



Australian Government



PROGRAM GUIDELINES: Hot Shots Plus

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Screen Australia reserves the right to change its program guidelines from time to time. Please ensure you check the website for the latest version.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#).

We encourage you to contact the Program Operations team before you submit your application to discuss any eligibility questions and ensure all the required supporting material is in place. This will mean we can process your application smoothly and efficiently. The Program Operations team can be contacted on **1800 507 901**.

We receive many more applications than we can support. Inevitably, some applications will be unsuccessful and applicants will be disappointed by this result. However, our decision is final.

Specific requirements apply where there is Indigenous community participation or content involved in a project. Please refer to www.screenaustralia.gov.au/funding/business/Indigenous_Content.aspx

Hot Shots Plus

Hot Shots Plus combines funding for the production of a short narrative proof of concept (POC) as well as development funds for a long-form project.

The aim of this initiative is to arm screen content makers with an impactful POC that connects to a long-form project (feature film, TV, online series or virtual reality narratives) in order to build skills, relationships and create the audience and marketplace attention needed for the next step in their career. For example, a short film that speaks to a feature film (i.e. Cate Shortland's [Joy](#), Ben Howling & Yolanda Ramke's [Cargo](#)) or a pilot/test scenes that speak to a television or online series (i.e. [Skitbox](#), [Event Zero](#), and [Bondi Hipsters](#)).

The long-form project does not have to be the same story or a long version of the POC but should be connected to the POC, for example, by creative voice, genre, tone or stylistic approach.

What funding is available?

Funding is available to produce a narrative POC and to develop a long form narrative project.

POC production

Support can be provided for a narrative short film, series pilot, or visual proof of concept in all fiction platforms (feature, television, online, VR):

- **up to \$70,000** for live action production as appropriate to the platform and the project.
- **up to \$100,000** for animation production as appropriate to the platform and the project.
- **up to \$40,000** for post-production to completion funds as appropriate to the platform and the project.
- Funds are available for live action or animated short screen narrative stories of up to 30 minutes in length.
- While encouraging low budget approaches to storytelling, Screen Australia will allow additional financing from other sources however the funds must be in place at the time of submitting your application and evidence of this provided in the successful second stage applications.
- As per our [Terms of Trade](#) Screen Australia funding is conditional on paying at least award minimum rates including key creatives, cast and crew, see Budget Notes on Page 6.
- In exceptional circumstances, we may accept applications with funds that exceed the amounts for the POC funding above, in recognition of the regional nature of certain productions.

Long-form development

In your application you will also need to include your plan and requested development funds for your long-form narrative project.

- **up to \$50,000** for development costs
- Funds may include writing costs, workshops with actors, research, mentorships, consultations – whatever will nurture and feed the creative vision of the team and the heart of the story and to arrive at a strong package for your anticipated long-form project.
- You will also need to include the estimated total production budget for the long-form work. Strategically, we are looking for lower budget projects

because they are more likely to be financed and made with emerging teams. For this initiative we are saying this means for features under \$2 million, for online series and VR under \$10,000 per minute and for television under \$600,000 per one hour episode.

Who can apply?

- The application must come from the producer on behalf of a creative team including a writer and director or writer/director.
- The producer and director (or equivalent roles relevant to the type of narrative project) must both have at least one credit in the same role on a comparable narrative project which has been publicly released and had some reasonable views on a popular social media platform or film festival screening.
- The producer must hold sufficient rights to the POC and the long-form project and all other underlying rights in order to carry the POC from production through to completion. Note it can be a joint venture with the writer, director or writer/director.
- If a project is based on an underlying work, evidence of the option agreement and length of option must be supplied. Screen Australia expects the accumulated periods of the option and its subsequent extensions to be at least three and a half years.
- Only one application per team will be accepted.
- We will prioritise inclusivity of the teams and projects that capture, reflect and express the make-up of Australia i.e. cultural diversity, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Please note: the aim of the program is to help build the professional development opportunities of the team in taking the next step in their careers.
- Funding cannot be retrospective.
- Applicants must also meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#).
- Documentary projects are not eligible. See Documentary Development for more information.

What is the application process?

The application process consists of two stages.

STAGE 1

Application - Submit an application through the [online portal](#) including:

- a simple talk-to-camera 'video pitch' of no more than 3 minutes, where key principals (producer, writer, director, writer/director) talk about the [story concept](#), creative vision and platform for their narrative POC and how it connects to the long-form project in terms of creative voice, genre, tone, stylistic approach and the intended audience experience as well as the teams' career goals and plans and how they anticipate these projects will contribute to achieving these
- a link to the best example of the director's previous work that demonstrates the director's narrative voice. Please do not submit montages or show reels that only show fragments of work
- one paragraph [synopsis](#) of the POC
- one page [synopsis](#) of the long-form project

- bios for the creative team and any other crew or cast members proposed or confirmed

Assessment - Applications will be assessed by a combination of Screen Australia Executives and/or industry professionals as required. Applicants will normally be notified in writing approximately 4 weeks of the closing date as to whether their application has been shortlisted. Up to 10 projects will be shortlisted and required to submit further application materials for Stage 2. All applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application.

When assessing applications for this program, we will take the following criteria into account:

- the distinctiveness of the POC [concept](#), how it will assist with the long-form project and upskill as well as showcase the talent of the team (40%)
- the viability and audience potential of the long-form [concept](#) and the creative vision to surprise, engage and entertain audiences (30%)
- the skills and potential of the team, as well as the strength and distinctiveness of the director's previous work, why this team and why now? (30%)

STAGE 2

Application: If you are shortlisted, you will be invited to submit a further application via the online application portal within 4 weeks of the selection notification which must include:

- up to 3 pages or 3 minutes of anything you feel will help us understand the creative vision (tone, theme, style, audience experience) for the POC and long-form project more clearly. Be creative – express and evoke the creative vision– don't just tell us.
- a one page summary of the team's career plan describing where you are, where you want to be professionally and creatively and how you are planning and thinking strategically about getting there.

POC production materials:

- a script for the narrative POC of no more than 30 pages.
- a [finance plan](#) for the POC and if attached, evidence that additional funding from investors, crowd funding, sponsorship etc. is in place.
- a draft [A-Z budget](#) for the POC.
- If the application is for completion funds, a downloadable, password protected link to the rough-cut of the project.
- a solicitor's opinion on all Chain of Title documents.

Long-form development materials:

- a [story document](#) for the long-form narrative screen project as appropriate to the platform and project i.e. a treatment, scriptment, screenplay, episode outlines, first episode script or series drafts up to a maximum of 120 pages.
- a one page [development plan](#) for the long-form project that identifies the potential as well as the challenges and the strategies to address them in the next phase of development .
- a one page [pathways to audience](#) plan. Projects must be able to demonstrate who the audience is and how the project will reach its audience. Pathways could involve comparisons, marketing plans, existing database and promotional channels, existing and potential partnerships, analytics of audience engagement in existing program related content and platforms (e.g. websites, social media channels and trailers).

Assessment: Applications will be assessed by a combination of Screen Australia executives and industry specialists as required. Applicants will be normally be notified approximately 4 weeks of the notification date. Shortlisted teams may be interviewed as part of the assessment process. Applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application.

When assessing applications for this program, we will take the following criteria into account:

- the perceived potential of the narrative POC (in script or rough cut) to showcase the talent of the team and garner attention for the long-form project (30%)
- the perceived ability of the long-form story documents and the creative vision to engage, surprise and entertain an audience (40%)
- a development plan for the long-form project that identifies the potential, the challenges and the strategies to address them in the next phase of development (10%)
- the ability of the team to develop and execute the vision for the POC and the long-form project and leverage the opportunities to progress their careers (10%)
- The viability of the long-form project within the low budget parameters and the perceived effectiveness of the pathway to an identified audience (10%)

Important budget notes for the POC

You must use an A-Z budget template for the POC whether the Hot Shots [A-Z template](#) or industry standard A-Z budget template.

As per its [Terms of Trade](#), Screen Australia expects all recipients of funding to act fairly and reasonably in relation to third parties involved in the funded project. Fairness and reasonableness include:

- paying at least award minimum rates or, where applicable, any minimum agreed between the relevant guilds, for all work performed by third parties on their project, including key creatives, cast and crew;
- respecting the rights of all relevant persons, whether those rights be copyright or other intellectual property rights, moral rights or Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property rights.

Screen Australia has a special agreement with the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance ([MEAA](#)) for short film production whereby cast are contracted on the Actors Feature Film Agreement (AFFA).

Cast must be paid at least the basic negotiated fee (BNF) plus 40% reduced buyout to cover Australian TV rights (20%) and Australian ancillary rights (20%) inclusive of worldwide festival rights.

A fee of \$1000 can be included in your production budget for a mentor to be attached to the producer and/or director. Should you be successful, we can discuss these potential mentors with you during stage two.

ASIC confirmation: Note: if you are successful, you must have a company set up before executing the Screen Australia agreement. The company must be incorporated in Australia and must be able to pay GST.

Indigenous and Cultural Content:

Where there is Indigenous or cultural content that is not reflected by the key creatives then you will need to provide a statement setting out the consultation and participation process you have undertaken with regard to

this Indigenous and cultural content. You must also demonstrate that you have a consultation and collaboration plan covering the full production process and are following it and that the communities and people being represented in the story have provided signed letters of consent confirming their willingness to participate. For Indigenous content, please refer to the [Pathways & Protocols: a filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts](#). And please note that we encourage collaboration, not only consultation.

Terms of funding

Funding is in the form of a grant. Where the long-form project goes into production with Screen Australia, the development funds must be included in the total budget as part of qualifying Australian production expenditure (QAPE).

Funding recipients must deliver all delivery items listed in the PGA (Production Grant Agreement) and as per the current [National Archives](#), this includes 3 DVD copies of the completed film requirements plus related paperwork including an expenditure report and production stills.

Further funding and marketing information

Successful recipients may apply for additional story development funding for online and interactive web series, V/R and feature films after they deliver on this tranche of long-form development funds, however, the application will be competitively assessed against the criteria published in the story development guidelines. Television series intended for broadcast only would not be eligible for additional Story Development funding.

Acceptance into some of the top-tier international film festivals may require additional marketing, travel and screening materials. Applications for funding to cover such materials can only be accepted under Screen Australia's International Marketing Support program, and only then if the guideline conditions are met.

For information about short film marketing support funding see [International Marketing](#) and [A guide to marketing short films](#)