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Trailblazing female creators selected for ABC ME and Screen Australia 'Girls' film season

Following a nation-wide call out to Australian female content makers in March, the ABC and Screen Australia are pleased to announce the five successful films selected for the 'Girls' season joint funding initiative.

The films, two dramas and three documentaries, are all led by female creatives and will premiere during ABC ME's 'Girls' season on October 11, the UN's International Day of the Girl.

The dramas explore the pivotal and challenging moments in a twelve-year-old's life that will resonate with all young girls. ***Summer's Day***, produced by Di Robertson, written and directed by Hattie Dalton, is about the transition into womanhood when Summer gets her period for the first time and tries to make sense of her blooming body. ***First Day***, produced by Kirsty Stark, written and directed by Julie Kalceff, tells a story about the fears associated with the transition between primary school and high school - but in Hannah's case, the stakes are even higher: this year, she will be attending school for the first time as a girl.

The documentaries put twelve-year-old girls in the driving seat as they share exactly what it is like to be them, striving to achieve their hopes and dreams. The girls in ***The Funny Ones***, created and produced by Belinda Dean and directed by Genevieve Bailey, dream of a life as comedy performers, and get the chance to learn from some of Australia's funniest comedians. Jaral in ***Shame***, is struggling with the embarrassment of being a 12-year-old girl while trying to learn Noongar language to honour her family and culture. ***Shame*** is created, written and directed by Karla Hart and produced by Paloma Bartsch. ***A Field Guide to Being a 12-Year-Old Girl***, produced by Katrina Lucas and written and directed by Tilda Cobham-Hervey, gives twelve girls the task of investigating their own species in an innovative blend of theatre and documentary.

Production has started on all films and the combined projects have seeded 30 fresh female actors ranging in ages from 9 to 14 in performing roles from across Australia including Byron Bay, Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney.

Under the funding program, the teams have \$80,000 each to make their film, and are receiving mentoring from experienced industry film makers and editorial guidance from Jan Stradling and Libbie Doherty from ABC Children's TV and Nerida Moore from Screen Australia.

"The ABC would like to congratulate these five creative teams. Their proposed film ideas not only capture the heart of what it's like being a 12-year-old girl in Australia today but also represent the





incredibly wide-ranging spectrum of diversity of Australian children which was a key part of this proposition. We look forward to sharing their vision with our ABC ME audience later this year,” says Michael Carrington, ABC Head of Children’s Television.

“The calibre of entries received was incredible, proof once again that there are many extremely talented Australian female content makers ready to lead the way with fresh, innovative and compelling stories.”

Sally Caplan, Head of Production at Screen Australia said: “The quality of submissions for the ABC ‘Girls’ season was extraordinary, and we were bowled over by the diversity, range of perspectives and stories that were presented to us. The five bold, imaginative projects selected are not only from new creative voices, but promise to reveal, dissect and perhaps reconsider the realities of being a young girl in Australia today.”

The ‘Girls’ season is part of the ABC’s Corporate Plan to contribute to the diversity, quality and innovation of the Australian film and television industry, as well as Screen Australia’s target of achieving gender equity.

As part of the ABC’s International Day of the Girl celebrations, the ‘Girls’ season will premiere on ABC ME, the ABC ME app and ABC iview on October 11th.

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‘Girl’s season synopses

First Day

It’s Hannah’s first day of high school. It’s also the first day she’ll wear a girl’s school uniform and go by her chosen name instead of the boy’s name she was given at birth. **First Day** tells a story that will resonate with all young students - the fears associated with the transition between primary school and high school - but in Hannah’s case, the stakes are even higher: this year, she will be attending school for the first time as a girl.

Main cast: Hannah: Evie McDonald, Amanda: Joanne Hunt, Steve: Steve Rodgers, Dylan: Jack Fortunaso, Mr. Nguyen: Anthony Brandon Wong.

Crew: Producer: Kirsty Stark, Writer/ Director: Julie Kalceff, Project Mentor: Judi McCrossin, Production Designer: Jaclyn Amor, Costume Designer: Rebecca Romans, DOP: Velinda Wardell ACS, Editor: Christine Cheung

Summer’s Day

This funny and warm coming-of-age story follows Summer’s (Sienna Gilmore) awkward transition into a teenager. Summer lives in a house full of boys which was fine until now, when she needs tampons and a bra.





Her body beautiful beach town is also adding the pressure. Having lost her mum a couple of years back Summer is managing alone, when her best friend comes to the rescue she finds the support she didn't know she needed.

Main cast: Summer: Sienna Gilmore, Mackenzie: Summer Robertson, Fergus: Harry Straw, Tom: Andy Jans-Brown

Crew: Writer/Director: Hattie Dalton, Producer: Diane Robertson, DOP: Anna Howard, Production Design: Karen Harborow, Editor: Harriet Clutterbuck.

Shame

In Noongar language one word can have the power of many. It can shriek in excitement or cower in embarrassment. That word is Shame. This observational documentary follows Jaral, Aailah and Sharmika, three Aboriginal girls from Noongar country, as they share how embarrassing and fun it is to be a 12-year-old girl.

Main cast: Jaral Hill, Aailah Headland and Sharmika Headland

Crew: Creator/ Director/ Writer: Karla Hart, Producer: Paloma Bartsch, DOP: Claire Leeman, Editor Bruce: Flint

The Funny Ones

This documentary introduces four girls with a passion for making people laugh, and connects them with the young stars of Australian comedy; Veronica Milsom and the Skit Box troupe, for performances and behind-the-scenes conversations around being young, female and funny.

Main cast: Veronica Misom, Skitbox's Adele Vuko, Greta Lee Jackson and Sarah Bishop and young female comedians to be announced.

Crew: Creator and producer: Belinda Dean, Director: Genevieve Bailey, DOP: Jacob Williams, Art Director: Aisha Phillips, Composer: Nick Huggins

A Field Guide to Being A 12-Year-Old Girl

A film about 12-year-old girls, made by 12-year-old girls, for 12-year-old girls, or anyone that has been a 12-year-old girl, or will be a 12-year-old girl, or wishes they were a 12-year-old girl.

Created by Tilda Cobham-Hervey and twelve 12-year-old-girls, this film is a cross between a documentary and a theatre piece where real 12-year-old girls articulate what they hope for, what they remember and what it feels like to be a 12-year-old girl. Performing as themselves as part of a filmed field guide, together they will investigate their own species.

Main cast: Athieng Akol, Audrey Mason-Hyde, Azalea Kadija Li, Cadence Lopresti-Zotti, Grace Wilson, Hannah Beard, Karoline Steiner, Lila O'Donnell, Lola Tripodi-Smith, Trinity Dent, Navya Kumar and Mabel-Jean Lochowiak.

Crew: Producer: Katrina Lucas, Writer/Director: Tilda Cobham-Hervey, EP/Mentor Director: Sophie Hyde, DP/Editor: Bryan Mason, Production/Costume Designer: Renate Henschke, Composer: Harry Covill

