



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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Morrison Government’s Location Incentive brings *Young Rock*, *Joe Exotic* and *Irreverent* down under

The Morrison Government has announced \$19.5 million for NBCUniversal’s Universal Studio Group to produce three high-end scripted television series in Australia under the Federal Government’s Location Incentive program.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said that the productions are expected to generate more than \$140 million of expenditure in Australia and provide more than 1,000 jobs for Australian cast and crew and 2,000 extras.

“Australia’s production sector is world-class so it’s no surprise that we’re attracting the attention of international studios that are choosing to film their next hit TV shows here,” Minister Fletcher said.

“*Young Rock*, *Joe Exotic* and *Irreverent* are high-profile, large-scale productions that reinforce Australia’s appeal as a COVID-safe location boasting high calibre production facilities and expertise.

“The productions will provide invaluable opportunities for Australian cast and crew, create a pipeline of work for local post-production, digital and visual effects businesses, and engage workers in sectors such as construction, transport, accommodation and hospitality.”

These are the first productions supported under the Morrison Government’s \$400 million boost to the Location Incentive to create a pipeline of international projects, which will generate Australian jobs in the screen industry over the next seven years.

The projects will run for 18 months back-to-back in the Screen Queensland Studios in Brisbane, as well as locations in South East Queensland and Far North Queensland.

They will be led by the Australian based film and television production company, Matchbox Pictures (*Clickbait*, *Stateless*, *Glitch*, *Safe Harbour*), which is part of NBCUniversal International Studios, and will provide highly-skilled jobs for Australians to work on large scale television series for NBCUniversal’s flagship network NBC, USA, streaming service Peacock and the global market.

The productions are:

- *Young Rock* – a single-camera comedy from Nahnatchka Khan (Fresh Off the Boat) and Dwayne Johnson, inspired by Johnson himself. Executive producers are Khan, Johnson, Jeff Chiang, Dany Garcia, Hiram Garcia, Brian Gewirtz and Jennifer Carreras. The show will be produced by Universal Television, Seven Bucks Productions and Fierce Baby Productions.
- *Joe Exotic* – a limited series from UCP based on the hit Wondery podcast depicting the true events surrounding Carole Baskin (*Saturday Night Live*’s Kate McKinnon), a big cat enthusiast, who learns that

fellow exotic animal lover Joe “Exotic” Schreibvogel is breeding and using his big cats for profit, and sets out to shut down his venture, inciting a quickly escalating rivalry. It is written and executive produced by Etan Frankel. Wondery’s Hernan Lopez, Marshall Lewy and Aaron Hart will also executive produce along with McKinnon.

- *Irreverent* – a series developed and produced for the global market by Matchbox Pictures, which follows a criminal on the run from his life of crime back in New York, who is forced to hide out in a reef town in Far North Queensland, posing as the new church Reverend.

Pearlena Igbokwe, Chairman, Universal Studio Group said, “This initiative encapsulates all of the goals we had in mind when we aligned the three studios – Universal Television, UCP and NBCUniversal International Studios - under the Universal Studio Group umbrella. Not only are we leveraging shared resources and utilising talent across our three businesses, we are also partnering with the Australian Government and Screen Queensland to make a significant investment in our global community and significantly upgrade the studio infrastructure in Brisbane.”

Matt Vitins, Chief Operating Officer for Matchbox Pictures said, “This is an important set of projects for the Australian industry and Matchbox Pictures. The investment has created a pipeline of work over a sustained period, which means we can take a different approach to training crews, upgrading facilities and delivering high-end drama. It is immediate proof of the value of the Location Incentive.

“These projects also confirm a trend for us, in that we are seeing the line between domestic and international production become much less distinct. These projects will have Australian creatives and technical talent all over them. In the case of *Irreverent*, we have an Australian developed project that will put Queensland, as Queensland, on global television. We are excited about the talent we will be working with across the board, especially the new Australian talent we will be able to showcase to global audiences.”

NBCUniversal’s Universal Studio Group comprises Universal Television, Universal Content Productions (UCP) and NBCUniversal International Studios. NBCUniversal Global Distribution will be handling international sales for all three titles.

For more information on the Location Incentive Program visit: www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/screen/australian-screen-production-incentive.

Media contact:

Rebecca Papillo | 0439 892 771 | Rebecca.Papillo@communications.gov.au
Imre Salusinszky | 0432 535 737 | imre.salusinszky@communications.gov.au