

# impact



**GENTLE GIANT**  
MEDIA GROUP



Australian Government



## IMPACT AUSTRALIA HAS LAUNCHED, REVEALING CREATORS AND SHAPERS FOR THE ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

MELBOURNE - June 26, 2020 – Impact Australia, the offshoot of the successful U.S. [Imagine Impact](#) created by Brian Grazer, Ron Howard and Tyler Mitchell, is officially underway. In association with [Gentle Giant Media Group](#) and [Screen Australia](#), Impact Australia is an 8-week accelerator program that discovers, cultivates and empowers creative storytellers from across Australia. The program was originally slated to begin in Melbourne, Victoria in partnership with Film Victoria. However, due to coronavirus (COVID-19), it has been transitioned to a virtual program.

Impact Australia announced a call for submissions in March this year seeking fresh story perspectives and had a tremendous response from emerging writers. A diverse group of 'Creators' were selected to participate in the program, each to be paired with a 'Shaper' (world-class screen and TV writers) who will help craft their story in preparation for Pitch Day (hoping to take place in Melbourne this fall) with the ultimate goal of selling their project. The program kicked off on June 23 with an event bringing together all the Creators, Shapers, the Impact Team, and even Ron Howard and Brian Grazer.

For the inaugural program, Impact Australia will host a twice weekly speaker series and has also enlisted an award-winning group of writers to mentor the new class in their role as 'Shapers':

**Shaun Grant** is an acclaimed screenwriter in film and television. Most recently, his film "True History of the Kelly Gang" premiered at the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival, for which he won his fourth AWGIE Award for its screenplay. His other credits include "Snowtown", for which he received the AACTA Award for Best Adapted Screenplay (2012), and "Jasper Jones" and "Berlin Syndrome" gave him two AWGIE nominations and a win for Best Adapted Screenplay. On television, Grant has written several Australia drama series, including "Killing Time," the critically acclaimed mini-series, "Deadline Gallipoli," and the Season Two finale of "Mindhunter" for David Fincher and Charlize Theron (Netflix), for which he received a WGA nomination. Grant's upcoming feature film "Penguin Bloom" is in post-production and scheduled for release by Roadshow Films.

**Kai Wu** most recently co-executive produced Amazon's "Paper Girls." 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. Wu's other credits include ABC's (US) "Deception" (Producer), "Time After Time" (Co-Producer), the CW's "The Flash" (Executive Story Editor and NBC's "Hannibal" (Writer). Currently, Wu has a pilot in development at Amazon.

**Jason Smilovic** began his career as the creator of the ABC (US) series "Karen Sisco" and the Steven Soderbergh film "Out of Sight". He went on to develop three dramas for NBC: "Kidnapped," "Bionic Woman" and "My Own Worst Enemy." He is also the Co-Creator and Executive Producer of "Condor," which just recently completed its second season, and also directed several episodes of the series. Smilovic's first screenplay "Lucky Number Slevin" was directed by Paul McGuigan and starred Josh Hartnett, Ben Kingsley, Bruce Willis, Morgan Freeman and Lucy Liu. Smilovic co-wrote "War Dogs" with director Todd Phillips, starring Jonah Hill and Miles Teller. He and partner Todd Katzberg are currently adapting Robert Littell's best-seller "The Sisters" for Smilovic's directorial debut.

**Stuart Beattie** is an accomplished Australian director, screenwriter and producer who began his career writing screenplays for Australian independent films, then eventually branched out into major tentpole projects such as "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl" and the Tom Cruise thriller, "Collateral". Beattie's other credits include "Derailed," starring Clive Owen and Jennifer Aniston; "30 Days of Night", starring Josh Hartnett and Melissa George; "3:10 To Yuma", starring Russell Crowe and Christian Bale and Stephen Sommers' blockbuster action film "GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra". He also wrote the original screenplay for Baz Luhrmann's epic, "Australia" starring Hugh Jackman and Nicole Kidman. In addition, Beattie wrote and directed "Tomorrow When The War Began" and "I, Frankenstein," starring Aaron Eckhart, Bill Nighy and Yvonne Strahovski and wrote and produced the acclaimed Australian war drama "Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan". In television, he wrote one of four award-winning episodes of the Australian mini-series "Deadline Gallipoli" as well as the original bible and pilot for Showtime's "Halo." In theater, Beattie wrote the book for Jim Steinman's smash hit musical, "Bat Out of Hell".

**Sarah Heyward** is a writer and producer whose television credits include the HBO series "Girls," "SKAM Austin" on Facebook Watch, and Amazon's "Modern Love." She has sold feature screenplays to Universal, Good Universe and Netflix. Before becoming a screenwriter, Heyward received her M.F.A. in Fiction from the Iowa Writers' Workshop where she was the recipient of the Maytag Fellowship and the Richard Yates Short Story Prize. She currently has television and film projects in development at Netflix, Amazon and FX.

The diverse group of "Creators" for Impact Australia includes 14 Creators from across Australia working on 10 projects:

- Creator: Carrie Anderson (NSW) - "Bound" (TV Hour)
- Creators: Luke Goodall (VIC) + Marc Gallagher (VIC) - "Robots Inc." (TV Half Hour)
- Creators: Sukhjot Khalsa (WA) + Perun Bonser (WA) - "One of the Good Ones" (TV Half Hour)
- Creator: Catherine Kelleher (NSW) - "Iron Mountain" (TV Hour)

- Creators: Megan Palinkas (VIC) + Sam Barrett (VIC) - "Terminus" (TV Hour)
- Creator: Emma Dockery (VIC) - "The Party Line" (TV Half Hour)
- Creator: Lucy Coleman (NSW) - "Exposure" (TV Half Hour)
- Creator: Henry Boffin (VIC) - *Before The Dying Light* (Feature)
- Creator: Jessica Harris (VIC) - "The Bloomers" (TV Half Hour)
- Creators: Brendan Fletcher (NSW) + Devi Telfer (QLD) - *Taronga* (Feature Film)

You can learn more about the Creators at <https://www.imagine-impact.com/creators?category=aus>.

"Our proprietary system has curated an amazingly talented group of creatives with compelling scripts," said **Tyler Mitchell**, Head of Imagine Impact. "Through collaboration and guidance provided by our experienced group of 'Shapers,' we expect some incredible film and television projects to be ready for Pitch Day. Australia is revealing quite a high calibre of writers - it's exciting!"

"Impact Australia has brought to light the rich cache of diverse and talented writers we always knew were part of the Australian creative community" said **Greg Basser**, Chairman & CEO of Gentle Giant Media Group. "The Impact accelerator program is an enormous step up for our creative industry, bringing a global focus to original Australian IP and our talented storytellers."

Screen Australia CEO **Graeme Mason** said, "This is a fantastic opportunity for Australian creators to learn from and collaborate with leaders in the global industry. This program offers an innovative development opportunity and I look forward to seeing what exciting screen stories will emerge from the pairings of these talented shapers and creators."

Film Victoria CEO **Caroline Pitcher** said, "Connecting Victorian screen writers with international mentors and markets is vital to further developing world-class original content. Imagine Impact is a story development lab that pioneers new and innovative ground and we are thrilled to have successfully negotiated this invaluable opportunity for the benefit of our screen industry, and in partnership with Screen Australia, the City of Melbourne and our fellow state screen agencies. We know that our creators will seize this moment and go on to create screen stories that will captivate the growing demand of screen audiences around the world."

"Melbourne is Australia's cultural capital and the creative sector plays an important role in our economy," Lord Mayor of Melbourne **Sally Capp** said. "Impact Australia is an amazing opportunity for our city to attract and up-skill the best storytellers across Australia. It will also position Melbourne as a destination of choice for innovation in the film and television industries and provide long-term opportunities for our city to lead the revival of the creative sector nationally. I'd like to acknowledge the leadership and commitment from renowned creatives such as Ron Howard, Brian Grazer and Greg Basser to make this program happen in Melbourne."

Impact Australia is financed by Screen Australia, along with principal partner, Film Victoria. The program is also supported by Screen NSW, Screen Queensland, Screenwest, South Australian Film Corporation, Screen Territory, Screen Canberra and Screen Tasmania.

For more information, visit [imagine-impact.com/australia](http://imagine-impact.com/australia).

**ABOUT IMAGINE IMPACT:**

Founded by Brian Grazer, Ron Howard and Tyler Mitchell in September 2018, Imagine Impact discovers, cultivates and empowers creative storytellers around the world through a modern development system that helps them create their best work. Impact has also launched a mobile/web platform designed to directly connect the people who get creative projects made - writers, producers, showrunners and buyers. Since its inception, Imagine Impact has been responsible for major attachments to Netflix, Sony, Amblin, Legendary, Village Roadshow, Sony and more; Creators have been signed by major agencies and management companies, including CAA, WME, UTA, Verve, Anonymous Content, Management 360, 3Arts and more; and the Impact Platform is used by industry executives from over 300 companies, including A24, ABC, Disney, HBO, Netflix, Universal and many more. Most recently, Impact announced a deal with Netflix Films to source and develop original content in four specific genres from the next-generation of screenwriters worldwide that they will bring to the streaming service.

For more information, visit [www.Imagine-Impact.com](http://www.Imagine-Impact.com), subscribe to the Imagine Impact newsletter and/or follow on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook @impactimagine.

**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 billion garnering 19 Oscars. [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, such as its Gender Matters program. For more information visit [screenaustralia.gov.au](http://screenaustralia.gov.au).

**ABOUT FILM VICTORIA:**

Film Victoria is the Victorian State Government agency that provides strategic leadership and assistance to the film, television and digital media sectors of Victoria. Film Victoria aims to

increase screen activity in Victoria and be a responsive advocate for the screen industry. Film Victoria does this in a range of ways: through funding the production and development of screen content, industry placements, filming incentives, location assistance, industry events, partnership activities and other support, 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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### **IMAGERY**

Download a selection of images from Imagine Impact USA [here](#).