

PROGRAM GUIDELINES –
INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS

MARCH 2010

www.screenaustralia.gov.au

SCREEN
AUSTRALIA



Australian Government

SCREEN
AUSTRALIA

INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS

OVERVIEW 2

DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMS 4

 Documentary Development..... 4

 Documentary Production and Post-production 6

DRAMA PROGRAMS 8

 Drama Development 9

 Drama Production and Post-production..... 11

DIGITAL MEDIA PROGRAMS 13

PRACTITIONER SUPPORT – INTERNSHIPS 15

TRAVEL GRANTS 17

OVERVIEW

The Indigenous Department's funding programs support creatively ambitious projects and people, and imaginative, resonant stories authored by Indigenous Australians.

We aim to assist the career development of talented writers, directors and producers who have the potential to make a significant contribution to screen culture and the national cultural life by actively engaging at all stages with key creatives in the development and production of their works.

The Department proactively strives to support Indigenous projects and practitioners through providing:

- script development funds
- production investment in targeted initiatives, one-off projects, or in collaboration with broadcasters or other funding entities
- support for Indigenous practitioners to attend conferences, markets and festivals, nationally and internationally
- support and facilitate internships and mentorship programs with more experienced practitioners.

Screen Australia requires a 1% copyright interest, for the duration of the project's copyright, in:

- all projects for which it provides development funding in excess of \$100,000 (development funding provided by the former Australian Film Commission will be included in assessing whether the \$100,000 funding level has been reached);
- all projects for which it provides recoupable production investment.

There is no application fee payable for any of the Indigenous programs. However, all features produced through the Indigenous Department will have the same reversion rights and obligations as if they were funded through the Production Investment Department.

Other key roles of the Indigenous Department are:

- to work with the Indigenous filmmaking community in developing strategies for enhancing employment and professional development opportunities, and the creation of a vibrant screen sector for Indigenous filmmakers
- to provide assessment and guidance to projects with Indigenous content that are submitted to other Screen Australia divisions.
- to contribute to Screen Australia and industry policy development.

Eligibility for Indigenous Department Programs

To be eligible for assistance from Screen Australia's Indigenous Department, applicants and their projects must:

- meet the general Screen Australia funding criteria, and
- have Indigenous Australians in key creative roles; a minimum of the writer and director must be Indigenous.

Funding is not intended for projects by non-Indigenous filmmakers with Indigenous content.

Indigenous filmmakers may apply to any Screen Australia program; not only to the funding programs of the Indigenous Department.

Funding provided as a grant

Note that for all documentary projects approved after 1 March 2010, Screen Australia funding of \$200,000 or under will be provided as a grant, rather than recoupable investment, and will not have to be repaid unless the terms of the grant agreement are breached. Screen Australia's contribution will be agreed upfront and not varied other than in exceptional circumstances.

'Screen Australia funding' in this case means production finance through the National Documentary Program, Domestic & International Documentary programs, the Special Documentary Program, Indigenous Department documentary programs and other initiatives such as jtv docs. If a project has received development funding from Screen Australia or its predecessor agencies, the development funds will be added to the production funds for the purpose of determining whether the \$200,000 grant threshold has been reached. Support provided through Screen Australia's marketing programs is not included.

Screen Australia will hold 1% copyright in all documentary projects where its investment is greater than \$100,000.

INDIGENOUS

DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMS

Documentary Development

This program seeks to provide emerging and experienced practitioners with the opportunity to create appropriate written and/or visual materials to ensure that projects are as strong as possible when competing for production finance.

Emerging Indigenous producers are encouraged to apply.

Funding is for

The development of a more detailed outline, treatment and/or script for one-off documentaries or documentary series, including, where appropriate, script and project development, research, securing production financing and, in some instances, for preliminary shooting.

Eligibility

All applicants and projects must meet the general Indigenous Department eligibility criteria, in addition to the following specific eligibility requirements:

- Individuals or teams may apply.
- The producer or director must have at least one documentary screen credit (broadcast and/or screened at a recognised film festival) in their respective role. Applicants with a substantial drama track record will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- For applications for documentaries longer than 30 minutes in length, the director must have a produced documentary credit.
- Where the request includes shooting material, a director must be attached.
- For series development, a written expression of interest or commitment from a broadcaster or distributor is an essential requirement.

Funding recipients must deliver

A more detailed script or treatment, rushes (if funded for preliminary shooting).

Pitching materials for raising production finance such as a proposal document, and/or selected rushes assembly. Budget and Schedule.

Assessment criteria

When assessing applications for this program, Screen Australia uses the following criteria:

- The strength and distinctiveness of the idea and concept.
- The skills and capacity of the team to undertake the project as evidenced by previous work.

- The capacity of the project to attract further marketplace development or production finance after this stage of development.

Assessment process

Applications will be assessed by a combination of Screen Australia executives and industry specialists/peers as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants of the success or otherwise of their application, providing a brief statement of reasons.

Application materials

Applications must be made on the relevant Screen Australia application form, and include all supporting material listed on that form.

Application timing

There will be three rounds of Indigenous documentary development funding in 2010, with deadlines as follows:

- 30 April 2010
- 31 August 2010
- 30 November 2010

Recoupment

Where Screen Australia subsequently invests in the production, its investment in the development phase will be added to the production financing amount and the total investment recouped in accordance with the terms of trade for production financing.

Note that for all documentary projects approved after 1 March 2010, Screen Australia funding of \$200,000 or under will be provided as a grant, rather than recoupable investment (see page 3).

Documentary Production and Post-production

The Indigenous Department typically provides documentary production investment in collaboration with broadcasters or other funding entities through joint initiatives. The following general guidelines only apply to the limited funding available outside these specific initiatives.

This program seeks to support strong and distinctive documentary projects primarily to assist in the professional development of directors who have showcased their skills in previous work, as well as to provide the other key creative members with relevant experience in the industry.

Emerging Indigenous producers are encouraged to apply.

Funding is for

- Production and/or post-production of one-off documentaries or documentary series.

This program is designed to complete the film, not to fund a stage of production.

Eligibility

All applicants and projects must meet the general Indigenous Department eligibility criteria, in addition to the following specific eligibility requirements:

- Only teams including a director may apply.
- Both the producer and director must have at least one documentary screen credit each (broadcast and/or screened at a recognised film festival) in their respective roles.
- For series production, commitment from a broadcaster or distributor, or at least a strong written expression of interest, is an essential requirement.

Assessment criteria

Screen Australia will take the following considerations into account when assessing projects for production financing under this program:

- The *creative team* responsible for the project (producer, director, writer), according to (i) track record – past successes, relevant experience and achievements (ii) their demonstrated creative, technical and managerial capacity to deliver the project.
- The *script, treatment and project materials*, according to (i) the strength and distinctiveness of the idea, (ii) the quality of the writing, and (iii) the script or treatment's readiness to proceed into production.
- *Creative potential* of a project, according to (i) the creative team's vision for the film, and (ii) the proposed participants.
- *Audience potential* – a project's potential to reach its intended audience – according to (i) whether or not there is a clearly identified target audience for the film, (ii) the distribution strategy for Australia, (iii) where relevant, the international distribution strategy, and (iv) the cross-platform strategy.

- *Project viability* – budget and financing strategy – according to (i) the viability of the proposed budget in relation to achieving the creative team's stated goals and vision for the project, (ii) the viability of the proposed financing structure and production schedule.

Assessment process

Applications will be assessed by a combination of Screen Australia executives and industry specialists/peers as required.

This program includes a budget/schedule assessment and may include an interview of project teams.

Screen Australia will advise applicants of the success or otherwise of their application, providing a brief statement of reasons.

Application materials

Applications must be made on the relevant Screen Australia application form, and include all supporting material listed on that form.

Budget allowances for marketing and cross-platform elements

Screen Australia recognises the need for marketing and multi-platform digital program elements, and for these cross-platform elements to be incorporated into a production budget from the outset. To this end Screen Australia will earmark an amount in each production budget of the Agency financing for marketing and cross-platform elements.

Terms of trade

Details of Screen Australia and NFSA delivery items, recoupment and other requirements are available in Screen Australia's Terms of Trade.

Note that for all documentary projects approved after 1 March 2010, Screen Australia funding of \$200,000 or under will be provided as a grant, rather than recoupable investment (see page 3).

National Indigenous Documentary Fund (NIDF)

The NIDF provides production opportunities for both emerging and practising Indigenous documentary filmmakers. The Indigenous Department has allocated specific development and production funds towards the NIDF. The NIDF is financed by a combination of production funds from Screen Australia, SBS, the ABC and state agencies. NIDF Series 12 is currently in development. NIDF 12 is commissioned by the ABC.

Please check the website for NIDF Series 13 updates.

www.screenaustralia.gov.au/indigenous

DRAMA PROGRAMS

This program funds the project-specific costs associated with individual features, short films and TV drama series – including animation projects – by emerging and experienced Indigenous practitioners. The Indigenous Department is seeking to invest in the development and production of outstanding drama projects which are based on strong and original ideas, are well written, and can demonstrate the potential to reach an audience.

The Indigenous Department invests in production primarily to assist in the professional development of Indigenous directors who have showcased their skills in previous work, and then for the producers and teams with whom they work. Emerging Indigenous producers are encouraged to apply.

Post-production investment is available to fund project-specific post-production costs associated with taking individual projects from the end of principal photography through to delivery.

Drama Initiatives

The Indigenous Department allocates specific drama development and production funding to initiatives that target specific areas of the industry in any given year.

In 2008/09 **The New Black drama initiative** developed and produced seven 10-minute dramas with emerging directors and producers, financed by Screen Australia, ABC, NSWFTO and the Pacific Film and Television Commission.

The Long Black Feature Program aims to bring to the screen feature-length stories that are authored and crafted by Indigenous people. Three writers' labs and one directors' lab have been held since its inception in 2004. As of September 2009, there were nine features in development. Check the website for the latest updates.

Drama Development

Funding is for

A single draft script of

- Short drama films (under 25 minutes)
- Feature films
- Animation drama projects.

Bible and/or series outline for

- TV drama series.

Eligibility

All applicants and projects must meet the general Indigenous Department eligibility criteria, in addition to the following specific eligibility requirements:

Shorts: Individuals or teams with demonstrated experience in the film industry in any role (NB: this is not an entry-level program). Writers from other media will be considered, but only if they are part of a team including an appropriately credited producer or director.

Features: Individuals (a writer or writer/director) or teams (a producer and a writer or writer/director). The writer or writer/director must have at least one produced short film or appropriate television drama credit as a writer.

TV drama series: Individuals (a writer or writer/director) or teams (a producer and a writer or writer/director). The writer or writer/director must have at least one produced short film or appropriate television drama credit as a writer.

Funding recipients must deliver

- A revised one-line AND one-paragraph AND one-page synopsis.
- A revised script draft.
- A report on the progress achieved during this stage of development and future plans for the project.

For TV drama series

- A completed series bible and or/series outline.
- A revised one-line AND one-paragraph AND one-page synopsis.
- A report on the progress achieved during this stage of development and future plans for the project.

Assessment criteria

When assessing applications for this program, Screen Australia uses the following criteria:

- The strength and distinctiveness of the idea and story
- The quality of the script and the writer's command of cinematic storytelling and screenplay craft as evidenced by the script and/or previous work

- The quality and rigour of the development notes, and whether they articulate the issues to be faced in the next stage of development, as well as outlining the strategies that should resolve these issues and advance the project.
- The skills and experience of the writer and, where appropriate, the team including script editors, producer(s) and director, and the likelihood that their experience/support will advance the project.
- The potential of the film to reach its target audience.
- The viability of the project with regard to the proposed total production budget amount, financing strategy, creative team and target audience.

Assessment process

Applications will be assessed by a combination of Screen Australia executives and industry specialists/peers as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants of the success or otherwise of their application, providing a brief statement of reasons.

Specific advice for drama development applicants

Applications primarily for casting, financing, travel or budgeting and scheduling expenses will only be considered for projects where the script is regarded as being at an advanced stage of development (third draft or more).

Application materials

Applications must be made on the relevant Screen Australia application form, and include all supporting material listed on that form.

Application timing

There will be three rounds of Indigenous documentary development funding in 2010, with deadlines as follows:

- 30 April 2010
- 31 August 2010
- 30 November 2010

Recoupment

Where Screen Australia subsequently invests in a production, its investment in the development phase will be added to the production financing amount and the total investment will be recouped in accordance with the terms of trade for production financing.

Drama Production and Post-production

The Indigenous Department invests in the production and post-production of distinctive and creatively ambitious films primarily to assist in the professional development of directors, as well as to provide other key creative members with relevant industry experience. These films are designed to showcase the director's talent at local and international film festivals. Emerging Indigenous producers are encouraged to apply.

The Indigenous Department typically provides drama production investment in collaboration with broadcasters or other funding entities through joint initiatives. The following general guidelines only apply to the limited funding available outside these specific initiatives.

Funding is for

- Short drama films (under 25 minutes)
- Production and/or post-production
- Animation projects
- Feature films.

NB: This program is designed to complete the film, not to fund a stage of production.

Eligibility

All applicants and projects must meet the general Indigenous Department eligibility criteria, in addition to the following specific eligibility requirements:

- Only teams may apply.
- The producer and director must each have at least one produced short drama credit (minimum length 10 minutes, may include films made at film schools), in their respective roles that has been broadcast or screened at a recognised film festival.
- Filmmakers may apply for post-production funding for films that have been shot on film or tape and that intend to finish on the format on which they were shot. Funding is limited in this area and other Screen Australia funding may be used to augment existing funding from broadcasters and state agencies.

Assessment criteria

Screen Australia will take the following considerations into account when assessing drama projects for production financing:

- The *creative team* responsible for the project (producer, director, writer), according to (i) their track record – past successes, relevant experience and achievements (ii) their demonstrated creative, technical and managerial capacity to deliver the project.
- The *script*, according to (i) the strength and distinctiveness of the idea, (ii) the quality of the writing, and (iii) the script's readiness to proceed into production.

- *Creative potential*, according to (i) the creative team’s vision for the film, and (ii) the proposed cast and heads of department.
- *Audience potential* – a project’s potential to reach its intended audience – according to (i) whether or not there is a clearly identified target audience for the film, (ii) the distribution strategy for Australia, (iii) the international distribution strategy, and (iv) the cross-platform strategy.
- *Project viability* – budget and financing strategy – according to (i) the viability of the proposed budget in relation to achieving the creative team’s stated goals and vision for the project, (ii) the viability of the proposed financing structure and production schedule.

For features the Indigenous Department will also take into consideration the following criterion in addition to the above.

- *Commercial potential*, according to (i) the financing and distribution arrangements in Australia and internationally, (ii) the budget in relation to projected returns, and (iii) Screen Australia’s recoupment position.

Assessment process

Applications will be assessed by a combination of Screen Australia executives and industry specialists/peers as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants of the success or otherwise of their application, providing a brief statement of reasons.

Application materials

Applications must be made on the relevant Screen Australia application form, and include all supporting material listed on that form.

Budget allowances for marketing and cross-platform elements

Screen Australia recognises the need for marketing and multi-platform digital program elements, and for these cross-platform elements to be incorporated into a production budget from the outset. To this end Screen Australia will earmark an amount in each production budget of the Agency financing for marketing and cross-platform elements.

Terms of trade

Details of Screen Australia and NFSA delivery items, recoupment and other requirements are available in Screen Australia’s Terms of Trade.

DIGITAL MEDIA PROGRAMS

This strand seeks to provide experienced and emerging practitioners or filmmakers crossing over to the digital media area the opportunity to create written and/or visual pitching materials to ensure that digital media projects are as strong as possible when competing for production finance.

Funding is provided for pitching materials demonstrably appropriate to the project. The program aims to assist in the development of cross-platform, mobile phone or broadband content, or for the formulation of online rather than console games.

Funding is for

Interactive digital media projects of any length, type or platform.

Eligibility

All applicants and projects must meet the general Indigenous Department eligibility criteria, in addition to the following specific eligibility requirements:

- Only teams may apply.
- At least one member of the team must have a key creative or production credit on at least one substantial and completed interactive digital media project.
- At least one member of the team must have a key creative or production credit on at least one produced and released theatrical/broadcast/festival) drama or documentary project.
- Development support of the making of an 'electronic proof of concept' (EPOC) is not eligible.

NB: Experimental or predominantly art-based projects are eligible to apply, but will need to demonstrate their potential for future support. Educational projects must also demonstrate that they are innovative and provide professional development opportunities for the applicant(s).

Funding recipients must deliver

Finalised pitching materials such as paper-based scripts, proposals or graphics in hard copy or via web-based presentations from an existing website.

A revised strategy detailing how the development materials will be used to secure further development or production finance, and what the next stage might be.

Assessment criteria

When assessing applications for this program, Screen Australia uses the following criteria:

- The strength and distinctiveness of the idea and the concept.
- The creative use of interactive elements and how the work intends to find an audience, engage the user and/or drive audiences across platforms.
- The skills and capacity of the team to undertake the project as evidenced in previous work.

- The likelihood of the project attracting further marketplace development or production finance after this stage of development.
- The viability of the proposed production budget amount and finance strategy in line with the concept, the creative team and the target audience.

Assessment process

Applications will be assessed by a combination of Screen Australia executives and industry specialists/peers as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants of the success or otherwise of their application, providing a brief statement of reasons.

Application materials

Applications must be made on the relevant Screen Australia application form, and include all supporting material listed on that form.

Recoupment

Where Screen Australia subsequently invests in a production, its investment in the development phase will be added to the production financing amount and the total investment will be recouped in accordance with the terms of trade for production financing.

PRACTITIONER SUPPORT – INTERNSHIPS

Internships assist practitioners whose careers would benefit from an attachment to a person, production or organisation. This program is designed to assist the career development of talented filmmakers who have already showcased their skills in previous work. It is not an entry-level scheme.

Funding is for

An internship may take many forms and involve features, documentaries, animation, interactive digital media, TV drama or comedy series. For example:

- a director might attach themselves to a more experienced director on a production
- a producer might spend time in a TV production house to observe the script development and creative management process, or they may wish to work with a more senior producer developing a financing plan for a project of their own
- an animation filmmaker may wish to enhance specific technical or creative skills
- a filmmaker may want to hire a more experienced producer or director as a consultant on their own funded production.

Eligibility

The general Indigenous Department eligibility criteria apply to all Internship applications. Additionally:

- Only individuals may apply.
- The program is for producers, directors, script editors, animation filmmakers and interactive digital media producers who have at least one significant produced and released credit.
- Credits should be in the same field in which the applicant is seeking an internship (eg an applicant seeking an attachment with a director should have directorial credits).

Funding recipients must deliver

A report after completing the internship, including an update on any career developments which have arisen as a result of the internship/fellowship.

A statement of expenditure. Internship reports may be published, with the permission of the intern, in part or in full on the Screen Australia website.

Assessment criteria

When assessing applications for Internships, Screen Australia uses the following criteria:

- The potential of the applicant as evidenced by previous work.

- The quality of the mentor or mentor organisation and the level of access the applicant will have to them.
- The quality of the proposed program the applicant and mentor have negotiated.
- The strategic benefit of the program to the applicant at this stage of their career.

Assessment process

Applications will be assessed by a combination of Screen Australia executives and industry specialists/peers as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants of the success or otherwise of their application, providing a brief statement of reasons.

Application materials

Applications must be made on the relevant Screen Australia application form, and include all supporting material listed on that form.

Recoupment

Funding is in the form of a grant.

Indigenous Producers Initiative

The Indigenous Department's Producers Initiative aims to bring new creative producers into the industry and provide professional development for less experienced producers working in this area.

The initiative involves an intensive development plan that covers all aspects of producing and will be tailored to suit the needs and skills of participants. This development plan will also involve workshops, internships with experienced producers, help with developing projects and participation in conferences and markets.

TRAVEL GRANTS

Travel Grants assist filmmakers in meeting the costs associated with travel to attend overseas film festivals, market places, conferences, workshops, award ceremonies or other travel associated with either professional or industry development.

Funding is for

Costs associated with attending:

- Recognised international film festivals
- International markets
- Australian film conferences ie AIDC, ASDA, SPAA
- Award ceremonies ie AFI Awards, IF Awards
- Workshops and conferences considered to provide significant professional or industry development.

Eligibility

The general Indigenous Department eligibility criteria apply to all Travel Grant applications. Additionally:

- Indigenous directors and/or producers whose film has been selected to screen in a major international festival.
- Producers must have a project suitably developed to pitch at an international or Australian market.
- Directors and/or producers who wish to attend a relevant conference, workshop or awards ceremony with their project.

NB: Applicants can only receive one round of travel assistance in a 24 month period.

Funding recipients must deliver

A report after completing the travel, including an update on any career developments which have arisen as a result of attending the relevant event.

A statement of expenditure.

Assessment criteria

When assessing applications for Travel Grants, Screen Australia uses the criteria below.

For film festivals and award ceremonies:

- The professional development benefit to the applicant of attending the proposed festival.
- The international/national standing of the proposed festival/ceremony.
- The potential exposure for the film and practitioner.
- The strategic benefit to the applicant of attending the proposed festival/ceremony at this stage of their career.

For markets:

- The professional development benefit to the applicant of attending the proposed market.
- The international standing of the proposed market.
- The suitability of the particular market to the project(s) being pitched.
- The readiness of the project(s) to be pitched.

For conferences and workshops:

- The professional development benefit to the applicant of attending.
- The applicant's previous filmmaking experience.
- The quality and rigour of the statement of benefit, and whether it articulates clearly the professional benefit of the practitioner attending.
- Demonstrated commitment to a career in the film industry as evidenced by the applicant's CV.

Assessment process

Applications will be assessed by a combination of Screen Australia executives and industry specialists/peers as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants of the success or otherwise of their application, providing a brief statement of reasons.

Application materials

Applications must be made on the relevant Screen Australia application form, and include all supporting material listed on that form.

INDIGENOUS