
The Guardian and Screen Australia Online Documentary Initiative: Guidelines

Issued 27 November 2019

The Guardian and Screen Australia have once again teamed up for an Online Documentary Initiative and are calling for proposals from Australian filmmakers.

The Initiative will commission up to two short documentaries of 15 to 30 minutes in length, directed and produced by Australian filmmakers. The content can be local or international. The films will premiere on one of the world's leading news sites [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com).

WHAT

Screen Australia will commit up to \$AUD60,000 and The Guardian will commit GBP£15,000 (Initiative Funding) in total funding across successful projects. The Initiative Funding will be applied as agreed between The Guardian and Screen Australia.

We want proposals for contemporary stories that work online. The projects will have a genuinely surprising journey at their heart and should bring new perspectives beyond those already covered by The Guardian. The documentaries should be aimed at a youthful, though not necessarily young audience eager for information and story.

Content must follow The Guardian's core values of responsible journalism and storytelling. The Guardian's editorial code is published here: <https://www.theguardian.com/info/2015/aug/05/the-guardians-editorial-code>

Specifically content should be:

- Relevant for the Guardian's large global audience
- Fast paced, story driven with great characters
- Led by actuality/action rather than interviews/talking heads, and based on observational documentary journalism
- Contemporary, not historical
- Easily promotable through social media marketing campaigns - a film you can imagine people clicking on out of curiosity and sharing through their networks

We strongly advise applicants to look at previously-made documentaries on [theguardian.com/documentaries](https://www.theguardian.com/documentaries) for examples of films published by The Guardian.

Please note this opportunity is for short documentary films rather than news or current affairs. The proposals do not need to be tied to a current news event but should still be relevant, creating an enduring value beyond its release.

The productions will be supported by the Guardian's Head of Documentaries, and a Screen Australia Investment Development Manager.

WHO

Applicant teams must consist of at least a director and a producer, one of whom has at least one screen credit in their respective role on a project that has been broadcast and/or screened at a recognised film festival or distributed on a significant curated online platform. A list of recognised festivals is available at <http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/festivals/default.aspx>.

Applicant teams must also meet the general eligibility requirements set out in [Screen Australia's Terms of Trade](#). Subject to approval by both Parties, applicants who do not comply with these criteria may be selected in exceptional circumstances.

HOW

Applications can be submitted at any time before 30 June 2020 (unless funds exhausted earlier) via the [Screen Australia Portal](#) and must include;

- 200 word biographies for key creatives
- Any relevant credit information for key creatives
- An example of the director and producer's previous work (a complete film, not a showreel) via an active screening link, such as vimeo
- Up to 3 minutes of footage or sizzle reel from the proposed project to show evidence of character, access and storyline via a downloadable screening link, such as vimeo
- A 2-page (max) outline of the proposed project. The outline should focus on the visual storytelling and prospective journey, and not rely on giving background to the subject.
- A finance plan using the template provided by Screen Australia
- Where there is Indigenous community participation or content involved in the project, signed evidence of consultation to date and a statement setting out how you are approaching the Indigenous content or participation
- Written confirmation of key subjects' willingness to participate
- Where the production takes place in a potentially dangerous location, please provide an initial risk assessment document.

Assessment criteria

A Screen Australia Investment Development Manager in conjunction with The Guardian will review the applications based on the following, equally weighted assessment criteria:

- Creative strength of the project and the fit with the aims of the initiative
- Capacity of the team to manage the project and their ability to deliver
- Project viability in terms of the proposed budget, financing strategy and schedule

Other factors including diversity of slate and the gender and cultural diversity of the team may also influence Screen Australia's and The Guardian's funding decisions.

Applicants will be advised in writing of the decision within 8 weeks of a completed submission.

Terms of funding

All projects selected for production will be subject to the Guardian Commissioning and Screen Australia funding processes.

Screen Australia funding is provided as a grant. See [Screen Australia's Terms of Trade](#) for more details.

The Guardian funding is provided on the terms and conditions found here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/info/2015/dec/02/terms-and-conditions-for-the-supply-of-long-form-and-series-video-production-services>

For all enquiries please contact the Screen Australia Program Operations team on 1800 507 901 or documentary@screenaustralia.gov.au.