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Four finalists announced for QuitFlicks short film competition

Four talented filmmakers have been selected to bring to life their short film concept challenging smoking among LGBTIQ communities as part of this year's [QuitFlicks](#) competition, launched by Quit Victoria, Melbourne Queer Film Festival and Thorne Harbour Health.

Smoking rates in the LGBTIQ community are [more than double the national average](#). Recent qualitative research with community members showed there are several key reasons for this difference; smoking within the LGBTIQ community is used to cope with social anxiety and smokes are a way to connect with others socially, as well as managing stress in people's lives.

QuitFlicks asked filmmakers to address these challenges and find alternatives to coping and connecting without cigarettes.

After receiving submissions from filmmakers across Australia, four concepts were selected by a panel of judges from Melbourne Queer Film Festival, Thorne Harbour Health, Quit Victoria and creative agency, Catch the Bird. Each finalist will be granted \$6,000 to turn their creative concept into a short film. The selected submissions took a distinct and imaginative approach to respond to the brief. Among the concepts chosen, the approach varied greatly, ranging from humorous to thoughtful.

Quit Victoria Director, Sarah White said she was delighted with the high calibre of submissions. "The quality of the scripts made it extremely difficult to select only four. We're confident in the finalists' abilities to bring their diverse pitches to life and looking forward to viewing the final product."

MQFF Program Director, Spiro Economopoulos was similarly impressed. "The creativity and originality of the finalists' pitches makes us really excited to see these concepts brought to life on screen. It's a reflection of the incredible creative talent we have in this country."

Thorne Harbour Health Chief Executive Officer, Simon Ruth, has been inspired by the diversity of approaches adopted by the filmmakers. "Each concept explores a very different way to combat smoking in our LGBTIQ communities and all four tackle a very serious topic in an ingeniously imaginative way."



The four finalists are:

- Teddy Darling (Balwyn, Victoria)
- Millie Hayes (O'Connor, ACT)
- Hugh Murray (Mount Helen, Victoria)
- Rosie Pavlovic (East Brunswick, Victoria)

Each finalist will receive a \$6,000 grant to develop their written concept into a short film. The public will then get their chance to vote for their favourite film commencing in mid-January via quit.org.au/quitflicks.

The winner and a runner-up will be announced at MQFF's Program Launch on Tuesday 11 February and will be awarded a prize of \$6,000 and \$3,000 respectively. Both short films will air before every screening at the Melbourne Queer Film Festival 2020.

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'QuitFlicks' is a competition designed in partnership by Quit Victoria and Melbourne Queer Film Festival and proudly supported by Thorne Harbour Health. Details of the competition can be found here: www.quit.org.au/quitflicks

Quit Victoria is a partnership between VicHealth, the State Government of Victoria and Cancer Council Victoria. For more information, visit: www.quit.org.au

Melbourne Queer Film Festival is Australia's oldest and largest LGBTIQ film festival and celebration of the moving image. For more information, visit: www.mqff.com.au

Thorne Harbour Health is a community controlled organisation, governed by our members, and working for our sex, sexuality and gender diverse communities. For more information, visit: <https://thorneharbour.org/>

If you would like to arrange an interview with a grant recipient or one of the organisations' spokespeople, contact Maria Kambourakis, Quit Victoria Communications Coordinator via maria.kambourakis@cancervic.org.au or 0412 986 124.