

**DRAFT FOR COMMENT**

# **SCREEN AUSTRALIA PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

January to June 2009

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## **OVERVIEW**

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## DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Screen Australia's goal is to develop a vibrant, successful and dynamic screen industry, which is responsive to audiences and provides an interpretation of Australian culture both here and overseas. It aims to support Australian screen producers in creating outstanding Australian content across a range of platforms. It also aims to support innovation throughout the industry.

Two main arms of development support are available: the **Enterprise Program**, and a series of **Project-by-project Development Programs**. There are also **Innovation Programs**, development **workshops** and a new **industry fellowship**.

The **Enterprise Program** will provide up to \$500,000 per year for a three-year period to a wide range of screen production companies with experienced principals who have identified opportunities to develop and expand their business. The program aims to support further growth of existing screen businesses, encourage new business partnerships and alliances, and support dynamic businesses to develop strong slates of projects.

**Project-by-project Development Programs** provide project-specific development funding to experienced screen professionals who don't access the Enterprise program. Generally, the programs are for professionals with successful track records, working in teams. Emerging filmmakers will need to partner with experienced colleagues to be eligible for these programs.

Project development funding is generally provided in the form of a grant (recouped if Screen Australia subsequently provides production investment in the project), and is intended to be a strategic step on the path to triggering production financing.

A **short animation** production program is also available, to help reinforce Australia's growing expertise in this area.

The **Innovation Program** focuses on digital media projects or projects that use innovative technology or form.

Screen Australia has streamlined its project development programs in order to focus its activity and support excellence. It has set itself the goal of funding fewer projects for development, but funding them better, by lifting the amount that can be applied for in its programs.

It also aims to work with the industry more flexibly by eliminating rounds for development funding and accepting applications at any time. The intention is to provide a quick turnaround to help filmmakers maintain momentum. In addition, projects can apply both at an early concept stage and at a draft stage, and projects that have achieved milestones and completed a development stage can be fast-tracked for further development.

**Workshops** providing opportunities for both experienced and emerging filmmakers will be conducted by Screen Australia or staged in partnership with state bodies and other entities. **Industry fellowships** will be offered at two levels, for highly experienced screen professionals as well as less experienced filmmakers offered an outstanding opportunity.

**For more details, see [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/draft\\_guidelines](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/draft_guidelines)**

## PRODUCTION FINANCING

Screen Australia aims to invest in a range of audience-engaging and culturally relevant programs including feature films, television drama, children's television drama and documentaries.

In selecting projects in which to invest, Screen Australia will value excellence, audience engagement and Australian cultural content across all platforms. Productions funded must have cultural merit and an awareness of the market, both here and overseas.

We are committed to actively engaging with and involving the industry in the selection process.

In **features**, the assessment of the level of Screen Australia funding will be flexible, taking into account the Producer Offset, market attachment, the commercial, cultural, artistic and critical merit of the project and its ability to reach a wide audience or a specific targeted audience in Australia. All budget ranges are eligible, with special arrangements applying to low-budget films which do not qualify for the Producer Offset.

In **documentary**, Screen Australia will continue to invest in Domestic and International documentaries by Australian documentarians, as well as in low-budget documentaries and significant documentaries of particular cultural relevance.

The National Documentary Program will carry forward the National Interest Program and Making History initiative, creating a comprehensive and strategic slate of documentaries that deal with matters of national interest or illustrate and interpret aspects of Australian life and history. Arrangements have been revised to give greater responsibility for production to industry.

Supplementing the **adult TV drama program** will be a Low-budget Television Drama Program, which seeks to provide further opportunities for producers to make TV programs that step outside the potential limitations of scheduled broadcaster commissioning and Screen Australia market requirements.

Screen Australia's requirements for foreign presales in the category of **children's drama** recognise the excellent reputation Australian producers have built up internationally as suppliers of quality children's programming.

However, Screen Australia acknowledges that this success may act as a barrier for certain intrinsically Australian programs that may not necessarily have the potential to travel. The Distinctively Australian Children's TV Drama Program will support the production of lower budget children's drama projects with no requirement for an international pre-sale.

Screen Australia intends to work with the industry to identify and fund quality programs. Screen Australia will not use the marketplace by itself as the key criterion for determining which projects are necessarily funded and supports the notion of assessment-based funding and investment.

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## INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS

The Indigenous Branch'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 Branch proactively strives to support Indigenous projects and practitioners through:

- providing draft development investment in projects that have the potential to be realised.
- providing Development and/or Production Investment in targeted initiatives, one-off projects, or in collaboration with broadcasters or other funding entities.
- provide support for Indigenous practitioners to attend conferences, markets and festivals, nationally and internationally.
- provide support and facilitate internships and mentorship programs with more experienced practitioners.

Other key roles of the Indigenous Branch 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.

This funding is to enable both development and production opportunities for projects that have been initiated by Indigenous Australian writers, directors and producers which display originality.

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