

NEWS

MIFF, AFL AND VICSCREEN NAME FOOTY SHORTS TEAMS FOR 2026

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L to R back row standing: Mitchell Withers, Andrew Goode, Meg Duncan, Jasper Caverly, Angela How, Mark Thomson, Akec Makur Chuot, David Callow. Photo by Daniel Mahon.

VicScreen, Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) and the **AFL** today announced the five filmmaking teams selected for the second round of **Footy Shorts**, a short-form documentary initiative celebrating the stories, communities and traditions surrounding Australian Rules Football.

Footy Shorts offers emerging Victorian screen storytellers the chance to create short documentaries exploring Australian Rules Football on and off the field. Each team receives a \$25,000 production budget, professional development with industry mentors, and access to the AFL's footage archive and support from AFL Clubs.

Last year, *Footy Shorts* reached more than 30,000 viewers through MIFF screenings, the AFL's Grand Final week celebrations at Federation Square, other festivals, and MIFF and AFL online channels.

The selected teams will each make a short documentary exploring Australian Rules Football on and off the field, premiering at MIFF 2026 in August. The films will also be available nation-wider through MIFF Online from 14-30 August.

Five projects have been financed and are now in production, the successful teams and their projects are:



Angela How. Photo by Daniel Mahon.

***Carn the Chinese!* by Producer/Director Angela How**

Synopsis: A community's efforts to belong sees a group of young Chinese Australian men come together and play their national game of Aussie Rules with true blue passion and gusto.



Mitchell Withers and Sofia Viegas. Photo by Daniel Mahon.

For the Boys by Director/Producer Mitchell Withers and Producer Sofia Viegas

Synopsis: For his sons, he came out. For himself, he plays again. Australia's first openly queer ex-AFL player **Mitch Brown** steps back onto the field, bringing his whole self for the first time.



Meg Duncan and Akec Makur Chuot. Photo by Daniel Mahon

Kura: An African AFL Story by Writer/Director/Producer Akec Makur Chuot and Director/Producer Meg Duncan

Synopsis: Former **AFLW** player **Akec Makur Chuot** traces a path from her heroes to the new generation of African Australian stars navigating two worlds to find belonging.



David Callow and Mark Thomson. Photo by Daniel Mahon

Invincible Spirit by Co-Producer/Writer/Director Mark Thomson and Co-Producer/Director/Director of Photography/Editor David Callow

Synopsis: In the heart of the Goulburn Murray, the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club stands as a modern-day fortress of Yorta Yorta pride, a sanctuary of cultural healing where a community fights not just for points, but for the safety and dignity of its children.



Jasper Caverly, Sophie Booth and Andrew Goode. Photo by Daniel Mahon

North Melbourne Cheer Squad by Co-Directors Jasper Caverly and Andrew Goode and Producer Sophie Booth

Synopsis: Members of the North Melbourne Football Club Cheer Squad prepare to face long-standing rivals Essendon: a club they haven't beaten in a decade.

The five *Footy Shorts* films will have a gala world premiere at the 74th Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) in August 2026. MIFF runs 6–23 August 2026.

Following MIFF, the films will be available to view digitally across all AFL platforms, including AFL.com.au and the AFL app.

VicScreen CEO Caroline Pitcher said, *"VicScreen is proud to partner with MIFF and the AFL for a second round of Footy Shorts. Victoria's filmmaking talent runs deep — and this year's submissions are testament to that. The calibre was so strong that VicScreen increased its support, funding five projects instead of the four originally planned. I can't wait to see these filmmakers make their mark on the big screen!"*

MIFF Artistic Director Al Cossar said, *"There's nothing like the return of the footy season each year, and so it is with MIFF's new round of Footy Shorts in 2026! Culminating in a fresh collection of World Premiere short films set to cinematically focus our fixation with all things footy, MIFF is excited to be a part this initiative - to find, support, and share Victorian-made stories that bring our sporting passions compellingly to the screen."*

AFL Executive General Manager Customer, Commercial & Technology Bec Haagsma said, *"The AFL congratulates the five filmmaking teams selected for Footy Shorts in 2026. We are proud to once again be supporting the initiative showcasing the amazing stories and people at the heart of our game. We can't wait to see the final documentaries later this year on the big screen!"*

Learn more about VicScreen's [funding and support programs](#).

VicScreen acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Victoria and pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

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