

SCREEN AUSTRALIA RESOURCES FOR DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS

February 2010

FUNDING PROGRAMS

Development and production

Screen Australia's Documentary Unit offers development support and production finance for both one-off documentaries and series.

Development:

- Primarily for experienced documentary makers
- Up to \$40,000 available per project
- Time-critical and matched funding also available

Production financing:

- **National Documentary Program (NDP):** incorporates the National Interest Program and Making History Initiative, aiming to provide a distinctive slate of projects with a sense of cultural ambition and a budget scale that separates them from other documentary investments.
- **Domestic & International programs:** funding to match a domestic broadcaster's licence fee, or for projects with international marketplace commitment.
- **Special Documentary Program:** for innovative projects which do not necessarily have a market attachment.
- **Special Documentary Initiatives:** including triple jtv docs5, a joint initiative of ABC TV and Screen Australia that seeks fresh approaches to half-hour and one-hour documentaries exploring contemporary issues, ideas and culture through the eyes of generations X, Y and Z.

See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/documentary

Indigenous

Screen Australia's **Indigenous Department** is interested in investing in documentary projects which not only exhibit strong original ideas and a skilful grasp of documentary form and storytelling, but also provide professional development opportunities for key team members.

To be eligible for funding from the Indigenous Department, applicants and their projects must 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.

See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/indigenous

Innovation

There are new and evolving ways to explore documentary and factual subject matter, for example, through online platforms or gaming. These may be 'crossover' platforms from a linear documentary, or they may be standalone projects purely produced for digital media. The **Innovation Program** aims to support documentary projects that are cutting edge and visionary, using new platforms and methodologies.

The program encourages the formation of multi-disciplinary teams that embody convergence between traditional media and digital media, for example, factual and documentary specialists collaborating with web developers or game studios.

See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/innovation

Enterprise

Screen Australia's **Enterprise Program** provides funding over a three-year period to support a small number of production companies that have identified opportunities to develop and expand their business in terms of turnover, range and number of projects and/or the range of business activities undertaken to enhance the company's sustainability.

See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/enterprise

INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS

A documentary approved as an official co-production is regarded as a national production of each of the co-producing countries. This means it is eligible to apply for any benefits or programs of assistance available.

In Australia, projects approved as official co-productions can apply for investment from Screen Australia. They are also eligible to be treated as projects with a significant Australian content and may therefore access the Producer Offset (see below).

An official international co-production must be made under the terms of one of the arrangements in place between Australia and the co-producing countries. Australia has treaties with the United Kingdom, Canada, Italy, Ireland, Israel, Germany, Singapore and China; Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with France and New Zealand.

For more information, see www.screenaustralia.gov.au/coproductions

PRODUCER OFFSET

Screen Australia administers the Producer Offset, a refundable tax offset (rebate) for producers of eligible Australian programs. The Offset is worth:

- 20 per cent of **Qualifying Australian Production Expenditure (QAPE)** incurred on non-feature documentaries
- 40 per cent of QAPE on feature documentaries.

The Offset is paid through the Australian company tax system after a project is completed and Screen Australia has issued the production company with a Final Certificate. Broadly, in order to be certified, a film or program must meet a number of criteria. For documentaries, the QAPE must be at least \$250,000 per hour, and for feature documentaries, total QAPE must be at least \$1,000,000.

See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/producer_offset

MARKETING SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Screen Australia's marketing activities aim to assist Australian productions in reaching wider audiences, on any platform. In order to do this, we want filmmakers to understand, consider and implement the marketing needs of a project from inception through development, production and distribution.

Funding programs relevant to documentary makers include:

- **Theatrical P&A** – funds to enhance a theatrical documentary's marketing campaign and increase both audience and revenue.
- **Innovative Distribution** – grants to documentary producers or distributors with alternative, non-traditional and/or innovative distribution and release strategies.
- **Festival & Marketplace Travel** – grants to practitioners to attend a range of international events.
- **International Festival Materials** – grants to enable creation of the screening and promotional materials required when films are selected to screen at key festivals.

Information resources include:

- **Festival and market profiles:** Profiles of key international festivals and markets, including tips for attendees.

Screen Australia also hosts a stand at the European Film Market (EFM) Berlin, Cannes Film Market, MIPCOM and MIPTV.

See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/marketing

LIBRARY AND SALES

The Screen Australia Library is one of the largest and most historically significant sources of archival, documentary, stock footage and stills in Australia. Locations include Antarctica, South East Asia, Europe and the Americas. It offers:

- an extensive online database of the Library's titles, shot lists and digital clips, with stills available soon
- a collection of more than 5,000 titles and 150,000 stills, from the early 1900s to the present
- specialist library services for the documentary sector.

The collection is constantly being updated with footage and stills from new productions.

See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/library

Zero Fee Licence

Screen Australia's Library offers Australian independent documentary makers up to 10 minutes of footage and 40 stills for a no-fee licence as part of the Zero Fee Licence initiative.

This initiative is intended for Australian independent documentary makers only and they must meet one of the following criteria:

- their production has an Australian free-to-air or pay television pre-sale;
- their production is an online documentary;
- their production has funding from Screen Australia or a state funding body;
- their production has a letter of interest from an Australian broadcaster or funding body;
- the producer is a film student at an Australian educational institution; or
- the producer/director is a member of the Screen Producers Association of Australia (SPAA) or Australian Directors Guild (ADG).

See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/library

Documentary sales

Screen Australia Sales provides distribution services for more than a thousand Australian documentaries and programs, including titles produced under the former National Interest Program, National Documentary Program and Making History Initiative.

The Documentary and Educational Programs Catalogue contains programs previously produced under Film Australia or distributed by Screen Australia. More than 1,000 titles can be found on the Screen Australia website, including the latest projects in production.

See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/sales

DOCUMENTARY-RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Statistics

Documentary production in Australia: a collection of key data

First published February 2004 and revised annually, this report is released in time for the Australian International Documentary Conference (usually late February). It provides a summary of the comprehensive statistics on production, funding, distribution and exhibition of Australian documentaries available through Get the Picture Online.

See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/gtp

Titles database

The Screen Australia website has a **searchable film database** with over 4,000 Australian documentary titles since 1980, with credits, synopses, sales contacts and subjects.

See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/films

Budgeting

A–Z Documentary Budgets

Screen Australia's A-Z Budgets are Excel templates designed to provide a guide to preparing budgets in the form required by funding bodies. The Documentary Budget has been revised giving an indication of the QAPE (Qualifying Australian Production Expenditure) status for Producer Offset applicants.

See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/a-zbudget

Getting started

Screen Australia publishes a number of printed and online information guides that may also be of interest, such as:

- *Getting Started in the Film, Television and Interactive Digital Media Industry*: A guide to training courses, attachments and finding work
- *I've Got a Great Idea for a Film*: What to do if you have a great idea for a film or have written a script and don't know what to do next
- *Information for Filmmakers*: A guide to organisations and information sources for film and television production in Australia
- *What is a Synopsis? An Outline? A Treatment?* A short and simple explanation of synopses, outlines and treatments for drama and documentary

See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/filming_in_australia/Getting_Started.asp

Photocopying this guide:

This guide is regularly updated. Please check the Screen Australia website prior to copying to ensure you have the most up-to-date version:

www.screenaustralia.gov.au/filming_in_australia/Getting_Started.asp

Screen Australia Communications Unit welcomes amendments/additions to this guide.

Please phone

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