



DOCUMENTARY  
AUSTRALIA

# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

## 2024-2025

Songs Inside



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## Message from the CEO

In 2020 the Documentary Australia board and team set a bold 10-year strategic plan for the decade and in 2025, we reviewed this strategy. In consideration of the turbulent changes in the world, the amplification of division, the ever-pressing social issues and the need to hear from voices of those ignored by mainstream media, we set a new roadmap. We made a commitment to act, to move forward with courage and to continue to identify and share what is sacred about the documentary form. We are focused on what must be preserved and what must transform to meet emerging needs.

We wrapped up two of our three-year programs this year – the Environmental Accelerator and the Impact Producer Program. Both programs supported filmmakers to reach audiences and drive social change. The Impact Producer Program developed the skills of eight individuals who were immersed in strategy, implementation, partnerships, fundraising and evaluation. Resources developed for the program will continue to be shared with the broader sector through ongoing masterclasses and in-person workshops across the country.

One of our events centred on thought leadership in these troubling times with a screening of a 30-year-old documentary of mine, *Hatred*, which was restored this year. Sadly, more relevant than ever, this documentary calls for reflection on our individual capacity for hatred and how this can be appealed to, manipulated and orchestrated into collective manifestations of violence. The screening convened a conversation between Kim Williams – ABC Chair, Ian McGill – media lawyer, and myself, moderated by journalist Debbie Whitmont, who invited the audience to put aside differences and rise to the challenge of personal and philosophical consideration. Documentary has enormous power to provoke insights and catalyse thoughts and actions.

For the past 18 years, Documentary Australia has successfully helped films be made, now we must work harder than ever to help them be seen. Our updated resource [DocAccess](#) provides tools for all communities to find and host documentaries. We will be promoting this widely in the coming year.

None of this would be possible without my extraordinary team. Each one is passionate about the work, dedicated to excellence and a joy to work with. Each year our expertise grows as we evaluate outcomes, strengthen internal processes and innovate new ways to reach and unite audiences through programs and partnerships. Most importantly, without the generosity of our donors and partners, we couldn't share the heartfelt labour, love and profound documentary stories our filmmakers create. We hope you enjoy this snapshot of the 2024-2025 year and we welcome your insights.

Thank you for being part of our extended family.

Dr Mitzi Goldman  
CEO, Documentary Australia



## Message from the Chair

The 2024-2025 year was productive, engaging and fulfilling for the board, the team, our filmmakers and partners, despite the turmoil of world events.

I was very pleased to welcome some new donors to our fold, notably Jane Hansen of the Hansen Little Foundation, and we look forward to working together over the coming years. We also celebrated long-standing relationships that we have had with others, notably Shark Island Foundation and more recently the Dyson Bequest, who have supported our Impact Producer Program from inception through to completion.

For me, a highlight in 2025 was to review our 10-year strategy halfway through. We revised our direction and set up a workable blueprint for the next five years. With clarity and perspective, we developed new initiatives. There is an ever increasing need to support filmmakers to get their films made and seen and to engage young audiences.

Storytelling is as old as time and truth telling through the eyes of talented filmmakers is even more important with each passing year. Documentary allows people to access stories and truths from a multitude of perspectives, revealing the strength of the human spirit, even in the most testing circumstances.

One of the documentaries I saw last year that had a profound impact on me was the beautiful film, *Porcelain War*. It offered a metaphor of the fine art of porcelain, painted to illustrate aspects of enduring culture amidst the violence of the Russian war on Ukraine. For me, it symbolised the fragility of the world and the inspiration that a gifted artist is prepared to risk life to defend his country and culture. Seeing these kinds of stories, that approach the horror of war so delicately, poetically and artistically, transport me from my comfortable world into theirs, building understanding and compassion.

History is a great judge. They say, "Learning from the mistakes of others makes you a wise man." Documentary shines a light on some very challenging topics. If we are ever going to progress as a society, we must learn from the mistakes of the past. Assessing, re-calibrating priorities, drawing on strength and optimism, looking back to consider the future and sharing stories is what we do.

As Chair of Documentary Australia, I am indebted to the board and the staff for the excellent work they do each and every year. The number of documentaries that come to us seeking support grows each year. We closely assess each project on its merit and intention. We work together to deliver good governance and great outcomes. It is always a pleasure to serve this industry. Thank you to our generous community of donors. We could not deliver the impact we do without your loyal support.

Andrew Myer AM  
Chair, Documentary Australia



## Executive summary

In 2024-2025, Documentary Australia:

- Supported a diverse slate of almost 500 documentaries addressing some of the most pressing issues of our time
- Enabled up to 400 filmmakers to secure philanthropic funding, strengthen their campaigns, and connect with audiences and decision-makers
- Strengthened values-aligned partnerships based on impact goals and evaluation
- Expanded impact work through four tailored industry capacity building programs
- Helped films achieve real-world outcomes through screenings, outreach and educational programs
- Invested in long-term sector sustainability through advocacy and leadership
- Refreshed our 10-year strategic plan until 2030

**454**

**active documentaries**

**38%**

**increase in applications  
this financial year**

*"Documentary Australia is the main voice advocating for the documentary sector in Australia which is very valuable."*  
– Filmmaker

**4**

**major programs  
supporting documentary  
filmmakers and projects**

**7,500+**

**event participants**

*"I support documentary to give voice to important issues and reach more people. It has the power to open closed eyes and to broaden understanding. I support creativity because most of us lack that gift." – Donor*

**59%**

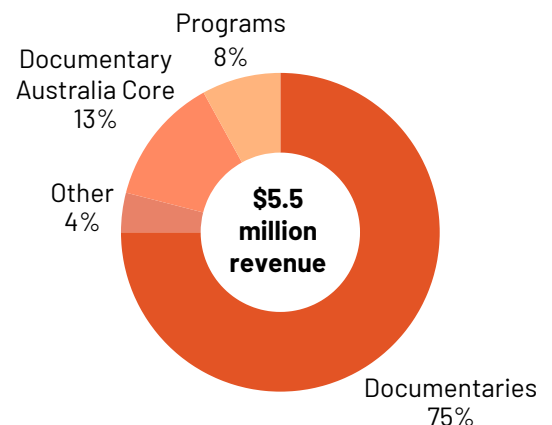
**female-identifying  
producers and directors**

**98%**

**filmmakers say their film  
improved awareness,  
understanding or attitudes**

**\$4,053,159**

**donated to documentary films**



# We support powerful stories for positive social change

## ► Our vision

At a time when trust has been eroded and the truth can't always be relied on in mainstream or social media, documentary storytelling is becoming more important than ever. Our vision is to see the depth and nuance that documentary offers as central to social change campaigns and accessible across many platforms to offer diverse and authentic perspectives on the most pressing social issues.

## ► Who we are and what we do

Documentary Australia's purpose is to advance awareness and inspire action on critical social issues by empowering independent documentary filmmakers and organisations on the forefront of social change. In 2024-2025, Documentary Australia continued its unwavering commitment to leveraging the power of storytelling for social change. Through a combination of impactful documentaries, strategic partnerships and dedicated donor support, we have made significant strides in advancing our mission.

## ► How we work

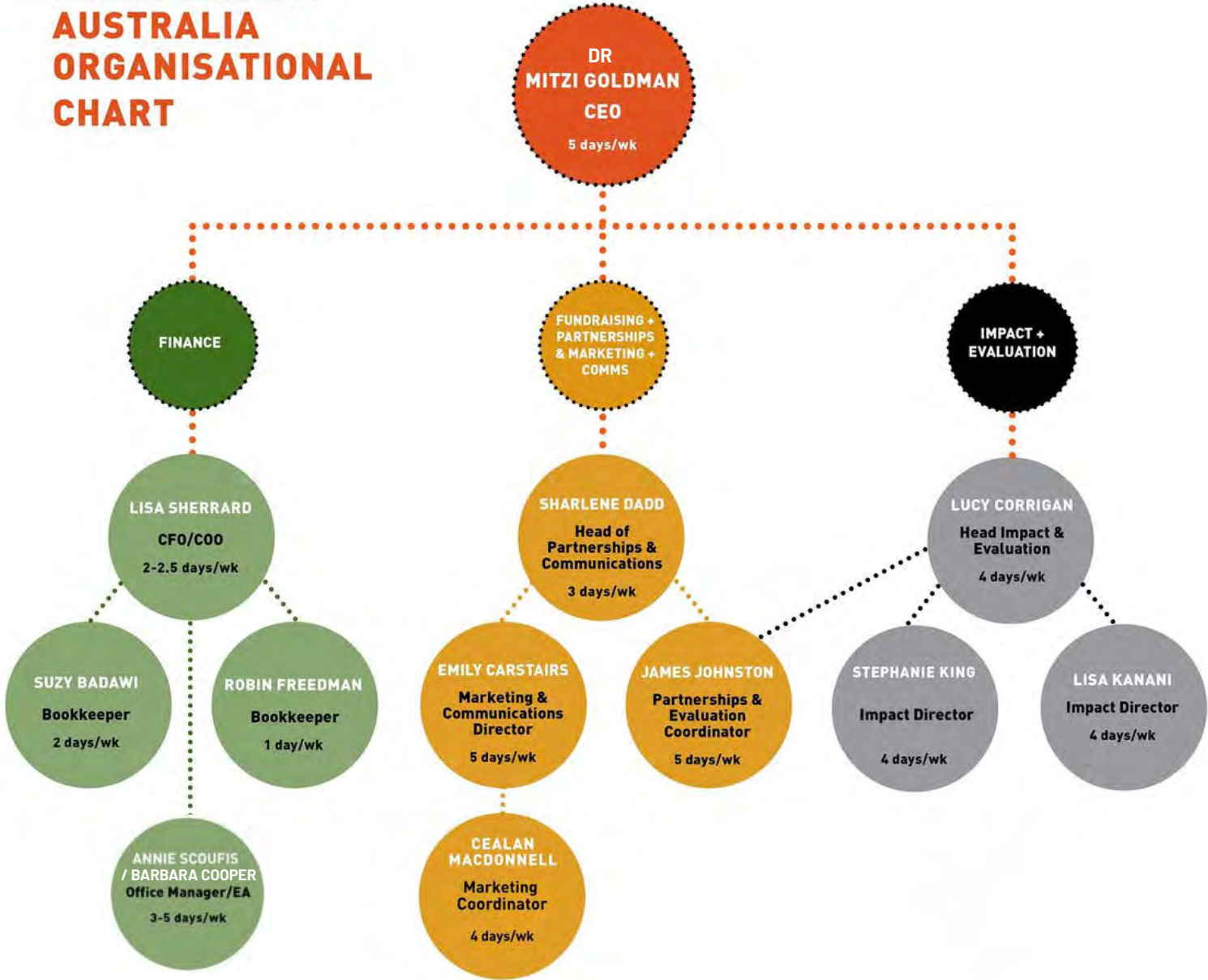
Integrity, inclusiveness, innovation and inspiration are our values. These inform our strategic focus on four key aims: Great Films, Great Partnerships, Great Impact and Leadership & Advocacy.

We achieve these aims by building and supporting our community through:

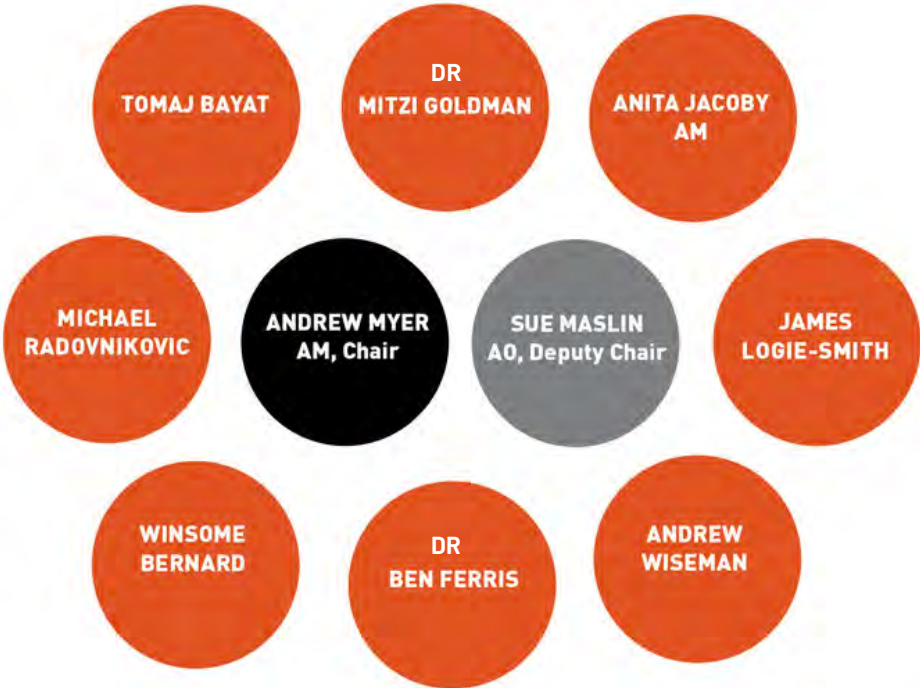
- Filmmaker capacity building and support
- Fundraising and donor stewardship
- Communications, digital advice and promotions
- Events and screening programs
- Partner and industry engagement
- Innovative programs and partnerships
- Sector leadership and representation
- Evaluation and reporting
- Advocacy



DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA ORGANISATIONAL CHART



THE BOARD



# GREAT FILMS

Delikado



## WE SUPPORT DOCUMENTARIES TO BE MADE

**This year demonstrated strong growth and momentum, with a significant rise in demand for support for new and important stories. The films tell diverse, intersectional stories, led by a broad range of filmmakers including female, culturally diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytellers. Through programs like SheDoc, skill-building workshops and philanthropic support, Documentary Australia has provided credibility, funding pathways and a model for impact, helping filmmakers create socially meaningful, widely seen and award-winning work.**



### The documentaries

This financial year, applications to Documentary Australia increased to 146, a 38% increase from the previous financial year, reflecting the vitality of the sector and the increasingly important role we play in supporting documentaries to be made.

Projects span the full documentary lifecycle, from early development through to completion, release and impact, with over 30 documentaries completed each year. In 2024-2025, 71 documentaries were completed in total, 49 of which have been released.

Strong partnerships and collaborations underpin these projects, connecting creatives, broadcasters, distributors, impact partners, community organisations, NGOs, academic institutions and international bodies. These relationships support creative development, story access, funding and the long-term legacy of each project.



### Quality productions

Our approved documentaries continue to receive an overwhelmingly positive reception and strong critical acclaim.

In addition to traditional release and distribution channels, our supported documentaries are being used by organisations and communities for a range of purposes including education and training (44%), community events (41%), advocacy and information campaigns (34%) and to support fundraising (28%), to name a few.

146

new documentary applications

38%

increase in applications this financial year

108

completed documentaries on our website (24%)

30+

documentaries being completed every year

Of the documentaries completed in 2024-2025:

69%

festival acceptance

41%

have a cinema release and were nominated for or won awards

31%

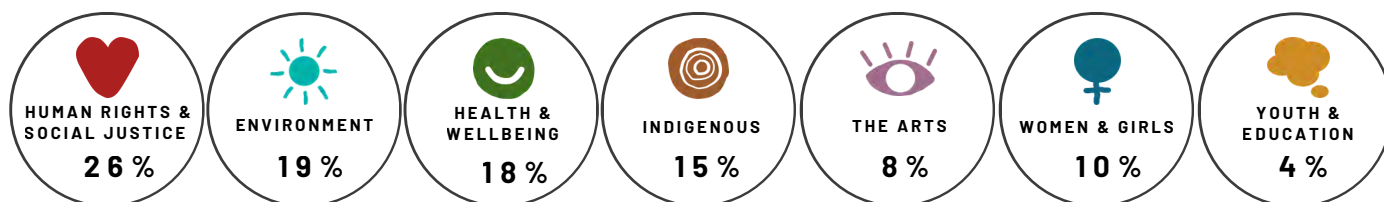
are to be broadcast

## Diverse stories and voices

Collectively, our approved documentaries illuminate contemporary issues, uncover new perspectives, and give voice to unseen or misunderstood experiences. Through archiving, preservation and long-term accessibility, they build legacy and cultural value, creating public records and personal memories that enrich our social fabric.

### ➤ Diverse stories

Our approved documentaries continue to capture and share meaningful stories across seven issue areas. While the documentaries are highly intersectional, the primary issue areas represented are led by human rights and social justice topics, the environment, health and wellbeing, and Indigenous stories, alongside women and girls, the arts, and youth and education.

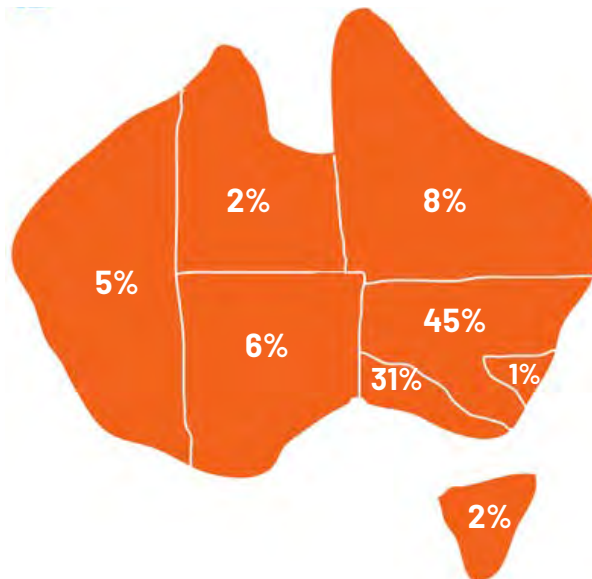


The breakdown of primary issue areas for our current films

**59%** female-identifying producers and directors

**28%** identify as culturally and linguistically diverse

**8%** identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



The breakdown of where our filmmakers are based by state



# SheDoc 2016-2024

## Context

SheDoc was born from a vision to amplify women's voices in documentary filmmaking and challenge a long-standing industry imbalance. In 2017, women made up just 46% of producers, 38% of writers and only 34% of directors in documentary (Screen Australia), revealing gaps not just in filmmaker representation, but in the stories being told.

## About the program

Launched in late 2016, SheDoc became Australia's only initiative dedicated to supporting female documentary filmmakers. Operating as a Fellowship, it offered grants of \$10,000-\$30,000 to filmmakers at any stage of their career, in any key creative role. They received mentorship, bespoke professional development, travel opportunities, and career-shaping support. From 2016-2023, Fellows included Vera Hong, Gemma Quilty, Charlotte Mars, Philippa Bateman, Justine Moyle and Georgia Quinn

In 2024, the program focused on Queensland-based talent, and prioritised applicants from under-represented communities, including First Nations, LGBTQIA+, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, regional and remote areas, and people living with disability. Recipients included Jo-Anne Brechin, Kate Boylan Ascione, Nu'utea Marie Lea Robillot, Sasha Parlett, Mags Scholes, and Veronica Fury. [Read more here.](#)

12

SheDoc participants

\$206k

disbursed to filmmakers

100%

Fellows agreed SheDoc was a valuable opportunity

## Achievements

The impact of SheDoc has been profound. It has transformed careers, strengthened the diversity of voices in documentary, and contributed to a shift in the industry toward greater gender equity. The latest Screen Australia data shows that in 2024-2025, documentary production exceeded parity across all key creative roles, with women representing 56% overall – producers at 60%, and directors and writers reaching 53% and 52%, respectively.

SheDoc has not just contributed to changing numbers, it has changed narratives. It has created pathways for women to lead, to innovate, and to tell stories that would otherwise remain unheard. It has nurtured a generation of filmmakers who are reshaping Australia's documentary landscape, proving that when women are empowered, the stories and the world become richer, more vibrant and more just.



**"SheDoc was instrumental in empowering my skills consolidation and gifting me access and learnings that allowed me to develop new skills in leadership, social impact producing and more."**  
– Filmmaker

**"One of the best things SheDoc did for my career was to give me the confidence to step up professionally and do what I want to do. It was a game-changer for me personally and professionally."** – Filmmaker



Funders:



Estate of James Simpson Love



DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA | ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2024-2025



# GREAT PARTNERSHIPS

Hazara Town

## WE ENSURE DOCUMENTARIES ARE SUPPORTED

We have strengthened our impact at Documentary Australia through loyal donors, successful grant applications and strategic collaborations. Donations and grants directed to documentary projects accounted for the majority of revenue, reflecting strong supporter confidence in the power of film to inform, inspire and spark action. Initiatives such as the Sydney Film Festival Award for Best Australian Documentary and the national DocAccess resource enable filmmakers and communities to connect, showcase stories, and engage audiences across our seven key issue areas.

### Funds raised

In 2024-2025, the organisation operated within a challenging philanthropic fundraising environment shaped by ongoing global and political uncertainty. Despite this, the continued loyalty and commitment of our donor community enabled Documentary Australia to successfully meet its fundraising target for the financial year, ensuring the sustainability of core organisational operations.

Donations for documentary projects and Documentary Australia-run programs accounted for 75% of our total revenue. A total of \$4,053,159 was donated directly to documentary films, underscoring strong supporter confidence in documentary as an impactful art form.

We submitted 38 grant applications and achieved a success rate of 64%, with the majority of successful grants supporting film projects.

**\$4,053,159**

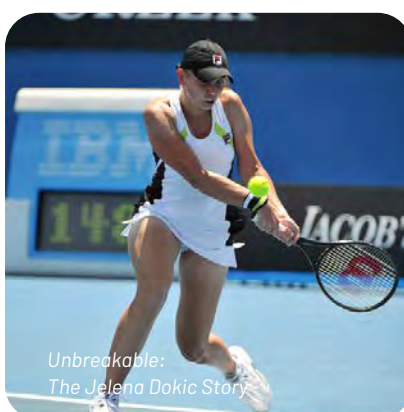
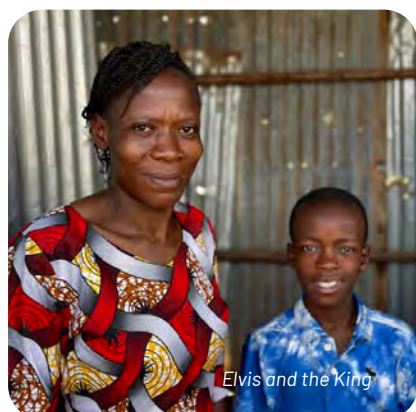
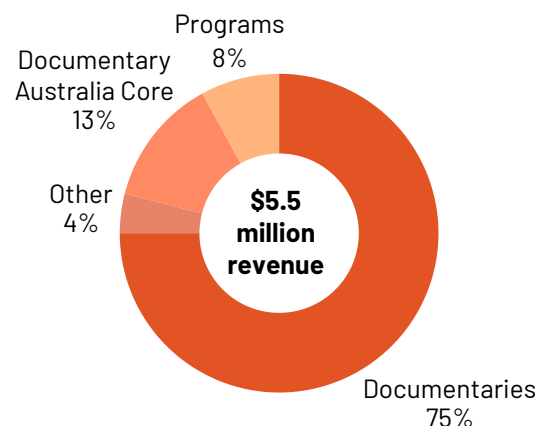
donated to documentary films

**38**

grants submitted

**64%**

success rate



## Donor perspectives

### Why do you choose to support Documentary Australia and why do you think documentaries matter?

*"To give voice to important issues and reach more people. It has the power to open closed eyes and to broaden understanding. I support creativity because most of us lack that gift."* – Donor

*"Because of the impact I believe documentaries can have and the way they challenge our thoughts and actions."* – Donor

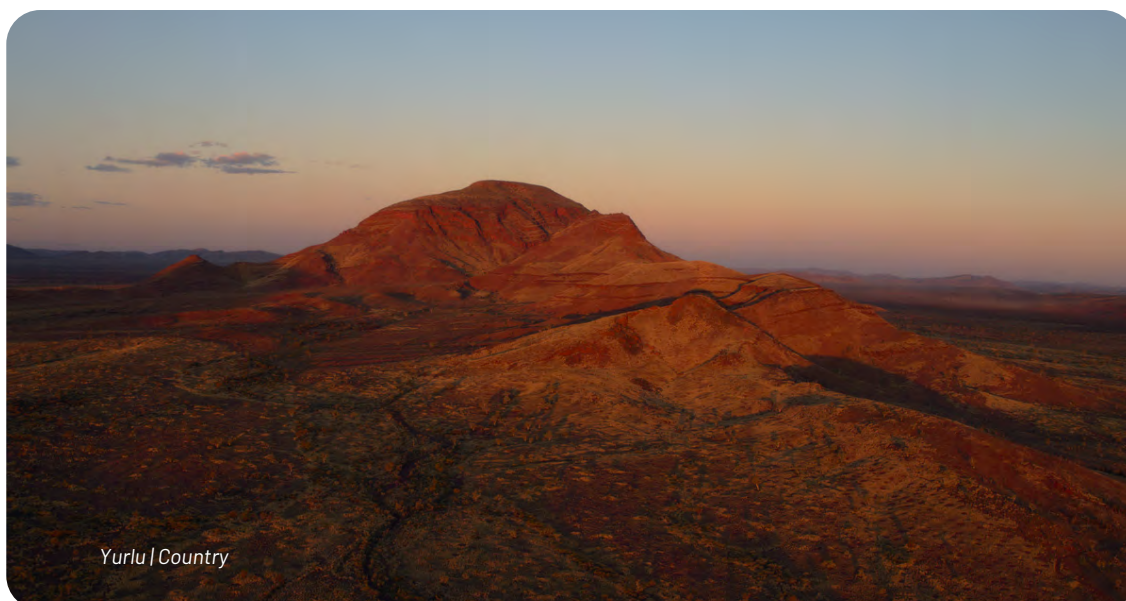
*"To support thoughtful, respectful and inclusive public debate by an informed public who are able to engage in meaningful public debate."* – Donor

*"Quality of productions and range of social change projects is 1st class!"* – Donor

*"They tell us stories that help us connect more deeply with others, and therefore ourselves, increasing our capacity for action and for living in accordance with our values and our Mother Earth."* – Donor

*"Great documentaries make me feel like a citizen rather than a consumer."* – Donor

*"Important to inform people, through compelling storytelling and backed by in-depth, quality research. It challenges how we see ourselves and our world."* – Donor



Yurlu | Country

### **Shark Island: 25 years of “staying the course”**

Ian Darling founded Shark Island Productions in 2000 when making his first film *Woodstock for Capitalists*, and later partnered with acclaimed editor Sally Fryer. Early success with *Alone Across Australia* (2004), a low-budget adventure film that screened at more than 200 festivals and won 50 awards, confirmed the power of a compelling story.

While on the US festival circuit, Ian saw how deeply philanthropy supported American documentary and realised Australian filmmakers were chasing the wrong audience.

*“The sector was targeting the wrong funding source... they should have been targeting philanthropic funds rather than investment funds.”* – Ian Darling

However, Australian philanthropists had no mechanism to give, so he set about building one. In 2006, Ian founded Documentary Australia Foundation with Mitzi Goldman and Susan MacKinnon – creating a DGR pathway that unlocked philanthropic support for documentary.

In 2008, Ian produced and directed *The Oasis*, a Shark Island Productions documentary on youth homelessness that influenced government policy and provided Australia’s proof of concept – that documentaries could deliver positive social outcomes. Shark Island has continued to deliver acclaimed social impact documentaries, including *Paul Kelly – Stories of Me* (2012), *The Final Quarter* (2019) and *The Pool* (2024), as well as *Life After The Oasis* (2019) and *The Department* (2020), continuing a creative collaboration with Director Sascha Ettinger Epstein.

In 2014, Shark Island Institute and Documentary Australia co-presented Good Pitch to Australia in partnership with Philanthropy Australia, Pro Bono Australia, Doc Society, Sundance Institute and Ford Foundation, and then went on to present two subsequent events. Unlike international models, the Australian version secured major philanthropic commitments and provided long-tail stewardship. 19 films were supported over a decade, including *The Hunting Ground*, which achieved “one of the most profound effects of any film in Australia in terms of legislative change.”

Shark Island Institute, including Shark Island Foundation and the artist residencies at Kangaroo Valley, has become a dedicated philanthropic engine for documentary that has provided consistent leadership, and a stable presence the sector can rely on.

We congratulate Shark Island Productions on 25 years of storytelling, an inspiring milestone for an Australian documentary production company. Ian and his team, Sally Fryer, Mary Macrae, Kate Hodges and Alisha Manning, offer a home and a lighthouse to the documentary community. The documentaries created and supported through the Institute spotlight the powerful outcomes made possible through documentary in communities globally.

Not only has Shark Island provided leadership in producing and supporting quality Australian documentaries with powerful impacts, they have strategically contributed to the documentary ecosystem Australia needed but didn’t have. Ian reflects that the achievement he is proudest of is simple, “We’ve stayed the course.” A quarter century on, that course has helped to reshape Australian documentary.

## Dyson Bequest: Celebrating 25 years of impactful giving

Founded 25 years ago by Bruce and Janie Dyson, the Dyson Bequest was later entrusted to Bruce's nephew, John Dyson, and Janie's daughter, Rose Gilder.

Inheriting significant resources but minimal formal guidelines, they shaped a proactive, trust-based approach to philanthropy. Influenced by John's venture capital background, the Dyson Bequest prioritises long-term relationships and backing people with the capacity to deliver meaningful impact, rather than relying on traditional annual application and acquittal processes.

John and Rose became aware of Documentary Australia through charities they supported, including BackTrack Youthworks in Armidale. Their work was captured and amplified through *Backtrack Boys*, a film that was Executive Produced by Documentary Australia. Witnessing the genuine impact documentaries can have for organisations and communities deepened their appreciation for the power of storytelling to illuminate diverse experiences and address community challenges.

*"Documentary Australia has got a really important role to play... if they disappeared, that would leave a huge gulf in the industry."* – John Dyson

In 2020, Documentary Australia introduced the concept of the Impact Producer Program to John and Rose. The program aligned perfectly with the Bequest's philosophy of supporting real-world outcomes and they committed multi-year funding to the program.

*"I think the Impact Producer Program has been super successful. They've trained eight impact producers who would never have had this opportunity otherwise. They've also created a wealth of resources for the broader documentary industry, which will benefit future impact producers. I think that's gold."* – John Dyson

The Dyson Bequest exemplifies a model of giving that is grounded in trust, relationships and strategic initiatives that deliver meaningful immediate and lasting change.

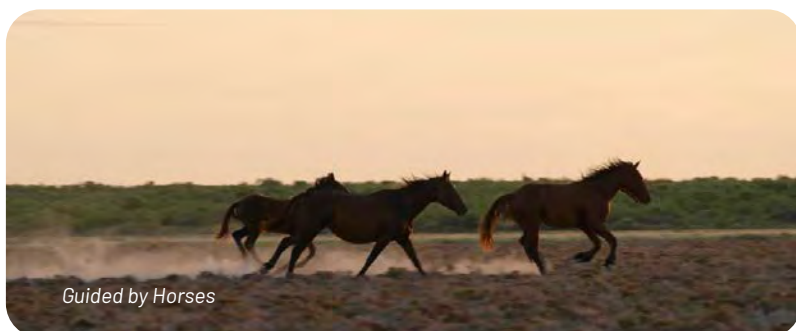


## Fundraising snapshots

### ▶ **Guided by Horses**      **\$404,010 – 24 donations**

Director Sean O'Reilly and producer Sophy Crane found that broad marketing and paid social media were less effective than targeted, relationship-based fundraising for their documentary on the healing power of wild horses for Aboriginal teenagers. By carefully researching and approaching foundations and philanthropists aligned with youth wellbeing and community, they built long-term, personal relationships with donors. The filmmakers reported that Documentary Australia played a pivotal role through fundraising guidance that led to major contributions, including a significant donation from the FutureGen Foundation directly supporting the film's subject program, Yawardani Jan-ga.

The filmmakers credit their fundraising success to persistence, clearly communicating their passion, and prioritising quality over quantity in donor engagement. By connecting with supporters who genuinely resonated with the film's mission and investing in individual relationships, they strengthened both the fundraising effort and the foundation of the film itself.



"We've got a unique relationship with supporters at an individual level... each relationship has helped us build the making of this film." – Sean O'Reilly, Director

### ▶ **Jordan Liberty**      **\$36,872 – 219 donations**

Director and producer Jason King began the project to share his own experience of loss "in the hope it might help others." Turning the camera on himself meant transforming private grief into public storytelling, a demanding emotional process grounded in a clear desire to create meaningful community impact.

Fundraising mirrored this deeply personal, community-led approach. Drawing on two decades living in Broken Hill and his background in community development, Jason took a proactive stance by mobilising local networks, hosting grassroots events, and using social media to share videos and build steady engagement. Though candidly described as "a slog," these efforts helped the project reach close to 80% of its initial fundraising target and generated outcomes far beyond funding, including new partnerships, a legacy mental health space, and direct community impact. This is most powerfully reflected when a young person contacted Beyond Blue after seeing a post and now has a mental health plan and has experienced mental health improvements. As Jason says, this reinforces the project's core belief: "If it saves even one life, it is worthwhile."



## ▶ **Hard As Puck**

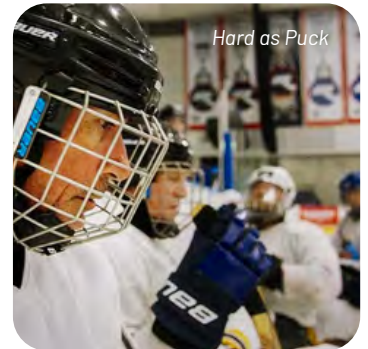
**\$67,180 – 66 donations**

Currently in production, this feel-good documentary follows a team of Para-Ice Hockey players striving to earn a place on the Australian team. As the 2024 recipient of ScreenWest's Brian Beaton Award, the project's significance and potential impact are already being recognised.

Fundraising began with a \$50,000 donation from Shark Island Foundation and then a further 65 philanthropic donations totalling \$17,180 raised through Documentary Australia. The team has demonstrated how a compelling story, persistence, and creative engagement can successfully mobilise supporters.

A key strategy was hosting a fundraising event at Perth's Backlot Theatre. Producer Chanel Bowen researched arts, disability, and WA-focused organisations and used their supporter lists to identify potential donors, while executive producers Ian Hale and Rebecca Bignell activated aligned contacts within their own networks. The team also expanded reach by asking event registrants, "Do you recommend inviting anyone else?", uncovering new supporters, and kept the 50-person event cost-effective through in-kind food and beverage support, alongside a presentation, personal pitch, and silent auction of donated items and produce from Chanel's vegetable garden.

*"You need to tell a compelling story if you want people to donate."* – Chanel Bowen



## **WE SUPPORT VISIBILITY**

### ▶ **Sydney Film Festival partnership**

Since 2014, Documentary Australia has sponsored the Award for Best Australian Documentary at Sydney Film Festival, offering a \$20,000 cash prize and eligibility for Academy Award consideration to the winning film.

#### **Winner of the Documentary Australia Award for Best Australian Documentary 2025:**

##### ***Songs Inside***

Director: Shalom Almond

Producers: Katrina Lucas, Lauren Drewery, Shalom Almond

*"The film was so intimate and rewarding...it completely touched our hearts."* – Judges Paul Clarke, Camilla Mazzaferro and Visakesa Chandrasekaram

*"Songs Inside has been nearly five years in the making and has been such a labour of love, so to see it now resonating with audiences is just so special. Documentary Australia has been by our side throughout the entire process of making Songs Inside."*  
– Shalom Almond, Director

[View the 10 finalists for the 2025 Documentary Australia Award](#)

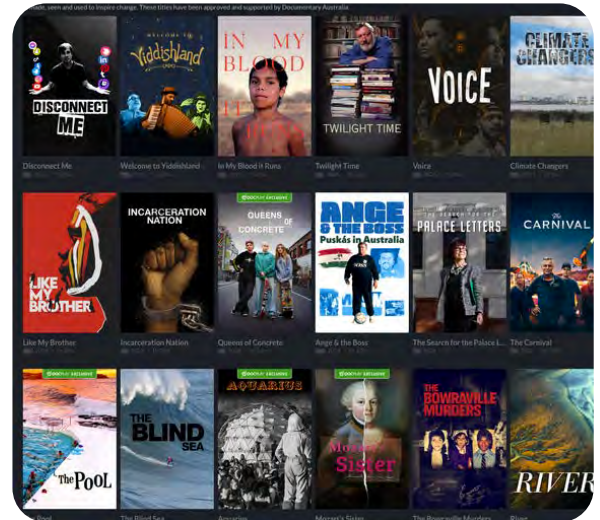


## ▶ DocPlay partnership

We are proud to continue our partnership with DocPlay, the dedicated home of quality documentaries in Australia and New Zealand. Explore a wide range of Documentary Australia-supported films on their streaming platform [here](#).



**96** Documentary Australia-supported films



## ▶ DocAccess initiative

DocAccess is a national resource that was created by Documentary Australia with support from Screenrights to help communities and organisations access and screen documentaries.

Featuring curated playlists of over 85 documentaries across ten key areas – Environment, Health & Wellbeing, Human Rights & Social Justice, Indigenous, The Arts, Women & Girls, Youth & Education, Disability, LGBTIQ+ and Culturally & Linguistically Diverse – DocAccess guides users through licensing, event planning, and facilitating meaningful dialogue and action.

Since its launch, DocAccess has attracted many visitors, frequent resource downloads, and growing enquiries to film teams. By streamlining the process of connecting communities with documentary films, DocAccess is set to become a vital tool for changemakers across Australia.

The ongoing roll out of this initiative is supported by a multi-year grant from the Hansen Little Foundation.

HANSEN LITTLE  
FOUNDATION

screenrights

# GREAT IMPACT

Left Write Hook



## DOCUMENTARIES CREATE REAL CHANGE

Documentary Australia's initiatives have shown how documentaries spark meaningful change. By training impact producers and supporting documentary impact campaigns, we have leveraged films as catalysts for action – empowering audiences, building community engagement, and influencing real-world outcomes. Our programs demonstrate the power of documentaries not just to inform, but to inspire, mobilise, and create lasting impact.



### Outcomes

Filmmaker reports of contributions to specific outcomes

**90%**

Improved connection/  
engagement around a  
social issue



**92%**

Increased visibility of  
diverse voices/  
perspectives



**98%**

Improved awareness,  
understanding or  
attitudes



**73%**

Organisational  
outcomes

**61%**

Systems change



**91%**

Community outcomes

**81%**

Increased action on  
social issues



# Impact Producer Program

## Context

The first of its kind in Australia, Documentary Australia's Impact Producer Program was created to meet a growing need for skilled professionals to transition into the role of an impact producer for documentary films – forging new pathways to audiences and using documentaries as tools for social change.

## About the program

Over three years, our eight participants gained access to Documentary Australia's impact and fundraising expertise through specialist training and hands-on experience working on current documentary campaigns.

## Achievements

We developed 10 specialised learning modules covering impact strategy, distribution, campaign implementation, education, fundraising, budgeting, communications and evaluation. The modules included screenings, learning tasks and case studies with the Documentary Australia team and industry experts.

Participants contributed to current impact campaigns for nine documentaries, including *Climate Changers*, *Undercover*, *Rachel's Farm*, *Trailblazers*, *Songs Inside*, *Stay Tuned to Our Planet*, *Yurlu | Country*, *White Rock* and *Sukundimi Walks Before Me*. Their work spanned research, strategy design, partnerships, fundraising, and resource creation.

Nine public masterclasses brought together more than 25 leading voices in directing, producing, fundraising, education, campaigning, and impact for the broader audience. With 2,500+ registrations, these sessions created valuable learning and networking opportunities for the industry as a whole. These sessions are now freely available for sector-wide capacity building. [Watch here.](#)

The program has launched eight emerging impact producers into the field. Five alumni have been working on campaigns, including *Trailblazers*, *Floodland*, *Left Write Hook*, *Yurlu | Country*, *Stay Tuned to Our Planet* and *PTSD Love Stories*. Three others are contributing to screen education, social impact storytelling, and community arts, demonstrating the program's success in cultivating a skilled, passionate impact workforce.

**280** program applications

**10** specialist modules created & delivered

**9** documentaries supported

**8** emerging impact producers trained

**5** alumni working on active campaigns

**9** masterclasses delivered

**1,100** masterclass attendees

**25** expert panellists featured

**96%** attendees reported increased understanding



Funders:



Venue: **SHARK ISLAND**  
Partner: **INSTITUTE**

## Comments from our eight participants



*"The program has given me the confidence to think laterally across sectors and industries. Hearing so many examples of different distribution pathways, impact activities, outputs and case studies was eye-opening."* – Jess Hamilton (2025)



*"A tangible outcome for me is my new role on Yurlu | Country. There are a few other opportunities in the pipeline that would not have been possible without the program."* – Matisse Walkden-Brown (2025)



*"The mentorship and support has been invaluable. Their guidance is something I'll carry forward well beyond the program's end."* – Aprille Asfoura (2024)



*"An incredible combination of structured learning, hands-on work experience and 1:1 mentoring. The program has given me a leg up into an entirely new industry, and the confidence to now freelance as an emerging Impact Producer."* – Anna Jane Linke (2024)



*"A whirlwind of information, case studies, amazing impact docs and practical exercises. I have learnt a lot... Thanks Documentary Australia!"* – Andrea Foxworthy (2023)



*"A deep dive into the various elements and approaches required in the field of impact producing... I'm excited to take what we've learned and put it into practice."* – Rowena Potts (2023)



*"I've developed a comprehensive toolkit... and I look forward to applying that in 2024 as I continue to work as an Impact Producer for the film Trailblazers."* – Natasha Akib (2023)



*"What an incredible learning, growing, expansive year. Documentary Australia created the most safe, caring, expert-led, cross cultural moment for me."* – Mel Harwin (2023)

## Next Steps

Building on the program's success, Documentary Australia is expanding its national impact training through new Advancing Impact workshops, supported by Screenwest, Screen NSW and others, ensuring continued opportunities for practitioners to learn about impact and storytelling across the country.



# Environmental Accelerator

## Context

In 2022 the Ipsos Climate Change Report found that 83% Australians were concerned about climate change, yet only 54% felt they could make a meaningful difference. Documentaries have a unique ability to bridge the gap between awareness and action on environmental issues, transforming the abstract to the urgent, and motivating audiences to act.

## About the program

In November 2022, we launched the Environmental Accelerator to support documentaries to increase awareness and inspire real-world action on a range of pressing environmental issues.

Over three years, our impact program supported nine documentaries with pro-bono impact campaign support, working with film teams to maximise releases, outreach, and social outcomes. Support included impact strategy and evaluation; budgeting and fundraising advice; campaign implementation tools and templates; amplification of documentary releases; and partnership opportunities.

The initiative was not just an impact program, but also a public campaign for change.

## Achievements

We collaborated with a world-class cohort of filmmakers and impact producers to provide pro-bono support to documentary impact campaigns, including *Greenhouse By Joost*, *The Giants*, *Delikado*, *Rachel's Farm*, *Climate Changers*, *Stay Tuned To Our Planet*, *Yurlu | Country*, *White Rock* and *Sukundimi Walks Before Me*.

We presented 33 screenings and events, showcasing a broader cohort of 20 documentaries to an audience of over 6,700 attendees, and generating over 6,000 engagements with environmental actions.

We worked with or supported a wide network of partners to bring environmental documentaries to new audiences and amplify strategic calls to action, including ACMI, Bob Brown Foundation, Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action, Climate Action Network Australia, Climate Council, Earth Hour, Future Super, Global Witness, Intrepid Travel, National Tree Day, Our Islands Our Homes, Rewiring Australia, TEDxSydney and more.

Across multiple documentaries the program has generated tangible outcomes – increasing audience engagement, building community networks, influencing policy (*Delikado*, *White Rock*), supporting climate education and youth empowerment (STTOP), and facilitating national discourse on climate leadership (*Climate Changers*).

The Environmental Accelerator not only strengthened the capacity of filmmakers, but it moved people from concern to action, empowering audiences and communities to engage with meaningful, real-world solutions. It proves that with the right infrastructure and support, documentaries can move beyond awareness to act as agents for change, creating lasting social and ecological impact.

9

impact campaigns supported

20

documentaries amplified

33

screenings and events

6,700

event attendees

6,000+

engagements with environmental actions

Supporters:



Mamoma Foundation

FWH FOUNDATION

Planet Ark



## Program-supported documentary snapshots

### ▶ White Rock

*White Rock* highlights the explosion of long-spined sea urchins devastating Australia's kelp forests and was one of three films selected for the third year of the Environmental Accelerator.

The program provided the film team with comprehensive strategic input on impact and evaluation design, and implementation planning. We have provided substantial fundraising support, developed a fundraising strategy, hosted VIP and workplace screenings, and stewarded prospective supporters to donate to the film's campaign.

*"The connections we were exposed to were super valuable... introductions and guidance throughout the process was really great."* - Filmmaker

*White Rock* premiered in March 2025 with screenings at 50 locations in the Ocean Film Festival, before commencing its east coast Q&A screenings tour in April. We co-hosted the Q&A Screenings Tour Launch at Hobart's State Cinema, hosted an online Q&A on the film, supported the film's NSW parliamentary screening, and amplified the film's release through owned and partner channels.

Over 2000 post-screening surveys have indicated increased audience awareness and support for the primary call to action: funding the recommendations outlined in the *Report of the National Centre Task Force, Longspined Sea Urchin: Towards a National Five-Year Business Plan*. Screenings of the film led to greater discussions on the Great Southern Reef, funding for an urchin removal project and engagement with First Nations communities.

With the tools and mentorship provided through both the Environmental Accelerator and Impact Producer Program, the team built confidence and capacity to manage future endeavours themselves.

*"I feel like when we make another film, I'll be equipped to do it again... it's exceeded my expectations."* - Filmmaker



*Delikado* follows three frontline environmental defenders in Palawan as they risk their lives to protect the Philippines' 'last ecological frontier'. Director Karl Malakunas joined the Environmental Accelerator through previous program, the Environmental Incubator, seeking strategic guidance and practical tools to amplify the film's message and reach.

*"I just can't speak highly enough of everything that Documentary Australia has done for me."* – Karl Malakunas

Program support included guidance across campaign strategy, distribution, partnerships, fundraising, evaluation and communications, all of which influenced campaign planning and implementation for the project that was "absolutely vital."

The *Delikado* impact campaign rollout combined global reach with deep local engagement. Internationally, the film screened at more than 50 festivals and major conferences. In the Philippines, the campaign delivered over 100 community screenings, including a Manila premiere attended by over 1,500 participants, among them diplomats and government representatives. Despite security risks, screenings were also held in Palawan.

The film increased public awareness of environmental destruction in Palawan and supported increased visibility and coordination among local environmental groups. Additional outcomes included contributing to the enactment of a 50-year ban on new mining permits in Palawan, strengthened security for activists through diplomatic engagement and international scrutiny, and more than \$50,000 was raised for local environmental organisations.

Overall, Karl says the Environmental Accelerator's contribution was "massive... without Documentary Australia's support, we wouldn't have been able to do 10% of what we did."

Read more program-supported impact snapshots: [\*Climate Changers\*](#) | [\*Stay Tuned to Our Planet\*](#)



## ▶ Film Impact snapshots

### **Left Write Hook** \*Trigger warning\*

*Left Write Hook* is a powerful documentary that has achieved significant impact by centring lived experience and childhood sexual abuse survivor agency through a trauma-informed, participatory approach. Premiering at MIFF 2024 as the inaugural 'Premiere with Purpose', the film rolled out across cinemas, community screenings, conferences, and global platforms including Netflix and Kanopy.

Led by Impact Producer Program alumna Andrea Foxworthy, the impact campaign was shaped by early sector research and engagement with more than 300 organisations, including impact partner Blue Knot Foundation. Together with key mentors, the team created a focused impact strategy prioritising survivor empowerment, cross-sector engagement across health, justice, child protection and mental health, and survivor-led recovery models.

Now used by the Left Write Hook charity to engage program participants, partners and funders – teaming film Q&As with workshops or trauma recovery program delivery – the film's most enduring impact has been awareness-building and the validation of survivor voices and their meaningful influence on sector practice and systems change.



*"The hard stories need to be told to create awareness... This is something that we did not even talk about ten years ago. Now, we have it in books and on screen. So I just want to thank you all. We have done a massive thing..."*  
– Jelena Dokic  
at the Logie Awards

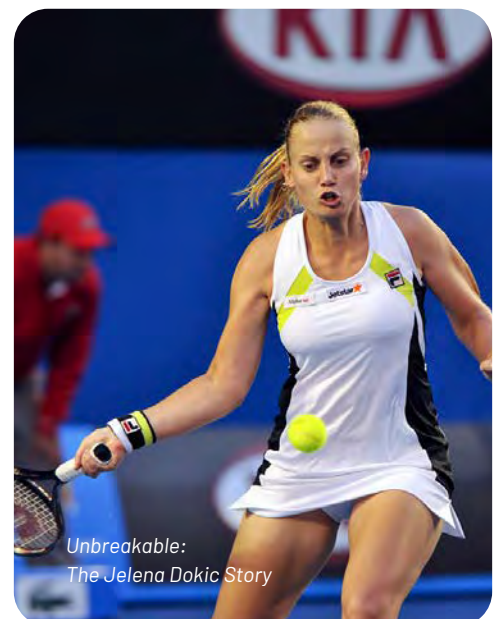
### ▶ **Unbreakable - The Jelena Dokic Story**

Filmmaker Ivan O'Mahoney identified two core impact strands early in production: child protection and bystander responsibility, and safeguarding young athletes in sport. Strategic partnerships with the Australian Childhood Foundation and Sport Integrity Australia enabled the film's reach to extend beyond the screen, informing policy discussions, professional development, and public engagement.

Following its completion in late 2024, the film premiered at the Brisbane International Film Festival, was released theatrically, and was supported by a major impact launch at Fed Square in January 2025 ahead of its national broadcast.

At its heart, the film centred survivor voice and healing. For Jelena Dokic, it marked a profound moment of validation and recovery, supporting her emergence as a visible advocate for child protection and safeguarding through public discussions and Q&As.

For audiences and survivor communities, the film challenged bystander silence, reframing inaction as a contributor to harm and encouraging a shift toward active responsibility. Ultimately, the film normalised conversations around trauma, amplified survivor experiences, and contributed to broader safeguarding reform.



# LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY

Greatness Known

## WE ACT FOR A THRIVING, SUSTAINABLE SECTOR

**In 2024-2025, Documentary Australia engaged in a wide variety of initiatives and activities to raise awareness and improve outcomes for documentary filmmakers and the documentary sector in Australia.**

*"Documentary Australia is the main voice advocating for the documentary sector in Australia which is very valuable" – Filmmaker*

### ► Streamer regulation in Australia

In 2024-2025 Documentary Australia has continued to advocate for the social and cultural value of documentary, and for the importance of introducing legislation to ensure Australian content, including documentary, is available on streaming platforms.

After making two written submissions during the Government's formal consultation process, we joined forces with Media Stockade, Doc Society and Screen Producers Australia to lead a collective action for screen practitioners to have their voices heard. Groups met their local Members of Parliament to advocate for fair levels of Australian content on streaming services to ensure a sustainable future for the sector.

Over 400 screen practitioners pledged to meet with their MPs from more than 80 electorates around the country, raising the profile of the screen industry and documentary sector with our elected representatives. We hosted a session on this topic at the Australian International Documentary Conference, as well as online information sessions, and contributed to media coverage on the issue.

In April 2025, the Prime Minister reaffirmed his government's commitment to local content on streaming platforms, and in November 2025 the Australian Parliament passed the Communications Legislation Amendment (Australian Content Requirement for Subscription Video On Demand (Streaming) Services) Bill 2025.

### ► Sydney Film Festival streamer panel

Our CEO Dr Mitzi Goldman joined the 'Streaming Services: The New Home for Documentaries?' panel at Sydney Film Festival 2025. The speakers included Amanda Duthie – Head of Stan Originals, Kriv Stenders – Film Director, Paul Wiegard – CEO of Madman Entertainment, and Sandy George – Journalist. The group discussed the rapidly expanding streaming space and scrutinised streamer investment in local documentaries.

[Read more here.](#)

## ➤ Australian International Documentary Conference

In March 2025, we produced and hosted two sessions at the annual Australian International Documentary Conference. Our CEO Mitzi Goldman moderated 'Accessing Philanthropic Funds Locally and Globally', with a panel of industry leaders including Debra Zimmerman (Women Make Movies), Hollie Fifer (Doc Society), and Ian Darling (Shark Island Foundation) sharing insights on global philanthropic trends, how to work with different funds, and collaborative strategies to bolster documentary storytelling.

Impact Director Stephanie King moderated 'DokPolitik: The State of Play for Policy and Advocacy', in conversation with experts Grainne Brunsdon (Screen Australia), Matthew Deaner (Screen Producers Australia) and James Dickinson (Screenrights) reflecting on the state of play for documentary policy and advocacy in pre-election 2025 – including the regulation of streaming services, proposed revisions to the Copyright Act, the release of AI usage principles and discoverability initiatives to help Australian stories be seen.

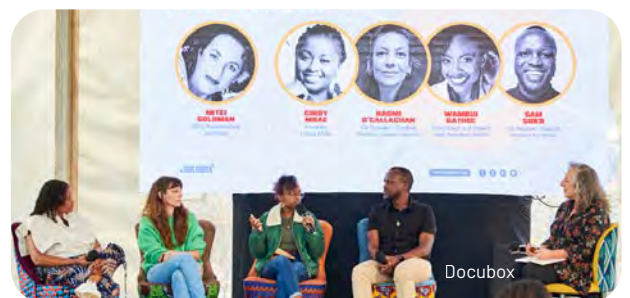
Additionally, Documentary Australia supported two emerging screen creatives to attend AIDC for the first time through the Leading Lights program, and met with filmmakers through the Cut to the Chase initiative. [Read Mitzi and Stephanie's reflections on AIDC 2025 here.](#)



## ➤ Docubox International Partnership Summit

Documentary Australia's involvement in the inaugural Docubox International Partnership Summit in Nairobi, Kenya reinforced the value of international collaboration in strengthening leadership and future directions for the documentary sector.

CEO Dr Mitzi Goldman shared Documentary Australia's model and contributed to discussions on funding, distribution and audience development, while engaging with African filmmakers and global partners on narrative change and social impact. The summit created important opportunities to identify shared priorities and future collaborations, with insights that can help amplify diverse voices within Australia's documentary landscape.



## ➤ Screenrights Research Partnership

*The Value of Documentary in Australian Educational Settings* pilot study is a collaborative research initiative between Screenrights and Documentary Australia, funded by Screenrights with substantial in-kind support from both organisations. The project combines Screenrights' data on educational documentary usage across Australia with additional data collection on selected documentaries to explore how documentaries are used in schools, TAFE and universities, and their educational and social impacts. The study aims to trial evaluation methods, inform best practices for educators and filmmakers, support advocacy for wider access to documentary content, and highlight the value of documentaries in Australian educational settings.

## What to expect in 2026

Thank you for reading this report and for your belief in and support of documentaries for social change. The 2024-2025 financial year was a productive one for us at Documentary Australia and we are proud of our outcomes, including the culmination of 3 x multi-year programs. We were blessed with almost 2000 film supporters and donors resulting in a turnover of \$5.5 million with approximately 75% of that going straight to almost 200 individual film projects on our platform. Only 13% of the revenue we generate supports our small but mighty team to deliver vital industry support services, manage our platform and governance, increase awareness of documentary, expand film team impact skills, seek out partnership opportunities, and to advocate and build capacity through training and development programs for the documentary film industry in Australia and beyond.

Springboarding into 2026, our focus will be on truth, trust and supporting diverse voices through new programs. These programs have evolved from our learnings based on 18 years of program delivery and industry support. We will launch the following in 2026:

- New DocAccess films
- Advancing Impact
- Women's Voices
- Engaging with Young People
- Building the Evidence Base

We will welcome even more films to our platform to help them be made, be seen and have clear and measurable impact. We will encourage diverse storytellers and connect them with diverse audiences to foster understanding and encourage action for a more harmonious and respectful society.

We have refreshed our 10-year strategic plan as we are at the half way mark – see summary on the next page. Our purpose remains to support independent documentary filmmakers creating impactful documentaries and partner with philanthropists and frontline organisations to advance awareness and action on social and environmental issues, fostering meaningful change.

Thank you for walking with us. It's a pleasure and an honour to work with our supporters and the many talented filmmakers, and to serve as connectors to philanthropy, communities and others who believe in what we stand for – understanding, empathy, truth and a better future for us all.



# Our Strategy for 2026-2030

## ► Our four key strategic pillars

### GREAT FILMS

#### Objectives:

- Increase the visibility of diverse voices and experiences
- Increase the visibility and profile of documentary
- Increase the quality of Australian documentaries

### GREAT PARTNERSHIPS

#### Objectives:

- Facilitate meaningful partnerships between documentary projects and philanthropic supporters
- Increase the visibility, engagement and use of documentary by diverse audiences, organisations and communities
- Improve connection and engagement with social and environmental issues

### GREAT IMPACT

#### Objectives:

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of impact strategies and campaigns
- Increase awareness, empathy and understanding of key societal issues
- Support documentaries to contribute to measurable social change

### LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY

#### Objectives:

- Build sector capacity by sharing best practice and innovative models and approaches
- Amplify evidence and the collective voice of documentary filmmakers in key policy, legislative and industry discussions
- Conduct research and engage with key stakeholders in the sector including government, broadcast, distributors and streamers to identify key challenges and opportunities
- Advance systems, policy and funding settings that support a thriving documentary sector

### OUTCOMES = IMPACTS TO:

- Philanthropic sector
- Screen sector
- Social and educational sector
- Society

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# Thank you to our supporters

## DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA'S FOUNDING SUPPORTERS

Ian Darling AO, Founder and Patron  
Shark Island Institute  
The Caledonia Foundation  
Nelson Meers Foundation  
Thyne Reid Foundation

## PLATINUM SCREEN SUPPORTERS \$100,000+

Josephine Wolanski  
Shark Island Foundation  
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The Snow Foundation

## GOLD SCREEN SUPPORTERS \$50,000 - \$99,999

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Intrepid Travel  
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation  
Minderoo Pictures  
Screen Australia  
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## SILVER SCREEN SUPPORTERS \$10,000 - \$49,999

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Crookes Family Foundation  
Doc Society  
Ferris Family Foundation  
Hantomeli Foundation  
Joanna Baevski  
Neil Watson & Margaret Moroney  
Ruth Armytage AM  
Screen Queensland  
ScreenWest  
The Dick and Pip Smith Foundation  
The Skrzynski Foundation

## BRONZE SCREEN SUPPORTERS \$1,000 - \$9,999

Andrew James Wiseman  
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Annabel White  
Antoinette Albert  
Australian Communities Foundation  
through the Scarlet's Fund  
Belinda Bentley and Michael Radovnikovic  
Caroline Lawrence  
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Susan Luscombe  
The Hastings Foundation  
The Rossi Foundation  
Vicki Brooke  
Woollahra Council

## PROGRAM SUPPORTERS

Chong Family  
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Hansen Little Foundation  
Horizon Foundation  
Intrepid Travel  
Kate Hayward  
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation  
Minderoo Pictures  
Shark Island Institute  
The Snow Foundation  
Woollahra Council

## GOVERNMENT & INDUSTRY PARTNERS

ACMI  
Australian International Documentary  
Conference (AIDC)  
DocPlay  
Screen Australia  
Screen NSW  
Screen Queensland  
Screenwest  
Sydney Film Festival

## IMPACT, CORPORATE, SCREENING & EVENT PARTNERS

Better Futures Forum  
Bonython Café  
Bush to Bowl  
Great Southern Reef Foundation  
JoJo Jetty wines  
Myer Family Office  
National Film and Sound Archive of  
Australia  
Optimiste Wines  
Planet Ark & National Tree Day  
RITZ Cinemas  
Shark Island Institute

TEDxSydney & TEDxSydney Youth  
The Feds  
Totem Films  
VivCourt Trading

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS  
AND PARTNERS WHO HAVE CHOSEN  
TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS, TO THE  
DONORS WHO GAVE TO FILMS  
DIRECTLY AND THE IMPACT PARTNERS  
AROUND THE INDIVIDUAL FILMS**

## \$25,000+ TO A SINGLE DOCUMENTARY \$1 million +

Shark Island Foundation

## \$250,000-\$999,999

Groundswell Giving  
Bright Moon Trust

## \$100,000-\$249,999

The Tony Foundation  
MaiTri Foundation  
Robert Keldoulis  
LEEAF Trust

## \$25,000-\$99,999

Aesop Foundation  
Ian Huntley  
Flannery Family Fund, a giving fund of  
the APS Foundation  
Jasper Foundation  
ACME Foundation  
Harris Charitable Foundation  
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Monster Chip Media Pty Ltd  
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Ryan Cooper Family Foundation  
The Glendonbrook Foundation  
The Snow Foundation  
Virgin Unite Australia

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Special thanks to Allens for years of pro  
bono legal support. 

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LEADERSHIP COUNCIL AND TEAM**