

**IAF Group Grant Award to
Dante Niedzwiedz, Alice Reardon & Angus Becke
Smith towards the production of M-8.**

M-8 is a 12-minute sci-fi short film that was shot in September 2023. It focuses on Ruby, a teenager who is striving to earn a scholarship to a robotics academy to pursue her dream career. Her ultimate creation, a small & cute robot, M-8, doesn't quite go to plan, leaving her hopes in the balance. Only by working with M-8 and becoming his friend can she start to realise her potential.



Our unique angle for the film is having it predominantly be shown from the point-of-view of the robot, M-8. The audience sees the world through his eyes, experiencing things as he does. This gave us the opportunity to create a sci-fi on a lower budget, but also allowed for a level of

creativity in how we can convey M-8's expressions.

This wasn't exclusively the case; there are a few moments where we see M-8. Together with our wonderful production designer and robot extraordinaire, we built a practical robot that could move through the environment, with the aid of some VFX to compliment it. This robot build was a highlight of the production, and was something the whole crew enjoyed being a part of.

M-8 was created by a small crew mostly made up of recent graduates and current students. There were two locations: Ruby's bedroom, and the school hall where she presents M-8. For her bedroom, we built a set in Star Ave Studios, which gave us full control over the space and made for excellent shooting conditions. For the school hall, we shot in a lecture theatre at Flinders University.

The production went superbly; we're delighted with how the crew operated and with how the footage turned out.

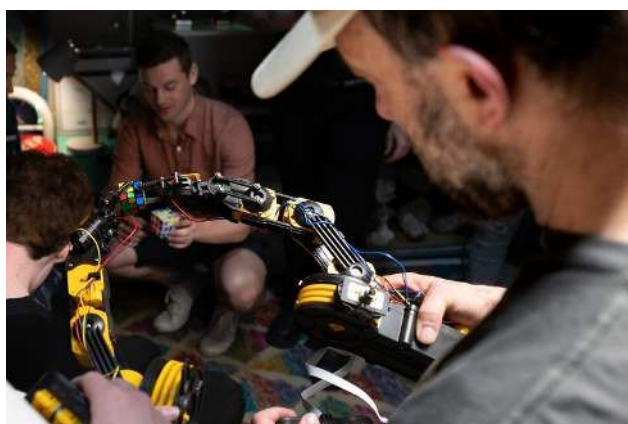
Now post-production is now well and truly underway. The editing process is a bit unique as a few scenes play out in long takes without cuts, with lots of robot movement. They do, however, involve a lot of HUD UI design. The HUD of M-8 is a significant part of the visuals and some of the storytelling as it visualises his decision-making process, so this makes up a significant portion of the post-production process.

Sound design will also be crucial to

accompany all of these robotic movements, expressions, as well as the individual elements of the HUD.

M-8 has so far proved to be a wonderful project to develop our skills as creative practitioners. It's been our biggest project by far and has given us invaluable experience which will be fundamental for the remainder of our careers.

We can't wait to see the final product and have high hopes for its festival run.



****Update received December 2024 from Dante****

This has been a long time coming, but post-production of M-8 is finally complete! Thanks to the support of IAF we were able to undergo the extensive editing, vfx and sound design process in bringing this robot short film to live. We are delighted to say that it will be premiering at Flickerfest in Sydney in January, a huge objective of ours! It wouldn't have been possible without your support, so thank you very much.

I've attached a few stills from the completed film.

IAF is mentioned at the beginning of the film and the logo appears in the credits, as well as on the poster!

