

## Historic change to Story Development Guidelines

**Monday 2 July 2018:** Screen Australia has today announced that the new development guidelines have been finalised following two months of [industry consultation](#), and are now in effect. These guidelines will make funding more accessible with an emphasis on supporting talent who have a strong idea and a clear pathway to an audience.

“Industry support for the proposed guidelines was overwhelmingly positive, and the final model includes tweaks based on feedback. We particularly received feedback regarding the submission of second stage materials, producer fees, funding allocations, and budget thresholds,” said **Nerida Moore**, Senior Development Executive at Screen Australia.

“These new guidelines empower Australian screen practitioners to develop the best stories, for the best platform with a more streamlined application process.”

“Where and how Australians watch screen content is changing and these new development guidelines give Screen Australia the flexibility to help creatives take advantage of these new opportunities. We expect to see an increase in the diversity of screen stories being told and a larger pool of content makers telling them.”

The guidelines allow projects for any platform including TV, film and online, to apply for development funding from one of two program strands - the Generate Fund or the Premium Fund.

The Generate Fund is for lower budget projects with an emphasis on new and emerging talent, or experienced talent wanting to take creative risks. There are no eligibility requirements for this fund, however applications will need to be competitive against the criteria and in line with the aims of the fund.

The Premium Fund is for higher budget projects of ambition and scale from successful screen content makers. The commercial viability of the project, and the path to a significant and clearly defined audience is a key focus of this fund.

Screen Australia will be seeking stories for both funds that reflect gender equity as well as the diversity of people and experiences from around Australia, all of which are important culturally, creatively and economically.

The new guidelines have seen the budget threshold amounts change to \$1 million per hour for TV projects (formerly \$800,000), and \$3 million for feature films (formerly \$2.5 million) to allow greater creative flexibility for applicants. The other significant change is that applicants will now have three months to submit their second stage materials for a project, rather than submitting immediately after a successful stage 1 application which was the case previously.

More details about the guidelines including resources are below, as are some answers to questions that were frequently raised during the consultation process. Both funding streams are now open. Visit this page for further details and how to apply for each fund. ([Generate](#) and [Premium](#))

### Resources

- The new Story Development guidelines can be viewed in full [here](#)
- The new guidelines application process is available [here](#)
- The guide to what makes a compelling application is available [here](#)
- The Pathway to Audience guide is available [here](#)
- The Story Documents guide is available [here](#)

### Screen Australia Staffing

Two new Development Executives Jenevieve Chang and Ester Harding have recently joined the Screen Australia team. Jenevieve is a story developer, author and actor who was a recipient of Screen Australia's inaugural [Developing the Developer](#) initiative in 2017. Since then she has worked with Felix Media on the



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development of a new screen project, and is currently Creative Executive at Arclight Films, focusing on the development of Chinese Australian co-productions. Jenevieve's memoir, *The Good Girl of Chinatown* was published by Penguin Random House in 2017 and has been described as a story where "heritage and hedonism collide."

Film and television producer Ester Harding, joins Screen Australia from See Pictures. Her recent work includes co-producing feature comedy [Swinging Safari](#), for writer/director Stephan Elliott, and producing the short-film [Remembering Agatha](#), which premiered at the Adelaide Film Festival, was selected for Flickerfest and was later broadcast on the ABC. She also worked as production executive on the feature adaptation of Tim Winton's novel, [Breath](#). She holds a Masters of Screen Arts and Business at AFTRS.

## FAQs

### Can I apply as an individual?

Yes, however as you get closer to production, you will need to have a complete team around you. For sole writers or directors, this includes attaching a producer at a later stage of development.

For Premium, an individual must have a significant track record with production credits and/or awards.

### What if I don't meet the budget thresholds for the fund I am applying to?

The budget thresholds are only a guide to what Screen Australia considers lower and higher budgets. If you have a project that has a higher budget but the team are not experienced, you will need to think about the elements you will need in order to attract marketplace, attract cast, raise the finance and successfully deliver the project to its audience. For some projects, this may mean rethinking the project in a lower budget context in order to be able to pitch a concept that can be realistically achieved, and will meet the aims of the fund.

### I am at a very early stage of my development process, do I really need to know who my audience is?

Yes, finding your pathway to an audience is essential to the creative and funding process. We want to know who your target audience is, why they will want to see your project and your plans to attach the right people who will help you get it to your audience (and hopefully make a bit of money along the way!). Check out our [Pathway to Audience guide](#) for more information.

### Do I have to do a pitch to camera?

Yes, but the pitch can take any form (people, pictures, text on screen, music, sound, etc) that describes the long-form story, who the audience is and how you will reach them. This does not need to be a highly produced video to 'sell' to assessors but an opportunity to talk through your submission.

### Who will assess my project?

Applications will be assessed by Screen Australia Development Executives and/or industry specialists in accordance with their experience across the relevant platforms. We have a very inclusive mix of external assessors and our internal Development Executives have varied experience across all platforms.

### What is a scriptment?

A scriptment is part script, part treatment - a hybrid between a prose presentation of the story and the inclusion of key dialogue scenes. We have recently updated our [Story Documents Guide](#) to reflect all platforms, with further information on scriptments, core concepts, synopses, outlines, bibles and scene breakdowns.



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**How will the \$3 million of Screen Australia development funding be distributed across the two funds? Will all the funds go to television now that you have opened it up to them?**

Screen Australia supports talent, quality, innovation and culture through programs that increase the ambitions, risk tolerance and diversity of Australian storytelling for local and international audiences. Decisions will take into account the criteria listed under each stage of development, the availability of funds, the diversity of the current slate of projects and teams across all platforms, as well as the perceived need for Screen Australia funds by the applicant. As this is the first time we are running these strands, it will depend on the demand for each fund, but ultimately the new guidelines are about funding the best stories.

**I have worked really hard to get a story document together for this application, can I get paid for this work?**

No, we don't fund retrospectively. Since we have opened up eligibility, the funds will be extremely competitive so the applicant must do the initial heavy lifting in order to get to the next phase and stand out.

**What if my writer costs more than what Screen Australia can contribute?**

If the fees are above Screen Australia's contribution, we would encourage you to find other sources of funding that you can list in your application.

**Can I get feedback on my project?**

We aim to make the application and assessment processes as transparent as possible, but given the volume of applications we receive, we do not have the resources to provide extensive feedback on each project. However, if you are unsuccessful, you will receive an email with a short paragraph outlining the reasons for the decision against the published criteria. No further correspondence or discussion will be entered into.

**If I've been declined for Stage 1 can I come back in again?**

Yes, you will have one more chance to come in to that stage. Please refer to the [process document](#) for further information on previously declined projects.

**If I have been declined for development funding from the pre July guidelines can I re-apply based on the new guidelines?**

If your project has received two declines, you are not eligible to apply with the same project again. This includes any of the following:

- Two declines across Generate and Premium Stage 1.
- Two declines across Generate and Premium Stage 2.
- Two declines from any previous Screen Australia drama development funding (excluding Gender Matters Brilliant Stories and Hot Shots Plus).
- One previous decline from Screen Australia drama development funding plus one decline from Generate or Premium.

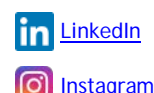
**If I have already received funding from previous Story Development, do I need to apply to Stage 1?**

No, you can apply directly to Stage 2 if your last application was successful. Contact Program Operations on 1 800 507 901 or email [development@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:development@screenaustralia.gov.au) for your invitation.

**Do I need all legal agreements in place for my application?**

We need to contract with the entity that controls the rights to the project. It may be directly with a key creative provided it can be demonstrated that they control the rights. You may add legal costs to your budget if you need to clarify this by entering new agreements. In some cases, we will require a solicitor's opinion

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letter confirming that the applicant has all the necessary rights. If you have any questions with regards to protecting your rights or ensuring you have the appropriate credits, please contact your relevant guild or organisation such as [ADG](#), [AWG](#), and [SPA](#). [Please refer to our Terms of Trade for more information.](#)

#### Do I need an ABN?

Yes. You can contract with us as a company or an individual (eg. sole trader) but in all cases you must have an ABN. If you are intending to pay other people, you will be required to set up a company with an ABN. The cost of setting up a production company can be included in your development budget.

#### What if I have an international co-production, am I still eligible?

Yes, you may apply as a co-production and can indicate such in the application, however funding for development is for the Australian company and Australian elements of the budget only and the applicant must be Australian and must control the rights to the project.