



Australian Government



# Narrative Content Market & Audience - Audience Testing Guidelines

Issued 28 January 2026

Screen Australia reserves the right to change its program guidelines. Applicants should check the website for the latest version. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#), [Information for Applicants](#) and [Information for Recipients](#) on the agency's website.

If applicants have questions about this program or accessibility requirements relating to submitting an application contact Screen Australia's Program Operations team at [audience.narrativecontent@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:audience.narrativecontent@screenaustralia.gov.au) or on 1800 507 901.

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# 1. Funding Program

## 1.1. Overview

The Narrative Content Market & Audience - Audience Testing Program supports producers, creatives and distributors to audience test theatrical feature film projects. This funding program only applies to narrative projects in receipt of Screen Australia Narrative Content Production, Scripted Production, or First Nations Production funding.

The aims of the Narrative Content Market & Audience - Audience Testing Program are to support:

- audience testing domestically and/or globally for Australian narrative theatrical feature films during post-production and before picture lock;
- audience testing domestically and/or globally for Australian narrative theatrical feature films pre-release and after picture lock;
- informing and enhancing a cohesive audience strategy to increase title impact for Australian and, where relevant, global audiences post-Audience Testing.

This program will have one application round in the financial year 2025/26.

## 1.2. Available Funding

Applicants with a theatrical narrative feature film project in receipt of Screen Australia Narrative Content Production, First Nations or Scripted grant or investment funding may apply for a maximum amount of \$15,000.

Applications for the following platforms will be accepted:

- Theatrical feature film (inclusive of VR, XR, AR).

Screen Australia may determine a different level of funding than that requested based on the assessment of all projects submitted in the funding round.

### 1.2.1. Feature Film (inclusive of Children's)

For those projects where:

- theatrical is the first and primary release window in Australia;
- the project has not yet released theatrically in Australia;
- a bona fide ANZ Distributor has been secured and is arms-length from the producer:
- a local or international streamer does not form part of the Finance Plan; and
- a Rest of World (ROW) Sales Agent has been secured.

## 2. Inclusive Storytelling

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

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

Screen Australia encourages applications from applicants from all backgrounds, cultures and experiences. In particular, the agency welcomes applications from under-represented groups.

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

## 3. Eligibility

- Applicants and projects must meet Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#), any general eligibility or other requirements listed on the agency's website (see [Information for Applicants](#) and [Information for Recipients](#)), as well as the specific eligibility criteria set out in these guidelines.
- Specific requirements apply to projects which involve [First Nations participation or content](#).
- Specific requirements may apply to projects which involve community participation or content with the following communities: d/Deaf, disabled, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTQIA+, or those from other under-represented groups.

### 3.1. Applicant Eligibility

This program is open to arms-length co-applicants consisting of the project's distributor and the project's production company for theatrical feature film titles.

To be eligible, co-applicants must:

- be incorporated companies carrying on business in Australia, with central management and control in Australia;
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN);
- be registered for the purposes of GST if required by law;
- for the production company co-applicant, be arms-length to the distribution company and be the producer of the title and maintain and retain control of the rights necessary to carry out the project, meaning that it must have clear Chain of Title and must generally be party to any

underlying rights agreements; and

- for the distribution company co-applicant, be arms-length to the production company and be the bona fide ANZ distributor of the title with a distribution agreement in place.

The following types of entities are **not eligible** to apply to this program:

- Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agencies or bodies; and
- any organisations that are otherwise excluded pursuant to the [Information for Applicants](#).

### 3.2. Project Eligibility

To be eligible, the project must:

- be a theatrical feature film that is in receipt of Screen Australia Narrative Content, Scripted or First Nations Production Funding;
- not be locked or locking the cut of the film within the application and decision timeframe if requesting audience testing to inform the cut of the film;
- not have commenced theatrical release or exhibition in Australia if requesting audience testing to inform campaign, positioning and audience strategy;
- be not more than 18 months from confirmed release date if requesting audience testing to inform campaign, positioning and audience strategy;
- have been developed by Australian production companies/producers and creatives, not sub-contracted from a commissioning platform;
- provide a quote or quotes and outline of services for audience testing from an Australian or global bona fide audience testing provider. Screen Australia defines a bona fide audience testing provider as a business whose focus is to provide insights (qualitative and quantitative) on a project through testing locally and/or globally audience insights and trends on a project and the territories that the project will be available); and
- have secured a Rest of World (ROW) Sales Agent.

The following projects/costs are **not eligible** for funding:

- narrative projects for which the first and primary window is not theatrical feature film;
- narrative projects that are not in receipt of Screen Australia Narrative Content, Scripted or First Nations Production Funding;
- projects that are not prior to post-production or prior to release;
- capital works or purchases;

- retrospective costs;
- purchase of underlying Intellectual Property;
- non-narrative projects, such as documentary, factual, sporting or entertainment (i.e. panel shows and variety shows); and
- educational and training programs and projects.

## 4. Application Process

Before applying co-applicants must read and understand these guidelines, Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#), [Information for Applicants](#), [Information for Recipients](#), and preview the application form on SmartyGrants.

### 4.1. How to Apply

- Complete and submit the online application form prior to the application deadline through Screen Australia's [Application Portal](#) on SmartyGrants.

### 4.2. Application Form

Through the application form co-applicants must:

- provide all the information requested and answer the application questions;
- meet, where required, all eligibility criteria; and
- include all required supporting materials.

### 4.3. Required materials

Co-applicants are required to provide information in the application form and upload the following submission materials with their application form:

#### Creative

- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Plan for the Audience testing or campaign activity for the activity being applied for, where applicable (for example, a title may wish to test the title globally with regards to a specific community)
- First Nations Statement for the Audience testing or campaign activity for the activity being applied for, where applicable (for example, a title may wish to test the title regionally)

#### Budget

- Budget for eligible costs and any co-contribution provided by co-applicant or third party which directly relate to the activity of audience testing
- apply for a maximum amount of \$15,000
- a quote or quotes for audience testing from Australian and/or global bona fide audience testing provider(s)
- confirmation that the distributor, producer, key creatives will be involved in and receive audience testing report/s

## Materials

- Company Biographies for each co-applicant
- Company Biography for each audience testing provider
- Preliminary campaign Strategy and Schedule
- Audience Testing Strategy
- Distribution Agreement evidencing an arms-length relationship between distributor and producer/production company.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

### 4.3.1. First Nations participation or content

Where there is First Nations participation or content involved in the project applicants should provide:

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

## 5. Assessment

### 5.1. Process

- Once submitted, Program Operations will review each application to determine eligibility and ensure that required materials have been submitted. A member of the team may contact the applicant if there are questions regarding submission materials or eligibility.
- Once eligibility has been confirmed, the co-applicants will receive an email advising that their application has moved to assessment.
- Applications are assessed against the published criteria by Screen Australia delegates, with industry specialists as required.
- All projects involving First Nations content or participation will be assessed or co-assessed by First Nations Assessors.
- Some projects involving representation of communities and culture may be assessed by Specialist or Cultural Assessors.

## 5.2. Criteria

Applications will be assessed the following criteria:

- **Audience Strategy:**
  - Does the project have the potential to resonate with specific or broad Australian and/or global audiences, and will it invite them to buy a ticket?
  - Will the story have impact for audiences and/or reflect the depth and diversity of people and experiences from around Australia?
  - Does the preliminary campaign and audience testing strategy align with its intended audience reach?
  
- **Campaign Strategy:**
  - Is the preliminary campaign to be informed by audience testing activity strong and distinctive for the title?
  - Is the preliminary campaign suited to its platform and intended audience?
  - Does the preliminary campaign have potential to support discoverability and impact of the title?
  
- **Audience Testing Strategy:**
  - Does the previous experience and/or track record of the co-applicants position them to execute the audience testing strategy?
  - Will the timing, provider and team work collaboratively on the audience testing strategy and is there evidence that audience testing will impact the project and/or campaign?
  - Will audience testing support the impact of this title?

Other factors may be considered including the:

- availability of funds;
- range of projects in receipt of direct funding from Screen Australia, inclusive of a project's scale, budget, intended audience, genre and themes;
- range of applicants in receipt of direct program funding from Screen Australia, inclusive of applicant, applicant company and geographic diversity; and
- extent to which a project is likely to effectively and properly increase and amplify equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.

## 5.3. Decision and Notification

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application within seven (7) weeks of the program deadline.

Screen Australia will advise approved applicants via telephone call detailing the level of Screen Australia's approved contribution, as well as information about the contracting process and any applicable decisions.

Where an application is unsuccessful, the applicant will receive a short, written assessment against the assessment criteria which will accompany the decision notification.

Due to the high volume of applications Screen Australia is unable to provide further feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Decisions on applications are final.

## **6. Successful Applicants**

### **6.1. Contracting**

If a project is approved, the applicant will receive an approval email detailing the level of Screen Australia's approved contribution, as well as information about the contracting process and any applicable decisions.

Applicants will enter into a Market & Audience Agreement with Screen Australia.

If successful, the activities covered by the funding must commence post-contracting with Screen Australia (i.e. retrospective costs cannot be covered by the grant).

### **6.2. Terms of Funding**

- For further information about Screen Australia's standard conditions of funding, see Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#), [Information for Recipients](#) and the FAQs for the program.
- If your application is successful, Screen Australia will provide direct funding as a non-repayable grant. Direct funding from Screen Australia is separate to the [Producer Offset](#) and is **not** a contribution to the project's production or distributor expenditure budget.

## **7. Other Resources**

Further information about Screen Australia funding and resources to assist with submitting an application is available on Screen Australia's website:

- [Terms of Trade](#)
- [Information for Applicants](#)
- [Information for Recipients](#)
- Program FAQ

## **8. Contact**

If applicants have any further questions, contact Screen Australia's Program Operations on 1800 507 901 or at [audience.narrativecontent@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:audience.narrativecontent@screenaustralia.gov.au).

Please note that Screen Australia is unable to provide creative advice or review any materials that may form part of an application.

## **9. Privacy**

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