

Screen Australia announces applications are open for two below-the-line programs

Thursday 07 September 2023: Screen Australia is pleased to announce two programs for boosting below-the-line (BTL) capacity are now open for applications with revised guidelines: **BTL Next Step** (Stage One) to help mid-career practitioners to step into senior crew and leadership roles; and the **Skills Development Fund** (formerly the Production Crew Skills Training Fund) supporting screen businesses to provide work-based learning.

Launched in April 2023, the first round of Industry Development initiatives has distributed over [\\$1.7 million to date](#), providing training and skills development for more than 350 people, with further recipients to be announced shortly.

Screen Australia’s Head of Industry Development, **Ken Crouch** said, “These initiatives have had a great response from the sector. We’re thrilled we can help grow the capacity of the Australian screen workforce and that’s why we’ve reopened BTL Next Step and revamped the Skills Development Fund with revised guidelines. We want to make sure we’re meeting the needs of industry and addressing the skills shortages for below-the-line roles.”

“These changes will provide additional placement and training opportunities. The improved application processes will encourage and support businesses to offer these critical pathways to emerging and mid-career practitioners. By delivering these programs with industry, we are working together to build capacity where it’s needed most,” **Crouch** continued.

Notable changes outlined in the BTL Next Step and Skills Development Fund guidelines include:

- increasing the number of funding rounds across all Industry Development programs – applications will now be assessed in three funding rounds in the 2023/24 financial year
- under BTL Next Step the number of identified roles has increased from four key roles to 10 positions
- renaming the Production Crew Training Skills Fund the ‘Skills Development Fund’ and broadening its scope to include game development studios – enabling eligible gamemakers to apply for opportunities.

BTL Next Step (Stage One)

Through this initiative, Screen Australia supports mid-career practitioners to take the next step in their career by undertaking a paid placement where they will be mentored and attain a credit. The placements are in crew and leadership roles that have been identified as experiencing shortages: 1st Assistant Director, Art Director, Editor, Line Producer, Location Manager, Post Production Supervisor, Production Accountant, Production Manager, Special Effects (SFX) Supervisor and Sound Designer.

Potential host companies are invited to submit an application as part of Stage One, with opportunities announced and open for practitioners in Stage Two in the coming months.

The 2023/24 closing dates for Stage One are:

- **Round 1** (for placements from 18 February 2024): 5 October 2023.
- **Round 2** (for placements from 26 May 2024): 18 January 2024.
- **Round 3:** (for placements from 15 September 2024): 16 May 2024.

Applications are now open for Round 1 and close at 5pm AEST Thursday 5 October 2023. For more information see the guidelines [here](#).



Australian Government



Skills Development Fund

This funding program supports production companies and screen businesses with grants of up to \$80,000 to provide skills development through structured work-based learning and training. Proposals must benefit at least three participants and may include emerging practitioners receiving on-the-job training to build confidence and attain a credit; training to support upskilling crew into mid-career Heads of Department (HOD) roles; or other tailored structured programs.

The 2023/24 closing dates for Skills Development Fund are:

- **Round 1** (for projects commencing December 2023): 26 October 2023.
- **Round 2** (for projects commencing April 2024): 1 February 2024.
- **Round 3** (for projects commencing July 2024): 16 May 2024.

Applications are now open for Round 1 and close at 5pm AEST Thursday 26 October 2023. For more information see the guidelines [here](#).

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