



Australian Government



GUIDELINES

DOCUMENTARY

PROGRAMS

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REVISED December 2015 and August 2016 (see [page 19](#) for Update Log)

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Screen Australia has updated the Documentary Program guidelines in keeping with its aim to reduce red tape, shorten assessment periods and respond to 2016/17 funding levels. The former Broadcast program, now referred to as the Commissioned Program, no longer includes allocations, has expanded to incorporate VOD services and is fully contestable.

Details of these changes are outlined within this document. Changes to the Producer Equity Program can be found within the [PEP guidelines](#).

GUIDELINES:

DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMS

Screen Australia's direct funding for documentary aims to support:

- **Quality** – premium Australian content that resonates with contemporary audiences in a global marketplace
- **Cultural value** – screen stories that shape our cultural imagination, contribute to our national belonging, and create an enduring legacy for all Australians now and into the future
- **Innovation** – risk-taking and creativity that grows and evolves content across different forms and business models
- **Diversity** – Australian content across a variety of subjects, styles and approaches, reflecting a range of viewpoints.

For the purpose of these Guidelines the term **Commissioning Platform** includes a free-to-air or subscription television broadcaster and/or newer online platforms such as subscription video on demand (SVOD).

Screen Australia anticipates allocating direct funding of approximately \$15-17 million for documentary in 2016/17.

Three programs supporting documentary production are offered:

- **Producer program:** Supports singles and series for distribution across broadcast, festival, theatrical, digital, i-doc and transmedia platforms. Minimum budget of \$120,000 per hour. Maximum Screen Australia contribution of \$750,000. Finance does not have to be confirmed at application (Screen Australia can be 'first in').
- **Commissioned program:** Supports singles and series all productions made primarily for accepted Commissioning Platforms, as outlined above. Minimum budget of \$250,000 per hour. Maximum Screen Australia contribution of \$1 million. Minimum licence fees apply. Commissioning platform contribution and any other finance must be in place at application (Screen Australia is 'last in').
- **Producer Equity program (PEP):** Provides a direct payment of funds to producers of eligible low-budget Australian documentaries, equal to 20 per cent of the approved budget. Projects are not assessed beyond establishing eligibility. PEP is available in conjunction with any other Screen Australia documentary production funding.

To help 'grow the pie' with **international sources of finance**, a minimum of 20 per cent of funding through the Producer program will be allocated to projects with international finance, and the Commissioned program will incentivise international projects through a lower required domestic licence fee.

Funding for **documentary development** and discretionary **sector building initiatives** is also available.

Other sources of finance are encouraged, and the assessment process will take into account the level of Screen Australia funding requested as a proportion of the overall budget. In this way Screen Australia hopes to be able to continue its support for a large, diverse and high-quality slate of documentary projects.

There is no change to Screen Australia's aims for documentary funding. Due to budget changes they increase in importance to our decision making process.

Budget response reflects a reduction of 5-6% across the agency to all on screen programs

We've adapted the Broadcast program after a request from government to review our funding programs to provide greater contestability in recognition of audience engagement across a wide variety of platforms.

PEP guidelines are in review and applicants can see the updates in the guidelines as they are confirmed.

Investment and slate management principles

In an environment where the Producer Offset provides the primary means of government support for projects with commercial potential, Screen Australia's investment and slate management principles are governed by its enabling legislation, the *Screen Australia Act 2008*, to:

ensure the development of a diverse range of Australian programs that deal with matters of national interest or importance to Australians, or that illustrate or interpret aspects of Australia or the life and activities of Australian people.

In this context, and given the need to allocate its limited funds fairly and effectively, Screen Australia manages its slate in collaboration with producers and Commissioning Platforms, according to the following principles:

- Ongoing consultation with producers and Commissioning Platforms about the year's slate and upcoming priorities
- Recognition of Commissioning Platforms' expertise in connecting with audiences as part of their commissioning processes
- Reserving the right to make investment decisions based on published assessment criteria (see pages 7 and 12) that reflect the requirements of the *Screen Australia Act*, and the over-arching aims of its documentary funding programs (see page 2).

Further, where projects seeking Screen Australia support are intended for television broadcast, Screen Australia needs to work closely with both broadcasters and producers in order for its limited funds to have maximum impact.

Screen Australia first published these slate management principles in the 2009 guidelines. They are an important way of acknowledging the broadcaster's role in connecting with audiences as well as clarifying Screen Australia's position as an investor with public accountability for its funding decisions.

The aim is to balance the broadcaster's commissioning expertise, Screen Australia's accountability for its funds, and the producer's ultimate responsibility for the project.

See also Commissioned Program Funding Decisions [page 12](#).

Documentary production:

Producer program

The intention of the Producer program is to provide producers with the flexibility to drive projects both creatively and commercially, with Screen Australia funding as the foundation for growing and securing deals.

The program is designed to support innovative documentaries with a strong creative vision in the context of today's evolving media and distribution landscape and the commercial realities of increasingly fragmented sources of finance.

It supports singles and series intended for broadcast, festival, theatrical, digital, VR and transmedia audiences. Minimum budget is \$120,000 per hour (or \$120,000 in total for non-linear projects).

Screen Australia aims to fund 20–30 hours of content a year through this program.

Marketplace commitment is not required at application but projects will need to demonstrate a highly developed understanding of how they will reach and engage their target market and audience. See 'Pathways to audience', [page 8](#).

Funding available

Any amount up to \$750,000 may be requested. For projects eligible for the Producer Equity program, the PEP payment will automatically form part of the Screen Australia contribution. Producers who have a genuine cinematic feature that may require a larger investment should talk to Screen Australia as soon as possible about their project.

There are no limits on the proportion of the budget Screen Australia can contribute under this program. However, other sources of finance are encouraged, and the assessment process will take into account the level of Screen Australia funding requested as a proportion of the overall budget. Contributions might come from marketplace entities, as well as from state agencies, other government organisations, cultural institutions, international sources, private investors or other partners.

The program is open to applications for post-production as well as production. Screen Australia may decide to provide funding from a different funding program or at a different level than that applied for, based on its assessment of the project.

A minimum of 20 per cent of program funds will be reserved for projects with international finance. There is no required minimum level of international finance for a project to request funds from the international reserve.

Eligibility

In order to be competitively assessed for funding through this program, applicants and projects must meet the general eligibility requirements under Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#).

In addition, the **project that is the subject of the application** must:

- be a documentary (see definition [page 17](#))
- be intended for public release

- have a total budget of at least \$120,000 per hour (or \$120,000 in total for non-linear projects)
- not be
 - primarily a game
 - an extension to a film or TV program, or
 - content made for primarily for educational or training purposes.

Both one-off documentaries and series are eligible. However, more than 15 broadcast hours of any one project, which may include multiple series, will not be eligible for funding unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.

Foreign formats are eligible, although the assessment criteria take originality of format into account.

The **creative team** responsible for the project must:

- include one key principal who has at least two 'eligible credits' in their respective role (this may be the producer or director, or equivalent role relevant to the type of project).

For linear documentaries, and linear projects with multiplatform elements, an 'eligible credit' is a linear documentary that is 30 minutes or longer in duration, and has:

- been broadcast by a recognised broadcaster or channel, or
- had a commercial theatrical release, or
- been invited to screen at IDFA, Hot Docs or equivalent.

For interactive documentaries, an 'eligible credit' must be an equivalent project which has been publicly released.

Note that corporate, education, training or community access programs are not acceptable credits for eligibility purposes.

Less experienced practitioners may be part of the team, as long as at least one key principal is eligible as above. The intention is not to exclude new talent, but encourage them to team up with more experienced practitioners.

Screen Australia will not finance programs where the project has been developed by a Commissioning Platform and sub-contracted at a later stage to a producer, except where chain of title resides with the producer.

In addition, Screen Australia expects key creatives (producer, writer, director, director of photography, editor) to be sourced from the freelance market and not from the staff of the Commissioning Platform.

Application and assessment process

Applications will be considered by Screen Australia executives in conjunction with industry specialists as required ([documentary specialists](#) are listed on the Screen Australia website).

The assessment process is in two stages.

STAGE 1 – EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Application materials:

You must apply using the expression of interest application form on the Screen Australia website, providing the following materials:

- a three- to five-page proposal including:
 - an outline or treatment of the proposed documentary project making clear

reference to structure, characters, and stylistic and visual approach (a good reference guide for what is a synopsis/outline can be found on the Screen Australia website) and

- the key principals' vision for the project and how they plan to get it made and seen.
- 200-word bios and CVs for the creative team – the producer, writer and director, or equivalent key roles relevant to the project, and any other confirmed key personnel (DOP, editor, etc).
- sample footage or sizzle reel (**five minutes maximum**) if available.
- (optional) a simple talk-to-camera 'video pitch' of **no more than two minutes**, where key principals present their vision for the project.

Shortlisting:

Eligible expression of interest applications will be considered for shortlisting against the following criteria:

- Track record and capacity of the creative team
- Creative strength of the project, including:
 - the concept/idea: its distinctiveness and clarity of objectives,
 - the proposed realisation: level of boldness or innovation,
 - cultural impact: its potential to create an impact beyond the first viewing, i.e. to inspire debate, insight or reflection, and/or create an enduring legacy for future generations.

STAGE 2

Application materials:

If your project is shortlisted then within two weeks of being notified you will be invited to attend a meeting, in person or via Skype, with the Screen Australia assessors to present an overview of your project. Screen Australia is unable to contribute to the costs of attending the presentation. At this meeting you can present your project to assessment team. (Note the project must be fully budgeted and production-ready, with a plan for how finance can be raised, but finance does not all have to be in place). Prior to the presentation meeting you will need to provide:

- a treatment of no more than 15 pages
- a detailed budget and budget summary using the standard [A-Z Budget format](#), available from the Screen Australia website. Fees should comply with industry standards. They will be considered in the context of the budget and track record of the personnel
- a draft [finance plan](#) in the standard format available from the Screen Australia website, indicating which sources are confirmed
- a one-paragraph narrative that explains how you intend to secure the finance
- where available you can provide visual material, such as rushes - no longer than 5 minutes in duration - or if you are applying for post-production funding, a rough cut of the film.

In addition, or if your project is successful and prior to a letter of interest being issued you **may** be asked to supply:

- a marketing and release plan (at least one page), including, as relevant, broadcast, film festival pathway, theatrical release and/or innovative distribution strategy (see *Pathways to audience*, [page 8](#))
- a production schedule and methodology, including appropriate milestones
- evidence of any confirmed sources of finance or marketplace commitment

Changes to the 2nd stage reflects Screen Australia aims to reduce the length of the decision process, the burden of applying for funds and provide an opportunity for the creative team to talk directly with the assessors during the funding process.

- where there is Indigenous community participation or content involved in the project:
 - a statement setting out how you are approaching the Indigenous content or participation with regard to appropriate protocols, even if the content is not specific to a particular community or individual. You must demonstrate that you have a consultation plan covering the full production process and are following it. The statement should be based on the checklists available in Screen Australia's guide [Pathways & Protocols: a filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts](#)
 - evidence of consultation to date
 - if the project will involve particular Indigenous individuals or communities, signed letters of consent confirming their willingness to participate.

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

Funding decisions:

Following the creative team's presentation shortlisted applications will be considered against the following equally weighted criteria:

- Creative strength of the project, including
 - the concept/idea: its distinctiveness, originality of format, clarity of objectives
 - the proposed realisation: depth of research, boldness of approach or level of innovation
 - quality of submitted production materials (script, treatment, footage, EPOC, etc as relevant).
- The project's relevance and resonance to audiences, including such factors as:
 - cultural significance for Australians
 - potential to create an impact beyond its first viewing – i.e. to inspire debate insight or reflection and/or create an enduring legacy for future generations
 - ability to engage, challenge, entertain, inform and/or enlighten.
- Viability of the project, including:
 - understanding of audience, release plan and demonstrated pathway to viewers
 - viability of the budget
 - strength of the finance plan, including the amount requested from Screen Australia as a proportion of the total budget, and the international component where relevant
 - revenue potential.
- Track record and capacity of the creative team.

Other factors, including availability of funds, diversity of slate and the gender and cultural diversity of the team may also influence Screen Australia's funding decisions.

Decisions on applications are final. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the outcome of their application. Where an application is declined at 2nd stage, the applicant will be advised of the reason

Pathways to audience

Projects must be able to demonstrate a clear pathway to audience as part of their Stage 2 application. There should always be a credible pathway to Australian audiences, even for international projects.

For content with traditional marketplace attachments such as broadcast presales, festival investment or distributor guarantees, relevant agreements or letters of interest should be provided

For non-traditional attachments, a described pathway to audience could involve

- demonstrated community of interest in topic
- marketing plans
- existing database and promotional channels
- existing and potential partnerships with organisations tied to significant communities of interest
- analytics of audience engagement in existing program related content and platforms (e.g. websites, social media channels and trailers).

For example, a VOD release on an obscure website would not be sufficient by itself. You would need to support this with proof of an established community of interest or audience being driven to the website by a marketing campaign.

Applicants proposing alternative pathways should submit copies of any marketing plans as well as provide detail on relevant mailing lists, audience analytics and/or existing partnerships with organisations.

Terms of funding

Screen Australia will provide a letter of interest to successful applicants, to allow producers to complete the project's finance plan. This letter will set out the amount of Screen Australia's contribution, which will not be varied other than in exceptional circumstances. The producer needs to secure the total finance plan or have a revised finance plan and budget approved by Screen Australia within an agreed period, generally four months from date of issue of the letter of approval. Where relevant, Provisional Producer Offset certification will also need to be obtained before funds can be released.

Where Screen Australia's total contribution (including any development funds) is **\$500,000 or under**, funding will be in the form of a grant:

- Screen Australia does not take a share of receipts from projects funded under a grant, which means the funds do not have to be repaid other than in circumstances set out in the [Terms of Trade](#).
- The amount of the Screen Australia grant will be agreed upfront and not varied, other than in exceptional circumstances.
- Screen Australia does not require a share of copyright in productions that it funds under a grant.

Where Screen Australia's total contribution (including any development funds) is **more than \$500,000**, funding will be in the form of recoupable equity investment, with copyright and recoupment terms in accordance with the agency's [Terms of Trade](#).

Note that Screen Australia will not be able to give unlimited extensions to producers to secure their finance and it's expected that some approval letters will lapse.

Documentary production: Commissioned program

The Commissioned program is designed to support the production of a diverse range of quality documentaries made primarily for free-to-air or subscription television broadcast, VOD platform or similar (Commissioning Platforms), that offer a compelling vision and have clear enduring cultural value beyond their initial availability.

The program targets projects at least a commercial half-hour in duration, with a minimum budget of \$250,000 per hour, and a confirmed local commission.

Screen Australia aims to fund 30–40 hours of content a year through this program.

Post-production funding: Applications for matched post-production funding will be considered up to a maximum of \$100,000, provided that the project has a post-production presale to a domestic commission with a licence fee of at least \$50,000 per commercial hour.

Funding available

Program funds will be allocated across all suitable Commissioning Platforms. (Note: Projects with local market place attachments may also be funded through the Producer Program.)

Any amount up to \$1 million may be requested per project. However, the amount of direct Screen Australia support is limited so that total Federal Government funds, including the Producer Offset or Producer Equity payment where relevant, do not account for more than 75 per cent of the project's total budget.

Co-funding with state agencies, other government organisations, cultural institutions, private investors or other partners is encouraged, and the assessment process will take into account the level of Screen Australia funding requested as a proportion of the overall budget.

Eligibility

Applicants and projects must meet the general eligibility requirements under Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#).

In addition, the project that is the subject of the application must:

- be a documentary ([see definition page 17](#)), comprising a single episode at least a commercial half hour in duration, or a series of any number of episodes at least a commercial half hour in total duration
- have an approved budget/finance plan of at least \$250,000 per hour
- be intended for distribution via a Commissioning Platform with the required presale confirmed ([see page 11](#)).

Both one-off documentaries and series are eligible. However, more than 15 commercial hours of any one project, which may include multiple series, will not be eligible for funding unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.

Foreign formats are eligible but priority is given to original material.

Presale requirements

A local presale for an Australian Commissioning Platform with a minimum licence fee as follows:

- \$180,000 per hour, where Screen Australia funding is more than \$500,000
- \$150,000 per hour, where Screen Australia funding is \$500,000 or less
- \$100,000 per hour, where at least 10 per cent of the budget comprises:
 - advances from sales agents for the international market, and/or
 - international territory presales
 irrespective of the level of the Screen Australia funding.

A presale at the **minimum licence fee must *not include***:

- any equity component for the Commissioning Platform;
- Broadcast or streaming rights for New Zealand or another Rest of World (ROW) territory;
- subscription television rights (if the presale is to a free-to-air broadcaster), or free-to-air rights (if the presale is to subscription television);
- transmission via another platform - for example *SVOD*, *transactional video on demand* or other online platforms if they are not the originating Commissioning Platform;
- distribution rights for Australia or a ROW territory;

It can include a genuine 'catch up' service associated with a Commissioning Platform.

If a Commissioning Platform wishes to exploit additional rights such as SVOD, Screen Australia expects the parties to negotiate in good faith for a payment to the producer which is reasonable in all the circumstances.

The Commissioning Platform must not enter into any agreements with the producer (or a related entity) that has the effect of undermining the minimum licence fee requirement.

Screen Australia will not finance programs where the project has been developed by a Commissioning Platform and sub-contracted at a later stage to a producer, except where chain of title resides with the producer.

In addition, Screen Australia expects key creatives (producer, writer, director, director of photography, editor) to be sourced from the freelance market and not from the staff of the Commissioning Platform.

Application process and materials

You must apply using the [online application portal](#) available on the Screen Australia website, providing all the materials set out on that form.

Applications can be submitted at any time. All documentation should be in place at the time of submission, including all signed licences and agreements (in short form at least). For projects that have also applied for state agency funding, the state agency decision must be made within 4 weeks of the date your application is submitted to Screen Australia to be eligible for assessment. Decisions made in approximately 8 weeks.

Pathways to audience

For this program, projects must have commitment from a local Commissioning Platform in place, and a copy of the relevant agreement must be included in the application.

However, enhancing audience reach through new pathways is also encouraged. This could involve:

- demonstrated community of interest in topic
- access to an existing database and promotional channels
- existing and potential partnerships with organisations tied to significant communities of interest
- analytics of audience engagement in existing related content and platforms (e.g. websites, social media channels and trailers).

Marketing plans can demonstrate how these new pathways will enhance the project's audience – and ongoing revenue potential where relevant – by providing detail on relevant mailing lists, audience analytics, and/or any existing partnerships with relevant similar interest organisations.

Funding decisions

As a 'last in' investor to a Commissioned program project, Screen Australia acknowledges that other parties, including the Commissioning Platform, have already committed funds to the project. However, Screen Australia's resources are limited, and not all projects can be supported.

In line with its investment and slate management principles (see [page 3](#)), Screen Australia reserves the right to provide less funding than the amount requested, or to decline funding altogether, based on the following criteria:

- The relevance of the project to Screen Australia's objectives, which are to support:
 - *Quality*: premium Australian content that resonates with contemporary audiences in a global marketplace
 - *Cultural value*: screen stories that shape our cultural imagination, contribute to our national belonging, and create an enduring legacy for all Australians now and into the future
 - *Innovation*: risk-taking and creativity that grows and evolves content across different forms and business models.
- The appropriateness of the amount requested from Screen Australia, taking into account:
 - the size and viability of the project's budget
 - the contributions and investment positions of other parties, including the producer, and international finance where relevant
 - the Screen Australia funds available.
- The track record and capacity of the creative team.

Diversity of the slate as well as the gender and cultural diversity of the team will also be taken into account, reflecting Screen Australia's aim to support Australian content across a variety of subjects, styles and approaches and viewpoints.

Applications will be considered by Screen Australia executives, and decisions are final. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the outcome of their application. Where an application is declined, the applicant will be advised of the reason.

Terms of funding

Where Screen Australia's total contribution (including any development funds) is **\$500,000 or under**, funding will be in the form of a grant:

- Screen Australia does not take a share of receipts from projects funded under a grant, which means the funds do not have to be repaid other than in circumstances set out in the [Terms of Trade](#).
- The amount of the Screen Australia grant will be agreed upfront and not varied, other than in exceptional circumstances.
- Screen Australia does not require a share of copyright in productions that it funds under a grant.

Where Screen Australia's total contribution (including any development funds) is **more than \$500,000**, funding will be in the form of recoupable equity investment, with copyright and recoupment terms in accordance with the agency's [Terms of Trade](#).

Documentary Development

Screen Australia's Documentary Development program assists experienced documentary makers to achieve planned outcomes for the development of their projects.

This could include further research, writing the next draft of a script or treatment, strategic shooting and/or editing to attract marketplace development or production finance, or compiling a sizzle reel.

The program is primarily focused on providing development support to one-off projects.

Interactive or web-based projects: Producers of interactive or web-based projects must discuss their project with an Investment/Development Manager to explore what development may be possible, before applying for development funding.

Time-critical funding – by invitation only

Producers must consult with an Investment/Development Manager about applying for time-critical funding (including funding for time-critical shooting). Applications outside of the scheduled rounds can only be made by invitation.

A comprehensive rationale will be required, setting out:

- what the funding is to be used for
- why the expenditure is vital to the realisation of the film and
- why the timing is critical.

Strong marketplace interest, including broadcast, must be demonstrated.

Unsolicited applications will not be accepted for consideration outside a development funding round.

Funding available

Applicants may apply for any amount up to \$30,000.

Eligibility

Applicants must meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#). In addition:

- Sole applicants must have at least three 'eligible credits' in the role of producer or director.
- In the case of teams, one of the key principals must have at least **three 'eligible credits'** in their respective role (this may be the producer or director, or an equivalent role relevant to the type of project).

For linear documentaries, and linear projects with multiplatform elements, the three 'eligible credits' must include at least two eligible linear documentaries.

For interactive documentaries, the three 'eligible credits' must include at least one eligible interactive project equivalent to the one for which funding is sought.

An 'eligible credit' under this program must be either

- a linear documentary, is 30 minutes or longer in duration, and has:
 - been broadcast by a recognised broadcaster or channel or Commissioning Platform or
 - had a commercial theatrical release or

– been invited to screen at IDFA, Hot Docs or equivalent.

or

- an interactive project which has been publicly released.

Note that corporate, education, training or community access programs are not acceptable credits for eligibility purposes.

Less experienced practitioners may be part of the team, as long as at least one key principal is eligible as above. The intention is not to exclude new talent, but encourage them to team up with more experienced practitioners.

- Current recipients of funding through Screen Australia’s pre-2014 Enterprise program are not eligible.

In addition:

- Generally, projects funded under this program may only reapply for further development investment if they have confirmed **matching marketplace funds** (i.e. from broadcaster(s), distributors, sales agents or other credible marketplace entities), and such applications will be considered in the light of the advancement and the overall viability of the project.

Funding decisions

Applications are considered by Screen Australia executives, with industry specialists consulted as required. Funding decisions will be made against the following criteria:

- track record and capacity of the creative team including the ability to fund production
- the strength of the idea and the fit with the aims of quality, culture and/or innovation
- the appropriateness of the proposed development strategy and use of Screen Australia funds at this stage of development
- understanding of audience, and pathway to viewers.

Reduction to funding decision criteria to enable smoother assessment process.

Other factors, including availability of funds, diversity of slate and the gender and cultural diversity of the team may also influence Screen Australia’s funding decisions.

Decisions on applications are final. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the outcome of their application. Where an application is declined, the applicant will be advised of the reason.

Terms of funding

Funding through this program is provided as a limited recourse loan.

Where Screen Australia subsequently provides production funding, its contribution to the development phase will be recognised in the production budget and will become part of Screen Australia’s total funding for the project. Screen Australia’s total contribution will then be treated as a grant or recoupable investment according to the terms of trade and guidelines for production funding.

Where the project goes into production without further Screen Australia support, the development funding provided by Screen Australia is not repayable.

Sector-building Initiatives

Screen Australia will also continue to seek ways to strengthen and advance Australian documentary storytelling and its practitioners through special initiatives such as workshops, forums and other events, conducted by Screen Australia or in partnership with state bodies, industry organisations or other entities.

Stay in touch via Screen Australia's e-news, like us on [Facebook](#) and/or follow us on [Twitter](#).

General information for applicants

What is a documentary?

For the purposes of these guidelines, Screen Australia will have regard to the guidelines compiled by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). These guidelines are available on the [ACMA website](#).

Screen Australia does not invest in programs such as reality or magazine television, light entertainment, panel shows, infotainment, current affairs, cooking, 'how to', sports programs, or projects whose primary market is the education sector.

Applying for funding

Applicants and projects must meet the general eligibility and delivery requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#), as well as the specific requirements of these guidelines.

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

Incomplete applications will not be accepted. This includes those without finalised finance plans in place with associated letters of offer.

Unless invited to reapply (in the context of managing available funds), projects can only be submitted more than once if substantial changes have been made, and more than two applications for the same project will not be accepted.

Budgets

Format: Budgets must be presented in the [A-Z Budget format](#), available from the Screen Australia website. Fees should comply with industry norms. They will be considered in the context of the budget and track record of the personnel.

Production budgets must include:

- **Contingency:** Contingency is set at 10 per cent.
- **Completion Guarantor:** Screen Australia reserves the right to require a completion guarantor.
- **Delivery items:** Allowance must be made for delivery items specified for Screen Australia, the broadcaster and NFSA, as well as for sales company deliverables and other delivery items as required. See Terms of Trade for details.
- **Study guides:** The cost of a study guide must be included in the budget as a line item of \$2,500 per hour. If the publisher decides not to create a study guide, the \$2,500 can be applied to marketing expenses. The producer must seek Screen Australia's approval of the choice of publisher (ATOM is pre-approved).
- **Promotions and marketing:** Budgets should allocate an appropriate marketing spend fit for purpose.

Indigenous community participation or content

Where there is Indigenous community participation or content involved in the project applicants should provide:

- a statement setting out how you are approaching the Indigenous content or participation with regard to appropriate protocols, even if the content is not specific to a particular community or individual. You must demonstrate that you have a consultation plan covering the full production process and are following it. The statement should be based on the checklists available in Screen Australia's guide [*Pathways & Protocols: a filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts*](#)
- evidence of consultation to date
- signed letters of consent confirming their willingness to participate if the project will involve particular Indigenous individuals or communities.

Official co-productions

- Projects approved as official co-productions are eligible for, but not automatically guaranteed, Screen Australia support.
- As co-productions have access to more than one domestic market, they must bring a higher level of genuine market attachment to the budget.

IMPORTANT: The Australian co-producer must lodge an application for provisional approval as a co-production with Screen Australia before applying for production funding. Provisional approval is required before the decision meeting at which the project will be considered for funding, although some flexibility is allowed if approval is delayed due to circumstances outside the control of the producer or Screen Australia.

See [Co-productions](#).

Update log

1 August 2016:

Wording in boxed text on cover page deleted.

Additional wording to clarify the funding program is subject to Screen Australia's Terms of Trade eligibility requirements.

Explanation of Commissioning Platform and its use within the Guidelines and where the term Broadcaster was used previously in the Guidelines it has for the most part been replaced by Commissioning Platform.

Broadcast Program renamed Commissioned program and broadcaster allocations removed.

Producer program changes to second stage of the funding process

Development program has reduced funding criteria and fewer application materials.

13 November 2014:

Guidelines included in suite of Documentary programs

6 June 2012:

Clarification of eligibility relating to interstitials, budget and financing, and website production.

Applications now accepted at any time.

27 February 2012

'Eligibility'; clarifying dot point regarding eligible durations to read 'be a single-episode program of at least a commercial half hour in length, or a series of at least two episodes each of which is at least a commercial half hour in length'

4 August 2011

'Important points to note' box; first dot point amended for clarification.