



Sequel to *Sweet Country*, among 19 projects supported by Screen Australia’s First Nations Department

Thursday 24 October 2024: Screen Australia’s First Nations Department is thrilled to announce its latest funding slate, including Warwick Thornton’s sequel to *Sweet Country* titled *Wolfram*, alongside two powerful documentaries for NITV spanning sport and politics.

In total, 19 new projects, including 16 funded for development, will receive over \$3 million in funding. This investment reflects the agency’s ongoing commitment to amplify First Nations voices and stories, aligned with the Federal Government’s National Cultural Policy [Revive](#) and its *First Nations First pillar* - recognising and respecting the crucial place of First Nations stories at the centre of Australia’s arts and culture.

Screen Australia’s Head of First Nations **Angela Bates** said, “Our First Nations creatives are at the forefront of Australian storytelling, with many incredible projects being celebrated on the world stage and even more in development. The demand for our funding has never been higher, which is a positive sign for the industry. Across the 23/24FY, our Department invested over \$7.1 million of funding including 105 opportunities across development, production, initiatives, attachments and market support - highlighting the incredible talent and rich narratives within Indigenous communities. With films like *Wolfram* and documentaries *Dreaming Big* and *One Mind, One Heart*, I’m inspired by the depth of powerful screen stories authored by First Nations Australians.”

“It’s an exciting time for First Nations content creators, and we’re witnessing a new wave of talent. Looking ahead, we will continue to create pathways for these storytellers to thrive and expand their careers in the competitive global marketplace, collaborating with industry to enhance project visibility and impact,” said **Bates**.

This funding announcement follows a year of significant achievements for First Nations stories and creatives. Feature films [The New Boy](#) and [The Moogai](#) have garnered international acclaim. The third series of the landmark drama [Total Control](#) captivated local audiences with it being the most watched First Nations series in 23/24. Additionally, the ground-breaking children’s show [Little J & Big Cuz](#) returned for its fourth series on NITV and ABC, featuring 17 language groups and providing a powerful voice for children across Australia. The feature length documentary [Kindred](#) premiered on NITV in June, further highlighting the power of cultural connection.

In the past year, the Department has also invested \$1 million into the Enterprise program, supporting four First Nations businesses and three practitioners. Collaborating with Instagram Australia, it launched the [fourth iteration of the First Nations Creators Program](#), supporting emerging talent in the content creator economy to build their skills in the digital space. The Department also [supported six projects for production through the First Facts: First Nations Factual Showcase initiative](#), providing emerging and mid-career Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander filmmakers with opportunities to create 10-minute documentaries for Network 10.

Warwick Thornton, director of *Wolfram: A sequel to Sweet Country* said, “This is my family’s story. My great grandmother and her daughters worked the Hatches Creek mines for whitefellas. Now a truth will come out and it’s called *Wolfram*.”

The projects funded for production are:

- ***Wolfram: A sequel to Sweet Country***: Set three years after [Sweet Country](#), *Wolfram* continues the story of Philomac, now 17 and still living under the watchful eye of his ill-tempered master Mick Kennedy. After meeting Max and Kid, Philomac decides to free himself and the siblings from the white men’s brutality by running away into desert country. Along the way they are assisted by a pioneering family of Chinese Australian miners Jimmi and Wang Wei, who help reunite the children with their estranged mother Pansy. *Wolfram* is directed by Warwick Thornton and written by Steven McGregor and David Tranter, whose credits include *Sweet Country*. Also producing alongside Tranter

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MEDIA RELEASE

is David Jowsey and Greer Simpkin of *Sweet Country* and Cecilia Ritchie ([Limbo](#)). It is financed with support from Screen NSW and the Adelaide Film Festival Investment Fund. Distributing is Dark Matter Distribution, with international sales managed by Memento.

- ***Dreaming Big***: This six-part series for NITV takes an intimate look into the lives of gifted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian youths on the cusp of becoming the nation’s next generation of sports stars. Each episode highlights two young elite athletes, showcasing their relentless pursuit to reach the pinnacle of their chosen field as they navigate family and cultural obligations while remaining focused on their goals. The series will be directed by Andrew Dillon ([Le Champion](#)) and Abraham Byrne Jameson (*One by One*), with writer/producer Richard Jameson ([Strait to the Plate season 2](#)) and producer Veronica Fury ([And We Danced](#)) also attached. It is financed in association with Screen Queensland.
- ***One Mind, One Heart***: In this feature-length documentary for NITV, a historic political Yirrkala bark petition is discovered and makes its way home to Yolgnu country, evoking the spirit of decades of activism for change. The repatriation provides the opportunity to track the long political campaign - through petition, song, dance, campaigning - to keep culture strong and to have a voice for country. *One Mind, One Heart* is from writer/director Larissa Behrendt ([The First Inventors](#)) and producer Michaela Perske ([Larapinta](#)). It is financed in association with Screen NSW, with support from the Adelaide Film Festival Investment Fund, Spectrum Entertainment, Documentary Australia and Philanthropy via the Shark Island Institute.

Also announced today are three television dramas, 11 feature films and two documentaries that will share in over \$540,000 of development funding. The projects include feature film *Native Gods* from [2024 Enterprise Business recipient](#) Djali House; comedy series *Long Story Short* from writer/director Tanith Glynn-Maloney ([Windcatcher](#)); documentary *Fire Country*, a transformative exploration of Indigenous fire knowledge and wisdom; and feature film *RED*, about eight Western Australian First Nations women who share the ugly secret of being surrounded by the missing.

Click here for the full list of projects funded for [Production](#) and [Development](#) by the First Nations Department throughout the 2023/24 financial year.

ABOUT SCREEN AUSTRALIA’S FIRST NATIONS DEPARTMENT

Entirely led and staffed by First Nations Australians, the Department funds drama, documentary and children’s content across all platforms. The Department also identifies emerging First Nations talent, advocates for representation and funds skills development and career escalation opportunities. For more information on the First Nations Department and funding available, click [here](#).

Screen Australia is expanding the First Nations Department and is recruiting for the new position of Director of First Nations. This is to align with the Agency’s commitment to supporting authentic First Nations screen stories, to further champion industry practitioners and build opportunities for growth and visibility. For more information about the role, click [here](#).

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