



# GUIDELINES

## First Nations Programs

Issued 5 March 2018  
Updated 20 March 2026

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

### NOTICE ON MINIMUM LICENCE FEES

As of 20 February 2026, new minimum licence fees for all television production funding (for all TV Drama and Documentary projects) have come into effect. A review will take place ahead of the 2028/29 financial year.

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We receive many more applications than we can support. Inevitably, some applications will be unsuccessful and applicants will be disappointed by this result. However, our decision is final.

**Contact Program Operations:**

We encourage you to contact the Program Operations team before you submit your application to discuss any eligibility questions and ensure all the required supporting material is in place. This will mean we can process your application as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Program Operations: **1800 507 901** or [FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au). Please note that we are not able to provide creative advice or suggestions to strengthen your application.

**Contact an Investment/Development Manager:**

Before applying to Screen Australia for funding, it is essential that you contact an Investment/Development Manager to discuss your project. Call the Program Operations team if you are unsure who to speak with: **1 800 507 901**.

## Inclusive Storytelling

Screen Australia is committed to building equity into its programs and its engagement with the community. Gender equity, anti-racism, authentic story-telling, from and about under-represented groups, and inclusivity are priorities for Screen Australia. We expect that the lived experience portrayed through the narrative and characters are reflected within the key creative team. It is vital the creative team has the cultural authorship to tell the story so that telling of the story is authentic. This will be taken into account when assessing applications.

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

## Overview

Screen Australia's First Nations Department programs support creatively ambitious projects and people, and imaginative, resonant stories authored by Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners.

We aim to assist the career development of talented writers, directors and producers who have the potential to make a significant contribution to screen culture and the national cultural life. We engage actively at all stages with key creatives in the development and production of their works.

We provide:

- **Development:** script development funds for drama and documentary screen projects
- **Production:** production of feature films with a domestic distributor attached, documentary and drama television one-off or series with a commissioning platform attached, or online one-off or series
- **Sector Development:** Internships, travel, marketing, festivals, events, targeted initiatives, workshops and industry partnerships
  - **Internships:** support and facilitation of internships and mentorship programs with more experienced practitioners.
  - **Travel:** support for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners to attend conferences, markets and festivals, nationally and internationally
  - **Marketing, Australian Festivals, Events & Industry Partnerships:** support for productions and practitioners to audiences via significant domestic and international events

We also:

- work with the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander screenmaking community in developing strategies for enhancing employment and professional development opportunities, and the

- creation of a vibrant screen sector for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners.
- provide assessment and guidance to projects with Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander content that are submitted to other Screen Australia divisions
  - contribute to Screen Australia and industry strategy development.

## **Eligibility: First Nations Department Programs**

To be eligible for assistance from Screen Australia's First Nations Department:

- a sole applicant must be an Australian Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander practitioner;
- projects must have Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander practitioners in key creative roles – at least as writer and director, and in the case of writing teams the lead writer must be First Nations Australian;

Applicants and their projects must meet:

- the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#), and the eligibility requirements of the particular program.
- Applications must be made via the [Application Portal](#) on the Screen Australia website and include all supporting material listed.

If a project has previously been assessed and declined for funding under a particular program, **it is not eligible to apply to that program again** unless significant changes have been made, and a statement will need to be provided setting out the major changes made since the previous submission. Screen Australia will consider this statement when deciding whether or not to accept the application and assess it again for funding. **Note: after two unsuccessful submissions, no further applications for this project will be accepted.**

Funding is not intended for projects by non-Indigenous screen content makers with Indigenous content.

**Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander screen content makers may apply to any Screen Australia program in addition to the funding programs of the First Nations Department.**

**Commissioning Platform** – for the purpose of these guidelines, Commissioning Platform will be used to reflect both a free-to-air or subscription television broadcaster and/or streaming platforms - for example subscription video on demand.

**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](#)). Screen Australia does

not invest in reality or magazine television, light entertainment, panel shows, infotainment, current affairs, cooking, 'how to', sports, corporate, training, games, extensions to film or TV, or community access programs or projects whose primary market is the education sector.

## **Terms of trade**

Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#) outline the core terms on which the organisation will transact its business. Contracts entered into between Screen Australia and applicants for funding reflect both the [Terms of Trade](#) and the specific requirements relating to each program as set out in program guidelines. Screen Australia reserves the right to vary its [Terms of Trade](#) and program guidelines from time to time.

## **Contracting**

To help streamline the contracting process, Screen Australia is developing core conditions for its production investment agreements (PIAs) and production grant agreements (PGAs). In each case, the complete agreement will comprise the core conditions together with a series of schedules.

How it works:

- The core conditions in place at the time a project is approved for funding will apply.
- The goal is to keep the core conditions unchanged, with any exemptions addressed in the Special Conditions Schedule.
- Once all schedules are agreed to, the schedules and the core conditions will be merged into one fully executed pdf with approved budget and drawdown schedule (if applicable).

[Find out more.](#)

## **Foreign actors**

Screen Australia encourages producers to engage with the [Foreign Actor Certification Scheme](#) (FACS) process early if they intend to bring foreign actors into Australia to be a part of any production. Separate to any requirement from Screen Australia, a production must meet the requirements of this scheme.

## **Official co-productions & the Producer Offset**

Projects approved as official co-productions are eligible for, but not automatically guaranteed, direct 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 also secure

acceptable offers to distribute or broadcast the project in each co-production territory from appropriate domestic distributors or broadcasters.

**IMPORTANT:** You do not need to have lodged an application for your Producer Offset Provisional Certificate at the time of applying to the funding round unless specifically requested by your Investment Manager. In most cases producers will be able to wait to see whether or not their project has been successful for funding before applying for a certificate, saving time and application fees. However, if you are approved for funding you will need to lodge your application and receive your certification prior to contract execution.

Producer Offset and Co-production provisional approvals if already acquired must not be more than two years old (from the date of your application for Production Investment). If approvals were granted over two years ago, a reassessment by the POCU will be required.

See [Producer Offset](#) & [co-production](#) Programs for further information.

### **Marketplace agreements**

The proposed terms of Marketplace agreements will be considered by Screen Australia as part of the assessment process based on factors including compliance with the minimum licence fee requirements, overall commerciality and compliance with relevant industry agreements. Marketplace Agreements are subject to Screen Australia's approval where funding is provided via a recoupable investment.

## DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMS

### 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).

Screen Australia does not invest in programs such as reality or magazine television, infotainment, current affairs, cooking, 'how to', sports programs, corporate, training, games, extensions to film or TV, or community access programs or projects whose primary market is the education sector.

## DOCUMENTARY DEVELOPMENT

This program seeks to provide practitioners with the opportunity to create appropriate written and/or visual materials to ensure that projects are as strong as possible when competing for production finance.

### What funding is available?

- **Up to \$30,000** for one-off feature and series documentaries intended for a Commissioning Platform
- **Up to \$20,000** for one-hour television documentaries
- **Up to \$20,000** for online series productions

Funding is available for the further development of a treatment and/or draft scripts, series bible, project development as well as fees for writer, producer, director, story consultant, research, and/or securing production financing.

Only in exceptional circumstances would we consider funding outside of these amounts.

### Who can apply?

Applicants and their projects must meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#) in addition to the following:

- **A sole applicant;**
  - must be an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander key creative (writer, producer or director).
  - A writer and/or director must have at least one 'eligible documentary credit' in the role they apply with.
  - The producer (where attached) must be either:
    - An 'experienced producer', or
    - A producer who has at least two eligible documentary credits', or
    - An emerging producer applying in conjunction with an experienced producer (if applying in a team).

- **If applying with a team:**

- The same minimum credit requirements for writer, producer or director apply as mentioned above for sole applicants. In addition;
- The director (where attached) and any co-directors must be Australian Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander person
- In the case of co-writing teams, made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers, the original concept must come from the First Nations Australian writer. This must be shown in the application.

An **'eligible documentary credit'** under this program must be either:

- a linear documentary, is 30 minutes or longer in duration, and has:
  - been broadcast by a recognised Commissioning Platform (ie broadcaster or channel), or
  - had a commercial theatrical release, or
  - been invited to screen at IDFA, Hot Docs or equivalent, OR
- an interactive linear documentary which has been publicly released.

- Where the request includes shooting material, a director must be attached.
- **The project must be a documentary** as defined by [ACMA](#). Screen Australia does not invest in reality or magazine television, light entertainment, panel shows, infotainment, current affairs, cooking, 'how to', sports, corporate, training, games, extensions to film or TV, or community access programs or projects whose primary market is the education sector.

**Further Funding:** Any application for further development funding after the first tranche will only be considered if the project has at least a letter of interest from a Commissioning Platform, and such applications will be considered in the light of the advancement and the overall viability of the project.

Outstanding applicants or projects that emerge through the First Nations Department's Special Initiatives may be invited to apply to this program. This provides the opportunity for First Nations practitioners to access single-project development funds even where minimum credit requirements are not satisfied.

### **What is the process?**

Applications are open all year round and available via the [Application Portal](#).

**Turnaround time** for decisions is approximately six weeks.

Refer to the website for a downloadable materials checklist.

Applications are assessed by Screen Australia executives and/or industry specialists as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the outcome of their application.

Funding decisions will be made against the following equally weighted criteria:

- the track record and capacity of the creative team including the ability to fund production
- the strength and distinctiveness of the idea and creative approach
- the appropriateness of the proposed development strategy and use of Screen Australia funds at this stage of development
- the understanding of audience and pathways to viewers

### **Terms of funding**

Funding through this program is provided as a grant.

If a project has received development funding from Screen Australia and proceeds to production investment with Screen Australia finance, the previous funding must be recognised in the production budget (as an above-the-line cost) and will become part of Screen Australia's total investment in the project. Where the project goes into production without Screen Australia funding, Screen Australia may require the producer to repay the development funding previously provided by Screen Australia in order to acquire any copyright interest held by Screen Australia. See [Terms of Trade](#) for more information.

**Rights and Chain of Title:** You must list all of your Chain of Title documents in the application form. If you are applying for funding which is \$50,000 or under in total Screen Australia funds for this project, you will not be required to submit any Chain of Title documents for any applications submitted. If over the course of the development tranches, you receive over \$50,000 combined, you will be required to submit a solicitor's opinion letter.

## DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION

**INVITATION ONLY:** Before you can apply to Screen Australia for Feature Production funding, it is essential that you contact a First Nations Investment Manager to discuss your project. Contact the Program Operations team if you are unsure who to speak with: **1 800 507 901** or [FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au)

This program seeks to support strong and distinctive documentary projects primarily to assist in the professional development of the key creative team.

### **What funding is available?**

Limited funding is available through this program to support the production and/or post-production of one-off documentaries, documentary series or online projects. Funding is designed to complete the project, not a stage of production.

There are no limits on the proportion of the budget Screen Australia can contribute under this program. However, other sources of finance are encouraged, and the assessment process will take into account the level of Screen Australia funding requested as a proportion of overall budget.

Contributions might come from marketplace entities (eg broadcasters), as well as from state agencies, other government organisations, cultural institutions, international sources, private investors or other partners.

**Post-production funding:** Applications for matched post-production funding will be considered up to a maximum of \$100,000, provided that the project has a post-production presale to a domestic broadcaster with a licence fee of at least \$30,000 per broadcast hour or part thereof.

### **Who can apply?**

Applicants and their projects must meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#) in addition to the following:

#### **The Applicant:**

- An application must be from a producer on behalf of a team, including a writer and director, or writer/director.
- The director and any co-directors must be Australian Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander practitioner.
- In the case of co-writing teams, made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers, the original concept must come from the First Nations Australian writer. This must be shown in the application.
- The producer or the director must have at least one 'eligible documentary credit'.

An **'eligible documentary credit'** under this program must be either:

- a linear documentary, is 30 minutes or longer in duration, and has:
  - been broadcast by a recognised broadcaster or channel or Commissioning Platform, or
  - had a commercial theatrical release, or
  - been invited to screen at IDFA, Hot Docs or equivalent, OR
- an interactive linear documentary project which has been publicly released.

Note that reality or magazine television, light entertainment, panel shows, infotainment, current affairs, cooking, 'how to', sports, corporate, training, games, extensions to film or TV, or community access programs or projects whose primary market is the education sector are not acceptable credits for eligibility purposes.

### **The Project:**

- can be a one-off or series linear documentary of at least a commercial half hour in duration, or a series of any number of episodes at least a commercial half hour in total duration
- must be a documentary as defined by [ACMA](#). Screen Australia does not invest in reality or magazine television, light entertainment, panel shows, infotainment, current affairs, cooking, 'how to', sports, corporate, training, games, extensions to film or TV, or community access programs or projects whose primary market is the education sector.
- must be intended for distribution via a Commissioning Platform with the required presale confirmed (noting that minimum licence fees apply). See below.
- have been developed by Australian production companies/producers and creatives, not sub-contracted from a Commissioning Platform;
- if applicable, must be independent of the nominated local Commissioning Platform for the first release of a program in Australia. In addition, Screen Australia expects key creatives (producer, writer, director, cinematographer, editor) to be sourced from the freelance market and not from the staff of the Commissioning Platform;
- must not be more than 26 broadcast hours of any one project, which may include multiple series.
  
- Other than in exceptional circumstances, preference will be given to projects that, at the time of application, are no further than six months from the start of pre-production.

### **Presale Requirements**

A domestic presale for Australian Commissioning Platform is required, with the following minimum requirements:

- **single documentary or series:** a confirmed minimum licence fee of **\$180,000 per broadcast hour** allocated toward the initial 5-year licence period against the **primary rights** for the program being on the Commissioning Platform on which the program premieres in Australia.
- **TV feature length documentary:** a confirmed minimum licence fee of **\$250,000** allocated toward the initial 5-year licence period against the primary rights for the program being on the Commissioning Platform on which the program premieres in Australia.
- **secondary rights for the program being on the Commissioning Platform's branded/related-party platform (e.g., BVOD/SVOD for an FTA Commissioning Platform; FTA/other VOD for an SVOD Commissioning Platform; Digital additional rights (including third party free or subscription platforms e.g., Tubi, YouTube):** a confirmed minimum licence fee of **\$10,000 per broadcast hour or TV feature length documentary** (note: this additional secondary rights fee generally does not apply to public broadcasters).
- **monetised AVOD/digital additional rights** for the program being on a third-party platform/channel that is (i) owned or controlled by the Commissioning Platform; and (ii) approved by the Producer (Geoblocked): a confirmed royalty share of no less than 50:50 (subject to negotiation with the Commissioning Platform).
- **feature film documentaries with a theatrical release:** a theatrical distributor must be secured for at least the Australian territory. Whilst there is no minimum distribution guarantee amount, the key deal terms for such theatrical distribution arrangement must be provided to Screen Australia.

No international marketplace attachments are required but producers are encouraged to develop a marketing strategy for international sales.

Note that:

- minimum licence fees cannot include:
  - equity investment;
  - broadcast rights for New Zealand or any Rest of World territory (ROW);
  - secondary rights (except as permitted above);
  - distribution rights; or
  - ancillary rights.

- where applicable, if further rights or extended licence periods (after the initial licence period) are sought from the Commissioning Platform, additional licence fees must be negotiated in good faith, in line with current market rates on terms acceptable to Screen Australia and in accordance with relevant industry agreements;
- the minimum licence fees are minimum requirements, and Screen Australia recognises that producers may be in a position to negotiate for more favourable rates with respect to certain rights, depending on the unique circumstances of the relevant project; and
- the minimum licence fees set out above will be valid until a review takes place prior to 1 July 2028.

### **What is the process?**

Applications are by invitation only. Contact a First Nations Investment Manager to discuss your project or the Program Operations team if you are unsure who to speak with: **1 800 507 901** or [FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au).

If you are invited to apply you will be asked to submit your application using the [Application Portal](#)

**Turnaround time** for decisions is approximately eight weeks.

Refer to the website for a downloadable materials checklist. All documentation should be in place at the time of submission.

For projects that have also applied for state agency funding, the state agency decision must be made within 4 weeks of the date your application is submitted to Screen Australia to be eligible for assessment.

Applications are assessed by Screen Australia executives and/or industry specialists as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the success or otherwise of their application.

Funding decisions will be made against the following equally weighted criteria:

- **Script/treatment/outline:** The script, treatment, outline and project materials according to: (i) the strength and distinctiveness of the idea; (ii) the quality of the writing; (iii) readiness of the script or treatment to proceed into production.
- **Creative team:** The producer, director, writer according to: (i) evidence of skills, relevant experience and achievements which demonstrate either an established successful track record or exciting new talent; and (ii) their demonstrated creative, technical and managerial capacity to deliver the project.

- **Project:** The project's potential in relation to: (i) the creative team's demonstrated understanding of the intended audience; (ii) the creative team's vision for the project; (iii) the proposed participants.
- **Viability:** Screen Australia will consider (i) the viability of the proposed budget in relation to achieving the creative team's stated goals and vision for the project; (ii) the viability of the proposed financing structure including the amount requested from Screen Australia as a proportion of the total budget; and (iii) the production schedule.

### **Pathways to audience**

For this program, projects must have commitment from a domestic Commissioning Platform in place (see above for minimum licence fee requirements), and a copy of the relevant agreement must be included in the application.

Enhancing audience reach through new pathways is also encouraged. This could involve:

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

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

### **Budget requirements**

**Format:** Budgets must be presented in the [A-Z Budget format](#), using the Screen Australia template. Fees should comply with industry norms. They will be considered in the context of the budget and track record of the key creatives and crew.

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 Commissioning Platform 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 per hour. 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.

## Terms of funding

### Crew Placement Scheme

As a condition of Screen Australia production funding, below-the-line crew placement opportunities must be allocated to each project for emerging to mid-career Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander practitioners to gain experience in mid and senior crew and leadership roles.

- **Documentary Productions** that receive \$300,000 or over in production funding from Screen Australia must budget for, and engage, one emerging or mid-career crew Placee in consultation with Screen Australia.
- Depending on the role, the length of each crew placement opportunity must be for a period of time that provides genuine career advancement (minimum of 6 weeks).
- The costs for the Placee must be included within your production budget. Potential roles for the placements can be discussed with the Investment Manager or Screen Australia's **Industry Development Unit**.
- For more information about the requirements of the Crew Placement Scheme, [click on these FAQs](#).

Where Screen Australia's total contribution (including any development funds) is **\$500,000 or under**, funding will be in the form of a grant:

- Screen Australia does not take a share of receipts from projects funded under a grant, which means the funds do not have to be repaid other than in circumstances set out in the [Terms of Trade](#).
- The amount of the Screen Australia grant will be agreed upfront and not varied, other than in exceptional circumstances.
- Screen Australia does not require a share of copyright in productions that it funds under a grant.

Where Screen Australia's total contribution including any development funds is **more than \$500,000**, funding will be in the form of recoupable equity investment, with copyright and recoupment terms in accordance with the agency's [Terms of Trade](#).

You must list all of your Chain of Title documents in the application and a Solicitor's Opinion letter will be required for all projects.

## **DRAMA PROGRAMS**

### **FEATURE DRAMA DEVELOPMENT**

The First Nations Department's feature development program aims to provide opportunities for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander screen content makers with demonstrated experience to extend their craft and their ideas in the longer feature format. We are looking for striking and engaging storytelling that will connect with audiences.

Screen Australia reserves the right to require the attachment of a story consultant where appropriate.

#### **What funding is available?**

- **Up to \$30,000** or **up to \$45,000** if a producer is attached.

Funding is available for the further development of a treatment and/or draft scripts, project development as well as fees for writer, producer, director, story consultant, research, and/or securing production financing.

Only in exceptional circumstances would we consider funding outside of these amounts.

#### **Who can apply?**

Applicants and their projects must meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#) in addition to the following:

##### **The Applicant:**

- Can be a producer, writer or writer/director.
- The director (where attached), any co-directors and the writer must be Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander practitioners and must have at least two 'eligible drama credits' in their respective roles.
- In the case of co-writing teams, made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers, the original concept must come from the First Nations Australian writer. This must be shown in the application.
- An eligible writer or writer/director may receive a maximum of two tranches of funding as a solo applicant without a producer attached as above.
- The producer (where attached) must be either:
  - an 'experienced producer', or
  - a producer who has at least two 'eligible drama credits', or
  - an emerging producer applying in conjunction with an 'experienced producer'.

An **'eligible drama credit'** under this program is a drama film or program of at least 10 mins which has:

- screened at a recognised film festival (Cannes, Berlin, Toronto, Sundance, Clermont-Ferrand or Annecy; Adelaide Film Festival, Brisbane Asia Pacific Film Festival, Melbourne International Film Festival, Revelation Perth International Film Festival, Sydney Film Festival; Flickerfest or St Kilda Film Festival); or
- been nominated for an AACTA Award or Academy Award; or
- been broadcast by a recognised commissioning platform, ie broadcaster or channel; or
- had a commercial theatrical release.

An **'experienced producer'** is defined as having at least one credit as producer on:

- a feature film that has been released on a minimum of five commercial screens in one territory, or
- a primetime broadcast drama mini-series or telemovie.

Outstanding applicants or projects that emerge through the First Nations Department's Special Initiatives or Sector Development programs may be invited to apply to this program. This provides the opportunity for Indigenous practitioners to access development funds even where minimum credit requirements are not satisfied.

### **What is the process?**

Applications are open all year round and available via the [Application Portal](#).

Turnaround time for decisions is approximately six weeks.

Refer to the website for a downloadable materials checklist.

Applications are assessed by Screen Australia executives and/or industry specialists as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the success or otherwise of their application.

Funding decisions will be made against the following equally weighted criteria:

- The strength of the concept and underlying premise
- The quality of the cinematic storytelling and potential of the film to reach its target audience
- The development notes, and the degree to which they articulate the issues to be faced in the next stage of development and outline the strategies to address them
- The skills and experience of the writer and, where appropriate, other members of the team, and the likelihood that their experience will advance the project.

- The viability of the project and whether it can be realised for an appropriate budget relative to its audience.

### **Terms of funding**

Funding through this program is provided as a grant.

If a project has received development funding from Screen Australia and proceeds to production investment with Screen Australia finance, the previous funding must be recognised in the production budget (as an above-the-line cost) and will become part of Screen Australia's total investment in the project.

Where the project goes into production without Screen Australia funding, Screen Australia may require the producer to repay the development funding previously provided by Screen Australia in order to acquire any copyright interest held by Screen Australia.

See [Terms of Trade](#) for more information.

**Rights and Chain of Title:** You must list all of your Chain of Title documents in the application form. If you are applying for funding which is \$50,000 or under in total Screen Australia funds for this project, you will not be required to submit any Chain of Title documents for any applications submitted. If over the course of the development tranches, you receive over \$50,000 combined, you will be required to submit a solicitor's opinion letter.

## FEATURE DRAMA PRODUCTION

**INVITATIONS ONLY:** Before you can apply to Screen Australia for Feature Production funding, it is essential that you contact a First Nations Investment Manager to discuss your project. Contact the Program Operations team if you are unsure who to speak with: **1 800 507 901** or [firstnations@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:firstnations@screenaustralia.gov.au)

Limited funds are available through this program to invest in outstanding low- budget feature film projects which are based on strong and original ideas, and can demonstrate the potential to reach an audience.

Production investment is intended primarily to assist in the professional development of First Nations Australian key creatives, as well as to provide opportunities for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander screen content makers who have demonstrated extraordinary talent to extend their vision and their skills.

**Post-production** investment is also available to fund project-specific post-production costs associated with taking a project from the end of principal photography through to delivery.

### What funding is available?

Limited funding is available through this program.

There are no limits on the proportion of the budget Screen Australia can contribute under this program. However, other sources of finance are encouraged, and the assessment process will take into account the level of Screen Australia funding requested as a proportion of overall budget.

Contributions might come from marketplace entities (eg distributors), as well as from state agencies, other government organisations, cultural institutions, international sources, private investors or other partners.

### Who can apply?

Applicants and their projects must meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#) in addition to the following:

- **The Applicant:**
  - The application must come from a producer, on behalf of team including a First Nations Australian writer, director, and any co-directors, or an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander writer/director
  - The writer and director must be First Nations Australian and must have at least three 'eligible drama credits' in their respective roles.
  - In the case of co-writing teams, made up of Indigenous and non- Indigenous writers, the original concept must come from the First Nations Australian writer. This must be shown in the

- application.
- The producer (where attached) must be either:
  - an ‘experienced producer’, or
  - a producer who has at least three ‘eligible drama credits’, or
  - an emerging producer applying in conjunction with an ‘experienced producer’.
- **The Project:**
  - The project must have an acceptable offer to theatrically distribute the project in Australia (with sufficiently detailed core commercial terms) from an appropriate domestic distributor.
  - Other than in exceptional circumstances, preference will be given to projects that, at the time of application, are no further than six months from the start of pre-production.

An ‘eligible drama credit’ under this program is a drama film or program of at least 10 mins which has:

- screened at a recognised film festival (Cannes, Berlin, Toronto, Sundance, Clermont-Ferrand or Annecy; Adelaide Film Festival, Brisbane Asia Pacific Film Festival, Melbourne International Film Festival, Revelation Perth International Film Festival, Sydney Film Festival; Flickerfest or St Kilda Film Festival); or
- been nominated for an AACTA Award or Academy Award; or
- been broadcast by a recognised commissioning platform, ie broadcaster or channel; or
- had a commercial theatrical release.

An ‘experienced producer’ is defined as having at least one credit as producer on:

- a feature film that has been released on a minimum of five commercial screens in one territory, OR
- a primetime broadcast drama mini-series or telemovie.

Outstanding applicants or projects that emerge through the First Nations Department’s Special Initiatives or Sector Development programs may be invited to apply to this program. This provides the opportunity for Indigenous practitioners to access development funds even where minimum credit requirements are not satisfied.

### **What is the process?**

Applications are by invitation only. Contact a First Nations Investment Manager to discuss your project or the Program Operations team if you are unsure who to speak with: **1 800 507 901** or [FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au). If you are invited to apply you will be asked to submit your application using the [Application Portal](#)

Turnaround time from complete applications is approximately eight weeks.

Refer to the website for a downloadable materials checklist.

Applications are assessed by Screen Australia executives and/or industry specialists as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the success or otherwise of their application.

Funding decisions will be made against the following equally weighted criteria:

- **Script or rough cut:** In relation to: (i) the quality of the writing or filmmaking and cinematic storytelling; (ii) the strength and distinctiveness of the idea or film within its own genre; (iii) the reader's or viewer's emotional engagement with the story and characters; (iv) [unless the application is for completion/post-production funding], the readiness of the script to move into production.
- **Creative team:** The producer and director according to: (i) skills, relevant experience and achievements which demonstrate either a successful track record or an exciting new talent; and (ii) their demonstrated creative, technical and managerial capacity to deliver the completed film; (iii) the director's vision for the film or final cut.
- **Market strength:** The project's market value according to: (i) the strength of the domestic distributor's strategy for the film; (ii) the track record of the distributor and its suitability to the project.
- **Project:** The project's potential in relation to: (i) the team's demonstrated understanding of the film's intended audience; (ii) the quality of any proposed or attached cast, or the calibre of the performances in the cut; (iii) the quality of any proposed heads of department or the strength of the production values as evidenced by the work by the heads of the department; (iv) the potential for the film to be selected for an A-list festival; (v) the potential for the film to appeal to a significant audience in Australia.
- **Viability:** The likelihood that the project can be realised with reference to (i) its budget size relative to its intentions; (ii) its budget size relative to its potential audience; (iii) the strength and quality of the deals proposed in the finance plan; (iv) the proposed recoupment position for equity investors.

### **Budget requirements:**

Screen Australia, in consultation with the completion guarantor (where applicable), will examine a producer's schedule and budget to ensure that the production values in the script can be realised. Screen Australia will require access to the quotes and other underlying documentation that support the line item amounts in the budget.

- Budgets must be presented in the Screen Australia [A-Z Budget format](#).
- The cost of production, both above and below the line, should reflect the level of recoupment that the project can reasonably expect to earn.

- Fees should comply with industry standards. They will be considered in the context of the budget and track record of the personnel. Screen Australia reserves the right to look at the whole package, including budget and target audience, in determining whether individual above-the-line fees, including cast fees, are appropriate.
- Screen Australia will have approval over any variation in budget items that are exclusions under the completion guarantee (eg music, cast breakage) and all above-the-line items.
- The budget must include:
  - Production overheads are capped at 5 per cent of the total of the company's total film expenditure on the project, or A\$500,000, whichever is the lesser amount.
  - Allowance for a contingency of 10 per cent of the total below the line costs.
  - Development costs breakdown including: any development funds; producer fellowships from state agencies, Screen Australia or its predecessor agencies; and state agency administration fees (if applicable).
  - Publicity spend during production.
  - Marketing and promotional materials comprising the 'dedicated marketing budget' (DMB).
  - Foreign currency hedging mechanism to allow for currency fluctuations where applicable.
  - The cost of captioning and audio description for theatrical release and DVD, as per Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#).
  - Allowance for Screen Australia and NFSA delivery items including delivery to digital platform.
  - Sales company deliverables and other delivery items as required.

If producers have any questions when preparing a budget, they should contact the First Nations department via their Investment Manager or email to [Firstnations@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:Firstnations@screenaustralia.gov.au)

## **Terms of funding**

### **Crew Placement Scheme**

As a condition of Screen Australia production funding, below-the-line crew placement opportunities must be allocated to each project for emerging to mid-career Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander practitioners to gain experience in mid and senior crew and leadership roles.

- Productions that **receive between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000** in production funding from Screen Australia must budget for and engage one emerging or mid-career crew Placee in consultation with Screen Australia.

- Productions that **receive more than \$1,000,000** in production funding from Screen Australia must budget for and engage two emerging or mid-career crew Placees in consultation with Screen Australia.
- The costs for the Placee must be included within your production budget. Potential roles for the placements can be discussed with your Investment Manager or Screen Australia's **Industry Development Unit**.
- For more information about the requirements of the Crew Placement Scheme, **click on these FAQs**.

Where Screen Australia's total contribution (including any development funds) is \$500,000 or under, funding will be in the form of a grant:

- Screen Australia does not take a share of receipts from projects funded under a grant, which means the funds do not have to be repaid other than in circumstances set out in the [Terms of Trade](#).
- The amount of the Screen Australia grant will be agreed upfront and not varied, other than in exceptional circumstances.
- Screen Australia does not require a share of copyright in productions that it funds under a grant.

Where Screen Australia's total contribution (including any development funds) is more than \$500,000, funding will be in the form of recoupable equity investment, with copyright and recoupment terms in accordance with the agency's [Terms of Trade](#).

## TV DRAMA DEVELOPMENT

This program seeks to provide practitioners with the opportunity to create appropriate written and/or visual materials to ensure that projects are as strong as possible when competing for production finance.

We are looking for striking and engaging storytelling that will connect with audiences.

Screen Australia reserves the right to require the attachment of a story consultant where appropriate.

Emerging Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander producers are encouraged to apply.

### What funding is available?

- One-offs: **Up to \$30,000**, or **up to \$45,000** if a producer is attached.
- Series: Up to \$65,000 (other than in exceptional circumstances).

Funding is available for the further development of a treatment and/or script for a telemovie or TV drama series, including, where appropriate, script, series bible and project development, research, securing production financing.

### Who can apply?

Applicants and their projects must meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#) in addition to the following:

#### The Applicant:

- Can be a producer, writer or writer/director.
- The director (where attached), any co-directors and the writer must be Australian Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander practitioner and must have at least two 'eligible drama credits' in their respective roles.
- In the case of co-writing teams, made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers, the original concept must come from the Indigenous writer. This must be shown in the application.
- An eligible writer or writer/director may receive a maximum of two tranches of funding as a solo applicant without a producer attached as above.
- The producer (where attached) must be either:
  - an 'experienced producer', or
  - a producer who has at least two 'eligible drama credits', or
  - an emerging producer applying in conjunction with an 'experienced producer'.

An 'eligible drama credit' under this program is a drama film or program of at least 10 mins which has:

- screened at a recognised film festival (Cannes, Berlin, Toronto, Sundance, Clermont-Ferrand or Annecy; Adelaide Film Festival, Brisbane Asia Pacific Film Festival, Melbourne International Film Festival, Revelation Perth International Film Festival, Sydney Film

- Festival; Flickerfest or St Kilda Film Festival); or
- been nominated for an AACTA Award or Academy Award; or
- been broadcast by a recognised commissioning platform, ie broadcaster or channel; or
- had a commercial theatrical release.

An 'experienced producer' is defined as having at least one credit as producer on:

- a feature film that has been released on a minimum of five commercial screens in one territory, OR
- a primetime broadcast drama mini-series or telemovie.

Outstanding applicants or projects that emerge through the First Nations Department's Special Initiatives or Sector Development programs may be invited to apply to this program. This provides the opportunity for Indigenous practitioners to access development funds even where minimum credit requirements are not satisfied.

### **What is the assessment process?**

Applications are open all year round and available via the [Application Portal](#).

Refer to the website for a downloadable materials checklist.

Turnaround time for decisions is approximately six weeks.

Applications are assessed by Screen Australia executives and/or industry specialists as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the success or otherwise of their application.

Funding decisions will be made against the following equally weighted criteria:

- The strength of the concept and underlying premise
- The quality of the storytelling and its potential to engage its target audience
- The development notes, and the degree to which they articulate the issues to be faced in the next stage of development and outline the strategies to address them
- The skills and experience of the writer and, where appropriate, other members of the team, and the likelihood that their experience will advance the project
- The viability of the project and whether it can be realised for an appropriate budget relative to its audience.

### **Terms of funding**

Funding through this program is provided as a grant.

If a project has received development funding from Screen Australia and proceeds to production investment with Screen Australia finance, the previous funding must be recognised in the production budget (as an above-the-line cost) and will become part of Screen Australia's total investment in the project.

Where the project goes into production without Screen Australia funding, Screen Australia may require the producer to repay the development funding previously provided by Screen Australia in order to acquire any copyright interest held by Screen Australia. See [Terms of Trade](#) for more information.

**Rights and Chain of Title:** You must list all of your Chain of Title documents in the application form. If you are applying for funding which is \$50,000 or under in total Screen Australia funds for this project, you will not be required to submit any Chain of Title documents for any applications submitted. If over the course of the development tranches, you receive over \$50,000 combined, you will be required to submit a solicitor's opinion letter.

## TV DRAMA PRODUCTION

**INVITATION ONLY:** Before you can apply to Screen Australia for TV Production funding, it is essential that you contact a First Nations Investment Manager to discuss your project. Contact the Program Operations team if you are unsure who to speak with: **1 800 507 901** or [FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au)

Limited funds are available through this program to invest in outstanding drama television projects which are based on strong and original ideas, and can demonstrate the potential to reach an audience.

Production investment is intended primarily to assist in the professional development of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander key creatives, as well as to provide opportunities for First Nations Australian screen content makers who have demonstrated extraordinary talent to extend their vision and their skills.

### **What funding is available?**

Limited funding is available through this program.

There are no limits on the proportion of the budget Screen Australia can contribute under this program. However, other sources of finance are encouraged, and the assessment process will take into account the level of Screen Australia funding requested as a proportion of overall budget.

Contributions might come from marketplace entities (eg Commissioning Platforms), as well as from state agencies, other government organisations, cultural institutions, international sources, private investors or other partners.

### **Who can apply?**

Applicants and their projects must meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#) in addition to the following:

#### **The Project:**

- must be a Drama of any broadcast format to be eligible for this program, including telemovies, telemovie packages, series (no distinction is drawn between series and mini-series) and online drama projects.
- must not be more than 26 broadcast hours of any one project, which may include multiple series.
- must be intended for distribution via a Commissioning Platform with the required presale confirmed (noting that minimum licence fees apply). See below.
- have been developed by Australian production companies/producers and creatives, not sub-contracted from a Commissioning Platform;
- if applicable, must be independent of the nominated local Commissioning Platform for the first release of a program in

Australia. In addition, Screen Australia expects key creatives (producer, writer, director, cinematographer, editor) to be sourced from the freelance market and not from the staff of the Commissioning Platform;

- Other than in exceptional circumstances, preference will be given to projects that, at the time of application, are no further than six months from the start of pre-production.

### **The Applicant:**

- The writer, director and any co-directors must be Australian Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander practitioner.
- The application must come from a producer, on behalf of team including a First Nations Australian writer, director, and any co-directors, or a First Nations Australian writer/director
- The writer and director must be First Nations Australian and must have at least three 'eligible drama credits' in their respective roles.
- In the case of co-writing teams, made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers, the original concept must come from the First Nations writer. This must be shown in the application.
- The producer (where attached) must be either:
  - an 'experienced producer', or
  - a producer who has at least three 'eligible drama credits', or
  - an emerging producer applying in conjunction with an 'experienced producer'.

An 'eligible drama credit' under this program is a drama film or program of at least 10 mins which has:

- screened at a recognised film festival (Cannes, Berlin, Toronto, Sundance, Clermont-Ferrand or Annecy; Adelaide Film Festival, Brisbane Asia Pacific Film Festival, Melbourne International Film Festival, Revelation Perth International Film Festival, Sydney Film Festival; Flickerfest or St Kilda Film Festival); or
- been nominated for an AACTA Award or Academy Award; or
- been broadcast by a recognised commissioning platform, ie broadcaster or channel; or
- had a commercial theatrical release.

An 'experienced producer' is defined as having at least one credit as producer on:

- a feature film that has been released on a minimum of five commercial screens in one territory, OR
- a primetime broadcast drama mini-series or telemovie.

Outstanding applicants or projects that emerge through the Indigenous Department's Sector Development programs may be invited to apply to this program. This provides the opportunity for Indigenous practitioners to access production funds even where minimum credit requirements are not satisfied.

### **Presale Requirements**

A domestic presale for an Australian Commissioning Platform must be secured on terms acceptable to Screen Australia for all episodic or feature length projects for which Television (including SVOD or BVOD) is the first and primary window (including Children's television). Such presale must meet the minimum licence fee requirements set out below, and must otherwise be in accordance with all relevant industry agreements and having regard to issues of overall commerciality:

- a confirmed minimum licence fee of \$550,000 per broadcast hour allocated toward the initial licence period (3 years) against the **primary right** for the program being on the platform on which the program premieres in Australia; or
- for Children's content, a confirmed minimum of:
  - \$125,000 per broadcast half hour for one commissioning platform with limited exclusivity holdbacks; or
  - \$144,000 per broadcast half hour for (i) combination of commissioning platforms; or (ii) one commissioning platform with full exclusivity during the initial licence period,allocated toward the initial licence period (3 years) against the **primary right** for the program being on the platform on which the program premieres in Australia.
- to the extent that the local commissioning platform acquires **secondary rights during the initial licence period**, please refer to the table below for minimum requirements, and terms must generally be in accordance with relevant industry agreements.

Note that:

- minimum licence fees cannot include:
  - equity investment;
  - broadcast rights for New Zealand or any Rest of World territory (ROW);
  - secondary rights (except as permitted above);
  - distribution rights; or
  - ancillary rights.
- the minimum licence fees are minimum requirements, and Screen Australia recognises that producers may be in a position to negotiate for more favourable rates with respect to certain rights, depending on the unique circumstances of the relevant project;
- the minimum licence fees set out above will be valid until a review takes place prior to 1 July 2028;

- the producer needs to be able to demonstrate that they are able to engage cast to match the requirements of the Commissioning Platform; and
- no international marketplace attachments are required but producers are encouraged to develop a marketing strategy for international sales.

**Summary of Minimum Licence Fee requirements for TV Drama Productions:**

<b>Rights acquired by the commissioning platform (for initial 3 year licence period)*</b>	<b>Minimum Licence Fee per broadcast hour (Adult)</b>	<b>Minimum Licence fee per broadcast half hour (Children)</b>
Primary right for the program being on the platform on which the program has been commissioned and premieres (e.g. FTA, SVOD, Pay TV)	\$550,000	For one commissioning platform with limited exclusivity holdbacks: \$125,000  For (i) combination of commissioning platforms; or (ii) one commissioning platform with full exclusivity during the initial 3 year licence period: \$144,000
Secondary right for the program being on a branded/related-party platform: a) AVOD/FVOD/BVOD for FTA commissioning platform and/or Digital additional rights (including third party free subscription platforms e.g. Tubi, YouTube); and  b) FTA/other VOD for an SVOD commissioning platform	a) \$14,000  b) \$50,000	a) \$7,000  b) \$25,000
Monetised Third Party AVOD/Digital additional rights for the program being on a platform/channel controlled by the commissioning platform and approved by the producer (Geoblocked)	Royalty share no less than 50:50	Royalty share no less than 50:50

### **What is the assessment process?**

Applications are by invitation only. Contact a First Nations Investment Manager to discuss your project or the Program Operations team if you are unsure who to speak with: **1 800 507 901** or [FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au). If you are invited to apply you will be asked to submit your application using the [Application Portal](#)

Turnaround time from complete applications is approximately eight weeks.

Refer to the website for a downloadable materials checklist.

Applications are assessed by Screen Australia executives and/or industry specialists as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the success or otherwise of their application.

Funding decisions will be made against the following equally weighted criteria:

- The quality of the proposal including its innovative and/or cultural significance
- The project's potential to connect with its target audience
- The track record and capacity of the creative team
- The strength of the marketplace and the level of co-finance excluding Screen Australia and the State agencies
- Diversity of Slate

Preference will be given to original formats over programs based on foreign formats.

### **Budget requirements**

Format: Budgets must be presented in the Screen Australia [A-Z Budget format](#). Fees should comply with industry standard rates. They will be considered in the context of the budget and track record of the personnel.

Budgets must include:

- Contingency: Allowance for a contingency of 10 per cent of the below the line costs.
- Overheads: Production company overheads are capped at 5 per cent of the company's total expenditure on the project, or \$500,000, whichever is the lesser amount.
- Completion guarantor: An allowance should be made for a completion guarantor unless Screen Australia agrees otherwise in writing.
- Promotions and marketing: Marketing and promotions costs should be incorporated from the outset. Line items for specific promotional materials must include professional stills photography and press kit.
- Delivery to digital platform: Screen Australia now considers it as standard that the budget is sufficient to allow for all necessary online delivery requirements. Delivery items: Producers must budget for all relevant deliverables including for Screen Australia, the NFSA, sales

company deliverables and other delivery items as required. See [Terms of Trade](#) for details.

## Terms of funding

### Crew Placement Scheme

As a condition of Screen Australia production funding, below-the-line crew placement opportunities must be allocated to each project for emerging to mid-career Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island practitioners to gain experience in mid and senior crew and leadership roles:

- Productions that **receive between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000** in production funding from Screen Australia must budget for and engage one emerging or mid-career crew Placee in consultation with Screen Australia.
- Productions that **receive more than \$1,000,000** in production funding from Screen Australia must budget for and engage two emerging or mid-career crew Placees in consultation with Screen Australia.
- The costs for the Placee must be included within your production budget. Potential roles for the placements can be discussed with your Investment Manager or Screen Australia's **Industry Development Unit**.
- For more information about the requirements of the Crew Placement Scheme, **click on these FAQs**.

Where Screen Australia's total contribution (including any development funds) is \$500,000 or under, funding will be in the form of a grant:

- Screen Australia does not take a share of receipts from projects funded under a grant, which means the funds do not have to be repaid other than in circumstances set out in the [Terms of Trade](#).
- The amount of the Screen Australia grant will be agreed upfront and not varied, other than in exceptional circumstances.
- Screen Australia does not require a share of copyright in productions that it funds under a grant.

Where Screen Australia's total contribution (including any development funds) is more than \$500,000, funding will be in the form of recoupable equity investment, with copyright terms in accordance with the agency's [Terms of Trade](#).

**Recoupment** - For all projects covered by these guidelines in which Screen Australia contributes a recoupable equity investment, Screen Australia will generally require the appointment of a disbursement administrator for all territories (*to manage the disbursement of both gross receipts and residuals*) and Screen Australia's approval is required over

the terms of any disbursement agreement entered into. Screen Australia will consider a waiver of the requirement to appoint a disbursement administrator depending on the experience and track record of the producer and on the nature of the project. The recoupment terms shall otherwise be in accordance with the agency's Terms of Trade.

**Online/Direct to Audience projects**

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners can apply for online production funding through the First Nations Department's Documentary Production or TV Drama Production programs.

## SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

The First Nations department will also continue to seek ways to strengthen and advance Australian Indigenous storytelling and its practitioners through internships, travel, marketing, festivals, events and special initiatives such as workshops, forums and other events, conducted by Screen Australia or with industry partnerships such as state bodies, industry organisations or other entities.

The aims of these programs are to:

- promote and showcase quality Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander film, television, online and interactive projects to Australian audiences
- develop exhibition opportunities
- provide opportunities for critical debate and analysis of Australian Indigenous screen content
- provide opportunities for professional development
- support the marketing needs of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander projects, while promoting the national industry and its practitioners.

### **Industry Support:**

The First Nations Department supports screen sector organisations and agencies to run professional development workshops and special initiatives that will better target the development needs of their local First Nations Australian Screen practitioners. The First Nations department can only run a limited number of nationally focused initiatives every financial year. In doing so we recognise each state and territory is trying to develop screen practitioners at very different experience levels.

First Nations: Industry Support is an invitation only program that will assist state agencies, and professional development organisations, with a focus on regional and remote based screen practitioners. The intention of the fund is to provide workshops with a focus on up-skilling First Nations Australian writers, directors and producers.

### **Who can apply?**

To be eligible for this program, applicants must:

- Have been invited to apply to the program
- be Australian citizens or residents and meet Screen Australia's Terms of Trade
- be an Australian company, registered organisation, incorporated association, guild or individual which is incorporated and carrying on business in Australia, and have its central management and control in Australia
- have specialist screen industry expertise

- have experience in successfully delivering similar activities

### **What activities are eligible?**

Eligible activities include: conferences, workshops, labs, Film Festivals other screen-related activities dedicated to the development of skills in the film, television, online, and virtual reality industries. For example, we will consider funding for events that hold a special First Nations Australian film screening.

Activities must take place between 3 and 9 months of the application submission date (other than in exceptional circumstances).

### **What activities are not eligible?**

Activities that do not have diverse, early career practitioners as their target participants

- General masterclasses, 'In Conversations', networking or social activities for industry-based groups or guild members
- Award Ceremonies
- Development or enhancement of websites
- Publications (online/podcast/print)

### **What support is available?**

A grant of up to \$50,000 per applicant per financial year

Applicants may submit:

- a single application to deliver a suite of activities across the year; or
- separate applications for each activity, provided the funding cap has not been reached

The level of funding sought must reflect the proposed activity's size and benefits to First Nations Australian screen practitioners.

### **When and how can applications be made?**

Applications are by invitation only. Contact a First Nations Investment Manager to discuss your application or the Program Operations team if you are unsure who to speak with: 1800 507 901 or

[FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au).

If you are invited to apply you will be asked to submit your application using the Application Portal with the following materials:

- Fully completed application form including contact details and applicant eligibility
- Outline of activity including:
  - target audience
  - how it will benefit emerging practitioners and the sector.

- proposed facilitators, mentors, trainers
- why the activity is needed and how it does not duplicate other activities
- Detailed budget for the activity

### **Assessment Criteria**

Funding decisions will be made against the following criteria:

- How the activity addresses one or more of the Sector Development objectives
- The experience and ability of the applicant organisation and project team to deliver the proposed activities, including the calibre of the proposed speakers, panellists and facilitators.
- Demonstrated industry need and market differentiation of the activity
- The activity's budget and funding sources, including proposed use of funds, revenue, and strategic alliances or partnerships formed with other industry bodies to present the activity
- Whether previous activity objectives and KPI's were successfully met and how any identified issues have been addressed (if relevant)
- How robustly the activity advances diversity and inclusion across one or more core areas:
  - Meaningful representation of diversity in panel members and participants
  - Industry access and opportunities for training/career progression/mentoring
  - Accessibility of the activity.

**Applicants will be advised of the outcome within 2-4 weeks of receipt of eligible application.**

### **Australian Festivals, Events & Industry Partnerships**

Intended to promote Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander productions and practitioners to audiences via significant domestic events, we may provide additional funding to established film festivals, national touring programs, and significant standalone events.

From time to time we may also identify certain drama or documentary projects and talent which may benefit from further opportunities through special initiatives hosted by Screen Australia or in partnership with the industry.

If you require further information, please contact the First Nations department via Program Operations **1 800 507 901** or [FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au)

### **Marketing and Distribution Support**

As part of Sector Development, we may also offer additional distribution or marketing support which may not fit the eligibility in our P&A and Distribution funding stream.

If you require further information, please contact the First Nations department via Program Operations **1 800 507 901** or [FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au)

## Internships

Internships assist practitioners whose careers would benefit from an attachment to a person, production or organisation. This program is designed to assist the career development of talented screen content makers who can demonstrate a strong commitment to a career in the film industry. This is not an entry-level scheme.

An internship may take many forms and involve features, documentaries, animation, online production, TV drama or comedy series. For example:

- a director might attach themselves to a more experienced director on a production
- a producer might spend time in a TV production house to observe the script development and creative management process, or they may wish to work with a more senior producer developing a financing plan for a project of their own
- an animation screen content maker may wish to enhance specific technical or creative skills
- a screen content maker may want to hire a more experienced producer or director as a consultant on their own funded production.

### What funding is available?

- **Up to \$20,000** may be requested other than in exceptional circumstances and supported by a budget.

### Who can apply?

The potential intern must:

- meet the general eligibility requirements of Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#)
- be an Australian Aboriginal and/or a Torres Strait Islander practitioner, and
- can only apply for the internship funding twice in their career.

No minimum credits are required, but previous work will be considered in assessing the applicant's commitment to screen storytelling as a career.

### What is the process?

Applications can be made at any time via the [Application Portal](#). However, please note that the turnaround time for application decisions is approximately four to six weeks and that Screen Australia does not provide funds retrospectively. Your application must therefore be made at least six weeks before funds are required.

Applications are considered by Screen Australia executives and industry specialists as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the success or otherwise of their application. Funding decisions will be made against the following equally weighted criteria:

- The potential of the applicant and their commitment to a career in the film industry, as evidenced by previous work.

- The quality of the mentor or mentor organisation and the level of access the applicant will have to them.
- The quality of the proposed program the applicant and mentor have negotiated.
- The strategic benefit of the program to the applicant at this stage of their career.

### **Terms of funding**

Funding through this program is in the form of a grant. Screen Australia will not provide funds retrospectively. Funding recipients are expected to deliver:

- A report after completing the internship from both the applicant and the mentor or production house, including an update on any career developments which have arisen as a result of the internship/fellowship, and
- A statement of expenditure.

### **Travel**

The Travel program is designed to assist Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander screen content makers in travelling to key international and Australian events. Professional development is a key objective.

Funding is available to support travel costs associated with attending:

- recognised film festivals and pitching forums where an applicant's film or television series has been selected or invited to attend;
- events where the applicant or their film or television series has been nominated for an award;
- key international markets;
- conferences and workshops providing significant professional development opportunities.

### **What funding is available?**

Requests can be for domestic or international travel supported by a budget for:

- **Up to \$6,000 for International travel**
- **Up to \$3,000 for travel within Australia**

Only in exceptional circumstances will we provide funding outside of this amount.

Any hospitality offered by the event must be disclosed and any travel funding from other sources must be listed in the application form, including Screen Australia's Business and Audience Department and state agencies.

Screen Australia's Indigenous Department will take into account any travel funds provided by Screen Australia's Business and Audience

Department and by state agencies, and the actual costs of travel from the applicant's current place of residence.

Screen Australia will not provide funds retrospectively.

### **Who can apply?**

Applicants and their projects must meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#) in addition to the following:

- Applicants must be Australian Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander practitioner.
- Travel grants are for Australian residents. Australians living overseas are not eligible.
- The event must be listed under [Eligible Events](#). In exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of Screen Australia, an event not on the current list may be considered if it has grown in significance and/or offers unique commercial opportunities.
- Proof of selection/invitation/nomination must be provided for all applications with the exception of travel to markets and conferences.
- For markets, the applicant must be a producer with at least one active project in development to pitch.
- For award ceremonies, the applicant must be nominated for an award, or the producer or director of a film nominated for an award.
- Where a project has been invited to screen at an eligible festival, applications will be considered for travel by key Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cast members, as well as key creatives.
- Practitioners may receive only one travel grant through this program within a 12-month period, other than in exceptional circumstances.

### **What is the process?**

Applications can be submitted at any time via the [Application Portal](#) and are considered by Screen Australia executives, with industry specialists consulted as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the success or otherwise of their application.

Applications can generally be made at any time at least 5 weeks before the event.

Decisions will be made within 2–4 weeks from receipt of the application or in accordance with event deadlines. Please also keep in mind further contracting time in order to receive your first drawdown on top of the turnaround decision time.

Funding decisions will be made against the following equally weighted criteria

#### **For all events:**

- the professional development benefit to the applicant.

**For film festivals and award ceremonies:**

- the potential exposure for the film
- the strategic impact on the applicant's career.

**For markets and pitching forums:**

- the suitability of the particular market/forum to the project(s) being pitched
- the readiness of the project(s) to be pitched.

**For conferences and workshops:**

- the quality and relevance of the conference or workshop program
- the applicant's track record including previous filmmaking experience, and their demonstrated commitment to a career in the film industry.

Other factors, including availability of funds and status of the event, may also influence Screen Australia's funding decisions.

**Terms of funding**

Funding through this program is provided as a grant.

Funding recipients are expected to deliver:

- A report after completing the travel, including an update on any career
- developments which have arisen as a result of attending the event.
- A statement of expenditure.

## Eligible events

Following is a list of events that will be considered for funding. Selection of a project into a festival, pitching forum or workshop does not guarantee support and approval depends on the competitive strength of the application and availability of funds. A new event or an event not included on this list may become eligible if it has grown in significance and may offer unique professional development opportunities. Contact [FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au) for advice.

### Australian events:

- Industry conferences ([AIDC](#), [ADG](#), [AWG Writers Conference](#), [VidCon](#), [MIFF 37°South](#) and [SPA Screen Forever](#))
- Award ceremonies ([AACTA Awards](#), industry guild awards)
- Major Australian film festivals ([Adelaide Film Festival](#), [Brisbane Asia Pacific Film Festival](#), [Melbourne International Film Festival](#), [Revelation Perth International Film Festival](#), [Sydney Film Festival](#)).

### International events:

- [AFM \(American Film Market\), Los Angeles](#)
- [Annecy International Festival of Animation, France](#)
- [Berlin/EFM/Talent Campus](#)
- [Busan – Festival/Asian Project Market](#)
- [Cannes – Festival/Marche du Film/L’Atelier, France](#)
- [Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival, France](#)
- [Critics Week, Cannes](#)
- [Digital Hollywood, United States](#)
- [Directors' Fortnight, Cannes](#)
- [Hiroshima Animation Festival, Japan](#)
- [Hot Docs – Festival/Forum, Toronto](#)
- [IDFA – Festival/Forum, Amsterdam](#)
- [imagineNATIVE Film and Media Arts Festival, Toronto](#)
- [International X/Media/Lab](#)
- [Maoriland Film Festival, Otaki New Zealand](#)
- [MIPTV - Pitching sessions only, Cannes](#)
- [nextMEDIA, Canada](#)
- [No Borders, New York](#)
- [Power to the Pixel, London](#)
- [Rotterdam – Festival/CineMart/Lab, The Netherlands](#)
- [Sitges, Spain](#)
- [South by Southwest \(SXSW \) – Festival/Interactive Fest, United States](#)
- [Sundance Film Festival, United States](#)
- [Sunny Side of the Doc](#)
- [Telluride Film Festival, United States](#)
- [Toronto International Film Festival, Canada](#)
- [Venice International Film Festival, Italy](#)
- [World Congress of Science & Factual Producers](#)

## **First Nations Australian Content or Participation**

Where there is First Nations Australian community participation or content involved in the project, written confirmation of the willingness of both the subject(s) and the community to be involved in the project is essential.

First Nations Australian content means a film or program based on an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander story, with Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander subjects or featuring Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage in any form.

As per the funding application form, where the content involves a true story or real-life subject, you will need to provide a signed clearance or release for any individual or community depicted. Where the content involves culturally specific material, you may need written consent to use Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage.

Where the content involved is not specific to a particular community or does not involve a real-life story or depictions of culturally specific material, the team will still need to provide a written statement of how they will deal with the material, i.e. what research has been done, what action has been taken to date, and what consultation is proposed. Evidence of a concrete plan is required.

The required statements should be supplied on a separate page that is clearly labelled – in accordance with the checklist on the relevant application form. Please ensure you allow sufficient time for consultation so that people giving consent can more fully understand what they are consenting to.

Please note, these requirements apply equally to Australian Indigenous and non- Indigenous Australian screen content makers.

### **Consultation and consent**

Consultation and consent in First Nations Australian communities are interrelated. Through consultation a screen content maker can come to understand what requires consent and the correct people to give it, and the people giving consent can more fully understand what they are consenting to.

Consultation refers to the process whereby people exchange views and information. Consultation is not just a one-way process, but a process of sharing knowledge and opinions. Consultation means working together, listening to what the other party has to say and acting upon it.

Consent is a process whereby permission is given, based on a relationship of trust. Consent should be informed, and this means screen content makers need to provide a clear explanation of the filmmaking process, timeframes, contract details, possible benefits, impacts and future uses of footage at the time of seeking consent, to avoid misunderstandings at a

later time. The consent process should be transparent for all parties, and information should be explained in plain English or with the help of an interpreter.

See Screen Australia's [Pathways & Protocols](#): A screen content maker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts for more information.

Any queries, please contact the Screen Australia First Nations department via email [FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:FirstNations@screenaustralia.gov.au).

We recommend that screen content makers intending to use any First Nations Australian material in their projects read the protocols. It is a useful guide that provides information on dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material from research to marketing of your film. It also provides useful tips for consultation with Australian First Nations communities.

### **Australian Indigenous Cultural & Intellectual Property (ICIP) Rights**

Australian Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) rights refer to Australian Indigenous people's rights with respect to their cultural heritage. This is a living heritage, which comprises all objects, sites, stories, images and knowledge, the nature or use of which has been transmitted or continues to be transmitted from generation to generation, and which is regarded as pertaining to a particular Indigenous group or its territory.

Wording similar to the following provision will be contained in all Screen Australia development, production and post-production contracts for projects involving Indigenous content or participants:

- The producer and Screen Australia acknowledge the existence of ICIP Rights of the Indigenous participants in the Film. The Producer agrees and undertakes to endeavour to ensure that the ICIP Rights of Indigenous participants are respected and upheld in the production and all aspects of distribution of the Film.
- In the event that the producer wishes to include ICIP Rights material in the Film, the producer shall obtain a non-exclusive licence from the ICIP Rights holder/s or custodian/s to include such ICIP Rights materials in the Film.
- In the event of a dispute regarding the ICIP Rights of any Indigenous participant in the Film, all parties shall use their best endeavours to resolve the dispute.

## **Change Log:**

### **March 2026**

- Raised the minimum licence fee for First Nations Documentary, Drama and Children's TV production funding from 18 March 2026 and clarified minimum licence fee criteria.
- Details inserted to replace the Inclusive Attachment Scheme with the Crew Placement Scheme.

### **September 2023**

- Clarified that programs will not be financed where the producer is not independent of the nominated local Commissioning Platform for the first release of a program in Australia.
- Raised the minimum licence fee for First Nations Documentary, Drama and Children's production funding from 1 January, 2024 and clarified minimum licence fee criteria.
- Added Screen Australia's requirement that other than in exceptional circumstances, projects must, at the time of application, be no further than six months from the start of pre-production.
- Added Screen Australia's general requirement that a disbursement administrator be appointed in all territories for projects funded via a recoupable equity investment.
- Updated eligibility requirements to Documentary Development key creatives

### **July 2021**

- Program renamed First Nations
- Increase in drama development funding: up to \$45,000 if a producer is attached for feature funding and up to \$60,000 for scripted series
- Increase in internship / attachment funding to \$20,000
- Industry Support program included

### **October 2020**

Number of credits required by producer on feature development and TV drama development changed from three to two.

### **November 2019**

- Travel grant funding within Australia changed from \$4,000 to \$3,000 per application

### **January 2019**

- Applications for Development funding (documentary, tv drama & feature drama) are now open all year round.

### **March 2018**

- Defined Commissioning Platform
- Eligibility – Added co-directors must also be Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to all funds

- Chain of Title – Added we now only require a solicitor’s opinion letter for total Screen Australia funds of over \$50,000
- Invitations – clarified invitation only programs
- Defined commissioning platform presale amounts as per other television funding programs
- Inclusive attachment – added inclusive attachment requirements across all productions
- Added interactive content to the documentary guidelines in line with the documentary programs
- Added commercial half hour minimum duration for documentary productions
- Revised Travel amount limitations
- Added Sector Development to cover marketing, festivals, events and industry partnerships.
- Removed the Social Impact program