

SBS, NITV and Screen Australia announce 2025 Digital Originals Shortlist

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SBS, NITV and Screen Australia are excited to unveil the 10 projects shortlisted for the first round of the 2025 Digital Originals initiative. Now in its sixth year, this award-winning program champions bold, innovative scripted storytelling from the next wave of Australian screen talent. Select series will be commissioned and premiere on SBS On Demand and NITV.



Above: The 2025 Digital Originals shortlisted teams. Photo credit: Teniola Komolafe.

A flagship partnership between **SBS**, **NITV** and **Screen Australia**, Digital Originals is central to SBS's commitment to developing and commissioning bold and risk-taking scripted series from diverse voices both on screen and behind the camera. The initiative supports rising talent from underrepresented communities in the sector, including those who identify as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), First Nations, people with disability, female and gender diverse, LGBTQ+, and those based in regional and remote areas.

The 10 shortlisted teams are currently participating in an immersive development workshop in Sydney hosted by SBS, NITV and Screen Australia. The workshop features sessions with industry mentors including **Alistair Baldwin** (*Latecomers*; *Erotic Stories*), **Hannah Ngo** (*Latecomers*; *Bird Drone*), **Jub Clerc** (*Warm Props*; *Sweet As*), **Julie Kalceff** (*First Day*; *Starting from... Now*), **Mithila Gupta** (*Four Years Later*; *Winners & Losers*), **Nicole Coventry** (*Sherbert Rozencrantz*; *You're Beautiful*; *Eaglehawk*) and **Taofia Pelesasa** (*Moni*; *Parramatta*).

The workshop gives teams the opportunity to enhance their narrative-writing skillset and develop their projects in line with the SBS Charter and [SBS Commissioning Inclusion Guidelines](#). It will culminate in teams pitching to SBS, NITV and Screen Australia, with up to five projects selected for further development funding. From these, up to three scripted series will advance to receive production funding and premiere on SBS On Demand, SBS VICELAND and NITV.

This year's initiative received more than 200 applications from across the nation. The strong response is a testament to the enduring relevance and impact of Digital Originals in shaping the future of the Australian screen industry.

SBS Head of Scripted, Nakul Legha, said: "Digital Originals continues to be one of the most impactful pathways in the world for visionary new voices to break through and tell bold, original scripted stories. It is a cornerstone of SBS's commitment to developing the next generation of screen creatives. Selected from more than 200 applications, we can't wait to collaborate with this talented cohort and help bring their stories to life."

NITV Head of Indigenous Commissioning and Production, Dena Curtis, said: "Digital Originals is a powerful pathway for First Nations creatives to grow, develop and break into the industry. We're thrilled to see such a broad spectrum of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander projects shortlisted this year, reflecting the strength of new talent coming through. We can't wait for these bold new voices to continue evolving and share their stories with NITV audiences."

Screen Australia Director of Narrative Content, Louise Gough, said: "Digital Originals is an important talent escalation initiative and partnership with SBS and NITV that has created tangible pathways for early career creatives from a range of backgrounds to tell bold and distinctive stories for Australian audiences. We're excited to support 10 new teams as they develop their projects, learn from industry experts and Digital Originals alumni and build their industry connections at this year's workshop. I can't wait to see what this year's cohort create."

Digital Originals continues to build on its legacy as a launchpad for underrepresented creatives to break into the industry and garner local and international recognition. Recent Digital Originals successes include the Series Mania selected series [Moonbird](#) (2025); [Appetite](#) (2023) which premiered at the Canneseries TV Festival and was also nominated for a Rose d'Or; [Night Bloomers](#) (2023) which won the 2024 Australian Writers' Guild (AWG) Award for Best Web Series; [Latecomers](#) (2022) which also premiered at Canneseries and went on to win the 2024 Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) Awards for Best Online Drama or Comedy and the 2023 Casting Guild Australia Awards for Achievement in Casting; and the AACTA award winning series [A Beginner's Guide to Grief](#) (2022).



Alumni of Digital Originals have gone on to secure key creative roles across SBS Original drama series and elsewhere in the industry including: **Mohini Herse** (*Appetite*) who went on to be set-up director for SBS Original *Four Years Later*, *Latecomers* producer **Liam Heyen** and director **Madeleine Gottlieb** reprised their roles for anthology series *Erotic Stories*, *The Tailings* director **Stevie Cruz-Martin** who later directed award-winning series *Safe Home*, *Homecoming Queens*' **Corrie Chen** and **Michelle Law** who have both gone on to create critically acclaimed projects, and filmmaker **Dylan River** who directed *Robbie Hood*.

The selected Digital Originals projects and the teams for the workshop are:

Bump Into You: When hard of hearing James bumps into Deaf sign-language user Frankie, it sparks an unexpected romance that challenges them both to confront their identities, family expectations, and what it means to belong.

Team: *Nathan Borg, Sam Martin.*

Durries: Jason and Vinay are two bumbling wannabe foot soldiers in the Tobacco Wars who are on the run after burning down the wrong building.

Team: *Kevin Han, Michaela Le, Rohan Ganju.*

Good Boy: A lonely motel receptionist falls in love with a man in prison. When she copycats a crime to prove his innocence, her fantasy life tips into a criminal reality.

Team: *Rebecca Metcalf, Anu Hasbold.*

Jellybean: As opening night nears, a Torres Strait Islander choreographer hides a pregnancy and faces the hardest decision of her life - to become a mother, or choose herself.

Team: *Brooke Collard, Aaliyah-Jade Bradbury.*

Loops: Two mismatched brothers must put aside their tangled differences to save their crumbling family rug store. But when a corpse is discovered wrapped in their Signature Rug, their last shot at redemption twists into a knot they may never untangle.

Team: *Kauthar Abdulalim, Oz Malik, Noor Hoblos.*

Musket: When Elijah dumps a stolen colonial-era musket into Benny's ute, two Koori best mates are forced into a tense overnight mission to return it - navigating rowdy classmates, buried memories and the silent weight of a boys' school in a town that's never truly seen them as equals.

Team: *Jack Steele, Bronte Gosper.*

Rogue One: Community policing meets chaos in the Top End where justice is murky, youth are smarter than the cops and the local BBQ holds more intel than HQ.

Team: *Mema Munro, Cian McCue, Rebecca Parker.*

SCAMMERS: After retiree Denise Reynolds loses her life savings to a scam caller, she reluctantly teams up with her young aged-care worker Anika Luthra to scam the scammers back. But as Anika and Denise get closer to each other and the truth, they uncover a greater scam much closer to home.

Team: *Mehhma Malhi, Xavier Hazard, Paige Wharehinga.*

The Salt Line (Working title): When a Torres Strait Islander detective returns home to investigate bones rising from the tidal mudflats, she's pulled into a case where the island

is being swallowed by the sea, old stories are waking and the truth may slip beneath the tide.

Team: John Harvey, Walter Waia, Mariana Babia.

Womb for Improvement: Kaz just wanted to chill – until her baby-crazy girlfriend, a coma-bound Nan and a sassy Aboriginal AI dragged her into the wild ride of queer parenthood. Matriarchy meets motherboard in this offbeat comedy about making a family, Blakfella-style.

Team: Tahlee Fereday, Damienne Pradier.

Digital Originals is part of SBS's broader commitment to improving inclusion in the screen industry. Read more about this work [here](#).

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