



Don Harwin
Minister for Resources
Minister for Energy and Utilities
Minister for the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW Government and SBS announce the emerging LGBTIQ filmmakers sharing \$180,000 funding for Mardi Gras 40th Anniversary

NSW Minister for the Arts Don Harwin and SBS have today announced the six emerging filmmaking teams chosen to create shorts that will air as part of the broadcaster's coverage of the 40th anniversary celebration of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival in 2018.

The recipients of this year's LGBTIQ focused Create NSW *Generator: Emerging Filmmakers Fund* celebrate LGBTIQ diversity through a wide scope of themes including LGBTIQ acceptance in multi-cultural communities, small-town bigotry and a Muslim probationary policewoman amongst others.

The successful projects are *Concern for Welfare* (director Fadia Abboud), *Black Lips* (director Adrian Chiarella), *Cherry Season* (director Joshua Longhurst), the bilingual *Tomgirl* (director Vonne Patiag), *Joy Boy* (director Stef Smith) and *Disco Dykes* (director Sara West).

Don Harwin said that the fund is an exciting and valuable way of introducing greater diversity into the Australian screen industry.

"I am immensely proud of this initiative and its aims for funding productions that shape a more diverse Australian screen sector, both on-screen and off. We are delighted that with our partners at SBS, these projects will create 155 screen jobs that support LGBTIQ creatives, show strong representation for female practitioners, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and include jobs for young people.

"This year's emerging filmmakers already have some promising early credentials under their belt and we are confident that their shorts will showcase impassioned and thought-provoking LGBTIQ stories that audiences will find meaningful and sincere."

SBS Managing Director, Michael Ebeid, said: "Promoting the benefits of diversity in all its forms remains at the core of SBS and we are thrilled to partner with Create NSW on this emerging filmmakers initiative, part of our increasing commitment to create opportunities for Australian screen practitioners from diverse backgrounds.

"Delivering positive outcomes for emerging LGBTIQ creatives and talent, this year's selected stories span a range of important themes from across the community and we look forward to featuring these as part of SBS's overall Mardi Gras coverage next year."

Each filmmaking team will receive \$30,000 through a \$15,000 production finance grant from Create NSW and a \$15,000 licence fee from SBS. The shorts (each up to 15 mins long) will be filmed and post-produced in NSW and be delivered by the end of January for programming through SBS.

As part of the initiative, Create NSW has signed drama, factual, entertainment and comedy production company CJZ (makers of *Gruen*, *House of Bond*, *House of Hancock* and *Go Back to Where You Came From*) as Executive Producers of all the shorts.

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The funding recipients are listed on the following pages.

The 2017 Create NSW Generator: Emerging Filmmakers Fund projects are:

CONCERN FOR WELFARE (11 mins)

Genre: Drama

Company: Red Seeds Production

Key Creatives:

- **Director:** Fadia Abboud
- **Producer:** Alissar Gazal
- **Writer:** Nick Parsons

Shooting Locations: Punchbowl, Bankstown, Greenacre

Synopsis: Ali is a gay Lebanese probationary constable and kicking against her Muslim brother's controlling behaviour. When she attends a 'concern for welfare' and discovers the body of an elderly man who died alone and unnoticed, she realises the value of a loving family, even if they can be misguided.

Key Creative Team Summary:

To date, director Fadia Abboud and producer Alissar Gazal have worked together on several projects, most notably the web series 'I LUV U BUT', nominated as the Most Engaging YouTube Channel in Lebanon. Fadia has previously co-directed an episode of 'Here Come The Habibs' (Nine Network) and *Concern for Welfare* is based on a character from an upcoming Create NSW supported feature film *Leaving Lebanon* which she continues to develop with writing partner Nick Parsons.

BLACK LIPS (15 mins)

Genre: Drama/Contemporary Social Issues/History and Identity

Key Creatives:

- **Producer:** Rebecca Janek
- **Writer/Director:** Adrian Chiarella
- **Shooting Locations:** Eastwood and the Royal National Park

Synopsis:

A lonely Chinese immigrant sells black market abalone in Sydney's suburbs. When his supplier falls through, he has a meeting with a young man who makes him consider the limits and possibilities of his life.

Key Creative Team Summary:

Writer, director and editor Adrian Chiarella graduated from the Australian Film Television Radio and School (AFTRS) in 2012 and first met producer Rebecca Janek several years ago. The pair are currently in pre-production on another short film *Dwarf Planet*. In addition to working with Rebecca, Adrian has worked with *Black Lips* cinematographer James Brown for many years and also worked as an editor on Craig Boreham's *Teenage Kicks*. Rebecca has production experience across a range of commercial projects and built EPK production experience on films including *Alien: Covenant* and *The Water Diviner*.

CHERRY SEASON (15 mins)

Genre: Drama

Company: Wintergarden Pictures

Key Creatives:

- **Director:** Joshua Longhurst
- **Producer:** Rosie Braye
- **Writer:** Tim Spencer

Shooting Location: Young

Synopsis: Shantelle works at the local supermarket in her hometown of Young, NSW. Between stacking the shelves with cherries and scrolling through women on Snapchat, there doesn't appear to be much going on in her life to keep her there. But when she discovers her wayward teenage sister, Tamara, posting nude pics online, Shantelle must hunt her down and, with the help of a callow workmate, stop Tamara crossing a dangerous line. Faced with the bigotry of her small country town as she attempts to balance the duality of her responsibility and her sexuality, Shantelle must choose who to protect – her sister, herself or a young gay man at risk.

Key Creative Team Summary

Wintergarden Pictures is comprised of AFTRS graduate and award-winning emerging LGBTIQ filmmaker Joshua Longhurst, emerging producer Rosie Braye (armed with nearly a decade of film distribution and publicity experience) and Green Room Award-winning writer, Tim Spencer. Joshua's first short *Ravage* premiered at the Sydney Film Festival Dandy Awards in 2013 and his 2016 directorial debut *Oasis* (written by Tim Spencer) has now screened at most major domestic and international LGBTIQ film festivals.

TOMGIRL (9 mins)

Genre: Drama

Company: In-Between Pictures

Key Creatives:

- **Producer:** Maren Smith
- **Writer/Director:** Vonne Patiag

Shooting Location: Blacktown

Synopsis: Justin, a young Australian-born Filipino boy who is constantly bullied for being different, announces to his Uncle Norman that he'd like to dress as a girl because "girls don't get hit." Norman, a migrant dealing with his own restricted forms of self-expression in Western Sydney, reveals himself to be a cross-dresser in the sexually-fluid 'Bakla' tradition, and together they hit the main streets of Blacktown dressed in drag, celebrating their shared Filipino culture. **Key Creative Team Summary:**

Vonne Patiag and Maren Smith are an award-winning filmmaking team whose recently launched production company In-Between Pictures creates narratives that explore contemporary intersectional Australian identities. They were recently awarded a Hot Shots Plus grant from Screen Australia to develop and produce the pilot episode of an online series described as a contemporary take on male friendship in Western Sydney with themes around LGBTQIA culture, class and ethnicity. Vonne's shorts have won numerous awards at

Made In The West Film Festivals and Maren's feature *One Less God* won the Grand Jury Prize and Industry Choice Award at the Dances With Films Festival in LA in June this year.

JOY BOY (12 mins)

Genre: Drama

Company: Little Poss Pictures

Key Creatives:

- **Producer:** Morgan Benson-Taylor
- **Writer/Director:** Stef Smith
- **Writer:** Jonny Hawkins

Shooting Locations: Northern Beaches and Western Sydney

Synopsis: *Based on a true story. In fact, all of it happened. One way or another.* 6-year-old Jonny is preparing to give the performance of a lifetime; a private rendition of Marilyn Monroe's 'Happy Birthday, Mr President'. At first elated, Jonny receives a lacklustre response. We then meet a grown Jonny, now a young minister for a 'hip' city Christian Church. He is greeted by his girlfriend after Mass one day and we wonder, how did THAT boy, become THIS boy? 'Joy Boy' follows through a series of fractured events in Jonny's journey to fully embracing his inner self, his sexuality, and his joy. This is the true story of Jonny, his mother's little Joy Boy.

Key Creative Team Summary:

Award-winning actor Jonny Hawkins, co-writer of the screenplay will play the title role of the short, aided by fellow writer and director Stef Smith, who recently directed the ABC iView comedy sketch series 'The Lost Tapes' as part of the Fresh Blood initiative and completed a Director's Attachment under Trent O'Donnell for the ABC/Netflix series 'The Letdown'. Producer Morgan Benson-Taylor has led advertising, short film and content projects and currently has a number of feature and series projects in development.

DISCO DYKES (11 mins)

Genre: Comedy/Drama/Family

Company: Someone Like U Productions

Key Creatives:

- **Director/Writer:** Sara West
- **Producers:** Jordan Cowan, Grace Taylor

Shooting Location: Windsor (Western Sydney)

Synopsis: Gert's a weirdo – she's an outcast at school, questions her own sexuality and loathes her little sister who bursts with confidence on a bad day. To make things worse, Gert's mum Sal has decided, since leaving her husband, that she'd like to have a girlfriend. When Tex, Sal's new girlfriend, rolls into town in her decked out semi-trailer to take the girls on a wild ride, it's time for the ultimate test – will they survive the dreaded family road-trip?

Key Creative Team Summary:

Director and writer Sara West's writing credits include her play *The Trolleys* for the Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP), short films *Split Me*, *Teenage Filth*, *Dirt Girls* and *River Water*, which she also directed. Sara was awarded Best Emerging Filmmaker Award at the 2014 South Australian Screen Awards and is currently in post on short film *Mutt* and developing two feature films and a TV series. Jordan Cowan is a producer and actor, awarded Emerging Artist of the Year at the 2013 Critics Circle awards and Best Female Performance at the 2013/2014 Adelaide Theatre Guide awards. Her first theatre production won the 2016 Theatre Guide's Best Theatre Production award and she has since worked with West to produce *Split Me* and *Mutt*. Her acting credits include *Wolf Creek 2*, *Red Ink* and the supernatural series 'Jade of Death'. Grace Taylor was the production manager for the 2016 Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship recipient short film *How the Light Gets In*, and the Create NSW 2016 Generator: Emerging Filmmakers Fund recipient short film *Sherbert Rozencrantz, You're Beautiful*.