

Media Release

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Anthony LaPaglia and Melanie Lynskey set to shine in new SBS crime drama.

SBS is pleased to announce two internationally acclaimed actors are set to star in SBS's new Australian drama series, **Sunshine**. The four-part crime thriller's cast includes multi-award winning **Anthony LaPaglia** (*Balibo, Lantana, Without a Trace*) and **Melanie Lynskey** (*Two and a Half Men, Togetherness, Heavenly Creatures*). Starring alongside LaPaglia and Lynskey will be some fresh and exciting new faces, including an outstanding South Sudanese Australian cast being seen for the very first time on Australian TV.

The edge-of-your-seat drama will also feature an exceptional line-up of renowned and seasoned Aussie actors including **Kim Gyngell** (*Rake, Jack Irish*), **Tiarnie Coupland** (*Love Child*), **Vince Colosimo** (*Jack Irish, Janet King, Underbelly*), **Leah Vandenberg** (*The Wrong Girl*), **Paul Ireland** (*Jack Irish, Never Tear Us Apart: The INXS Story, Underbelly*) and **Trudy Hellier** (*Winners and Losers, The Doctor Blake Mysteries, The Time of Our Lives*).

From Essential Media and Carver Films, producers of awarding-winning TV drama (*Rake, The Principal, Jack Irish*) and feature films (*Snowtown, Partisan, Saving Mr Banks*), **Sunshine** will be a landmark television drama series set within and featuring South Sudanese Australians, developed and written with close community consultation.

Sunshine is executive produced by SBS's **Sue Masters** and produced by Essential Media's **Ian Collie** with Carver Film's **Anna McLeish** and **Sarah Shaw** and written by **Matt Cameron** (*Jack Irish, Secret City*) and **Elise McCredie** (*Nowhere Boys*).

SBS Director of Television and Online Content, **Marshall Heald** said:

"**Sunshine** is set to be a powerful, bold, and uniquely SBS drama, with a crime mystery at its heart. SBS has a strong history of delivering exceptional drama with impactful storytelling. Our recent success with *The Principal, The Family Law* and *Deep Water* demonstrates our continued commitment to telling stories with purpose. We're also pleased to be working with Essential Media yet again, after great success with *The Principal*.

"I'm thrilled the show has attracted internationally acclaimed talent like Anthony LaPaglia and Melanie Lynskey, and I'm especially proud that the drama will showcase young, fresh and diverse local talent, something SBS is incredibly passionate about."

In making the announcement Essential's **Ian Collie** and Carver's **Anna McLeish** and **Sarah Shaw** said:

"After producing *The Principal* for SBS, we are thrilled to be returning with another exciting drama, which has attracted a compelling mix of local and international talent alongside newcomers from the South Sudanese community in Australia, highlighting the opportunities as well as challenges for this relatively new migrant group to the Land of Sunshine."

Special Broadcasting Service

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CEO of Screen Australia, **Graeme Mason** said:

"**Sunshine** has all the hallmarks of being a truly universal story, with major local and international appeal. A hearty congratulations to SBS, Essential Media and Carver Films for assembling such a dream cast to bring such powerful scripts to life."

Film Victoria CEO **Jenni Tosi** said:

"**Sunshine** is prestige drama which reflects the vibrant, multicultural society and times we live in. We're delighted to be supporting the stellar producing and creative team, cast and crew on this production which has all the elements to make it shine on SBS and resonate with international audiences."

Set in Melbourne's outer-west Sunshine and its surrounds, **Sunshine** will be directed by **Daina Reid** (*The Secret River, The Wrong Girl, Never Tear Us Apart: The INXS Story*) with Director of Photography **Bruce Young** (*The Secret River, The Code, INXS: Never Tear Us Apart*), production design by **Chris Kennedy** (*Lion, Jack Irish, The Water Diviner*), costume design by **Jeanie Cameron** (*Jack Irish, The Broken Shore*) with hair and makeup by **Zeljka Stanin** (*Hunters, The Dressmaker*).

The story of **Sunshine** follows the life of Jacob, a young, aspiring South Sudanese-Australian basketball player who is on the cusp of being picked up by US scouts for the US College league. Jacob's team is not up to his standard and so he angles to bring in a better coach. His choice is Eddie (LaPaglia), a local guy in his 50's, who once played for a US college team, but has long since retired and operates a small sports store in Sunshine, a suburb in the west of Melbourne. Almost against his best instincts, he accepts an approach by Jacob to coach his underperforming team, The Sunshine Kings. In the midst of aspiring to win at all costs, Jacob finds himself answering to Sunshine-raised lawyer Zara Skelton (Lynskey) when he is caught up in a police investigation involving a teenage girl from one of Melbourne's affluent suburbs.

Sunshine is a vibrant, kinetic and compelling high stakes fictional crime drama that delves behind the headlines to get up close and personal with the lives of the South Sudanese community in Australia, uncovering the humour, heartbreak and hurdles they face in forging a new life as strangers in a strange land.

Sunshine is an **Essential Media** production in association with **Carver Films** for **SBS**, and is produced with major production funding from **Screen Australia** in association with **Film Victoria** with **Fremantle** handling international sales.

The four-part crime drama *Sunshine* will air on SBS and SBS On Demand in 2017.

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