

SBS reveals new landmark documentary-drama series *ROBODEBT* coming in 2025

Award-winning producers CJZ secure major funding through SBS first-of-its-kind initiative

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The notorious Robodebt scheme has inspired an innovative and immersive landmark series that combines factual storytelling and high-end drama to take audiences beyond the headlines to experience the impact the scheme had on Australia's most vulnerable citizens.

ROBODEBT (working title) is produced by CJZ, the production company behind International Emmy Award-winning *Go Back to Where You Came From*, after securing SBS's new major development fund. Announced at the Australian International Documentary Conference (AIDC), SBS launched the first-of-its-kind initiative to discover an original and ambitious idea that explores inequality and social cohesion and tackles the fault lines of Australian society today.

SBS Director of Television Kathryn Fink said: "Through this initiative, SBS wanted to unearth a series unlike anything seen on Australian screens before. *ROBODEBT* will reveal the fight for justice by some of the most vulnerable people in our society. We're excited to be working with CJZ on this series, which will shine a much-needed spotlight on this unprecedented chapter in recent Australian history."

CJZ Creative Director Michael Cordell said: "Robodebt inflicted a tsunami of pain on hundreds of thousands of ordinary Australians accused of having fictitious debts. We're excited to be telling this story with an innovative combination of hard-nosed factual and high-end drama to push the limits of contemporary storytelling."

The Robodebt scandal ranks as one of the darkest chapters in Australian history. In a highly politicised campaign to claw back money from social welfare recipients allegedly 'roting' the system, \$1.8 billion was extracted from over half-a-million people between 2015 and 2019. The scandal resulted in Australia's largest class action, with a Royal Commission finding that the scheme was "crude and cruel" and "neither fair nor legal".

Attached as series director is award-winning documentary and drama director Ben Lawrence (*Ithaka*, *Hearts and Bones*). Esteemed screenwriter Jane Allen (*Janet King*, *Cleverman*, *Last King of the Cross*, *Troppo*, *The Secret Life of Us*) will serve as writer and script producer.

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