
ABC TV Documentaries and Screen Australia present

OPENING SHOT 4

– an ‘opening shot’ for young filmmakers

GUIDELINES DECEMBER 2014

Screen Australia and ABC TV Documentaries are calling for proposals from young filmmakers nationwide.

Opening Shot 4 will create up to six 29-minute one-off documentary films directed by filmmakers aged 35 years and under. The films will premiere as a series in prime time on ABC2, a channel that aims to surprise, enthuse and provoke. They will engage and entertain a broad audience, especially viewers aged 25–49.

Opening Shot 4 aims to give voice to a younger point of view on contemporary Australian life and to advance the careers of a new generation of program makers.

The stories and treatments will be compelling and promotable and will use a range of storytelling devices.

What compelling story would you tell the national prime time audience if you had the chance? Why does the story matter and why does the nation need to hear it now?

The ABC and Screen Australia will appoint a Commissioning Editor and Investment Development Manager respectively to the projects.

Available funding

ABC TV and Screen Australia have committed a total of \$400,000 to this initiative. Applicants can apply for up to \$80,000 for each half-hour (29-minute) documentary (up to \$40,000 for post-production only).

The ABC and Screen Australia contribution to each documentary may be augmented by funding from third parties like state film agencies, distributors, film festivals, etc and by a Producer Equity grant if eligible (see www.screenaustralia.gov.au/ProducerEquity). Crowdfunding and philanthropic funding may also be used to augment budgets. However, it is vital you are aware of the ABC’s Editorial Policies for this type of funding. Please see links below:

www.abc.net.au/tv/independent/doc/Philanthropic-bodies-advice-note.pdf

www.abc.net.au/tv/independent/doc/Crowd-funding-advice-note.pdf

If appropriate, the ABC and Screen Australia may provide funding for the development of some projects before deciding whether or not to commission them.

Application timing

Application deadline: Midnight 16 February 2015

Applicants will be advised of Stage One decisions within 6–8 weeks.

Eligibility

An application must first meet the following eligibility criteria in order to be competitively assessed for funding through this program.

- Projects must be one-off documentaries of 29 minutes in duration (documentary series proposals cannot be considered).
- The applicant team must include at least a director and producer each of whom must have at least one screen credit in a significant creative role (eg director, producer, DOP, editor, associate producer, writer, field director or researcher) on a film that has either been broadcast and/or screened at a recognised film festival. Films made at a film school qualify if they have been broadcast and/or screened at a recognised film festival. Credits can be in documentary or drama production, and may include short films and television series. The team may also include a writer.
- The director must be 35 years or under as at the closing date 16 February 2015.

Application process and materials

STAGE ONE – APPLICATION AND SHORTLIST

Step 1. Fill out an Opening Shot 4 application form, available at www.screenaustralia.gov.au/openingshot.

Step 2. Compile the required supporting documentation, including:

- A 2-page (max) outline or treatment of the proposed half-hour documentary project making clear reference to story structure and key character story arcs and stylistic and visual approach as per the ABC2 brief. (A good reference guide for what is a synopsis/outline can be found on the Screen Australia website). You may propose more than one project in your application.
- CVs of the producer, writer and director, and any other confirmed key personnel (DOP, editor, etc).
- If available, one example of the director's previous work (a complete film, not a showreel) on DVD.

Please note materials will not be returned, so applicants must ensure they keep copies of everything, including all AV materials.

Step 3. POST your complete Stage One application (THREE copies) to the ABC (NOT Screen Australia):

Opening Shot
ABC TV Documentaries
Attention: Sandra Graham
GPO BOX 9994, Sydney NSW 2001
(Courier Delivery: 700 Harris St, Ultimo NSW 2007)

Step 4. EMAIL an electronic copy of your complete Stage One application to Sandra Graham (graham.sandra@abc.net.au) by the published deadline of February 16 2015. Applications received after this deadline will not be accepted.

STAGE TWO – DEVELOPMENT AND DECISION

If your project makes it to Stage Two and is shortlisted for further consideration you will be required to provide the following materials:

- Expanded treatment (5–7 pages).
- If available, footage of characters or key elements, preferably via a site like Vimeo or Hightail, or on DVD.
- Written confirmation of key subjects' willingness to participate.
- Where there is Indigenous community participation or content involved in the project, written confirmation of the willingness of both the subject(s) and the community to be involved in the project is essential.
- A budget in the Screen Australia A-Z Documentary format (available from the [Screen Australia website](#)), a finance plan using the template available from the [Screen Australia website](#), and schedule.

Assessment process

All eligible applications will be read by the ABC TV Commissioning Editor who will long-list the projects. A Screen Australia Investment Manager will review long-listed projects. ABC TV and Screen Australia will create the short-list after further assessment.

Applicants who are shortlisted after the second stage may be required to develop their projects before final consideration. Extra preparation time and some funding may be provided to develop additional materials.

Assessment criteria

When assessing applications, the following criteria will be used:

- Creative strength of the project, in the context of the ABC2 brief, including
 - the concept/idea/story: its distinctiveness, relevance to ABC2 audience,
 - the proposed realisation: creativity in storytelling, entertainment value
 - the quality of the submitted treatment.
- Capacity of the team to manage the project creatively and commercially, given the nature of the proposal and their track record.
- The professional development benefit to the team (especially the director) if funded for this project at this stage of their careers.
- Project viability in terms of the proposed budget, financing strategy and schedule (assessed at Stage Two).
- Ability to deliver by March 2016.

Please note that we will NOT be revisiting territory already covered in the first three series of Opening Shot. Details of projects funded for that series are available in the [ABC2 Brief](#).

We are keen to emphasise that we are looking for strong stories in the present tense. This does not rule out the use of presenters or other storytelling devices but at the heart of the project there must be a strong story to tell.

Please see the [ABC2 Brief](#).

Decisions on applications are final. The ABC will advise applicants in writing of the outcome of their application.

Terms of funding

All projects selected for production will be subject to the ABC Commissioning and Screen Australia funding processes.

Screen Australia funding for Opening Shot is provided as a grant. See [Screen Australia's Terms of Trade](#) for more details.

In accordance, with the [ABC's Terms of Trade](#) the ABC will be entitled to a rights package which includes five runs over five years, streaming and download rights for 14 days after each run and series stacking on the first run. The ABC will issue a license agreement setting out the full rights package prior to production.

Other resources:

[What is a synopsis/ outline/ treatment?](#)

[ABC2 Brief](#)