



Australian Government



DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR COMMENT DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMS: Stories that matter

RELEASED 16 JUNE 2014

Background	2
DRAFT GUIDELINES	
Overview	6
Producer Equity Program.....	8
Vision and Voice	10
Meaning and Market.....	14
Premium.....	17
Documentary development.....	20
General information for applicants.....	23

Tell us what you think

Feedback on the draft guidelines is open until **Friday 18 July 2014**.

Send to feedback@screenaustralia.gov.au

We'll publish your comments on the website as we receive them, unless you tell us otherwise.

BACKGROUND

This is a really key moment for documentary in this country, and perhaps globally. We are seeing significant changes in the way viewers interact with content – with new players, new platforms and technologies shifting habits – and we need to think carefully about how we can extend – not just preserve – documentary’s unique and important qualities in this new landscape. [Graeme Mason, February 2014]

Documentary has a special place in the Australian screen industries. The best documentaries help us understand ourselves and others, inform our cultural identity, inspire us to think differently or think more deeply about issues, and form a vital legacy into the future.

Over the last five years Screen Australia has supported documentary production with approximately \$20 million each year of direct funding as well as around \$20 million each year through its administration of Producer Offset rebates.

The need for review

At the Australian International Documentary Conference (AIDC) in February 2014, Screen Australia CEO Graeme Mason launched a comprehensive discussion paper on the agency’s documentary programs, aiming to explore the best ways to support Australian documentary into the future, in particular how to:

- remain responsive to a rapidly changing production and distribution environment;
- reach and engage with audiences on all platforms;
- improve the contestability of funds;
- support-low budget documentary; and
- streamline Screen Australia's administration of documentary funding.

During AIDC, a plenary session involving all delegates, open round-tables and specific stakeholder engagement, led into six weeks of public consultation. During this phase of consultation 25 written submissions were received – most of which are available on [Screen Australia's website](#).

The documentary and strategy teams have since sought out views on proposed models from a range of filmmakers, practitioners, commissioners and decision makers leading up to the release of these draft guidelines.

The draft guidelines acknowledge the diverse views that emerged during the consultation and reaffirm Screen Australia’s commitment to its role and function in the complex and evolving documentary production ecosystem. The aim is to ensure our support is properly calibrated for the future.

These are draft guidelines and we welcome input and ideas – responses are due by 18 July 2014.

Towards a new suite of documentary programs

Focus on stories that matter

Screen Australia has a special remit to support documentary due to the implicit public and social value of this kind of content. The *Screen Australia Act 2008* requires the agency to:

ensure the development of a diverse range of Australian programs that deal with matters of national interest or importance to Australians, or that illustrate or interpret aspects of Australia or the life and activities of Australian people; and (b) place an emphasis on: (i) documentaries.

In this context, and especially given the general contraction in Screen Australia's appropriation, the draft guidelines for the proposed new programs **strengthen the agency's focus on supporting 'stories that matter'**. These are stories that should reflect the principles of quality, diversity and innovation, as outlined in the *Stories that matter* discussion paper. They are likely to resonate with audiences; they will have meaning that can endure beyond the moment of broadcast (or download or streaming); should draw on a depth of research or thinking about the subject matter; and rely on documentary craft and skills.

The draft guidelines embody an overarching commitment to taking these factors into account in assessing projects for all programs other than the Producer Equity program.

Responsiveness to an evolving media landscape

Over recent years Screen Australia has tracked significant changes in audiences and industry trends. While broadcast television currently maintains its dominance, changing models in the production and consumption of screen content continue to transform our sector, at an ever-accelerating pace.

Many practitioners and stakeholders involved in early consultation made the case for allowing these new models to access Screen Australia support.

In response, while recognising that domestic broadcaster presales will remain the dominant form of marketplace attachment, the draft guidelines include funding programs which **broaden the accepted forms of marketplace commitment** to include online subscription service presale, film festival finance, and partnerships with foundations and institutions that extend audience reach.

Further, the proposed guidelines do not set minimum licence fees for broadcast presales, other than in the context of very high-budget projects.

These more flexible requirements for market attachment should also provide opportunities for producers building international relationships. Documentaries with international marketplace attachments make a highly valued contribution to the Australian industry, and the draft guidelines acknowledge this but propose a different mechanism to support it. Rather than encouraging internationally focused production through tightly prescribed contributions to a project's finance plan, the draft guidelines aim to achieve the same ends through **allowing a more entrepreneurial approach**.

Acknowledging the role of the broadcasters

Screen Australia recognises that broadcasters have a vital role in Australian documentary production, as well as expertise in reaching audiences.

The negotiation between broadcaster priorities and Screen Australia's responsibilities under its Act has been set out in the investment and slate management principles which currently apply to programs which require broadcaster presale.

The draft guidelines propose to **retain these slate management principles**. However, in the context of enhancing the flexibility of requirements for marketplace commitment, the draft guidelines propose to **discontinue the notional allocation of funds across the various broadcast platforms**.

At present, of the funding available under the domestic funding programs (the NDP and GDP), approximately 50 per cent is earmarked for content intended for the ABC, 40 per cent to the SBS and the remaining 10 per cent is for programs commissioned by the commercial broadcasters and subscription television.

Whether these allocations should be retained, changed or removed was certainly the most contentious issue that emerged during the consultation process.

Naturally, the public broadcasters wish to keep the current splits, and SPA, along with many producers, support this, saying they provide certainty and stability for the industry. On the other side of the argument are those who say the allocations tend to result in broadcasters commissioning work from a small selection of production companies. They see the splits as damaging the ecosystem and resulting in less diversity in content and production companies.

This is a complex issue and Screen Australia has sympathy for both points of view. However, at the bottom line, while continuing to recognise and value the expertise of the broadcasters and the industry, Screen Australia must take responsibility for its investment decisions. As a cultural agency, we must recognise the role our funding plays and the difference it makes for each project we invest in – now more than ever.

Our expectation is that the broadcasters remain responsible for editorial decisions for their content. We also expect that across the year broadcasters are likely to attract a similar proportion of Screen Australia's funds as when the allocations were in place.

Supporting strong creative vision

Many documentary filmmakers have advocated for support for some of the more vulnerable forms of documentary filmmaking, particularly as it is becoming harder for them to attract broadcaster presales in the current environment.

Recognising the wealth of storytelling skills in the sector and the ambition for these stories to engage audiences beyond broadcast, the draft guidelines aim to provide **flexibility for projects from filmmakers with strong creative vision and innovative, authorial or experimental approaches**.

Providing incentives for high-end documentary

A diverse documentary slate should include large-scale projects with a sense of ambition and high production values. The challenge is to encourage the production of such documentaries given the increasing difficulties in securing finance, and the high risk for broadcasters and other investors. There is a **clear role for Screen Australia funds in supporting exceptional projects that would otherwise be too risky.**

The draft guidelines therefore propose a fund allowing for greater levels of investment from Screen Australia in a limited number of higher-budget projects. These projects could take the form of blue chip singles and series, event television or feature documentaries for theatrical release.

Streamlining administration

A case was made for providing more funding in the form of grants rather than recoupable investment, especially for lower-budget documentary, as the cost to both the producer and the agency of recoupment may outweigh the benefits of small revenue flows back into production funding.

All funding up to \$200,000 is currently provided as a grant, with everything above that provided as recoupable investment. Screen Australia is considering increasing the grant threshold to improve service delivery and support the sector in an environment of limited funding.

The Producer Equity Program (PEP) will continue to fund projects that require no additional subsidy from Screen Australia beyond 20 per cent of their budget, via the least onerous process possible. They will not be assessed beyond establishing eligibility.

However, to help simplify the process, PEP will not be accessible in conjunction with other Screen Australia funding.

Projects seeking a higher proportion of their budget than the 20 per cent PEP payment can apply through Screen Australia's other documentary production programs. In this case, the draft guidelines allow for up to 75 per cent of the budget (up to 100 per cent for lower-budget projects) to be provided where projects are assessed against program criteria (although in general, projects that rate strongly against a program's assessment criteria and have a lower ask of Screen Australia's fund as a proportion of overall budget will be prioritised).

Tell us what you think

We want to hear your views on these issues and to test out the new models described – exploring how they may or may not deliver on the principles of cultural value, diversity, quality and innovation and the needs of audiences and the industry.

Feedback is open until **Friday 18 July 2014.**

Send to feedback@screenaustralia.gov.au

We'll publish your comments on the website as we receive them, unless you tell us otherwise.

DRAFT GUIDELINES: DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMS

Stories that matter

Screen Australia seeks to invest in documentaries that reflect the principles of quality, diversity and innovation:

- **Quality** – premium Australian content that resonates with contemporary audiences and creates a legacy of quality audiovisual content
- **Diversity** – Australian content across a range of subjects, styles and approaches
- **Innovation** – risk-taking and creativity that grows and evolves content across different forms.

It is anticipated Screen Australia will have a direct funding budget of approximately \$18–19 million for 2014/15.

Four programs supporting documentary production are offered:

- **Producer Equity Program (PEP):** Provides a direct payment of funds to producers of eligible low-budget Australian documentaries, equal to 20 per cent of the approved budget. Projects are not assessed beyond establishing eligibility. Not available in conjunction with any other Screen Australia documentary production funding.
- **Vision and Voice:** Supports innovative documentaries with a strong creative vision and a minimum budget of \$120,000. Maximum Screen Australia contribution of \$250,000. Marketplace attachment not required but pathway to audience must be clear.
Notional allocation: \$2–4 million
- **Meaning and Market:** Designed to stimulate the production of stories that matter, in the context of today’s evolving media and distribution landscape and the changing commercial realities of increasingly diverse finance sources. Supports medium- to large-budget projects with a minimum budget of \$250,000/hour. Screen Australia will match the contribution of genuine marketplace attachments (not limited to broadcaster licence fees) up to \$250,000 for a one-off and \$600,000 for a series.
Notional allocation: \$7–9 million
- **Premium Documentary Program:** Focused on the production of high-end projects, including theatrical documentaries, that are ambitious in scale, offer a compelling vision and have clear cultural value. Requires a minimum budget of \$1 million per hour, and a broadcaster or distributor attachment.
Notional allocation: \$3–5 million

Funding for **documentary development** and discretionary sector building initiatives is also available, with a notional allocation of around \$1 million for 2014/15.

Applicants will be accepted for the Producer Equity Program at any time and five times a year for the Documentary Development program. Four concurrent funding rounds are proposed for the other programs across the financial year. Dates will be published on Screen Australia's website.

Both one-off documentaries and series are eligible for all programs. However, more than 12 broadcast hours of any one project, which may include multiple series, will not be eligible for funding unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. Projects based on foreign formats are not eligible.

In general, projects that rate strongly against the program's assessment criteria and have a lower ask of Screen Australia's fund as a proportion of overall budget will be prioritised. In this way Screen Australia hopes to be able to continue its support for a large, diverse and high-quality slate of documentary projects.

Investment and slate management principles

In an environment where the Producer Offset provides the primary means of government support for projects with commercial potential, Screen Australia's investment and slate management principles are governed by its enabling legislation, the *Screen Australia Act 2008*, to:

ensure the development of a diverse range of Australian programs that deal with matters of national interest or importance to Australians, or that illustrate or interpret aspects of Australia or the life and activities of Australian people.

In order for its support to have maximum impact, and in recognition of the continued high levels of audience for Australian documentary on the national broadcasters, Screen Australia will work with broadcasters in managing its documentary slate. In this context, and given the need to allocate its limited funds effectively, Screen Australia proposes to manage its documentary slate in collaboration with producers and broadcasters, according to the following principles:

- Consultation with producers and broadcasters about the year's slate and upcoming priorities
- Recognition of broadcaster expertise in connecting with audiences as part of the broadcaster's commissioning process
- Reserving the right to make investment decisions based on published criteria that reflect the requirements of the *Screen Australia Act*, including placing an emphasis on programs with a high level of artistic and cultural merit and promoting the development of commercially focused screen production businesses.

Screen Australia anticipates working productively with broadcasters and producers, based on these principles. Where broadcasters need to prioritise projects due to the limits on Screen Australia's funding, consideration should be given to Screen Australia's investment decision criteria. Achieving a balance between funding content for the favoured platforms of today's audiences and content that reaches out for new audiences will remain a focus for Screen Australia.

Producer Equity Program

The Producer Equity Program provides a direct payment of funds to producers of eligible low-budget Australian documentaries, equal to 20 per cent of the approved budget.

Note that projects that receive a grant under PEP are not eligible for the Producer Offset nor for production funding through Screen Australia's other documentary programs.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this program, a project must:

- be a single-episode documentary of at least a commercial half hour in length, or a series of at least two episodes each of which is at least a commercial half hour in length (interstitials or series of interstitials are *not* eligible).
- have Significant Australian Content
- be intended for distribution to the Australian public
- have an approved budget/finance plan of \$500,000 or less in total, and at least \$250,000 per hour. Applicants should note that:
 - all funding (including state agency funding) must be confirmed and all long-form agreements must be attached to the application. Letters of offer, letters of intent or deal memos are not sufficient;
 - deferred fees and/or in-kind support may form a part of a budget, and parties who contribute to a project in this way may hold equity positions, but the value of deferred or in-kind contributions will not be included in the PEP calculation.

Applications for series must demonstrate that the series is the whole series and not part of a larger series.

In addition:

- The project must have commenced pre-production on or after 1 July 2011.
- The project may be in pre-production, production, post-production or complete when an application is made. However, an application cannot be submitted more than six months after the project is completed.

Note that the production of whole websites is not covered by this program. Eligibility and the amount of the total payment will be determined based on the linear documentary content of a website.

The project and the applicant/s must also be eligible under Screen Australia's Terms of Trade.

Application process and materials

You must apply using the application form available on the Screen Australia website.

Applications can be submitted at any time. The average turnaround for decision is six weeks from receipt of a complete application.

Funding decisions

Projects being considered under the PEP will not be assessed beyond the eligibility requirements.

Decisions on applications are final. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the outcome of their application.

Successful applicants will need to sign an agreement outlining the producer's obligations. If the project is not yet complete, the successful applicant will invoice Screen Australia for:

- 50 per cent of the approved amount on signing the agreement; and
- 50 per cent of the approved amount on delivery of a copy of the completed film, a final cost report, and proof of public distribution.

If the project is already complete, the successful applicant will invoice Screen Australia for:

- 100 per cent of the approved amount on delivery of the completed film, a final cost report, and proof of public distribution.

Screen Australia may require an audit of the final cost report. Screen Australia may also withhold payment/s until satisfied that the film is/will be genuinely available to the Australian public.

Important points to note

We will not vary the amount of the Producer Equity payment, once decided, even if your budget subsequently changes.

Note also that if you receive Producer Equity for your project, you may not subsequently apply for the Producer Offset even if the project budget increases to the level of the applicable QAPE threshold.

Projects approved for PEP cannot apply for the Producer Offset or any Screen Australia production funding under any circumstances.

This may affect projects with duration changes e.g. from a commercial hour to a feature-length documentary with cinematic release.

Vision and Voice

Vision and Voice is designed to support innovative documentaries with a strong creative vision and a minimum budget of \$120,000.

Although a traditional marketplace attachment is not required, projects will need to demonstrate a highly developed understanding of how to reach and engage their target market and audience, whether for festival audiences, online or multiplatform distribution.

Funding available

Screen Australia will provide a grant of up to \$250,000 per project.

There are no limits on the proportion of the budget Screen Australia can contribute under this program.

Note: Projects funded under the Vision and Voice Documentary Program are not eligible to receive a grant under the PEP.

Eligibility

An application must meet the following eligibility criteria in order to be competitively assessed for funding through this program.

The **applicant** must:

- meet the General Eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's Terms of Trade,

The **project that is the subject of the application** must:

- be a documentary
- be intended for public release
- not be based on a foreign format
- not be
 - primarily a game
 - an extension to a film or TV program, or
 - content made for internal training purposes only.

The **creative team** responsible for the project must:

- include a producer or director (or equivalent roles relevant to the type of project) with at least one 'eligible documentary credit' in their respective role.

For linear documentaries, and linear projects with multiplatform elements, an 'eligible documentary credit' is a linear project which is not more than 10 years old, is half hour or longer in duration, and has:

- been broadcast by a recognised broadcaster or channel; or
- had a commercial theatrical release; or
- been invited to screen at IDFA, Hot Docs or equivalent.

For interactive documentaries, an 'eligible documentary credit' must be an equivalent project which has been publicly released.

Note that corporate, education, training or community access programs are not acceptable credits for eligibility purposes.

Marketplace attachments are not required, although the involvement of a relevant marketplace entity may improve the competitiveness of the application.

Co-funding with state agencies, other government organisations, cultural institutions, private investors or other partners is encouraged. Where crowd-funding is proposed as a source of funds, a contingency plan must be provided in case this source does not eventuate.

Broadcaster involvement: Screen Australia will not finance a production where the project has been developed by a broadcaster and sub-contracted at a later stage to a producer, except where chain of title resides with the producer. In addition, Screen Australia expects that key creatives (producer, writer, director, director of photography, editor) are not sourced from the staff of a free-to-air or pay television broadcaster or channel.

Application process and materials

You must apply using the application form on the Screen Australia website.

You must provide the following with your initial application:

- A two-page (maximum) outline or treatment of the proposed documentary project making clear reference to story structure and key character story arcs and stylistic and visual approach. (A good reference guide for what is a synopsis/outline can be found on the Screen Australia website).
- a simple talk-to-camera 'video pitch' of no more than two minutes, where key principals present their vision for the project – particularly what's distinctive or innovative about the storytelling)
- 200-word bios and CVs for the key creative team - CVs of the producer, writer and director, and any other confirmed key personnel (DOP, editor, etc)
- sample footage or sizzle reel (five minutes maximum) if available.

If your project is shortlisted, you will be invited to provide the following within two weeks:

- a project proposal and/or scripts that demonstrate the project is production ready
- a one-page marketing and release plan, including, as relevant, film festival pathway and/or innovative distribution strategy (see *Pathways to audience*, page 13)
- a production schedule and methodology, including appropriate milestones
- a detailed budget and budget summary using the standard A-Z Budget format, available from the Screen Australia website (www.screenaustralia.gov.au/a-zbudget). Fees should comply with industry standards. They will be considered in the context of the budget and track record of the personnel.
- supporting quotes (camera hire, insurances, picture post, sound post)

- a finance plan in the standard format available from the Screen Australia website
- all chain of title documents, including all rights and development agreements, as well as releases from key subjects as applicable, and any other releases or access agreements
- visual material, such as rushes or a rough cut of the film, where available
- where there is Indigenous community participation or content involved in the project:
 - a statement setting out how you are approaching the Indigenous content or participation with regard to appropriate protocols, even if the content is not specific to a particular community or individual. You must demonstrate that you have a consultation plan covering the full production process and are following it. The statement should be based on the checklists available in Screen Australia's guide [Pathways & Protocols: a filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts](#)
 - evidence of consultation to date
 - if the project will involve particular Indigenous individuals or communities, signed letters of consent confirming their willingness to participate.

Please note materials, including all AV materials, will not be returned, so applicants must ensure they keep copies of everything.

Funding decisions

Eligible applications will be considered by Screen Australia executives, in conjunction with industry specialists as required.

At the first stage, applications will be considered against the following criteria:

- Track record and capacity of the creative team
- Creative strength of the project, including:
 - the concept/idea: its distinctiveness, clarity of objectives,
 - the proposed realisation: level of boldness or innovation
 - the project's cultural and national significance and ability to endure beyond the moment of viewing

Shortlisted applications will be considered against the following criteria, taking into account the additional Stage 2 supporting materials:

- Creative strength of the project, including
 - the concept/idea: its distinctiveness, clarity of objectives,
 - the proposed realisation: depth of research, boldness of approach or level of innovation,
 - quality of submitted production materials (script, treatment, footage etc as relevant)
- The project's relevance and resonance to Australians, including
 - cultural and national significance and ability to endure beyond the moment of viewing
 - ability to engage, challenge, entertain, inform and/or enlighten

- Viability of the project, including:
 - understanding of audience, release plan and demonstrated pathway to viewers,
 - viability of the budget
 - strength of the finance plan
- Track record and capacity of the creative team.

Other factors, including availability of funds and diversity of slate, will also influence Screen Australia's funding decisions.

Decisions on applications are final. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the outcome of their application.

Terms of funding

Funding under this program is provided as a grant. The Screen Australia amount will be agreed upfront and not varied, other than in exceptional circumstances.

Pathways to audience

Projects should be able to demonstrate a clear pathway to audience as part of their application.

For content with traditional marketplace attachments such as broadcast presales, festival investment or distributor guarantees, relevant agreements or letters of interest can be included in the application.

For non-traditional attachments, a described pathway to audience could involve:

- demonstrated community of interest in topic
- marketing plans
- existing database and promotional channels
- existing and potential partnerships with organisations tied to significant communities of interest
- analytics of audience engagement in existing program related content and platforms (eg websites, social media channels and trailers).

Applicants proposing alternative pathways should submit copies of any marketing plans as well as provide detail on relevant mailing lists, audience analytics and/or existing partnerships with organisations.

Meaning and Market

The Meaning and Market program is designed to stimulate the production of stories that matter in the context of today's evolving media and distribution landscape and the changing commercial realities of increasingly diverse finance sources.

The program supports medium to large-budget projects with a minimum budget of \$250,000/hour and a marketplace attachment. This attachment is not limited to a broadcaster licence fee but can also include other forms of marketplace commitment such as an online subscription service presale, film festival finance, and contributions from foundations and institutions that extend audience reach.

Co-funding with state agencies, other government organisations, private investors or other partners is also encouraged.

Funding available

Screen Australia will match the contribution of a genuine marketplace entity up to \$250,000 per project for single-episode programs and \$600,000 per project for series.

Limits also apply to the level of direct funding as a proportion of the project's budget; these limits are set out in Screen Australia's Terms of Trade.

Post-production funding: Applications for matched post-production funding will be considered up to a maximum of \$100,000.

Eligibility

An application must first meet the following eligibility criteria in order to be competitively assessed for funding through this program.

Applicants and projects must meet the general eligibility requirements under Screen Australia's terms of trade.

The project that is the subject of the application must also:

- have an approved budget/finance plan of more than \$250,000/hour
- be a single-episode documentary of at least a commercial half hour in length, or a series of at least two episodes (interstitials or series of interstitials are *not* eligible)
- be intended for commercial release, and have a genuine marketplace attachment and pathway to viewers as set out below.

The following are not eligible:

- projects that are primarily a game
- an extension to a film or TV program
- content made primarily for educational or training purposes

If a project has previously been assessed and declined for funding, a statement must be provided setting out the major changes made since the previous submission. Screen Australia will take this statement into account

when considering whether or not to accept the application and assess it again for funding. Note that after two unsuccessful submissions, no further applications for that project will be accepted.

Marketplace attachments

Genuine marketplace attachments – financial commitments from entities providing pathways to audience for the project – are required as condition of funding, and Screen Australia will match this commitment up to the maximum stated above.

Acceptable forms of marketplace attachment are broadcaster presales, distributor guarantees (both theatrical and online), international presales, funds provided by parties such as foundations and institutions where they provide or enhance a path to market, film festival financing and/or crowd-funding (provided that the funds have been receipted prior to applying).

Applicants should note that for the purposes of matching the contribution of marketplace entities, deferred fees or in-kind support are not included. Although they may form a part of a budget, deferred fees or in-kind support will not be included in the calculation of Screen Australia's matching contribution and will not be considered as marketplace attachment.

Pathways to audience

Projects must demonstrate a pathway to audience as part of their application.

For content with traditional marketplace attachments such as broadcast presales or distributor guarantees, a copy of the relevant agreements will need to be included in the application.

For non-traditional marketplace attachments, a described pathway to audience could involve:

- demonstrated community of interest in topic
- marketing plans
- existing database and promotional channels
- existing and potential partnerships with organisations tied to significant communities of interest
- analytics of audience engagement in existing program related content and platforms (eg websites, social media channels and trailers).

Applicants must submit copies of any marketing plans as well as provide detail on relevant mailing lists, audience analytics, existing partnerships with organisations etc.

Application process and materials

You must apply using the application form available on the Screen Australia website.

Funding decisions

Eligible applications will be considered by Screen Australia executives, in conjunction with industry specialists as required, against the following criteria:

- Creative strength of the project, including
 - the concept/idea: its distinctiveness, clarity of objectives,
 - the proposed realisation: depth of research, boldness of approach or level of innovation,
 - quality of submitted production materials (script, treatment, footage etc as relevant)
- The project's relevance and resonance to Australians, including
 - cultural and national significance and ability to endure beyond the moment of viewing
 - ability to engage, challenge, entertain, inform and/or enlighten
- Viability of the project, including:
 - understanding of audience, release plan and demonstrated pathway to viewers,
 - viability of the budget
 - strength of the finance plan
- Track record and capacity of the creative team.

Other factors, including availability of funds and diversity of slate, will also influence Screen Australia's funding decisions.

Decisions on applications are final. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the outcome of their application.

Terms of funding

Where Screen Australia funding is \$xx0,000 or under, it will be provided as a grant. In this case, the Screen Australia funding will be agreed upfront and not varied, other than in exceptional circumstances.

Where Screen Australia funding is more than \$xx0,000, it is provided as a recoupable investment, with copyright and recoupment terms in accordance with the agency's Terms of Trade.

Where Screen Australia has previously provided funding, this previous funding will be added to the current funding for the purpose of determining whether the \$xx0,000 threshold has been reached. If the total amount exceeds \$xx0,000, the total will be treated as recoupable investment.

Screen Australia will hold 1 per cent share in the copyright and other intellectual property rights (where relevant) in all projects where its total commitment (including any funds previously provided) is greater than \$100,000.

Premium documentary program

The Premium Documentary Program is designed to support the production of high-end projects, including, blue chip singles or series, 'event' television and theatrical documentaries, that are ambitious in scale, offer a compelling vision and have clear cultural value.

The program targets projects with a minimum budget of \$1 million per hour, and a confirmed attachment from a broadcaster or distributor.

Funding available

Any amount up to \$1 million may be requested.

Projects that have a lower ask on Screen Australia funding and rate strongly against the assessment criteria will be prioritised.

Limits also apply to the level of direct funding as a proportion of the project's budget; these limits are set out in Screen Australia's Terms of Trade.

Co-funding with state agencies, other government organisations, cultural institutions, private investors or other partners is encouraged. Where crowd-funding is proposed as a source of funds, a contingency plan must be provided in case this source does not eventuate.

Eligibility

An application must first meet the following eligibility criteria in order to be competitively assessed for funding through this program.

Applicants and projects must meet the general eligibility requirements under Screen Australia's terms of trade.

The project that is the subject of the application must also:

- have an approved minimum budget/finance plan of at least \$1 million per hour
- be a single-episode documentary of at least a commercial half hour in length, or a series of at least two episodes (interstitials or series of interstitials are not eligible)
- be intended for distribution to the Australian public via broadcaster presale or theatrical release
- have a genuine marketplace attachment as indicated below

The following are not eligible:

- projects that are primarily a game
- an extension to a film or TV program
- content made primarily for educational or training purposes

Marketplace attachment requirements

Genuine marketplace attachments are required as condition of funding.

This may take the form of:

- a minimum licence fee presale from a domestic broadcaster of \$200,000, or
- an acceptable offer to theatrically distribute the project in Australia (with sufficiently detailed core commercial terms) from an appropriate domestic distributor; and an acceptable offer to be the Rest of World sales agent for the project (with sufficiently detailed core commercial terms) from an appropriate sales agent.

Application process and materials

You must apply using the application form available on the Screen Australia website.

Pathways to audience

For this program, projects must have traditional marketplace attachments in place, with the pathway to audience demonstrated by broadcast presales or distributor guarantees, and a copy of such agreements will need to be included in the application.

In addition, enhancing audience reach through new pathways is also encouraged and will improve the competitiveness of the application.

For new platforms, a described pathway to audience could involve:

- demonstrated community of interest in topic
- existing database and promotional channels
- existing and potential partnerships with organisations tied to significant communities of interest
- analytics of audience engagement in existing program related content and platforms (eg websites, social media channels and trailers).

Marketing plans can demonstrate how these new pathways will enhance the project's audience by providing detail on relevant mailing lists, audience analytics, and/or any existing partnerships with relevant similar interest organisations.

Funding decisions

Eligible applications will be considered by Screen Australia executives, in conjunction with industry specialists as required, in line with Screen Australia's slate and investment management principles.

Applications will be considered against the following criteria.

- Creative strength of the project, including
 - the concept/idea: its distinctiveness, clarity of objectives,
 - the proposed realisation: depth of research, boldness of approach or level of innovation,
 - quality of submitted production materials (script, treatment, footage etc as relevant)
- The project's relevance and resonance to Australians, including
 - cultural and national significance and ability to endure beyond the

moment of viewing

- ability to engage, challenge, entertain, inform and/or enlighten

- Viability of the project, including:
 - understanding of audience, release plan and demonstrated pathway to viewers,
 - viability of the budget
 - strength of the finance plan
- Track record and capacity of the creative team.

Other factors, including availability of funds and diversity of slate, will also influence Screen Australia's funding decisions. As part of these considerations, Screen Australia expects to see a fair representation of projects sourcing international finance.

Projects that rate strongly against the assessment criteria and that have a lower ask of Screen Australia's fund as a proportion of overall budget will be prioritised.

Decisions on applications are final. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the outcome of their application.

Terms of funding

Where Screen Australia funding is \$xx0,000 or under, it will be provided as a grant. In this case, the Screen Australia funding will be agreed upfront and not varied, other than in exceptional circumstances.

Where Screen Australia funding is more than \$xx0,000, it is provided as a recoupable investment, with copyright and recoupment terms in accordance with the agency's Terms of Trade.

Where Screen Australia has previously provided funding, this previous funding will be added to the current funding for the purpose of determining whether the \$xx0,000 threshold has been reached. If the total amount exceeds \$xx0,000, the total will be treated as recoupable investment.

Screen Australia will hold 1 per cent share in the copyright and other intellectual property rights (where relevant) in all projects where its total commitment (including any funds previously provided) is greater than \$100,000.

Documentary development

Screen Australia's Documentary Development program assists experienced documentary makers to achieve planned outcomes for the development of their projects.

This could include further research, writing the next draft of a script or treatment, strategic shooting and/or editing to attract marketplace development or production finance, or compiling a sizzle reel.

The program is primarily focused on providing development support to one-off projects.

Interactive or web-based projects: Producers of interactive or web-based projects must discuss their project with an Investment/Development Manager to explore what development may be possible, before applying for development funding.

Time-critical funding – by invitation only

Producers must consult with an Investment/Development Manager about applying for time-critical funding (including funding for time-critical shooting) and applications outside of the scheduled rounds can only be made by invitation.

A comprehensive rationale will be required, setting out:

- what the funding is to be used for,
- why the expenditure is vital to the realisation of the film, and
- why the timing is critical.

Strong marketplace, including broadcast, interest must be demonstrated.

Unsolicited applications will not be accepted for consideration outside a development funding round.

Funding available

Applicants may apply for any amount up to \$30,000.

Eligibility

Applicants must meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's Terms of Trade. In addition:

- Sole applicants must have at least three eligible documentary credits (half hour or longer) in the role of producer or director.
- In the case of teams, the producer or the director must have at least three eligible documentary credits (half hour or longer).

Practitioners experienced in other genres may apply so long as either the producer or director has the required documentary credits.

- To be an 'eligible documentary credit' under this program a project must not be more than 10 years old, and must be a documentary that has: – been broadcast by a recognised broadcaster or channel; or – had a

commercial theatrical release; or – been invited to screen at IDFA, Hot Docs or equivalent. Note that corporate, education or training programs are not acceptable credits for eligibility purposes.

- Current recipients of Screen Australia’s Enterprise funding are not eligible.

In addition:

- Applications for series development must have a letter of interest from a broadcaster or matching marketplace funds.
- Generally, projects funded under this program may only reapply for further development investment if they have confirmed **matching marketplace funds** (ie from broadcaster(s), distributors, sales agents or other credible marketplace entities), and such applications will be considered in the light of the advancement and the overall viability of the project.

Funding decisions

Applications are considered by Screen Australia executives, with industry specialists consulted as required. Funding decisions will be made against the following criteria:

- the distinctiveness of the idea and its cultural and national significance
- the quality of the script or treatment
- the creative team’s vision for realisation of the project
- track record and capacity of the creative team
- the appropriateness of the proposed development strategy and use of Screen Australia funds at this stage of development
- the project’s potential to connect with its target audience, including through the use of multiple platforms.

Other factors, including availability of funds and diversity of slate, may also influence Screen Australia’s funding decisions.

Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the success or otherwise of their application. Where an application is unsuccessful, the reasons will be conveyed to the applicant.

Terms of funding

Funding through this program is provided as a limited recourse loan.

Where Screen Australia subsequently invests in the production, its investment in the development phase will be recognised in the production budget and will become part of Screen Australia’s total investment in the project. Note that projects that receive development funding may also be considered under PEP.

Where the project goes into production without Screen Australia production funding, development funding provided by Screen Australia is not repayable unless the producer wishes to acquire any copyright interest held by Screen Australia.

Refer to *Doing Business with Us* for more information.

Sector-building Initiatives

Screen Australia will also continue to seek ways to strengthen and advance Australian documentary storytelling and its practitioners through special initiatives such as workshops, forums and other events, conducted by Screen Australia or in partnership with state bodies, industry organisations or other entities.

Stay in touch via Screen Australia's e-news, like us on Facebook and or follow us on Twitter.

General information for applicants

What is a documentary?

For the purposes of these guidelines, Screen Australia will have regard to the guidelines compiled by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). These guidelines are available on the ACMA website.

Screen Australia does not invest in programs such as reality or magazine television, infotainment, current affairs, cooking, 'how to', sports programs, or projects whose primary market is the education sector.

Applying for funding

Applicants and projects must meet the general eligibility and delivery requirements set out in Screen Australia's Terms of Trade, as well as the specific requirements of these guidelines.

Applications must be made on the relevant application form, and include **all** supporting material listed on that form.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted. This includes those without finalised finance plans in place with associated letters of offer.

Unless invited to reapply (in the context of managing available funds), projects can only be submitted more than once if substantial changes have been made, and more than two applications for the same project will not be accepted.

Budgets

Format: Budgets must be presented in the A-Z Budget format, available from the Screen Australia website (www.screenaustralia.gov.au/a-zbudget). Fees should comply with industry norms. They will be considered in the context of the budget and track record of the personnel.

Production budgets must include:

- **Contingency:** Contingency is set at 10 per cent.
- **Completion Guarantor:** Screen Australia reserves the right to require a completion guarantor.
- **Delivery items:** Allowance must be made for delivery items specified for Screen Australia, the broadcaster and NFSA, as well as for sales company deliverables and other delivery items as required. See Terms of Trade for details.
- **Study guides:** The cost of a study guide must be included in the budget as a line item of \$2,500. If the publisher decides not to create a study guide, the \$2,500 can be applied to marketing expenses. The producer must seek Screen Australia's approval of the choice of publisher (ATOM is pre-approved).

- **Promotions and marketing:** Budgets should allocate an appropriate marketing spend fit for purpose.
- **Legal and administration fee:** No fee is charged for applications to Screen Australia programs. However, as per our Terms of Trade, where an application for production funding is approved, Screen Australia will charge a legal and administration fee at 2 per cent of the value of the Screen Australia support. This amount should be included in the budget and finance plan of any application.

Indigenous community participation or content

Where there is Indigenous community participation or content involved in the project: applicants should provide:

- a statement setting out how you are approaching the Indigenous content or participation with regard to appropriate protocols, even if the content is not specific to a particular community or individual. You must demonstrate that you have a consultation plan covering the full production process and are following it. The statement should be based on the checklists available in Screen Australia's guide *Pathways & Protocols: a filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts*
- evidence of consultation to date
- signed letters of consent confirming their willingness to participate if the project will involve particular Indigenous individuals or communities,.

Official co-productions

- Projects approved as official co-productions are eligible for, but not automatically guaranteed, Screen Australia support.
- As co-productions have access to more than one domestic market, they must bring a higher level of genuine market attachment to the budget. As well as satisfying all the normal criteria for Screen Australia production investment, the co-production partners must secure acceptable offers to broadcast the project in each co-production territory from appropriate domestic broadcasters.

The Australian co-producer must also have received a letter of preliminary compliance or provisional approval as a co-production from Screen Australia. See www.screenaustralia.gov.au/coproduction.

Terms of funding

Where Screen Australia investment is \$xx0,000 or under, funding will be provided as a grant. Screen Australia's contribution will be agreed upfront and not varied, other than in exceptional circumstances.

Where Screen Australia investment is more than \$xx0,000, funding is provided as a recoupable investment, with copyright and recoupment terms in accordance with the agency's Terms of Trade.

Where Screen Australia provides development funds and subsequently invests in the production, its investment in the development phase will be

added to its production funding for the purpose of determining whether the \$X grant threshold has been reached, and if so, the total investment will be recoupable.

Terms of Trade

Details of Screen Australia and NFSA delivery items, recoupment, rights and other requirements, including special requirement for projects that involve Indigenous Australians, are available in Screen Australia's Terms of Trade.

Refer to *Doing Business with Us* for more information about the Terms of Trade and Screen Australia's funding agreements for documentary production.

Refer to the Screen Australia website for:

- important information about applying for Screen Australia funding
- Screen Australia's Terms of Trade
- the contracting process
- what to do if your project involves Indigenous content or community participation.
- Information about how Screen Australia involves industry specialists in some of its programs.