

# Media Release

12 August 2019



Australian Government



## SBS partners with Screen Australia to increase opportunities for under-represented screenwriters

SBS has teamed up with Screen Australia to launch Digital Originals, a new initiative aimed at developing exciting and innovative scripted short-form projects for SBS On Demand.

The initiative, an evolution of SBS's Short-Form Content Initiative, aims to provide opportunities and support for writers from diverse backgrounds currently under-represented in the sector. These include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people living with a disability, females, those who identify as LGBTIQ+ and gender diverse, and people living in rural and remote areas<sup>1</sup>.

SBS Director of TV and Online Content, Marshall Heald says: "SBS has a proud heritage of providing pathways for creatives traditionally under-represented in the screen sector, as part of our commitment to sharing stories that truly explore, reflect and celebrate the diversity of Australia today.

"Short-form content provides a really exciting way to tell unique and compelling stories from a range of diverse experiences. We're proud to partner with Screen Australia on Digital Originals, and look forward to supporting a new generation of Australian storytellers."

Up to ten writers and projects reflecting Australia's rich diversity of people and experiences will be invited to attend an exclusive workshop with a focus on short-form narrative writing skills, mentored by Australian television director and producer, Anna Dokoza (*Flight Of The Conchords*, *Lady Dynamite*, *Special*) and Ryan O'Connell, writer, producer and star of the Emmy-nominated Netflix short-form series, *Special*. Up to three projects will go into further development and production with SBS and Screen Australia.

Lee Naimo, Screen Australia Investment Manager – Online adds: "Screen Australia has been funding digital originals since 2008, including the acclaimed series *Homecoming Queens* and *Robbie Hood* for SBS On Demand. The web series format has proved to be an incredibly effective way for emerging creators to get some runs on the board, setting them up for a screen career. We're pleased to partner with SBS to not only unearth new talent, but to be able to bring more authentically told Australian stories to the screen."

Anna Dokoza says: "To the new crop of Australian talent, we're coming to you armed with SPECIAL stories. To the rest of Australia, Ryan O'Connell is limping, laughing and leaping across the Pacific to the beaches and boys. Good luck to all. See you soon, we can't wait to get there."

Submissions should include the following:

- Up to three-minute pitch video or up to three-page pitch document, consisting of:
  - Information on the series format (how many episodes, length of episode)
  - Genre, characters, story arc and brief plot summary
  - Themes and tone of the project

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- The target audience, including demographics and viewing habits
  - Details about the team and their experience creating content
  - What is unique and exciting about the project
- An up-to ten page writing sample of previous work
- Up to one-page statement articulating how the writer can contribute to more diverse and inclusive storytelling on-screen referencing their cultural or socio-economic background, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity or First Nations status.

**Submissions are open now on Screen Australia's website and close midnight Friday, 13 September 2019.**

## **Ends**

**For further information, please contact:**

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### **Screen Australia**

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/sa/media-centre/news/2016/08-24-study-of-diversity-on-tv-released>