

MEDIA RELEASE

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Screen Australia releases revised program guidelines

Friday 12 March 2010: Screen Australia today released revised guidelines for its Development, Production Financing, Indigenous and Marketing Support programs, effective immediately.

"We embarked on a review of our guidelines late in 2009," said Screen Australia Chief Executive Ruth Harley. "We wanted to see how our programs were working after a year of operation, hear what the industry had to say about them and confirm our focus on supporting creative storytelling, audience engagement and building sustainable businesses. Our industry consultation has resulted in several key changes to the draft released in November last year."

In **Feature Development**, Screen Australia has taken note of representations from sections of the industry and extended the definition of writers, writer/directors and directors eligible to apply for one draft of funding without a producer. Only two credits on relevant features, mini-series or telemovies are now required, and eligible credits also include six broadcast hours of primetime series. In addition, time-critical development funding has been introduced to help producers take advantage of opportunities to secure an option on an underlying work.

The revised **Enterprise Program** guidelines respond to calls for more clarity around several issues. They provide more details on the assessment process, and better define the eligibility of Enterprise funding recipients for other development funding. The closing date for the 2010/11 round has been announced as 26 July 2010. A total of \$1 million per year for three years is available to be distributed across the successful applicants in this round, up to \$350,000 for each company.

In **Production Finance**, the cap on Screen Australia's investment in a feature film remains at \$3 million, with the reduction to \$2.5 million proposed in the draft guidelines postponed until 1 July 2010. This will allow producers more time to factor the new cap into their planning.

"We have also listened to industry feedback on the appropriateness of the proposed guidelines for low-budget features," said Dr Harley. "Although we're still encouraging low-budget projects to apply through the normal feature film production program, the guidelines now state that we're prepared to be flexible about things like market attachment requirements where budgets are less than \$1.5 million."

For documentaries, including those funded through the Indigenous Department, the new guidelines reflect Dr Harley's recent announcement at the Australian International Documentary Conference that Screen Australia funding of \$200,000 or under will be provided as a grant, rather than recoupable investment. This move has been welcomed by documentary makers since the conference.

The guidelines for Screen Australia's **Marketing Programs** remain largely unchanged and it will be 'business as usual' for marketing support for the remainder of 2009/10. Screen Australia's new Head of Marketing, Kathleen Drumm, is currently undertaking a general review of the programs to inform future strategic directions. Any amendments will be incorporated into the Marketing guidelines for the 2010/11 financial year.

Screen Australia has consulted directly with stakeholder groups on the revised guidelines, as well as receiving submissions from individual companies and practitioners.

Revised **Terms of Trade** were also issued for comment in November, and final terms are due to be released in the next few months, to come into effect from 1 July 2010.

The guidelines are available at www.screenaustralia.gov.au/industry_support.