

Games Production Fund - Guidelines

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

If applicants have accessibility requirements relating to submitting an application, they may contact Screen Australia's Program Operations team via email games@screenaustralia.gov.au, or phone 1800 507 901, for assistance.

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1. About this funding program

1.1. Overview

The Games Production Fund offers flexible support to Australian independent gamemakers and games studios. The grant is aimed at projects that already have an early-stage prototype.

The program allows Screen Australia to respond to the varied needs of gamemakers at different career stages, providing direct funding that will assist studios in meeting their goals and establishing themselves in the international games landscape.

Applicants must contextualise the milestone they are working towards and how this funding will help them achieve it in their applications. Significant milestones include:

- **Completion/release** of a game
- **Early Access release** of a game
- Completion of a **demo** (to release at a digital event, or present at a physical event)
- Creating a **vertical slice** that is of global competitive quality and enables a team to access the international funding and pitching ecosystem
- Developing an early-stage prototype to a quality suitable for submission to an **accolade signifying cultural impact**, such as a notable award, showcase, festival, gallery or museum exhibit opportunity
- Any other goal, as defined by the applicant

The program will run as a series of rounds from financial year 2023/24 until financial year 2026/27.

1.2. Available Funding

The Games Production Fund provides grants of **up to \$100,000** to support the development of original Australian independent games with budgets of up to \$500,000 at the time of applying, to take the game to a significant milestone of its development.

2. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility

For Australian screen content to effectively deliver cultural and economic benefits it must speak to, and be for, all Australians. A diversity of ideas and a diverse workforce will enhance the Australian screen industry, making it more relevant to Australian audiences and more competitive internationally.

Screen Australia is committed to building equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility into its programs and into our engagement with the community.

Screen Australia encourages applications from applicants from all backgrounds, cultures and experiences. In particular, the agency welcomes applications from applicants who are First Nations, d/Deaf and disabled, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTIQ+, women or gender diverse, regionally based, or those from other under-represented groups.

Screen Australia strives to make its programs accessible by removing barriers for people who are d/Deaf and disabled and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Screen Australia expects that any experiences portrayed through gameplay, narrative, and characters which are aimed at illustrating diverse perspectives are reflected within the key creative team with appropriate representation and lived experience. It is vital the creative team has the cultural authorship to tell the story so that the telling of the story is authentic.

3. Eligibility

3.1. Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must be a company at the time of application.

Other business structures, including sole traders and public companies, are not eligible.

Sole traders are instead encouraged to consider applying for the [Emerging Gamemakers Fund](#) if they otherwise meet the criteria of that program.

All applicants and projects must also meet the eligibility criteria under Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#).

3.2. Project Eligibility

3.2.1. Eligible Projects

This program is for projects that are at the pre-production or production stage of development, and have:

- a playable prototype;
- a clear, well-scoped milestone that is actively being worked towards; and
- a clear idea of where they are at, where they are going, and how Screen Australia funding will help them get there.

Screen Australia can only fund Australian projects. The project must be under the key creative control of Australian citizens or permanent residents and be predominantly developed in Australia. Projects do not have to have an Australian theme or be set in Australia to be eligible.

Projects that have previously received funding from the [Emerging Gamemakers Fund](#) are eligible to apply for the Games Production Fund.

Projects must be for a digital game platform, including (but not limited to) PC, mobile, consoles, and VR. Regarding XR (including VR and AR projects):

- If you are making an XR documentary, your project may be better suited to the [Documentary Production - Producer Program](#).
- If you are making an XR scripted narrative experience, your project may be better suited to [Online Production funding](#).
- If your project sits at the intersection of games and other genres of media, we request that you contact us to discuss eligibility prior to applying.

Screen Australia requires a minimum level of interactivity for a project to be considered a game. If you are unsure whether the level of interactivity in your project constitutes a game for the purposes of the Games Production Fund, you must contact us and discuss eligibility prior to applying.

Unsuccessful applicants may re-submit once with the same project to a future funding round, provided that the application materials have undergone meaningful updates since the last submission.

Applicant companies may submit only one application per round. After two unsuccessful applications, a project is no longer eligible for the program. However, the same company may apply with a different project.

3.2.2. Ineligible Projects

The following types of projects are not eligible. Those games that:

- have already received funding from the Games: Expansion Pack or the [Games Production Fund](#) grants
- have applied for the [Emerging Gamemakers Fund](#) during the same round as the Games Production Fund application
- are not played on a digital device with a screen. That is, games that are not completely digital, including boardgames or hybrid digital/physical games
- are based on a licence to use and/or adapt pre-existing intellectual property owned by a third party under a licence agreement, such as games which are derivative works based on licensed content owned by a third party. For clarity, this does not include licences obtained for music, assets or software/plugins used in the making of the game
- are being developed by teams that include students who are currently enrolled in a games or games-adjacent field of study
- are being developed by teams led by, or significantly reliant on, full-time students, regardless of the field of study

- are business-to-business products (for example, training simulations, games created solely for teaching purposes at schools, games with ties to academic research, or middleware tools)
- are substantially advertising or promotions
- constitute gambling activities or are gambling simulations
- feature or link to exploitative or unethical pay-to-win or play-to-earn mechanics
- contain or have a relationship to high risk and volatile trading products or technology
- contain [or link] any content or mechanic that is in breach of any law or regulation
- in the reasonable opinion of Screen Australia, may have difficulties receiving an Australian classification, due to the inclusion of content such as:
 - the instruction or promotion of crime, cruelty or violence; depictions of frequent and/or very high impact violence
 - sexual activity; sexual violence; exploitative depictions
 - instructional illicit drug use; encouragement of illicit drug use; illicit interactive drug use
 - any other content that contravenes prevailing community standards

4. Application Process

4.1. How to Apply

Applicants need to create an account and submit an application via [SmartyGrants](#).

Applications for Games Production Fund must be submitted by 5pm AEDT/AEST on the published deadline date.

4.2. Application Form

Through the application form, applicants must:

- provide all the information requested and answer the application questions
- address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
- include all required supporting materials.

4.3. Required Materials

Applicants are required to upload the following supporting materials with their application form:

- **Downloadable Pitch Video** (maximum 3 minutes in length) that articulates the concept of your project, the creative vision, and the aims of the team
- **Playable Prototype**

- please ensure that your prototype has been tested and is functional prior to finalising your application
- applicants whose prototypes are inaccessible or unplayable after the close of the round may be deemed ineligible
- **30-second video of gameplay footage**
- **Prototype Details document.** This must contain:
 - a description of the minimum hardware requirements needed to run the prototype
 - step-by-step instructions that detail how to get the prototype running
 - instructions on how to control the prototype (controller map preferred)
 - description of the intended experience of the prototype
- [Production Plan](#) (applicants must use the template provided). Seven (7) pages maximum length. At a minimum this document contains a production timeline and description of milestones and acceptance criteria. Providing additional information that bolsters confidence in the viability of your development is encouraged
- [Strategic Outcomes document](#) (applicants must use the template provided). Six (6) pages maximum length. This document articulates your significant milestone, the steps to be taken to achieve it, and how Screen Australia funding will help you
- [Finance Plan and Budget spreadsheet](#)
- **CVs of team members**

Where a project involves First Nations content, stories, characters, or community participation, specific requirements apply. These projects will need to provide the following, additional documents:

- **First Nations content statement:** A statement setting out how you are approaching the First Nations content or participation with regard to appropriate protocols, even if the content is not specific to a particular community or individual
- **First Nations consultation:** Signed evidence of consultation to date
- **First Nations consent:** Signed letters of consent from First Nations individuals or communities confirming their willingness to participate

For more information on how to engage First Nations practitioners for collaboration or participation, please read [Pathways & Protocols: a film maker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts](#) and/or consider undertaking Indigenous Engagement training.

Please ensure all materials are present and functional before finalising your application. If submitting materials via cloud storage (e.g. Google Drive, Dropbox), ensure all materials are present, functional, and accessible before the grant closes. Any materials added or edited beyond the closure of the round will not be considered.

5. Assessment

5.1. Assessment Process

Before assessment, all applications must go through eligibility checks. The Program Operations team review each application to ensure eligibility, that required application materials are acceptable, and that prototypes are functional.

If eligibility is confirmed, applicants will receive an email advising that their application has moved to the second step, assessment.

Your application will be assessed by a panel of internal and external industry specialists, against the below criteria. The assessment panel consists of industry experts with varied specialisations. We employ a Conflict of Interest policy to ensure fairness for all applicants.

5.2. Assessment Criteria

Applications are assessed based on the following four criteria, with examples of the relevant considerations listed for each:

- **Creative Merit**
 - The level of originality and the quality of execution of the game and how compelling the overall experience is, as communicated through the prototype and application documents
 - The ability of the game to effectively meet the studio's strategic outcomes
- **Viability**
 - The scope of the project and how viable and realistic it is
 - How timely and relevant the project is to industry and the studio's strategic outcomes
 - How realistic the budget and production plan are, whether workers are fairly compensated
 - Whether the proposed team has the appropriate experience to execute their plans
- **Impact**
 - The extent to which funding will positively affect the studio's proposed trajectory

- The commercial and/or cultural benefits the project provides to the Australian games landscape, and contribution to its quality and reputation
- **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility**
 - Where diverse groups are portrayed in the project, whether there is either appropriate representation in the creative team, or there has been meaningful collaboration and consultation with represented groups
 - Whether there is Engagement with an audience that is typically underserved
 - The alignment of the application with the diversity, equity and inclusion aims of the grant

5.3. Decision & Notification

You can expect to receive the outcome of your application approximately 12 weeks from the application closing date.

Screen Australia acknowledges and appreciates the time and effort that go into preparing and submitting applications, but given the anticipated volume of applications, will not be able to provide individual feedback on each application. Please see this program's Trends Report for the latest trends.

6. Successful Applicants

6.1. Contracting

Successful applicants will enter into a project grant agreement (PGA) with Screen Australia which will outline the terms of funding.

6.2. Terms of Funding

Funding is provided in the form of a grant. Screen Australia does not expect to recoup funds from successful teams. That is, you are not expected to repay the grant in any way.

Funds are generally expected to be spent on staffing costs (wages for people making the game) and other costs associated with the game's development, such as (but not limited to) game development software and creative licensing fees and costs associated with the running of your game business (such as accounting and legal fees, digital storefront fees, or obtaining hardware necessary to the completion of the game). In the case of an application that proposes to take a project to a public-facing release, marketing expenses are also considered an acceptable use of funds.

At least 90% of the grant must be spent on development expenditure that takes place physically in Australia.

7. Contact

For any enquiries, please contact the Screen Australia Program Operations team on 1800 507 901 or [Games](#). Please note that we are not able to provide creative advice or suggestions to strengthen your application.

8. Privacy

Screen Australia collects personal information from individuals in different ways, including via funding applications, acquittal reports, or supporting material supplied with forms. Screen Australia will handle any personal information provided in connection with a funding application in accordance with its [Privacy Notice](#) relating to funding applications and its [Privacy Policy](#).