



# MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 8 September 2026



## The Airport Chaplain takes off as SBS's biggest launch of 2026

*1.67 million viewers on National Total TV to date*

*Best week one performance for an SBS local drama*

*One in four viewers have binged the entire series in the first week*

8 September 2026

SBS Original drama *The Airport Chaplain* has soared to new heights, smashing SBS On Demand records in its first week of launch to become the most successful SBS commissioned drama to launch on streaming.

The compelling series starring Hugo Weaving (*Slow Horses*), Shabana Azeez (*The Pitt*), Claudia Karvan (*Homebodies*), Erroll Shand (*All Her Fault*) and Thomas Weatherall (*Heartbreak High*) has become the network's biggest launch of 2026 to date, after the FIFA World Cup™, marking a flying start for the new Australian drama.

Set inside the high-stakes world of an international airport, *The Airport Chaplain* has struck a chord with audiences through its warm, funny and deeply human stories about the unexpected connections that form between strangers, workers and travellers passing through one of Australia's busiest airports.

SBS Head of Scripted, Nakul Legha said, "We're thrilled to see *The Airport Chaplain* resonate so profoundly with audiences. This is a gripping and timely drama that celebrates our shared humanity.

“It’s the kind of bold, distinctive home-grown storytelling that only SBS can deliver. Its success is a testament to the stellar cast and creative team who brought this series to life, and we look forward to even more viewers falling in love with *The Airport Chaplain* in the weeks ahead.”

Attracting 1.67 million viewers to date, *The Airport Chaplain* is connecting with audiences across SBS, with significant viewing on SBS On Demand. One in four viewers have also binged the entire series within its first week, demonstrating the addictive storytelling that makes this series so watchable. Audience engagement has extended beyond the initial broadcast, with the series recording a 154% uplift in its Total TV series average audience from Overnight to Consolidated 7 (C7), as viewers continue to discover and watch episodes on SBS On Demand after their original broadcast.

**SBS Director of Television, Kathryn Fink** said, “*The Airport Chaplain* is a great example of our audience strategy in action and the kind of original Australian drama that keeps audiences coming back. It’s a story that feels unmistakably SBS and we’re delighted to see it’s heart and humanity resonate.

“We’ve set ambitious targets for SBS this year around audience retention off the back of the FIFA World Cup™. So, it’s incredibly rewarding to see that ambition come to life, with nearly half of *The Airport Chaplain* audience also watching the FIFA World Cup™. The response to the series demonstrates a real appetite for stories that connect with audiences, wherever and whenever they choose to watch.”

In a landmark first for an SBS Original drama, the series launched simultaneously on Netflix outside Australia, extending the series’ reach to global audiences in more than 190 countries and regions.

The response has been matched by critical acclaim, with *The Sydney Morning Herald* hailing it as “one of the best shows of the year”. *Guardian Australia* awarding the series four stars and describing it as “thoroughly bingeable” and “moreish”.

Co-created and executive produced by Elise McCredie and Jude Troy, *The Airport Chaplain* is a Wooden Horse production for SBS, with major production investment from Screen Australia, in association with SBS. Financed with support from VicScreen.

*The Airport Chaplain* has been subtitled in five languages and is available to stream on SBS On Demand in Arabic, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese. All eight episodes are available with audio description reinforcing SBS's commitment to making accessible content.

Watch *The Airport Chaplain* on Wednesday night at 8.30pm on SBS. All eight episodes are also available to stream free on SBS On Demand.

## Sources

OzTAM VOZ National data, When Watched, 25 August–6 September 2026, Total TV Reach based on one-minute broadcast and 15-second BVOD reach.

SBS Adobe Analytics data. Streaming figures are based on Active Watchers and Chapter Views during the seven-day period inclusive of each program's launch date.

**For further information and interview requests please contact:**

Jessica Parry | [jessica.parry@sbs.com.au](mailto:jessica.parry@sbs.com.au) | 0428 767 836



SBS acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia.

To adjust preferences for receiving media releases from SBS please contact the above media representative.