

Screen Australia **Corporate Plan** 2023 – 2027



Australian Government



Acknowledgment of Country

Screen Australia acknowledges that we work on lands of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation in our Ultimo office and on the lands of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation in our South Melbourne office.

We pay respect to Traditional Custodians and Elders past and present, and recognise their continuous connection to culture, community and Country. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge the continuous strength and power in First Nations storytelling and are proud of the work of Screen Australia's First Nations Department, which has provided leadership and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytellers around the country for nearly three decades.

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Introduction

On behalf of the Board of Screen Australia I am pleased to present the 2023–24 Corporate Plan for the period 2023–24 to 2026-27, as required under subsection 35(1) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act).

This plan is prepared in accordance with section 16E of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* and Section 35 of the *Screen Australia Act 2008*.

Screen Australia's Corporate Plan outlines how we will achieve our purpose and work towards our vision to inspire, inform and connect audiences with compelling Australian stories. We deliver against our purpose and achieve our vision by investing in the development and production of screen projects and through activities that support screen culture, Industry development, Professional development and International Partnerships.

Each year, we publicly report on the Agency's performance against the Corporate Plan through the Annual Performance Statements, which form part of our Annual Report. The Corporate Plan is updated annually to reflect changes in our operating environment and to meet the requirements of the PGPA Act.



Nicholas Moore

Chair, Screen Australia Board



About us

Our purpose

Screen Australia was established under the *Screen Australia Act 2008* and from 1 July 2008 took over the functions and appropriations of its predecessor agencies, the Australian Film Commission (AFC), the Film Finance Corporation Australia (FFC) and Film Australia Limited.

The key functions of Screen Australia, as set out in the Act are to:

- a. support and promote the development of a highly creative, innovative and commercially sustainable Australian screen production industry; and
- b. support or engage in
 - i. the development, production, promotion and distribution of Australian programs; and
 - ii. the provision of access to Australian programs and other programs; and
- c. support and promote the development of screen culture in Australia.

Screen Australia develops and supports screen projects, practitioners and businesses through a range of programs including script and talent development, support for production ready projects, promotion and marketing support and professional development. Apart from this direct support to the sector, Screen Australia also administers the Producer Offset which provides eligible projects with a tax incentive. This support mechanism attracts critical investment in screen production to ensure Australian key creatives can participate on the world stage.

Screen Australia supports projects and businesses working across all platforms (TV, online, theatrical and gaming) and a broad range of genres including fiction, documentary and children's programming.

Vision: To inspire, inform and connect audiences with compelling Australian stories.



Filming of *Revealed: Reefshot*. Photo by Nicole McLachlan

Our mission

We support distinct local stories of scale and ambition told with strong creative voices for all platforms.

Australian screen content delivers tremendous cultural value to audiences: it informs who we are and hope to be, creates a sense of community and belonging, and reflects the diversity of experiences shared by millions of Australians. Quality local content can travel the world, educate, inspire, create change, and resonate for generations.

To deliver culturally valuable content, we need a vibrant, skilled and creative screen industry. Screen Australia fosters this through direct government funding, targeted initiatives and other means of support. The agency supports talent, quality, innovation and cultural value through programs that increase the ambitions, risk tolerance and diversity of Australian storytelling for local and international audiences.

Without this government support, Australian screen production would become unviable, and leave local audiences with less choice and less access to compelling and culturally-relevant content made by Australians, for Australians.

Cooperation and collaboration

Screen Australia is committed to maintaining cooperative relationships across the screen sector and cultivating new relationships as the screen industry evolves.

We maintain a strong and active relationship with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, and its responsible Minister for the Arts. We work with the Minister and the Department to ensure Screen Australia meets its expectations and obligations as a corporate commonwealth entity, through its governance and administration.

Our objective, as the screen industry's federal funding body, is to clearly communicate and engage with different parts of the sector including; producers and production companies, broadcasters and streaming services, state agencies, the Australian Film, Television and Radio school, screen sector guilds and associations. Screen Australia also proactively engages with advocacy organisations who are committed to inclusivity and positive change in the screen sector.

These collaborative relationships and the multi-way sharing of information, underpin our investment activities across all programs and our internal operations, in order to promote a sustainable industry and culturally relevant Australian stories.

Our environment

Australians now have unprecedented access to screen content from all over the world across a range of platforms; from short-form online videos, to subscription-based television viewing, to feature films on big or small screens. In this crowded marketplace, the importance and unique value of culturally relevant local content is as great as ever.

Revive – Australia’s Cultural Policy

In January 2023, the Australian Government released the National Cultural Policy, Revive, to transform and safeguard a diverse, vibrant and sustainable arts, entertainment and cultural sector. Revive is structured around five interconnected pillars which set out the Government’s strategic objectives. Screen Australia will work to implement the five pillars through the following programs and initiatives:

- **First Nations First: Recognising and respecting the crucial place of First Nations stories at the centre of Australia’s arts and culture.**

In 2023, the First Nations Department at Screen Australia celebrates its 30th anniversary. The department, fully staffed and led by First Nations Australians, funds critically acclaimed drama, kids and documentary content across film, television and online and connects First Nations content creators with local and global opportunities.

The First Nations Department offers funding support through its Development, Production and Special Initiative programs. It provides skills development and career escalation opportunities and supports First Nations screen practitioners with advice on the full lifecycle of screen production from script writing to distribution and sales.

Creating sustainable careers and clear career pathways are a priority for the First Nations Department, as reflected in *The Next 25 Years: Screen Australia First Nations Department Strategy*. The Department is exploring with stakeholders, including Commonwealth agencies, state agencies and industry, the development of a national framework for Indigenous professional development. At the same time the Department will roll out a number of targeted skills development initiatives in partnership with industry.

All First Nations Department projects must be led by First Nations practitioners. When working with Indigenous filmmakers it is important that non-Indigenous people ensure respectful and safe working arrangements and environments. The Department’s *Pathways & Protocols guide* is the Australian industry standard for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ culture and concepts. The First Nations Department will undertake a review and refresh of the guide in 2023/24.

- **A Place for Every Story: Reflecting the breadth of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.**

Screen Australia is committed to reflecting the breadth of Australian stories and building equity into its programs and its engagement with the community. The agency works across the country and partners with state agencies and the wider screen sector to develop initiatives and support content that is both filmed in and reflects Australia’s diverse locations and communities.

Screen Australia's funding guidelines include an Inclusive Storytelling Statement that highlights our commitment to diversity equity and inclusion. The agency has developed a series of programs to provide skills development opportunities for diverse practitioners traditionally under-represented in the Australian screen industry. These include Curious Australia in partnership with SBS and Every Voice with TikTok. Screen Australia also has a long-standing commitment to gender equity through its Gender Matters program and KPI.

Through its drama, documentary and online funding programs, Screen Australia supports a wide range of content that provide Australians with an opportunity to see their communities reflected on screen. Recent diverse examples include TV drama *Latecomers* which explores the lives of two young people with cerebral palsy; documentary series *Queerstralia* which investigates the queer history of Australia; and feature film *Shayda* which details the experiences of an Iranian-Australian mother and daughter.

In April 2023, Screen Australia released its second iteration of *Seeing Ourselves*, a research study into diversity, equity and inclusion in Australian Television. The report highlights the current gaps in representation on screen and includes a range of tools and resources to support industry in improving diverse representation and sector inclusion.

In 2023/24 Screen Australia will continue to encourage broader participation in the screen industry, with a focus on developing disability initiatives and improving the accessibility of our guidelines, forms and website.



- **Centrality of the Artist: Supporting the artist as worker and celebrating artists as creators.**

Screen Australia supports screen artists as workers and celebrates screen practitioners as creators. All Screen Australia-supported projects are contracted according to industry standards. The agency's Terms of Trade provide guidance on how Screen Australia will transact its business, including requirements that supported projects must pay at least award minimum rates for all work performed by third parties such as key creatives, cast and crew.

Screen Australia collaborates with other screen agencies to deliver national programs that support capacity building and skills development for Australian screen practitioners and continues to work with Government and industry, through the skills working group, to address the current skills shortages.

We are dedicated to enhancing opportunities for below-the-line roles, and our new Industry Development team has implemented initiatives including BTL Next Step, the Production Crew Skills Training Fund, and the Transferable Skills & Returning Crew Fund. Other Screen Australia collaborations provide unique opportunities for Australian creatives on local productions, such as NCIS: Sydney S1 Script Department Program in collaboration with Paramount ANZ, CBS Studios and Endemol Shine Australia.

Screen Australia also supports Australian content creators to travel overseas through programs such as The Creators initiative, in collaboration with the Australian Writers' Guild and supported by Australians in Film and Scripted Ink. These programs encourage higher foreign investment, stronger screen stories and greater export opportunities, which are all vital outcomes for the Australian industry.

Safety within the screen industry is an ongoing focus at Screen Australia. We are committed to supporting safe working environments and are working internally and with industry on the development of cultural safety tools and resources. This work is informed by our experience developing the *Pathways & Protocols guide* and Screen Australia's *Code of Conduct* to prevent sexual harassment and abuse, which preceded the current Screen Industry Code of Practice developed by industry guilds and associations that all funded projects must adhere to.

- **Strong Cultural Infrastructure: Providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts, culture and heritage.**

As the Commonwealth Government agency responsible for the screen production sector, Screen Australia plays a key role in supporting the institutions that sustain our nation's arts, culture and heritage. We coordinate opportunities with Australian Governmental departments and agencies, state and territory agencies, industry associations, organisations, and content platforms.

Screen Australia provides significant support for a range of screen industry events, including funding for leading festivals such as the Sydney and Melbourne film festivals, and markets including Screen Forever and the Australian International Documentary Conference. Screen Australia also attends and supports Australian creatives to travel to key festivals and markets overseas, such as the Festival de Cannes and the Toronto International Film Festival.

Screen Australia collaborates with other industry agencies, organisations and cultural institutions to strengthen the screen sector through targeted initiatives. Recent Screen Australia partnerships include the Emerging Writers' Incubator with SBS and other state screen agencies, The Kaleidoscope

Project with the ABC, and the First Nations Creators Program with Instagram Australia.

We also develop and implement initiatives to support Australian screen businesses and practitioners. For example, Screen Australia's Enterprise Program has a legacy of supporting Australian screen talent, providing emerging and experienced creatives with domestic or international career placement and professional development opportunities. Our Enterprise funding also assists to expand and develop strategic businesses, and has supported local productions companies including First Nations-founded Blackfella Films and Brisbane-based Ludo Studio, behind the award-winning children's program *Bluey*.

Screen Australia also provides market research and advice, research for governments and industry, and communications and legal support for funded productions. We look forward to partnering with Creative Australia on the triennial State of Australian Culture Survey, announced in Revive, which will study Australian attitudes and experiences with arts and culture, including Australian screen content.

- **Engaging the Audience: Making sure our stories connect with people at home and abroad.**

Through supporting Australian screen projects, practitioners and businesses, Screen Australia promotes the development of a diverse and vibrant Australian screen industry that engages local and international audiences. We provide development and production funding for drama, documentary and children's content across all screens including cinemas, television, and online platforms such as Stan, Instagram and YouTube, and support the development of digital games.

Screen Australia supports a diverse range of content that connects with audiences of all ages and backgrounds, at home and abroad. Successful Screen Australia-supported content includes the International Emmy winner *Bluey*, features such as *The Dry* and *Lion*, First Nations stories *Mystery Road* and *Total Control*, online content by creators including RackRacka, and factual content including recent biopic *John Farnham: Finding the Voice*, which is the highest-grossing Australian feature documentary in history.

Australian audiences deserve access to high quality, innovative and culturally impactful Australian screen stories. Screen Australia welcomes the Government's commitment in Revive to introduce requirements on streaming platforms to ensure continued access to local stories and content. Content obligations have historically mandated a level of demand for production that enabled the local screen industry to grow and innovate. Australians of all ages are increasingly turning to streaming services to view drama, documentary and children's content, and content requirements may support the creation of high-quality and innovative stories across the screens that Australians use.

Our performance and key activities

Performance indicators:

This Corporate Plan is directly aligned to the relevant outcome, priorities and performance indicators set out in the Communications and the Arts Portfolio Budget Statement, specifically:

Outcome 1: Promote engaged audiences and support a creative, innovative and commercially sustainable screen industry through the funding and promotion of diverse Australian screen product.

Screen Australia's performance measures are grouped under our key objectives, challenges and focus areas. Our results for the year against the key performance indicators that are detailed in this Corporate Plan will be reported in our annual performance statement.



Objectives:

What does Screen Australia want to achieve?

Australian stories that matter

Why? To ensure that the local stories on our screens resonate with contemporary audiences and create a legacy of quality screen content reflective of our cultural identity.

| How? | Desired result | Key performance indicators for 2023/24 to 2026/27 |
|---|---|--|
| Develop and invest in a range of high-quality, engaging and distinctive Australian stories across all genres and platforms | Australian audiences to have access to a wide range of quality local content | <p>New projects supported: 225</p> <p>Diverse slate, intended to appeal to a wide range of audiences, including projects which focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality - projects of scale and ambition • Culture - distinctive Australian stories • Innovation - risk taking content for all platforms • Talent escalation – projects that support the next generation of excellence in storytelling |
| Fund projects written and crafted by First Nations practitioners that display bold, distinctive voices that are creatively engaging | Projects written and crafted by First Nations practitioners enrich the Australian content available on our screens | <p>At least one major First Nations Feature Film or Television Drama series to proceed to production</p> <p>One major First Nations factual project or series to achieve free to air broadcast and/or a commitment from an online platform</p> |
| Fund projects that reflect the diversity of experiences and perspectives in contemporary Australian life | <p>Projects written and crafted by female practitioners that enrich the Australian content available on our screens</p> <p>Projects and practitioners that reflect other elements of Australian diversity including culture, LGBTIQ, and disabilities</p> | <p>Target: Across a three-year average (2023/24 to 2025/26), at least 50% of the key creative roles (writers, producers and directors) across all projects receiving Screen Australia development and production funding will be occupied by women, and/or, non-binary and/or gender diverse people.</p> <p>Through development and production investment, promote a diverse range of stories and storytellers</p> |

Highly-skilled, creative and innovative practitioners who embrace risk

Why? To ensure a vibrant culture of Australian storytelling continues into the future.

| How? | Desired result | Key performance indicators for 2023/24 to 2026/27 |
|--|---|---|
| Identify and support projects in development with strong creative proposals that have the potential to move into production | Projects developed with assistance from Screen Australia go on to be produced | 15% of feature projects developed with assistance from Screen Australia go on to be produced |
| Identify and nurture talented First Nations Australians and provide opportunities for them to participate in the screen industry | Professional development opportunities for First Nations practitioners | At least 10 opportunities for professional development for First Nations practitioners, including creative workshops, internships, mentoring programs and travel grants Develop and run 1-2 initiatives per year that focus on professional development opportunities for emerging First Nations practitioners |
| Encourage practitioners to innovate | Risk-taking in screen content creation and distribution | The Screen Australia slate supports projects and/or companies to be innovative in form or distribution |



Australian stories that are accessible domestically and internationally across all platforms

Why? To grow demand for Australian storytelling and promote access to our stories.

| How? | Desired result | Key performance indicators for 2023/24 to 2026/27 |
|--|--|--|
| To support the promotion and marketing effort of Australian projects and practitioners, both domestically and internationally | <p>Growth in the number of Australians viewing Australian product</p> <p>International presence for Australian projects and people</p> | <p>Features – box office: Three-year (calendar year) average of 2.7 million cumulative attendances at cinemas for the financial year reporting period</p> <p>TV - ratings: Cumulative audience of 91 million for Screen Australia funded TV (adult drama, children's, documentaries) for the financial year reporting period</p> <p>Online: At least five online projects launched during the period to each reach one million views across all reportable platforms, or to be streamed on a subscription based platform</p> <p>Nominations or selection at prominent international events</p> |
| Support screen culture events (local festivals, touring programs and awards) that promote and highlight Australian content and practitioners | Impactful national reach of Australian content and practitioners | At least 15 events supported in capital cities and regional areas promoting and highlighting Australian content across a range of platforms |
| Encourage industry to explore new pathways to audiences | Australian content is accessible and effectively promoted to key audiences | <p>Innovative approaches to audiences encouraged in program guidelines or project support</p> <p>Games: Support at least one project from every state and territory across Australia</p> |

Viable screen businesses

Why? To maintain a healthy infrastructure for screen production in Australia and encourage entrepreneurial approaches.

| How? | Desired result | Key performance indicators for 2023/24 to 2026/27 |
|--|---|--|
| Invest in viable screen projects | Production stimulated by Screen Australia investment | For each dollar Screen Australia invests, production budgets are leveraged by at least the following amounts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV drama: \$5.50 • Features: \$5.90 • Children's TV drama: \$3.60 • Documentaries: \$2.90 |
| To provide industry support in areas of identified need to promote the continued viability of the sector | Support the development of promising screen professionals and the viability of screen businesses | Up to 15 professional development opportunities for emerging and experienced industry professionals |
| Facilitate business-to-business networking opportunities at Australian conferences and other local industry events | Increased opportunities in Australia to network and encourage partnerships across content and platforms | At least five events held with a range of businesses and projects participating |
| Provide strategic opportunities for Australian companies to build relationships, pitch projects, and generate international business | Stimulate business for Australian projects | Support for at least two targeted activities for Australian screen creatives with international projects |
| Grow awareness of and market the Producer Offset and Co-production programs internationally | Increased production and inward investment in Australian and co-produced projects | Producer Offset and Co-production programs actively marketed in at least two events or markets |

An efficient, effective and responsive organisation

Why? To minimise administration costs (providing greater funds for on-screen projects) engage stakeholders and support public policy settings that encourage industry growth and resilience.

| How? | Desired result | Key performance indicators for 2023/24 to 2026/27 |
|--|---|--|
| Provide the highest-quality outcomes in the management and service delivery of Screen Australia's programs | Maximise expenditure on programs/projects as a percentage of total expenditure | Expenditure on programs/projects at least 85% of total expenditure |
| Provide informed and effective evidence-based policy | Public policy informed by Screen Australia research | Dissemination of evidence-based research that informs debate and policy-making and demonstrates thought leadership |
| Lead industry debate | Public and industry debate informed by Screen Australia research and analysis | Citation of Screen Australia research and insights in media, publications and other relevant platforms Commission ABS survey every four years |
| Maintain rigorous governance structure | Organisation recognised as being well-governed | Adherence to Screen Australia's policies and procedures |
| Meaningful consultation with sector | Productive relationships with practitioners, guilds and other industry organisations including broadcasters | Industry consultation is incorporated into processes where appropriate |
| Operate the Producer Offset and Co-production program efficiently | Co-production projects produced | Screen Australia decides at least 70% of provisional co-production approval applications – subject to foreign competent authority agreement – within 12 weeks of receipt of a complete application |
| | Producer Offset certificates delivered quickly | 70% of Final Producer Offset certificates issued within 12 weeks of receiving completed applications |

Our capability

We will be sustainable by working within our means and conducting our activities efficiently and in innovative ways to reach more people. We are focused on optimising the potential of our people, investing in our business systems and managing our assets effectively to deliver outcomes.

| Capabilities | Factors | Strategies |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Our People | <p>Screen Australia relies on staff with specific skill sets and knowledge to meet its objectives and enable us to meet our purpose of supporting screen projects, practitioners and businesses.</p> <p>Screen Australia will work to ensure that its staff continue to have experience in grants and program administration, screen production and development and general administration and management.</p> <p>Screen Australia will strive to ensure its staff have up-to-date experience in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry specific changes • Industry specific practices • Clear communication skills • Time management • Stakeholder and client management • Other professional development as required | <p>We are committed to developing and future-proofing our capability by ensuring our staff have the right skills and resources.</p> <p>We will continue to develop our workforce through targeted staff training programs, including participation in Cultural Competency Training.</p> <p>We will support our workforce to be agile and flexible by ensuring our organisational structures adapt and change, our employment framework supports continuous cultural change and our organisational systems support efficient administrative processes.</p> |
| Our IT and Digital Solutions | <p>Screen Australia's information technology and digital solutions are delivered to meet the needs of our staff and clients.</p> <p>Key drivers are to provide secure, resilient and accessible IT systems and infrastructure while ensuring cost efficient and sustainable use of resources.</p> <p>We continually seek opportunities to streamline and automate processes to reduce time and costs.</p> | <p>Continue Screen Australia's Cloud transition by migrating viable on premise corporate applications to cloud based solutions enhancing the agency's access, security and resilience.</p> <p>Ensure currency and efficiency of IT network and storage infrastructure while seeking opportunities to reduce energy, footprint and replacement costs.</p> <p>Provide mobility and improved collaboration solutions to all staff through the deployment of laptops and greater development and adoption of cloud based collaboration, access and deployment technologies.</p> <p>Undertake continual improvement and development of Screen Australia's IT security and resilience.</p> <p>Continue to improve and seek opportunities for the collection, analysis and sharing of relevant business and program information to inform corporate strategies, policy and support of the industry.</p> |

| Capabilities | Factors | Strategies |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Our Infrastructure | <p>Screen Australia has invested in physical and digital infrastructure, to support our business and enable us to achieve our outcomes.</p> <p>This infrastructure requires ongoing investment to ensure that it is up to date, fit for purpose and well maintained.</p> | <p>We continue to invest in building upgrades that deliver energy and operational efficiencies.</p> <p>Screen Australia has entered into a new lease at its existing premises – Level 7, 435 Jones Street Ultimo with a reduced footprint for a 5-year term commencing 1 November 2023. We continue to improve our business systems with up-to-date technology to provide enhanced productivity, security and resilience.</p> |



Risk oversight and management

External risks

The success of Australia's screen industry is subject to many external factors: social, political, economic, technological, legal (including piracy) and environmental. Screen Australia has identified the following external risks that could affect its ability to deliver on its goals:

- reduction in funding from the Australian Government
- increase in demand for existing funding including an environment in which producers experience difficulties in financing projects
- increased risks of litigation to Screen Australia due to greater competition for limited funding resulting in escalating costs to the agency
- discrepancy between the Producer Offset's requirements and those required by changing business models, particularly in relation to distribution arrangements
- screen investment recoupment targets not met
- insufficient crew or infrastructure to meet demand

These risks will be managed by Screen Australia's Board and management team, who will review risks regularly, and develop policies and processes to the extent that such risks are within Screen Australia's control.

Internal risks

In addition to the external factors, Screen Australia is also subject to risks arising from its internal processes.

The organisational risk management function within Screen Australia is managed and co-ordinated by the Finance Unit and involves:

- development, implementation and monitoring of a risk management policy and associated action plans;
- development, implementation and monitoring of a fraud control policy and associated action plans;
- development, implementation and monitoring of a business continuity policy and associated action plans, and
- coordinating the outsourced internal audit function.

As an essential part of sound corporate governance and management practice, Screen Australia is committed to effective risk management. The Australian Government requires agencies to have in place risk management, fraud control and business continuity management plans. These cover operational issues relating to program delivery, such as financial and organisation administration, and mechanisms to ensure sound corporate governance practices are followed. These plans are being monitored and reviewed in consultation with the Australian National Audit Office and internal auditors.



Shayda