

Smart for a Girl: ROAR kick-starts careers of next generation female screenwriters

Friday 4 August 2017: Fifteen entry-level female television screenwriters from across Australia have been given the opportunity to kick-start their careers working with renowned producer Imogen Banks (*Offspring*) and screenwriter Alice Bell (*Puberty Blues*, *The Beautiful Lie*) as part of Endemol Shine Australia's Smart for a Girl: ROAR, the development program which received funding from [Gender Matters: Brilliant Careers](#).

Imogen Banks and Alice Bell launched Smart for a Girl: ROAR to address the lack of new female voices coming into the TV industry. After an incredible 935 applications were received, the number of places on the program was increased from 12 to 15. Working in groups the successful applicants will be guided by Banks and Bell on how an idea is developed into a television series through the processes of a writers' room.

Imogen Banks said: "There was so much promise inside those 935 applications - it was excruciating limiting ourselves to four projects, so we've stretched to five. Gender Matters has unearthed a rich seam of potential and enabled us to tap into it, however lightly. It's been a hugely rewarding experience already and with our first room running on Monday, we're about to start the fun part."

Alice Bell said: "Reading the 935 submissions personally (yes, every single one!) has shown us what we suspected when we set out to create the Smart For A Girl: ROAR initiative - that there is a high level of untapped talent out there. Imogen and I feel privileged to be able to work with these emerging female screenwriters, guiding them into realising their ideas creatively, but also exposing them to the television industry in a nurturing way."

Nerida Moore, Senior Manager of Development at Screen Australia said: "Gender Matters has afforded these creatives the chance to work with the best in the business, Imogen Banks and Alice Bell, which will be a life-changing opportunity, providing skills and experience that will ultimately enrich the stories we see on our screens. Congratulations to all these fabulous women."

The successful applicants and the creative ideas they will develop are:

Unruly Girls from creator/writer Clare Young, shadow writer Ella Roby and note-taker Lily Daubney. A mini-series inspired by the 1961 riot at the notorious Parramatta Girls Home, *Unruly Girls* follows a group of delinquent girls learning to kick against a corrupt system and fight to be their own kings.

ID from creator/writer Vanessa Gazy, shadow writer Zuleika Khan and note-taker Katherine Sullivan. In this tense drama series a woman disappears, forcing her estranged, identical twin sister to revisit their murky history and accept that once again the lines between their identities are beginning to blur.

The Spoils from creator/writer Zoe Pepper, writer Anna Lindner and note-taker Lili Owen. In this half-hour drama-comedy a woman chosen to pioneer a new planet wantonly hurls grenades into her life, telling everyone she knows what she really thinks of them - but when the mission is aborted she is forced to stay and piece her life back together.

Reconciliation Rescue from creator/writer Angelina Hurley, shadow writer Alisha Hnatjuk, and note-taker Matilda Ridgeway. This half-hour comedy series follows an Aboriginal woman who finds herself accidentally caught up in bringing the nation together.

Empath from creator/writer Ash Ricardo, shadow writer Imogen McCluskey and note-taker Georgina Love. In this one-hour drama series a woman accidentally discovers that a revolutionary new medical device can read emotion, propelling her into a world of conspiracy, corruption, mass-manipulation and the mysteries of neuroscience.

Imogen Banks and Alice Bell will join these creative teams in a series of writers' room workshops beginning next week.