

## Applications open for scholarship to the American Film Institute Conservatory

**Tuesday 20 August 2019:** Screen industry veteran and philanthropist Greg Basser and his wife Kiera O'Neill have announced submissions will open in September for the second Screen Australia-Onbass Fellowship, a scholarship providing full tuition for a student to attend the American Film Institute (AFI) Conservatory.

The Conservatory's two-year program offers a Master of Fine Arts degree in one of six disciplines: Cinematography, Directing, Editing, Producing, Production Design and Screenwriting. The AFI Conservatory uses hands-on collaboration to prepare its Fellows for the real-world professional filmmaking environment.

The Screen Australia-Onbass Fellowship will cover tuition, plus a stipend toward living expenses. Applicants apply and enter the AFI Conservatory in one of the six filmmaking disciplines offered.

The [inaugural scholarship](#) was awarded to cinematographer **Meg White** in 2019. White is entering her first year of study at the AFI Conservatory and says, "I am inherently proud to be the inaugural recipient of the Screen Australia Onbass Fellowship. I look forward to beginning my studies at the AFI Conservatory and will endeavor to make the most of the relationships, exposure, access and work prospects the Fellowship and AFI will provide. I am extraordinarily grateful to have received this unprecedented opportunity."

Melbourne-born and LA-based Basser has been a long-time supporter of the Australian screen industry, and has been instrumental in building opportunities for Australians wishing to pursue global careers in entertainment. He is a G'Day USA Champion, an inaugural CEO member of the American Australian Business Council, a Qantas Orry-Kelly International Award recipient and is an immediate past member of the board and executive committee for Australians in Film (USA). The new scholarships continue Basser and O'Neill's more than 20 years of support for the Australian creative industries, including the Active Minds program at Melbourne Museum and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra education program. Most recently, Basser established the annual [Onbass Giant Steps Scholarship](#) to assist students who require financial assistance to attend Australian Film Television & Radio School in Sydney.

"The AFI Conservatory is recognised as the leading graduate school for film professionals globally. By creating an opportunity for Australians to come to Los Angeles to be taught by and study alongside the 'best of the best,' Kiera and I look forward to Aussie fellows taking these skills back to give back, at home," said **Basser**.

"Greg Basser and Kiera O'Neill are true champions of the visual arts. Their inspiring commitment to support these young filmmakers and to fortify the Australian film community demonstrates the kind of leadership that is critical to our mission of educating the next generation of emerging artists," said **Susan Ruskin**, Dean of the AFI Conservatory. Dean Ruskin continued, "Their generosity is an investment in the future of our industry."

Applications for the Fellowship open on 3 September 2019 and close on 13 October 2019.

The recipient of the Screen Australia-Onbass Fellowship will be notified in December 2019 and formally presented with the scholarship at the G'Day USA Gala, Los Angeles in January 2020, before commencing study in August 2020.

### ABOUT THE AFI CONSERVATORY

The AFI Conservatory is one of the leading film training programs in the world. In 1969, the Conservatory opened its doors to an inaugural class that included Terrence Malick, Caleb Deschanel and Paul Schrader. The AFI Conservatory offers a two-year MFA degree in six filmmaking disciplines: Cinematography, Directing, Editing, Producing, Production Design and Screenwriting. 140 Fellows are admitted to the AFI each year. Aspiring artists learn from the masters in a collaborative, hands-on production environment with an emphasis on narrative storytelling. Alumni of this elite program include Rachel Morrison, Andrea Arnold, Darren Aronofsky, Julie Dash, Steve Golin, Patty Jenkins, Janusz Kamiński, David Lynch, Melina Matsoukas and Robert Richardson, among others.

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident, preferably over age 21 (but at least 18 years of age).
- At the time of enrollment, the Fellowship recipient must not be currently employed by an Australian broadcaster or commissioning platform and not currently enrolled in a full-time capacity at another film, television or interactive digital media course at a film school or tertiary educational institution. This eligibility must be maintained throughout academic studies at the AFI Conservatory.
- As this is a Master's course, applicants will preferably have an undergraduate degree from a U.S.-accredited academic institution or a bachelor's degree equivalency document from Australia or other country to receive a Master of Fine Arts degree.
- Applicants who have studied at Australian film schools such as AFTRS, VCA and Griffiths will be highly regarded. The AFI Conservatory will still consider applicants who have no tertiary qualifications. However, if successful, these applicants would graduate as an Associate Fellow.
- Applicants must meet the AFI Conservatory's [Admission Criteria](#).

## APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applications must be received by the AFI Conservatory by 13 October 2019 (Los Angeles time). Apply at [www.AFI.edu](http://www.AFI.edu) and look for 'Screen Australia-Onbass Fellowships'.
- Applicants will be required to submit several documents, including a narrative statement, two letters of recommendation, academic history, a scholarship application and discipline-specific supporting materials. Those interested in applying should read the AFI Conservatory's [Application Tips](#) and [FAQs](#) well in advance of the due date to ensure that they can complete their application in time.
- Applicants who are shortlisted will be required to submit a police check from their Australian state of residence and proof of citizenship.
- Applicants not selected will still be considered for admission, but will be rolled into the regular application process and receive their admissions decision in March 2020. Their general AFI Conservatory scholarship application will be considered during the regular review period.

## SCHOLARSHIP INCLUSIONS

- The Screen Australia-Onbass Fellowships will provide all AFI Conservatory tuition and fees incurred while attending the AFI Conservatory.
- As part of the Fellowship, the Screen Australia-Onbass Fellows will also receive a stipend of approximately USD\$3000 per semester to assist with the cost of living in LA and in recognition that because the course is so intensive (often seven days a week), students cannot work.
- The value of the Fellowship award is greater than USD\$130,000, including the living stipend.
- In addition, successful applicants will be eligible for one return economy flight from an Australian capital city to Los Angeles, provided by Qantas Airlines as part of the G'Day USA program to enable them to travel to Gala for the announcement of the scholarship. The Fellows will also be entitled to one return economy flight from an Australian capital city to LA, provided by Qantas Airlines as part of the G'Day USA program to enable them to take up their studies in August.
- The scholarship does not cover accommodation in the US or [VISA fees](#).