

## **OFF THE RAILS**

*Feature Film*

**Writers/Directors:** Jet Williams & Max Dona

**Status:** Feature screenplay - Draft 2 complete (adapted from the novel *Off the Rails*)

**Location:** Sydney, NSW

**Budget:** approx. AUD \$2.4M-2.5M

### **LOGLINE**

After missing his shot at rugby, a teenage boy is pulled into graffiti and urban exploration, putting him on a collision course with his family and the law.

### **THE FILM**

*Off the Rails* is a raw, funny, and intimate coming-of-age film set within Sydney's underground youth cultures—graffiti crews, rooftops, abandoned spaces, train yards, and tunnels.

Jay isn't loudly rejected by the system—he's quietly passed over. In the emotional vacuum that follows, he drifts into spaces he isn't meant to access. What begins as curiosity becomes momentum, then identity. As the risks escalate, vandalism gives way to observation, and photography replaces destruction. The city becomes something to understand rather than conquer.

The film carries a constant sense of imminent danger—the expectation that something terrible will happen—but resolves not through tragedy, but choice. **Creation replaces self-erasure.**

### **TONE & STYLE**

- Grounded realism with humour and momentum
- Observational, handheld, intimate camera—conceived as a *moving street photograph*
- Summer warmth contrasted with colder institutional spaces
- Never sensationalises danger or illegal activity—risk is real, not glamorised.

Comparable films include *Kids*, *mid90s*, and *Stand By Me*.

### **WHY THIS FILM / WHY SYDNEY**

Australian film and television have long relied on a narrow image of national identity—the loud Aussie bloke, the beach, the barbecue, mateship played for laughs. While those stories exist, they leave little room for how many young people actually grow up in cities like Sydney.

*Off the Rails* explores an untapped side of Australian life: the underground youth cultures that exist below eye level. Graffiti crews, urban exploration, rooftops, train tunnels, and abandoned spaces—worlds that are invisible unless you are actively looking for them. This is Sydney as it's lived, not marketed.

## **CAST & ACCESS**

The project has been developed alongside a group of non-professional young performers drawn directly from the world the film depicts. This is not locked casting, but authentic access. A formal casting process with an experienced casting director is intended, with rigorous safeguarding and duty-of-care protocols in place.

## **PRODUCTION APPROACH**

- Designed for a 35-day shoot
- NSW-based production
- Flexible location strategy with scripted substitutions where required
- Budgeted realistically for safety, access, and post production
- Structured for Australian financing, including the Producer Offset

## **WHAT WE'RE SEEKING**

We are first-time feature directors seeking an experienced producer to partner with us in packaging, financing, and delivering *Off the Rails*. We are collaborative, pragmatic, and open to process—while being clear on the voice and intent of the film.

## **ADDITIONAL CONTEXT**

*Off the Rails* is adapted from a published novel that has found an unexpected afterlife within the youth cultures it depicts, circulating hand-to-hand among kids in Sydney and selling internationally. Alongside the book, we have produced a short documentary shot inside this world with the same community of young people, as well as a trailer cut from real-world footage. These materials have been presented publicly at a combined book launch and documentary screening, confirming both access and audience.

## **CONTACT**

### **Jet Williams**

Writer / Director

Email: [jw@jetwilliams.com](mailto:jw@jetwilliams.com)

Phone: +61 413 625 083

### **Max Dona**

Writer / Director

Email: [maxdona99@gmail.com](mailto:maxdona99@gmail.com)

Phone: +61 422 369 575

**Project materials available on request.**