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ABC unveils a stellar collection of programming for children

ABC will continue its commitment to Australian children by championing their voices and showcasing their stories through a slate of diverse and inclusive programming across its network.

On ABC ME, 2018 sees the premiere of *The New Legends of Monkey*. Inspired by the 16th Century Chinese fable Journey to the West, the 10-part half hour series follows a teenage girl and a trio of fallen gods on a perilous journey as they attempt to bring an end to a demonic reign of chaos and restore balance to their world.

The Award winning *Nowhere Boys* drama returns to production for its fourth and climactic final season. The gang return to unite to battle chaotic forces unleashed on Bremin, intent on dividing them. In another home-grown production, *Grace Beside Me*, we meet Fuzzy Mac, a 13-year-old girl who struggles with having one foot in the Indigenous realm of culture, Country – and spirits – and the other firmly planted in the world of a 21st century teenager.

Everyday Australian schoolkids are the stars of *My Year 7 Life*. Through a series of video diaries, these 10 and 11 year olds share firsthand accounts of the monumental changes impacting them as they make the transition from primary school to high school. It's both real and relatable.

Tough life lessons are learnt early in *Teenage Boss*, as we follow a mix of teenagers from a myriad of different backgrounds across Australia, take control of the family finances for a month, with some surprising (or perhaps not so surprising) results.

The insightful *What It's Like* series continues in 2018, providing a story-sharing platform for young people from groups who have previously been deprived of an equal space in the media landscape. It embraces diversity, inspires empathy, and encourages young marginalised voices to speak up.

Australian stories are also at the core of our preschool offering. Work is already underway for several new Australian animation series – including *Bluey*, a six-year-old cattle dog whose wild imagination turns ordinary moments into wild adventure; *Strange Chores*, a paranormal comedy about friendship and imagination; and *Spongo, Fuzz and Jalapeña*, three best mates in a town full of crazy contests and a friendship that breaks all the rules.

“Children are curious, they want to see their lives reflected on screen, and they want to laugh out loud. We have an incredible portfolio of new programmes lined up for them”, said Michael Carrington, Head of Children's, ABC. “We want to showcase the lives of Australian kids and their stories on *their* ABC and we're thrilled to be offering them inclusive content that is compelling, funny, and true to our distinct Australian culture.”

Australian children and families trust the ABC to consistently deliver quality programming on devices and platforms of their choosing. Australian children can enjoy even more from the ABC across a variety of platforms. With the success of the ABC KIDS iView app and the ABC ME app, with over 2.5 million downloads, the introduction of family friendly podcasts and this announcement of world class content, the ABC remains committed to this goal.

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COMMISSIONED PROGRAMS - Drama

The New Legends of Monkey

Inspired by the 16th Century Chinese fable Journey to the West, the 10-part half hour series follows a teenage girl and a trio of fallen gods on a perilous journey as they attempt to bring an end to a demonic reign of chaos and restore balance to their world.

ABC ME will be launching the series with a triple-episode (80') telemovie on Sunday the 28th January at 6pm. Immediately following the broadcast, the complete series will be available on ABC iview and the ABC ME app. The remaining 7 episodes will broadcast daily at 6:00pm with the final on Sunday 4th February.

Starts Sunday 28 January at 6pm and continues daily on ABC ME and ABC ME app.

Production credits: See-Saw Films and Jump Film & TV

Producers: Rachael Gardner and Robin Scholes

Runs for: 10 x 24' (linear: 1 x 80' and 7 x 24')

Commissioning Partners: ABC, TVNZ, Netflix

Funding Partners: Screen Australia and Create NSW, Fulcrum Media Finance and the New Zealand Screen Production Grant

Nowhere Boys Season 4 – in production 2018

In the penultimate season the *Nowhere Boys* - Luke, Nicco, Heath and Jesse - are more powerful than ever after a summer of magical training. But with the New Year comes new threats and when a series of elemental attacks hit Bremin, the Gang fear their powers are the cause of the trouble. But all is not as it seems as the Gang discover that dark, chaotic forces have been unleashed on Bremin, intent on dividing them. The Gang's unity is challenged and the future of the entire multiverse hangs in the balance.

Production credits: Matchbox Pictures

Producers: Beth Fry, Tony Ayres, Michael McMahon

Funding Partners: Screen Australia and Film Victoria

Runs for: 13 x 26-minute episodes on ABC ME and the ABC ME app

Grace Beside Me (NiTV/ABC co-commission)

Adapted from the award-winning novel by Sue McPherson, *Grace Beside Me* follows Fuzzy Mac, whose life is turned upside down when, at the age of 13, she discovers she can see ghosts and spirits. But all she wants is to fit in and have fun with her mates. It's hard enough navigating the highs and lows of becoming a teenager while living with your eccentric Nan and Pop, without also having to deal with needy ghosts, mischievous totems and cantankerous Ancestors. Combining whimsy, adventure, comedy and drama, *Grace Beside Me* takes 8 – 12-year-old audiences on a roller coaster adventure as Fuzzy reluctantly learns to accept her gift and understand its importance. With one foot in the Indigenous realm of culture, Country – and spirits – and the other firmly planted in the world of a 21st century teenager, Fuzzy Mac's journey is to realise she belongs to both in her own unique way. She must learn to be herself and to walk in two worlds.

Production credits: Magpie Pictures

Producers: Dena Curtis and Lois Randall

Funding Partners: NiTV, Disney Australia, Screen Australia, Screen Queensland, Create NSW

Runs for: 13 x 26-minute episodes on ABC ME and the ABC ME app



COMMISSIONED PROGRAMS – Animation, in production 2018

Bluey

Bluey is a loveable, ruff-and-tumble little six-year-old girl cattle dog, who lives with her Dad, Mum and her four-year-old little sister, Bingo. Imaginative and curious, Bluey and her sister Bingo love role-playing games. Bluey takes the everyday events of family life (making a cake, paying at the supermarket, trying on shoes) and transforms them with her wild imagination into unique, bizarre gameplay, turning ordinary moments into wild adventures! Gameplay is how Bluey integrates the adult world into her own; it helps Bluey and her sister learn important lessons and deal with the emotional ups and downs of growing up.

Production credits: Ludo Studios

Producers: Daley Pearson and Charlie Aspinwall

Funding Partners: Screen Australia, Screen Queensland, BBC Worldwide

Runs for: 52 x 7-minute episodes on ABC KIDS and the ABC KIDS iView app

The Strange Chores

The Strange Chores is a hilarious new show with a unique voice. Part coming of age story about three best friends, part paranormal comedy, the show draws from several much-loved genres to create an innovative and original story. Charlie and Pierce are two teenage wannabe warrior-heroes who, together with spirited ghost girl Que, master the skills they need to replace an ageing monster slayer by doing his strange, supernatural chores. A quick witted and contemporary animated school age show about friendship and imagination, *The Strange Chores* is anarchic with a small 'a' – a far cry from the zany madness of recent competitor offerings. With engaging, relatable characters in fun, fantasy settings our three best friends have a laugh and cause mischief in strange and surreal lands.

Production credits: Ludo Studios

Producers: Daley Pearson, Charlie Aspinwall and Colin South

Funding Partners: Screen Australia, Film Victoria, Screen Queensland

Runs for: 26 x 11-minute episodes on ABC ME and the ABC ME app

Spongo, Fuzz and Jalapeña

Three best buds, a town full of crazy contests and a friendship that breaks all the rules! Welcome to the town of Champions - whose state-of-the-art stadium plays host to a never-ending parade of weird and wonderful world championships. Whether as spectators, competitors, event judges or the girl who sells the hot dogs, the proud population knows it's all about one thing – the win. Well, maybe with two or three exceptions... 'Cos then there's Spongo, Fuzz and Jalapeña, three best buds on summer break with summer jobs making the most of a town full of world champs. Sometimes that means actually competing in the World's Longest Fingernails Contest, or the Extreme Ice Chess Championship. Sometimes it's a plan to make the perfect noodles, primp up poodles, or combine the two and create noodle-poodles. Sometimes it's all about stopping spoilt rich kid Tyler la Strange treading on the little guy and restoring karmic order to the world! Whatever the case comedy and chaos are guaranteed, because there's no such thing as an easy option.

Production credits: Cheeky Little Media

Producers: David Webster and Patrick Egerton

Funding Partners: Disney Australia, Screen Australia, Create NSW

Runs for: 26 x 12-minute episodes on ABC ME and the ABC ME app



DOCUMENTARY/FACTUAL ENTERTAINMENT

My Year 7 Life

The most highly anticipated year of a student's life is also the one that can change the course of their adult psychology forever - the transition into Year 7. Psychologists have discovered that the way we navigate the change from Top Dog in primary school to Small Fish in high school affects how successfully we navigate our entire lives, making and finding of new friends, dealing with new teachers and surviving puberty critically important. In *My Year 7 Life*, 16 diverse kids from around the country were given cameras to document their transition from primary school to high school. The series goes straight to the source, getting first-hand accounts of monumental changes taking place over their entire first year of high school. Through them we'll discover just how much homework grown-ups still have to do in order to relieve the stress and anxiety around a year that even people who loved high school remember as hard.

Sneak peek of episode 1: Thursday 14th Dec at 4.35pm and full series starts February 2018.

Production credits: Princess Pictures

Producers: Laura Waters and Karla Burt

Funding Partners: Screen Australia and Film Victoria

Runs for: 18 x 26-minute episodes on ABC ME and the ABC ME app

Teenage Boss

What happens when a teenager takes responsibility for the family's finances for a month? In the all new *Teenage Boss* – we'll find out. With star maths teacher and numbers whiz, Eddie Woo as their mentor, we let the teenager assume responsibility for the whole family budget over the course of a month. The ultimate goal is to teach the teenager (and the family) how to spend the money in a balanced way...without running out! Through realistic and fun challenges, these teenagers and their families are seriously put to the test.

Production credits: McAvoy Media

Producers: John McAvoy and Simon Steele

Funding Partners: Screen Australia and Create NSW

Runs for: 15 x 26-minute episodes on ABC ME and the ABC ME app

INTERNAL PROGRAMS

Good Game Spawn Point

ABC ME's show by gamers for gamers is back for another huge year of gaming goodness, with a fresh new look and a few exciting surprises! Exploring the latest in the wonderful world of gaming, from the hottest news to the must-play game reviews, and VIP access to some of the world's biggest gaming events, *Good Game Spawn Point* is the number one videogame show for the whole family.

Production credits: ABC Children's

Runs for: 42 x 24-minute episodes on ABC ME and the ABC ME app

Play School

Join the *Play School* presenters and the toys for some exciting new series in 2018 as they explore, create, sing, tell stories, and discover what's through the windows. Follow our food's journey from paddock to plate in *To Market, To Market*, and invent some extraordinary uses for everyday objects in *Bits and Pieces*. Come on a journey of discovery in *Tracks and Trails*, and explore the world of the imagination in *Once Upon a Time*. Find out who's come to visit *Play School* when some special guests help create toys and games from the recycling in *What is it Now?* and meet some small feathered, fluffy and scaly visitors in *Baby Animals*. There are plenty more surprises, games and fun in store with all new *Play School* in 2018.

Production credits: ABC Children's

Available in 2018 on ABC KIDS and ABC KIDS iView

Giggle and Hoot

In 2018, Jimmy Giggle and his best owl pals are back with new hootastic adventures, exciting top-secret missions and lots of owl naps and owl snacks of course! There will also be a brand-new nighty night song! So get your toothbrushes and beak brushes ready! Through the new year, the Land of Giggle and Hoot will be full of day time fun, gadgets galore and exciting new adventures in the Batty Lair and Gadget Cubby. Each night you can join the owl pals on their nighty night adventures too; Hootogadget will make sure everyone has done their 5 Steps to Bed, while Giggle Fangs heads out on Bat Patrol and Hootabelle twinklifies the stars before Hoot's Night Watch!

Production credits: ABC Children's

Available in 2018 on ABC KIDS and ABC KIDS iView

What It's Like

This is the show where young Australians tell their stories the way they'd like them to be told – by themselves. It's here that young people have their say – to talk about the ups and downs of their situations, to discuss what bothers them, what they find funny, and to share stories about their lives, their personalities and their hopes and dreams. This genuine and real storytelling shows us just how unique we all are, and how you never really know what someone is experiencing until you hear their side of the story. Have you ever thought about what it's like to be adopted, to be a refugee, to have same sex parents or to experience a disability? The great thing about hearing these important stories is that we learn to appreciate all the ways we're different, and all the ways we're the same.

Production credits: ME TV

Runs for: 10 x 8-minute episodes on ABC ME and the ABC ME app

Break the Future

With shiny new upgrades and modified features, ABC ME's weekly future news download *Break the Future* is back in 2018 revealing the latest, greatest, and craziest future inventions from around the world, and beyond! From robotics to space, and the internet to gadgets, *Break the Future* is the show that breaks the news of tomorrow... today!

Production credits: ME TV

Available in 2018 on ABC ME and the ABC ME app

News To Me

The show that puts you in the know is back with all the up to the minute good news stories we can find! *News To Me* is your weekly dose of what's happening in the world, in our country, and even in your back yard! From sports to music, from the internet to the school yard, if it's good news we've got it. With guests dropping by, experiments going wrong, and the occasional strange outfit, *News To Me* brings the news to you!

Production credits: ME TV

Available in 2018 on ABC ME and the ABC ME app

PODCASTS

Short & Curly

Short & Curly is a fast-paced fun-filled ethics podcast for kids and their parents, with questions and ideas to really get you thinking. It asks kids to puzzle over curly questions about animals, technology, school, pop culture and the future. Thanks to our two fabulous hosts, Carl Smith and Molly Daniels, there's lots of time for silliness too. They're also helped out by resident ethicist Matt Beard from The Ethics Centre, a brains-trust of school children and some special high-profile guests including sporting stars and famous musicians.

Short & Curly is designed to be listened to alone or as a family, with questions to think about and time to discuss the ethical conundrums together.

The ABC and WNYC Studios in New York have also co-produced a special five-episode season of *Short & Curly*, which will ask children across the world a series of ethical questions grounded in everyday life. ABC's Carl Smith and Shumita Basu from WNYC Studios will co-host the series. It will be known under the name Pickle for its North American release.

Production credits: ABC Audio Studios and WNYC Studios (Season 5); ABC Audio Studios (Season 6)

Producers: Kyla Slaven for ABC Audio Studios, WNYC Studios Vice President for On-Demand Content Emily Botein

Runs for: Season 5 - 5 x episodes of around 20 minutes on the ABC listen app

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