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## GUIDELINES: INDIGENOUS DEPARTMENT

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# PITCH SHORT BLACKS: SHORT DRAMA DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION INITIATIVE

ISSUED 18 MARCH 2016

**Screen Australia's Indigenous Department is calling on emerging Indigenous filmmakers from across Australia to submit 10- minute dramatic story ideas.**

PITCH SHORT BLACKS will comprise of six 10-minute dramas designed to bring to the screen edgy Indigenous stories, authored and crafted by Indigenous people.

The selected projects will be bold, based on strong ideas, exhibit a high level of creative ambition and demonstrate the possibility of being financed for production.

Stories should incorporate a maximum of two main characters with minimal extra/support characters and no more than two locations.

No experience in screenwriting or production is required, but a demonstrated interest in pursuing a career in this field is essential.

### **What funding is available?**

Applicants can apply for up to \$6,000 for project development.

### **Who can apply?**

An application must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Each project must have Indigenous Australians in key creative roles

(minimum writer and director).

- Applications from new and emerging Indigenous writers and writer/directors will be accepted.
- Directors who have made four or more fully funded short dramas are not eligible to apply.
- Indigenous producers are encouraged to apply. Applications with a strong story idea from an Indigenous producer without a director attached will be accepted.
- Applications with a strong story idea, but no director or producer in place, will also be accepted.
- Each project must have a censorship rating no greater than M.
- The project is no longer than 10 minutes, including titles and credits.
- All team members must be available to attend both the Development workshops (late June 2016 and late August 2016 – final dates TBC).
- Each film must be shot and delivered in a digital format by December 2016

### **Initiative parameters**

- Stories should incorporate a maximum of two main characters with minimal extra/support characters and no more than two locations.
- Eight projects will be selected for development.
- On completion of the development phase, which includes both workshops, six applicants will be selected for production funding.
- At this stage producers must be attached and applicants will be expected to provide a fully itemised A–Z budget and production schedule.

### **What materials do you need to apply?**

#### **STAGE ONE – DEVELOPMENT**

Applications must be completed via the Screen Australia Application portal which will require:

- A one-line and one-paragraph synopsis of the idea (see the Screen Australia publication, *What is a Synopsis? An Outline? A Treatment?*).
- A detailed treatment or story outline (minimum three pages) or full draft script, detailing the major character's screen journey (see the Screen Australia publication *Suggested Script Layout*).
- Script development notes that provide a detailed critical analysis of the project. They should identify current problems in the script, unresolved story issues, potential difficulties that may arise in the further development of the project, the project's creative and conceptual strengths, and its potential.
- If a director or writer/director is attached, a director's statement describing in detail the directorial approach to the project.

- If a producer is attached, a producer's statement describing in detail the producer's approach to the project.
- Professional development statement(s), outlining how this project would enhance the career aspirations of the principal creatives (writer, director, producer).
- CVs of the applicant(s) and any intended collaborators (eg writer, director, producer) in a yearly format including running time of any productions. (Please refer to the sample industry cv's).
- Examples of applicant's previous work sent via a vimeo link.

And any further documentation or supporting material that might assist in consideration of the application.

## STAGE TWO – PRODUCTION

At this stage, the eight successful projects from Stage One (Development), will have attended the Development Workshops. They will then be invited to apply for Stage Two (production) through the Screen Australia Application Portal, with the following materials:

- A one-line and one-paragraph synopsis of the idea (see the Screen Australia publication, *What is a Synopsis? An Outline? A Treatment?*).
- A third draft script
- A Producer's statement (a producer will need to be attached to the project by this stage)
- A fully itemized A-Z budget and production schedule.
- A Director's statement
- All Chain of Title documentation, including a Director's agreement

Screen Australia may request additional documentation when required.

### What is the assessment process?

Applications will be accepted from any Australian state or territory.

The selection panel will be made up of Screen Australia's Indigenous Department Executives and industry specialists as required.

This committee will read and assess all eligible Stage One Development applications. Up to eight applications will be selected to participate in the Development stage. This will include receiving up to \$6,000 in development funding, as well as the attending the following workshops:

- Development Workshop 1: The **initial stage** of development includes a three-day writing workshop for writers and writer/directors, to be held in late June 2016.

- Development Workshop 2: At **first to second-draft stage** applicants will attend a residential visual storytelling workshop, to be held in late August 2016.

At the conclusion of the Development workshops, projects will be moving from **second to third draft**. At this stage, Screen Australia will select up to six projects to apply to the Stage Two – Production fund. The committee will select six projects for production funding.

In special situations where Screen Australia believe the script is already well developed and close to production ready, the team might be requested to submit a full production application after the first workshop.

## Assessment Criteria

When assessing applications for this program, Screen Australia will use the following selection criteria:

### Stage One – Development:

- The strength and distinctiveness of the idea and concept; the use of compelling characters; and the project's ability to advance Australian Indigenous filmmaking and storytelling.
- The strategic benefit of the initiative to the applicant and demonstrated desire for a career in the film industry as evidenced by the written application and supporting materials.
- The skills and capacity of the team to undertake the project as evidenced by the written application and supporting materials.
- The practical viability of the project within the initiative parameters.

All of the above criteria are equally weighted.

### Stage Two – Production:

- The originality and distinctiveness of the story, and strength of the directorial voice in embracing the parameters of the initiative.
- The skills, experience and track record of each of the key principals and the potential to advance key creative careers.
- The viability of the budget and schedule in relation to the script, and a production approach that embraces the budget parameters of the initiative.

## **Application Timing**

All applications must be received by the published deadline – Friday 22 April 2016. No extensions will be granted for this initiative.

## **Terms of funding**

All projects selected for production will be subject to Screen Australia funding processes.

Screen Australia funding is provided as a grant. See Screen Australia's Terms of Trade for more detail