



GUIDELINES

DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMS

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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](#).

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

CONTACT PROGRAM OPERATIONS: 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 as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Program Operations: **1800 507 901** or documentary@screenaustralia.gov.au

Overview

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 \$14-16 million for documentary in 2017/18.

Four programs supporting documentary are offered:

- **Producer program:** Supports one-off documentaries and series for distribution across broadcast, festival, theatrical, digital, i-doc and online platforms. Minimum budget of \$125,000 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 one-off documentaries and series productions made primarily for Commissioning Platforms. Minimum budget of \$250,000 per hour. Maximum Screen Australia contribution of \$1 million. Minimum licence fees apply. All finance must be in place at application. Screen Australia is ‘last in’.
- **Producer Equity Program (PEP):** PEP is available in conjunction with any other Screen Australia documentary production funding. It 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. See [PEP guidelines](#) for more information.
- **Development:** Assists experienced documentary makers to achieve planned outcomes for the development of their projects.

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 reduced domestic licence fee.

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.

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, effectively and for maximum impact, 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 that reflect the requirements of the Screen Australia Act, and the overarching aims of its documentary funding programs.

Screen Australia first published these slate management principles in the 2009 guidelines. They are an important way of acknowledging the role of the Commissioning Platform 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 Commissioning Platform, Screen Australia's accountability for its funds, and the producer's ultimate responsibility for the project.

Documentary production: Producer program

Contact an Investment Manager: Before applying to Screen Australia for Producer Program funding, it is essential that you contact an Investment Manager to discuss your project. Contact the Program Operations team if you are unsure who to speak with: **1 800 507 901** or documentary@screenaustralia.gov.au

ONLINE AND INTERACTIVE FOCUS

The documentary team will prioritise online and interactive linear documentaries for Producer program rounds creating more flexibility for online and interactive teams:

- Teams should comprise at least a director and a producer who should have at least one credit in their respective roles on an equivalent project, which has been publicly released.
- The linear documentary can be any length but we encourage budgets of at least \$2,000 per minute. Anything less than this should be discussed with an Investment Manager prior to submitting your application.
- Whilst Screen Australia can fund up to 100% for outstanding projects the application must demonstrate a clear pathway to audience in the online or interactive industry.
- Not ready for production yet? Please talk to us about [development funding](#).

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 one-off documentaries and series intended for broadcast, festival, theatrical, online and Virtual Reality audiences. Minimum budget is \$125,000 per hour or \$125,000 in total for non-linear projects. Please see above for exceptions in the January and April 2018 rounds.

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](#)'

Please Note: It is a condition of this funding program that successful applications will have all finance in place within four months from the date of confirmation of Screen Australia approval. It is understood that some funding approvals will lapse because they cannot confirm finance within this time frame.

What funding is available?

Any amount up to \$750,000 may be requested. For projects eligible for the Producer Equity program (PEP), 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.

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, philanthropy or other partners.

The program is open to applications for post-production as well as production. Screen Australia may decide to provide funding at a different level than that applied for based on the assessment of the project. We may also refer the project to a different funding program but applicants will be required to reapply under the guidelines of that specific program.

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 form part of these funds.

Who can apply?

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: Please refer to the [ACMA guidelines](#) for the definition of a documentary.
- be intended for public release
- have a total budget of at least \$125,000 per hour (or \$125,000 in total for non-linear projects). See exception above.
- not be reality or magazine television, light entertainment, panel or travel shows, infotainment, current affairs, cooking, 'how to', sports, corporate, training, games, extensions to film or tv programs, or community access programs or projects whose primary market is the education sector

Both one-off documentaries and series are eligible. 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 will take originality of format into account.

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

- include one producer, director or writer who has at least two ‘eligible credits’ in their respective role.

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 Commissioning Platform or channel, or
- had a commercial theatrical release, or
- been invited to screen at IDFA, Hot Docs or equivalent.

For online and interactive documentaries, the producer or director should have at least one credit in their respective roles on an equivalent project which has been publicly released.

- Note that reality or magazine television, light entertainment, panel or travel shows, infotainment, current affairs, cooking, ‘how to’, sports, corporate, training, games, extensions to film or TV, or community access programs or projects whose primary market is the education sector 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 and form a genuine collaboration.

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 including the producer, writer, director, director of photography and editor to be sourced from the freelance market and not from the staff of the Commissioning Platform.

What is the process?

The assessment process is in two stages.

STAGE 1 – EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

You must apply using the expression of interest application on the [Application Portal](#), 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. See [What is a synopsis? An outline? A treatment?](#), and
 - the key creatives’ 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 Heads of Department ie DOP, editor, etc.

- if available, sample footage or sizzle reel maximum five minutes. Vimeo link preferred. If the footage or reel is password protected, please limit to 3 letters.
- for online and interactive projects, please provide a link to the producer and/or director's previous work. If password protected, please limit to 3 letters.
- optional, a simple talk-to-camera 'video pitch' of no more than two minutes, where key creatives present their vision for the project. The pitch must be downloadable and password protected with the same password as the sample footage or sizzle reel. Vimeo link preferred.

Applications will be considered by Screen Australia executives and/or industry specialists as required. [Documentary specialists](#) are listed on the Screen Australia website.

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 with local and where appropriate international audiences.

Applicants will normally be notified in writing approximately 4 weeks after the closing date as to whether their application has been shortlisted. Stage one decisions are final. Due to the number of applications we receive we do not have the resources to provide extensive feedback to unsuccessful Stage one applicants.

Production funding decisions for applications with a request of \$200,000 or less from Screen Australia and online and interactive projects may be made at the expression of interest stage.

STAGE 2

Projects that are shortlisted will be sent an invitation to submit a further application for Stage 2 via the [Application Portal](#) which must include:

- a treatment of no more than 5-10 pages
- a detailed budget using the standard Screen Australia [A-Z Budget format](#) and budget summary. Fees should comply with industry standards. They will be considered in the context of the budget and track record of the key creatives and crew
- a draft [finance plan](#) using the Screen Australia template, indicating which sources of financing are confirmed by placing an 'X' in the column on the left.
- a one-paragraph narrative that explains the status of financial commitments to-date and how you intend to secure the remaining funds needed to make up your budget.
- ASIC company extract no more than 28 days old
- 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. Vimeo link preferred.

In addition, or if your project is successful and prior to a letter of approval 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
- 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 film maker’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.

The deadline to submit your materials for Stage 2 will be advised on the invitation email but is normally within 2 weeks.

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, and
 - quality of the submitted production materials: script, treatment, footage, Proof of Concept (POC), 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.

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 any more than two applications for the same project will not be accepted.

Pathways to audience for Stage 2

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 at Stage 2 only.

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 email confirmation of approval 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 and achievable finance plan and budget approved by Screen Australia, **within four months** from the date of confirmation of approval. Where relevant, Provisional Producer Offset certification will also need to be obtained before funds can be released.

Note that Screen Australia will not be able to give unlimited extensions to producers to secure their finance and it’s expected that some funding approvals will lapse.

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](#).

You must list all of your Chain of Title documents in the application and a Solicitor’s Opinion letter will be required for projects requesting \$50,000 or over in Screen Australia funding.

Documentary production: Commissioned program

Contact an Investment Manager: Before applying to Screen Australia for Commissioned Program funding, it is essential that you contact an Investment Manager to discuss your project. Contact the Program Operations team if you are unsure who to speak with: **1 800 507 901** or documentary@screenaustralia.gov.au

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 of at least a commercial half-hour in duration, with a minimum budget of \$250,000 per hour, and a confirmed domestic commission.

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

What funding is available?

Program funds will be allocated across all suitable Commissioning Platforms.

Any amount up to \$1 million may be requested per project. The amount of direct Screen Australia support is limited so that total Federal Government funds, including the Producer Offset or Producer Equity Payment (PEP) 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.

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.

Who can apply?

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 one-off documentary of 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. Please refer to the [ACMA guidelines](#) for the definition of a documentary
- note: Screen Australia does not invest in programs such as reality or magazine television, light entertainment, panel or travel shows, infotainment, current affairs, cooking, 'how to', sports, corporate, training, games, extensions to film or TV, or community access programs or projects whose primary market is the education sector

- 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
- not be more than 15 commercial hours of any one project, which may include multiple series. Projects longer than 15 commercial hours will not be eligible for funding unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.
- not be a pilot or standalone episode for a longer series.

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

Presale requirements

A domestic 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 have 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.

What is the process?

You must apply using the [Application Portal](#) available on the Screen Australia website, providing all the materials requested.

Applications can be submitted at any time and must include:

- A complete [finance plan](#) using the Screen Australia template
- All relevant deal memos and agreements in relation to marketing and distribution finance. Please note: a signed & dated deal memo or signed & dated term sheets must be attached for ALL marketplace or equity attachments for every line of the finance plan including offset lender.
- A detailed budget using the standard Screen Australia [A-Z Budget format](#) that matches the finance plan
- An outline, treatment or script
- A creative vision statement
- All relevant cast, presenter, interviewee, access deal memos and/or agreements
- ASIC company extract no more than 28 days old

In addition, other relevant documents may be required in the Application Portal.

All documentation should be in place at the time of submission.

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 will be made in approximately 8 weeks.

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. Nonetheless, 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 equally weighted 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.

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 any more than two applications for the same project will not be accepted.

Pathways to audience

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

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.

Terms of funding

INCLUSIVE ATTACHMENT SCHEME

As a condition of Screen Australia production support an above or below the line attachment must be allocated to each project: for example an attachment to a Director, Producer, DOP, Editor or Composer. The attachment should reflect the theme or content of the project: for example Indigenous, disability, gender, LGBTI+, culturally or linguistically diverse. Or the attachment should be targeted at providing experience to emerging practitioners. The costs must be included within your production budget and potential attachments should be discussed with your Investment Manager.

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](#).

You must list all of your Chain of Title documents in the application and a Solicitor’s Opinion letter will be required for projects requesting \$50,000 or over in Screen Australia funding.

Documentary Development

Contact an Investment/Development Manager

Before applying to Screen Australia for development funding, it is advisable that you contact an Investment/Development Manager to discuss your project. Contact the Program Operations team if you are unsure who to speak with: **1 800 507 901** or documentary@screenaustralia.gov.au

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 and series documentary including online and interactive.

Screen Australia does not invest in programs such as reality or magazine television, light entertainment, panel or travel shows, infotainment, current affairs, cooking, ‘how to’, sports, corporate, training, games, extensions to film or TV, or community access programs or projects whose primary market is the education sector.

What funding is available?

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

Who can apply?

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

- Sole applicants must have at least two ‘eligible credits’ in the role of producer or director.
- In the case of teams, one of the key creatives must have at least two ‘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 two ‘eligible credits’ must include at least two eligible linear documentaries.

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

Note that reality or magazine television, light entertainment, panel or travel shows, infotainment, current affairs, cooking, 'how to', sports, corporate, training, games, extensions to film or TV, or community access programs or projects whose primary market is the education sector 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.

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 submitted by invitation.

A convincing 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.

Further funding: Generally, projects funded under this program may only reapply for further development funding 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

What is the process?

You must apply using the [Application Portal](#) available on the Screen Australia website, providing all the materials requested.

Applications can be submitted by the deadline posted on the website and must include:

- A maximum five page proposal including an outline or treatment of the proposed documentary project making clear reference to structure, characters and stylistic and visual approach.
- Development notes describing the stage and intended materials to be developed together with the rationale for these materials and a proposed finance strategy describing how the materials created in this development phase will be used to secure further development or production finance or support.
- 2-3 page CVs for all key team members
- Examples of the director's previous work

Applications are considered by Screen Australia executives and/or industry specialists consulted as required. Funding decisions will be normally made within 6 weeks against the following equally weighted 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

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.

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 any more than two applications for the same project will not be accepted.

Terms of funding

Funding through this program is provided as a grant.

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.

You must list all of your Chain of Title documents in the application form. If over the course of the development tranches, you receive \$50,000 or over of combined funding, you may be required to submit a solicitor’s opinion letter.

Sector Development

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. Past examples include the *Doco180* joint initiative with News Limited and the *Art Bites* joint initiative with the ABC. 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 or travel shows, infotainment, current affairs, cooking, 'how to', sports, corporate, training, games, extensions to film or TV, or community access 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. With the exception of official Co-Productions, it is Screen Australia's expectation that applications for direct funding will demonstrate that the project is written and directed by Australian citizens or residents. Applications must be made on the relevant application form, and include all supporting material listed on that form.

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 any more than two applications for the same project will not be accepted.

Budgets

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

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 Commissioning Platform 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 \$2,750 per hour. If the publisher decides not to create a study guide, the \$2,750 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

12 June 2018

- Online & Interactive prioritised for the producer program

9 April 2018

- Revised study code costs as per ATOM.

15 November 2017: Producer Program changes:

- Added Online and Interactive Focus box
- Reduced online and interactive credits to teams with one credit for the producer or director
- Added requirement for links to producer or director’s previous work for online and interactive
- Added decisions on funding online and interactive documentaries can be made at the EOI stage

8 September 2017: Removed the eligibility section for online and interactive noting the section was a duplicate on the existing online and interactive paragraph.

