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ABC AND SCREEN AUSTRALIA INVEST IN LOCAL STORIES FOR CHILDREN

The ABC and Screen Australia are proud to announce a slate of new children's programs that showcase local content, creativity and talent, across drama, comedy and animation.

The additional investment delivers on the ABC's strategy of telling engaging and entertaining Australian stories for children. The ABC's funding of Australian children's content grew 39% in 2017-18, supporting emerging and established Australian talent for broadcast and digital audiences.

Leading the way is ***The InBESTigators***, a new children's comedy by the creators of the award-winning *Little Lunch*. The Gristmill production takes place in an Australian detective agency run by four eleven year olds, who manage to solve one thorny school or neighbourhood mystery after another. While every episode offers a compelling puzzle to crack, at its core the show is a character comedy with heart.

Live-action comedy is at the bouncing heart of ***Hardball***, which showcases the diversity and vibrancy of life in suburban Australia. From creators Matt Zeremes and Guy Edmonds working on their first major series production, alongside Head of Kids, Catherine Nebauer at Northern Pictures, this series features fish-out-of-water Mikey and his misfit mates Salwa and Jerry. Their goal? To make Mikey the sweetest-bestest-acest handball champ that Western Sydney's ever seen.

Lovers of surreal, laugh-out-loud animation will give full marks to ***100% Wolf***, a comedy series about Freddy Lupin, an 11-year-old boy set to turn into a werewolf, just like everyone else in his family. Things don't go as planned when Freddy turns into an adorable poodle instead! Adapted from the popular Australian children's novel, ***100% Wolf*** is produced by Australian animation studio Flying Bark, along with Michael Bouchier and Barbara Stephen.

The Logie-nominated ***Mustangs FC*** will hit the field again for a second series about an all-girls soccer team. Produced by Amanda Higgs and Rachel Davis for Matchbox Pictures, the stellar Australian cast returns after finally beating their biggest rivals – but the new soccer season brings new challenges.

ABC Director of Entertainment and Specialist content David Anderson said: "The ABC is committed to telling funny, engaging and innovative Australian stories for children, created by some of our finest local creatives. These new programs deliver on the ABC's strategy of focusing on high-quality and distinctive Australian content to inform, entertain and inspire children of all ages.

"Only the ABC offers so much extraordinary and relevant content across television and digital platforms, showcasing Australia's amazing stories, settings and talent."



Screen Australia Head of Production Sally Caplan said: "It's vital that young Australians are able to see their country, their stories and hear their accent reflected on the screen, so we are incredibly proud to be working with the ABC on this significant slate of children's programs.

"The characters in *The InBESTigators*, *Mustangs FC*, *100% Wolf* and *Hardball* are distinctive and inclusive, and tell stories that are innovative and culturally significant. We have high hopes young viewers will connect with these tales and keep enjoying Australian content as they grow up."

For media enquiries please contact Tracey Taylor, Marketing Communications Specialist on taylor.tracey@abc.net.au or 03 8646 2313.



COMMISSIONED PROGRAMS

***The InBESTigators* - in production 2018**

The InBESTigators blends the comic, tonal and stylistic DNA of *Little Lunch* with the great tradition of whodunnit. When Ezra Banks (11, aspiring entrepreneur), meets Maudie Miller (10, aspiring Columbo), he sees an opportunity to fill an obvious gap in the market: a detective agency run by children. Maudie and Ezra are joined by two other kids from grade five, Ava and Kyle. Ava brings the social skills and Kyle brings the athletic prowess. Each episode solves a mystery; clues are littered throughout, and the race is on to see if the audience can crack the case before Maudie.

Production credits: *The InBESTigators* is a Gristmill production for ABC TV and Netflix. Principal production investment from Screen Australia in association with ABC. Financed with support from Film Victoria.

Producers: Robyn Butler and Wayne Hope.

Commissioning Broadcasters: ABC & Netflix.

Financing Partners: Screen Australia, Film Victoria and the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF).

Runs for: 20 x 30 minute episodes on ABC ME and the ABC ME app.

International Distribution: ACTF. ***The InBESTigators*** will debut on Netflix outside of Australia/New Zealand.

***Hardball* – in production 2018**

Set in Western Sydney ***Hardball*** is a live action comedy series that follows fish-out-of-water Mikey and his two misfit mates, Salwa and Jerry. Their goal? Make Mikey the sweetest-bestest-acest handball champ Western Sydney's ever seen. He's got the most powerful strike in the world, if only he could make the ball land in the right suburb!

Production credits: A Northern Pictures production for ABC TV. Principal production investment from Screen Australia in association with ABC TV. Financed with support from Create NSW.

Creators: Matt Zeremes and Guy Edmonds.

Producers: Catherine Nebauer and Joe Weatherstone.

Financing Partners: Screen Australia, Create NSW and the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF), Northern Pictures.

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



100% Wolf - in production 2018

Freddy Lupin would be just like any other ordinary eleven-year-old boy... except he is neither ordinary nor simply 'a boy'. He is eleven though... and also a werewolf! Or will be. On the night of his very first transformation, Freddy is set to turn into a strong and brave wolf like everyone in his family before him, but... shock horror! Freddy turns into an adorable POODLE!

Production credits: A Flying Bark production for ABC (Australia) and Super RTL (Germany) with international rights and distribution through Studio 100. Principal production investment from Screen Australia. Financed with support from Screen West and Create NSW.

Producers: Michael Bouchier & Barbara Stephen.

Commissioning Broadcasters: ABC and Super RTL (Germany).

Funding Partners: Screen Australia, Screenwest, and Create NSW.

Runs for: 26 x 22 minute episodes on ABC ME and the ABC ME app.

Mustangs FC Season 2 - in production 2018

Season 2 brings more complex relatable stories about real young women and their friendships, challenges and triumphs. There's more of the Mustangs' signature humour and heart, wrapped round stories about bullying, body image, sexuality, and the politics of moon cups, menstruation and mansplaining.

After getting to the finals last year but missing out on actually raising the trophy, the Mustangs are pumped and ready to get back in the game. Problem is – there's a Ruby shaped hole in the team since she defected to the Wildcats, and it's wobbling everyone. The girls don't even know if they can win a single match without her, never mind the league cup.

Production credits: A Matchbox Productions production for ABC TV.

Principal production investment from ABC in association with Screen Australia. Financed with support from Film Victoria.

Producers: Amanda Higgs and Rachel Davis.

Financing Partners: Screen Australia, Film Victoria and NBCUniversal.

Runs for: 13 x 24 minute episodes on ABC ME and the ABC ME app.

International distribution: NBCUniversal Distribution.

How do I get ABC ME?

ABC ME is available on channel 23 on free to air, channel 723 on Foxtel and via our free ABC ME app.

When does ABC ME air?

ABC ME broadcasts every day of the week from 5am to around 10pm.