

FEATURE FILM PRODUCTION LETTER OF INTEREST (LOI) GUIDELINES

RELEASED 25 SEPTEMBER 2017

These guidelines apply to all applications for production funding Letters of Interest submitted from the release date above.

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

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Feature film production: Letter of Interest

Contact an Investment Manager: Before applying to Screen Australia for a Letter of Interest it is essential that you contact an Investment Manager to discuss your project. Call the Program Operations team on 1800 507 901 if you are unsure who to speak with.

We also 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. Call them on **1800 507 901** or email to dramaproduction@screenaustralia.gov.au.

A Letter of Interest is an indication to the producer and the marketplace that Screen Australia recognises the project's creative and/or commercial potential. This is not a commitment for investment but it is an indication of the possibility of Screen Australia investing in the project at a later stage when the project will be competitively assessed against the published criteria.

An application for feature film production funding can then be submitted once the rest of the finance is in place.

IMPORTANT: A Letter of Interest is neither a prerequisite for an application for production funding, nor a commitment from Screen Australia to invest in a project.

Documentary projects, including theatrical or feature-length documentaries, are not eligible under this program. Refer to our [Documentary programs](#).

Who can apply?

Projects must be feature-length and intended for theatrical release. Producers can apply for a Letter of Interest when:

- their screenplay is at an advanced stage of development for example, ready to cast but still one draft away from shooting; AND
- they have a letter of interest from an appropriate domestic distributor or a letter of offer with sufficient terms and/or distribution guarantee from a Rest of World (ROW) sales agent relevant to the project.

There is no requirement for having both marketplace attachments at this stage.

A project **cannot** normally be submitted for a Letter of Interest concurrently with an application for Screen Australia development funding. Contact an Investment Manager to discuss further.

Projects which have been unsuccessful twice for a Letter of Interest:

- are ineligible to apply a third time for a Letter of Interest unless the applicant is able to demonstrate exceptional circumstances.

- can apply for production funding if and when finance is in place; however, if the production funding application is declined, the project is ineligible to apply again.

Applicants and projects must also meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#). 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.

What is the process?

Applications can be submitted at any time through the [Application Portal](#) and include the following additional materials:

- Current draft script
- One page synopsis
- CV's for all Key Creatives
- Director's Statement
- Producer's Statement
- Marketplace - Acceptable offer for Australian theatrical distribution or Rest of World (ROW) sales; all relevant deal memos/agreements/letters of offer in relation to marketing and distribution
- Draft finance plan if available
- Indigenous statement, consultation and consent if applicable

You should demonstrate clearly how a Screen Australia Letter of Interest will help your project become financed and production ready.

Complete and eligible Letter of Interest applications will be reviewed by Screen Australia executives and the Head of Production.

Applicants may be interviewed as part of the assessment process. We expect that the key creatives (writer, director and producer) will be available to attend an interview on the specified date and time and appreciate the team's flexibility to make this work.

Final decisions will be made by the Head of Production, regardless of the Screen Australia funding request amount likely to be involved.

Screen Australia will take the following equally weighted criteria into account when considering applications for Letters of Interest:

- **Script:** The readiness of the script for financing in relation to: (i) the quality of the writing and cinematic storytelling; (ii) the strength and distinctiveness of the idea within its own genre; (iii) the reader's emotional engagement with the story and characters.
- **Creative team:** The producer, director and writer according to: (i) skills, experience and achievements which demonstrate either a successful track record or an exciting new talent; (ii) their demonstrated creative, technical and managerial capacity to deliver the project; (iii) the director's vision for the film.
- **Project:** The project's potential in relation to: (i) the team's demonstrated understanding of the film's intended audience; (ii) the quality of any cast attached or proposed; (iii) the potential for the film to be selected for an A-list festival; (iv)

the potential for the film to appeal to a significant audience in Australia and internationally.

- **Viability:** The project's potential to be realised with reference to (i) its proposed budget size relative to its intentions; (ii) its proposed budget size relative to its potential audience; (iii) the track record of the distributor or sales agent and its suitability to the project.

Other factors including diversity of slate and the gender and cultural diversity of the team may also influence Screen Australia's decision.

Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application generally within 4-6 weeks. If an application is unsuccessful, the reasons will be conveyed to the applicant.

Terms

If a decision is made to issue a Letter of Interest, the date of the letter will be the date the application was approved.

Screen Australia Letters of Interest expire 12 months from the date of the letter. Applicants with Letters of Interest may be granted extensions at the discretion of the Head of Production.

Rights

The applicant must either hold the rights or have an appropriate option to acquire the rights necessary to produce, complete, deliver and exploit the project.

You must list all of your Chain of Title documents in the application.

If the project is based on a real-life event or person, Screen Australia may request an additional legal opinion letter addressing any defamation or contempt of court issues. Please read Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#). They include detailed information on additional requirements such as Screen Australia and NFSA delivery items and recoupment expectations.

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