



# AWG The Creators: Guidelines

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Screen Australia reserves the right to change its program guidelines. Please ensure you check the website for the latest version. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#).

If you have accessibility requirements relating to submitting an application, please contact our Program Operations team via email at [development@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:development@screenaustralia.gov.au), or phone 1800 507 901, so we can assist.

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# 1. About this funding program

## 1.1. Overview

The Australian Writers' Guild's (AWG) The Creators is a career acceleration program for high-calibre, mid-career screenwriters to build toward the creation of their own shows.

Building on the success of Years 1 and 2, The Creators program continues to provide selected screenwriters international high-level showrunner training, project development and pitching training, equipping them to sell their stories in domestic and international arenas.

Up to six writers will be selected to participate in Writers Guild of America-style showrunner and pitching training, run by Jeff Melvoin, in Sydney in October 2025. The program will take place in a retreat-style environment to maximise the opportunity and access to Jeff Melvoin and the other participants.

The program is funded by Screen Australia and Scripted Ink, and is designed and delivered by the Australian Writers' Guild.

## 1.2. What support is available?

Up to six writers will be selected to participate in AWG The Creators in Sydney in October 2025. Successful applicants will be provided with:

- showrunner and pitching training by [Jeff Melvoin](#);
- a pre-program onboarding webinar with Jeff Melvoin and The Creators Year 2 cohort to share insights into the program and assist in preparation
- travel to Sydney (if relevant)
- per diems and accommodation in the Sydney retreat location
- significant industry promotion as part of the group in domestic and international media

Important dates for AWG The Creators in Sydney are:

- Sunday 19 October 2025: Welcome Dinner
- Monday 20 October - Thursday 23 October 2025: Showrunner Training and Pitching Workshops with Jeff Melvoin
- Friday 24 October - Saturday 25 October 2025: Lead Projects Table Reads

Successful applicants will also need to be available for a public event in Sydney on Monday 27 October 2025.

## 2. Inclusive Storytelling

For Australian screen content to effectively deliver cultural and economic benefits it must speak to, and be for, all Australians. A diversity of ideas and a diverse workforce will enhance the Australian screen industry, making it more relevant to Australian audiences and more competitive internationally.

Screen Australia is committed to building equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility into its programs and into our engagement with the community.

Screen Australia encourages applications from applicants from all backgrounds, cultures and experiences. In particular, the agency welcomes applications from applicants who are First Nations, d/Deaf and disabled, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTIQ+, women or gender diverse, regionally based, or those from other under-represented groups.

Screen Australia strives to make its programs accessible by removing barriers for people who are d/Deaf and disabled and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Screen Australia expects that any experiences portrayed through a project's narrative and characters which are aimed at illustrating diverse perspectives are reflected within the key creative team with appropriate representation and lived experience. It is vital the creative team has the cultural authorship to tell the story so that telling of the story is authentic.

## 3. Eligibility

### 3.1. Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible for this program, applicants must be Australian citizens or permanent residents and meet Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#), and be available for the duration of the program. Participants are expected to stay at the Sydney retreat location for the full program dates.

Due to the high-calibre nature of this program, applicants must fulfil all three points below:

- (1) meet competitive **credit criteria** in either episodic series, features or theatre;
- (2) have a **slate** of episodic projects; and
- (3) have existing **engagement** with the global community.

Applicants do not need to be Australian Writers' Guild members. Successful applicants will receive a complimentary 12-month membership to the AWG.

Please see below for the breakdown of eligibility requirements.

## (1) Credit Criteria

For further information on eligible credits in the three formats, please read the [FAQs](#) and reach out to [development@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:development@screenaustralia.gov.au) if you wish to confirm the eligibility of your credits.

Applicants must meet **one** of the requirements listed below to be eligible. Credit requirements must come from one format (TV, feature or theatre), and cannot be a combination of the three.

### (1a) Episodic TV series

Applicants must have **5 cumulative hours\* of episode credits** as a sole writer of scripted episodic drama or comedy series that have screened in any territory on recognised broadcast or streaming platforms by 30 June 2025.

*\*Cumulative hours are based on episode length, not broadcast length.*

Please note, self-released content on YouTube, Vimeo or other online platforms is not eligible for the purposes of this program.

### (1b) Feature

Applicants must have a minimum of **2 scripted feature films** (produced and screened publicly in Australia or internationally) as sole writer

### (1c) Theatre

- Applicants must have a minimum of **2 mainstage theatre productions** as sole or lead writer that were produced nationally or internationally in a professional theatre or professional festival context where that production was either commissioned and/or programmed by selection.
- Applicants must also have been a recipient of, or nominated for, a significant domestic or international award.
- In addition to theatre writing credits, the applicant must, in the last five years (from 2020), have either optioned their underlying IP for screen adaptation and/or been engaged as a sole writer to write an episode for a scripted episodic series.

## (2) Episodic slate

Those who meet the credit criteria of one of the formats above must also have:

**A slate of 3 - 5 scripted episodic projects in development** of any genre, noting:

- The applicant writer must own the IP for original material and have evidence of ownership, if applicable, for any underlying material if an adaptation of underlying IP.
- One project should be selected as the **lead** scripted episodic project with a draft pilot script, well suited to gaining global interest and traction. This lead project must be unencumbered\*\*, and the applicant writer must hold all rights.
- The remaining two-to-four projects may be encumbered / optioned / assigned, and may be a combination of:
  - Another pilot (or pilots)
  - Bibles, pitch bibles, or pitch decks
  - Scripted spoken-word pitches, or extensive notes clearly articulating your projects for pitching

*\*\*Unencumbered should be taken to mean the applicant maintains full creative and financial control of their lead project. No rights can have been assigned, and no future development agreements, or production or broadcast agreements, can have been entered into in relation to the project. The project may have received previous development investment but the applicant must continue to hold all the rights as at the time of application to AWG The Creators program.*

### **(3) Global engagement:**

The applicant should have existing experience, traction and evidence of interest from the global community. This may be demonstrated by one or a combination of the following:

- previous engagement in a writers' rooms on an international series or having written/produced a television drama or comedy for any recognised network or SVOD, especially where that program has been screened on, or distributed to a major foreign outlet.
- having written a feature film that has screened at major festivals, and/or been distributed to other major international territories.
- having written a theatrical work (a play or musical) that has been commissioned or produced or toured in a recognised

major international/foreign theatrical market.

- having IP under option by recognised studios, networks, production companies, or producers; previous selection for international labs, pitching events, development programs; or having secured pitch opportunities in the global marketplace (e.g. Series Mania); and/or through representation by recognised international agents or managers.

## 4. Application Process

Before applying, applicants must read and understand these guidelines, Screen Australia's Terms of Trade, and preview the application form on SmartyGrants.

### 4.1. How to Apply

Applications close **5pm AEST Thursday 29 May 2025** and can be made via the Screen Australia [Application Portal](#).

### 4.2. Application Form

- Through the application form, applicants must:
  - provide all the information requested and answer the application questions including contact details and applicant eligibility (including demonstrated cumulative hours of episode credits)
  - address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
  - include all required supporting materials.
- Information to be provided on the Application Form:
  - detailed information on your current slate of projects. For each title mentioned on the slate provide: logline, synopsis, the stage of development and what materials are currently available; any secured development funding; the estimated budget; and information on any currently secured key creative, cast and marketplace attachments and/or interest where applicable;
  - detailed information on the lead project for nomination to be worked on through the AWG The Creators and as the focus project in the showrunner and pitching training; and
  - specific and intended professional development objectives demonstrating understanding of program and leadership opportunity provided by the training.

### 4.3. Required materials

Applicants are required to upload the following supporting materials with their

application form:

- CV including credits applicable to the required credit criteria (specifying credited role, project duration (minutes), performance run dates and location, etc). Please note a full CV must be provided and bios will not be accepted; and
- one set of sample pages of writing (15 pages max.) from a scripted project that has been produced.

## 5. Assessment

### 5.1. Assessment process

Once submitted, the Program Operations team will review each application to determine eligibility and ensure that required application materials have been provided. Once eligibility has been confirmed, the applicant will receive an email advising that their application has moved to assessment.

Complete and eligible applications will be considered and reviewed by Australian Writers' Guild, Screen Australia and/or industry specialists.

### 5.2. Assessment Criteria

Funding decisions will be made against the following equally weighted criteria:

- **Proposal and Slate.** the strength of the proposal and the perceived strength and diversity of the projects on the slate, as well as the stage of development and suitability for the event including quality and global appeal.
- **Leadership.** leadership qualities of the applicant with respect to the role of the showrunner in the development and production process and within the wider industry.
- **International interest.** the amount of perceived traction internationally from the applicant's body of work.
- **Experience.** the perceived experience and knowledge of the applicant pertinent to the activity.

### 5.3. Decision & Notification

Applicants will be advised of either a decline or shortlisted outcome in writing by Friday 11 July 2025.

Those who are shortlisted may be asked to **submit further materials** on each lead project and/or will be required to undergo an **interview** over video software with AWG and Screen Australia.



Final outcomes for the shortlisted applicants will be advised in writing by Friday 18 July 2025.

## **6. Successful applicants**

### **6.1. Contracting**

If approved, the applicant will receive an email with information about the contracting process and any applicable conditions.

Successful applicants will enter into a Participant Agreement with the Australian Writers' Guild.

## **7. Contact**

If you are unsure about your eligibility or have questions about the application form, please email us at [development@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:development@screenaustralia.gov.au) or call Program Operations on 1800 507 901.

If you have questions relating to the program and program content, please email the Australian Writers' Guild at [thecreators@awg.com.au](mailto:thecreators@awg.com.au).

Please note that Screen Australia and the Australian Writers' Guild are not able to provide creative advice or suggestions to strengthen your application.

## **8. Privacy**

Screen Australia collects personal information from individuals in different ways, including via funding applications, acquittal reports, or supporting material supplied with forms. Screen Australia will handle any personal information provided in connection with a funding application in accordance with its [Privacy Notice](#) relating to funding applications and its [Privacy Policy](#).