaker series that accompanies the accelerator and features conversations with world renowned artists such as: Peter Berg (*Friday Night Lights, Lone Survivor*); Issa Rae (*Insecure*); Judd Apatow (*40 Year Old Virgin, Trainwreck*); The RZA (*Wu-Tang: An American Saga*); Dave Burd aka Lil Dicky (*Dave*); Jeff Schaffer (*Curb Your Enthusiasm*); Saladin Patterson (*The Last O.G.*); Academy Award winners Frances McDormand (*Three Billboards, Fargo*), Damien Chazelle (*La La Land, Whiplash*) and Akiva Goldsman (*A Beautiful Mind, Cinderella Man*), and many more.

For more information, visit [impact.net](http://impact.net), subscribe to the Impact newsletter, and/or follow on Instagram @impact.development, Twitter @TweetsByImpact, and Facebook @impact.developmentFB.

### **ABOUT GENTLE GIANT MEDIA GROUP**

Gentle Giant Media Group is an independent producer of Hollywood film and television and Australian treaty co-productions, which promotes the film and television production in Australia. Gentle Giant partners with major studios and independent producers, matching projects with creative and technical talent in Australia and co-producing both film and TV. Leveraging its extensive networks and contacts across Hollywood, Australia and China, Gentle Media Group also acts as a financial mediator for creative visionaries and specifically seeks out projects best suited for production in Australia.

Chairman and CEO, Greg Basser, co-founded and led Village Roadshow Entertainment Group for over 18 years, producing 126 films with global box office exceeding U.S. \$19.5 billion. [gentlegiantmedia.com](http://gentlegiantmedia.com).

### **ABOUT SCREEN AUSTRALIA**

Screen Australia is the Australian Federal Government agency charged with supporting the development, production and promotion of Australian scripted and documentary content. The agency funds productions for television, film and online. Screen Australia also administers Australia’s Official Co-production program, in addition to the Producer Offset tax rebate which assists eligible Australian and Official Co-productions to be made. The agency provides a range of resources and opportunities to the industry including access to research, market intelligence and special initiatives. For more information visit [screenaustralia.gov.au](http://screenaustralia.gov.au).

### **ABOUT FILM VICTORIA**

Based in Melbourne, Australia, Film Victoria is the Victorian State Government agency that provides strategic leadership and assistance to the film, television and digital media sectors of the state of Victoria.

Film Victoria’s role is to ensure Victoria is a global powerhouse for screen that enriches the lives of all Victorians. The agency does this in a range of ways: through funding the production and development of screen content, supporting skills development opportunities including industry placements, attracting production to the state, location assistance,

industry events and partnership activities, all which help develop and strengthen the Victorian screen industry. For more information visit [film.vic.gov.au](http://film.vic.gov.au).

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