

NITV announces commissioning team appointments

NITV welcomes Dena Curtis as Head of Indigenous Commissioning and Production, Cieron Cody as Senior Commissioning Editor, and elevates Joseph Meldrum to Commissioning Editor.

21 October 2024

National Indigenous Television (NITV) has announced three new appointments to its commissioning team, as it increases its commitment and investment in original First Nations storytelling.



(L-R) Dena Curtis, Cieron Cody and Joseph Meldrum

A proud Warlpiri, Warrumungu and Arrernte woman, **Dena Curtis**, will join NITV in November as **Head of Indigenous Commissioning and Production**. She will lead NITV's content production and development across its slate of original commissions, internal productions, and digital content.

Curtis is an award-winning producer, writer and director passionate about First Nations storytelling and industry development. She brings extensive experience to the role from a career that has included working at NITV, the ABC, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA), and most recently with her own independent production company, Inkey Media. She has a raft of directing, producing, writing and editing credits to her name across everything from short film to documentary, and drama to comedy including NITV children's series *Grace Beside Me* and *Thalu*, documentary collection *Rebel with a Cause*, ABC series *First Weapons*, narrative comedy series *8MMM Aboriginal Radio*, and AMC's *Firebite* – among many more.

Curtis will be joined by Wiradjuri man **Cieron Cody**, coming on board as **Senior Commissioning Editor** to drive NITV's commissions slate across original scripted and unscripted content. His appointment sees him return to NITV, having spent the last almost four years with Screen Australia's Documentary Unit. He'll build on a range of career experience across the development and production of feature film, documentary, drama and children's content in his new role at NITV,

where he'll oversee the management and delivery of commissioned content, and the ongoing development of a pipeline of programming, and initiatives elevating Indigenous talent.

Further boosting NITV's commissioning team is **Joseph Meldrum**, a Ghungalu writer, director, producer and production executive, as **Commissioning Editor**. Currently a Content Assessor with NITV, his appointment sees him stepping up to play a key role in supporting development and delivery of commissioned content. Prior to NITV, Meldrum worked in Screen Australia's First Nations Department, Screen Queensland as well as production roles in major media brands internationally.

Jason Oakley, Acting Director of Indigenous Content at SBS and NITV, acknowledged the depth of experience and talent the three will bring to NITV's original First Nations content slate. "NITV is home to Australia's most distinctive content offering, and we're looking forward to having Cieron come back to NITV in this role, see Joe take the next step in the team, and to have Dena with her extensive experience taking on this key leadership position for the channel. They bring incredible talent and diverse experience from across the screen industry, and share a passion for developing, elevating and empowering the Indigenous production sector and First Nations storytellers. As NITV continues its growth, we're excited to continue our trajectory in investing more in distinctive, award winning, First Nations stories with wide appeal and meaningful impact".

On joining NITV, Curtis said: "NITV is home to some of the best First Nations content from Australia and the world. I look forward to continuing to build on the channel's brand, collaborating with the NITV team, broader SBS colleagues and with the very talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytellers and content makers from across the country, delivering high quality and distinctive original scripted and unscripted content to our audiences."

Cody added: "Australia's First Nations screen sector is a force unlike any other and NITV's audience a clever base of curiosity, power, voice and more. Rejoining NITV to play but one part in connecting these sources is humbling. NITV has a sincerely unique opportunity to work with a changing Nation and the potential is uncapped, powered by excellence, ambition and an imagination guided by the longest continuous culture in the world. I cannot wait to share in raising the many talented voices of mob from the remote heartlands and beyond."

Meldrum also added: "Having grown up watching NITV from my home in remote Northern Territory, I have witnessed the profound impact the network has had on giving our communities a voice and a platform to share important stories, news and culture around the country, and around the world. NITV has a long-standing legacy of investing in unique and captivating stories and championing and nurturing emerging and established voices and I look forward to contributing to this important mission. It is my goal to pay homage to our past, reflect on our present and look towards our bright future under the guidance of our Elders and Ancestors. Our storytellers have gone from strength to strength and I am excited to be a part of this next chapter in NITV's commissioning."

Dena Curtis will commence with NITV on 4 November, and Cieron Cody and Joseph Meldrum commence in their roles from 18 November.

ENDS

For more information, contact:
Sarah Vahtola

Corporate Communications Manager
sarah.vahtola@sbs.com.au
0497 532 782

Notes for Editors - Bios

Dena Curtis

Head of Indigenous Commissioning and Productions, NITV

Dena Curtis is a Warlpiri, Warrumungu, and Arrernte filmmaker from Central Australia. Her career in media began at Papulu Apparr Kari Language Centre in Tennant Creek in 1998, followed by a role as a Production Assistant at the CAAMA Productions in 2000. Dena gained formal training through the AFTRS, completing a graduate diploma in Television Editing.

In 2005, Dena wrote and directed her first short film, *Hush*, which garnered international acclaim, screening at festivals like ImagineNATIVE and the Melbourne International Film Festival. Her subsequent short film, *Jacob*, released in 2008, further solidified her reputation, winning multiple awards and screening at prestigious festivals including TIFF and Flickerfest.

From 2010 onwards, Dena took on roles at National Indigenous Television and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation before establishing Inkey Media in 2015, focusing on projects that showcase Indigenous stories and stories of resistance and resilience. Her work includes developing and producing the acclaimed children's series *Grace Beside Me* and co-producing award-winning documentaries like *Ella*, *Shadow Trackers* and *Belonging*. Most recently, Dena executive produced *Rebels with a Cause* for NITV which premiered at MIFF, and produced the series' *First Weapons*, which took out GOLD at the New York Festivals Film and TV Awards.

Cieron Cody

Senior Commissioning Editor, NITV

Cieron Cody is a Wiradjuri man, and a development and production executive with experience in agency and broadcast settings. With a focus on project and slate management, Cieron has overseen the development, finance, production and completion of over 100 titles across animation, children's content, games, VR, shorts, feature films, and series in documentary, fiction and factual entertainment. Cieron has supported a range of award-winning and record-breaking productions with some of Australia's and the world's most recognised market players and talent. He has advocated for the rise of new writers, producers and directors with a belief in the importance of a diverse sector, with an emphasis on First Nations participation. In 2017, he departed Screen Queensland as Vice President of Development and Production arriving at NITV as Commissioning Editor, before joining Screen Australia as Investment and Development Manager – Documentary.

Joseph Meldrum

Commissioning Editor, NITV

Joseph is a proud queer, Ghungalu writer, director, producer and production executive who was born and raised in Northern and Central Australia across Jawoyn, Dagoman, Warrumungu and Arrernte Country and with a diverse background in the screen industries spanning across North America and Australia. Joseph's career started out in Canada where he worked in various production roles for Discovery Channel, HBO, Netflix, Lionsgate, AMC Plus, Paramount Plus and CBS. More recently Joseph has been a Development and Investment Manager with Screen Australia's First Nations department having previously been at Screen Queensland as the Content

Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander department. Joseph is passionate about empowering bold and under-represented voices, and supporting his Community. A writer, director and producer in his spare time, he also owns his own production company, Faun Films. Joseph was also recently announced as one of the 12 producers selected by Screen Producers Australia for their Ones To Watch initiative for 2024.