



Development Program

Program Guidelines

About the program

Screen NSW Development funding supports writers and producers to develop fiction or unscripted (documentary) and [online](#) projects with distinctive ideas and ambitious stories. All applications must have a well-articulated plan for their next stage of development and identify appropriate market partners to ensure significant audience reach.

Projects can be for release on **any** platforms including cinema, television and online.

Applications can be received at any time and must clearly address all the selection criteria.

Please review the online [Application Form](#), the Budget Guide, our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and make sure you have all the required documents ready for your application submission.

In addition, [Screen NSW Terms of Trade](#) must be read in conjunction with the [Application Form](#).

Key information

- *Funding amount:* Up to \$50,000 depending on the project type and level of market interest.
- *Applications opened:* 30 October 2023
- *Applications close:* 11:59pm, 30 June 2024 (reopening for 24/25FY on 1 July 2024)
- [Program page here](#)
- [Apply here](#)

Program objectives

The objectives of the program are to:

- Support the nurturing of new ideas and talent in NSW
- Ensure Key Creatives are given access to opportunities that benefit their careers and reinvest back into the NSW screen industry
- Support connections that will shape the future of our creative landscape and strengthen our position in the global market.

Eligibility

Who can apply

All applicants need to fulfil all the following criteria:

- Be either a writer or producer who is an Australian resident or citizen or contracted by a Australian company providing writing services.
- If a writer applies for funding without a producer attached to the project:
 - a) They must be residents of NSW and can only receive one round of funding for a project without a producer
 - b) Any subsequent applications must have an [Eligible Producer](#) attached. Where an applicant is an emerging individual or team and doesn't have a suitable credit, a script editor or recognised Executive Producer may be considered.
- If a producer applies for funding they must meet the definition of [Eligible Producer](#) and:
 - a) For NSW Producer applicants: you may engage a non-NSW resident writer, however, preference is given to all-NSW teams. Note: Screen NSW will only fund NSW elements – i.e., all expenditure must be in NSW and spent on NSW based recipients.
 - b) For Non-NSW Producer applicants: you must engage a NSW resident writer and the project must intend to shoot and /or post produce in NSW. Screen NSW acknowledges that co-productions and story content may sometimes require otherwise.
- If a director is attached (including any co-directors) **and** where the writers or producers attached cannot meet the credit eligibility requirements, the Director must have at least two '[Eligible drama credits](#)' in their respective role and the credits needs to be for the same type of project submitted for development support (e.g., fiction feature, documentary series or be congruent with them).
- Documentary applications:
 - a) Where the request includes shooting material, a director must be attached
 - b) From a director must include an eligible producer or executive producer
 - c) Directors must be NSW residents.
- Screen NSW is obligated to prioritise teams who are all NSW-residents.
- Applicants must hold the rights to the submitted project and be able to demonstrate this if required by providing chain of title documents.
- Authenticity of story elements is mandatory and projects must have individuals in significant creative roles representing [priority groups](#) that are aligned to the project's story.

AND

All applications must qualify based on one of the below eligibility criteria:

- a) The Writer must have an appropriate credit on a qualifying project:
 - I. A project that has screened at a recognised [Marquee Film Festival](#)
 - II. Had a commercial theatrical release
 - III. Acquired by a recognised Commissioning Platform with a proof the project is, at minimum already in production and has a release plan in place
 - IV. Online digital projects with demonstrated audience taking into consideration viewing levels such as Average Audience VPM (Volume per million)
 - V. The credit must be in the same role and for the same type of project submitted for development support (e.g., fiction feature, documentary series or be congruent with them).

OR

- b) Individual NSW practitioners who have received development funding or successfully participated in a development initiative from a Screen Agency or market player. Assessment of this prior support is at the discretion of Screen NSW and must be approved prior to submitting.

OR

- c) You can provide evidence of market interest (Letter of Interest is minimum) or have secured co-funding from a recognised distributor or commissioning platform.

Eligible projects

Eligible projects are:

- Narrative fiction or [documentary](#) projects (as defined by [ACMA](#)) for any release platform including cinema, television and online
- Creative interactive screen entertainment.

Non-eligible projects are:

- Short films under 60 minutes
- Lifestyle, Infotainment, Magazine, Sports, Game Shows and Current Affairs concepts.
- Community television
- Reality television series
- Projects being developed as part of a course of study.

Participation and Diversity:

- Authenticity of story elements is essential. Projects that do not have individuals in significant creative roles representing [priority groups](#) that are aligned to the project's story will be deemed ineligible.
- If your project contains First Nations Content, it will be ineligible if it cannot demonstrate appropriate Indigenous consultation and/or participation. Screen NSW does not currently support projects with significant First Nation's content without a member of the key creative team coming from an appropriate background. Please refer to Screen Australia's guidelines [Pathways & Protocols: a filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts](#).

Resubmission eligibility:

- If your project has been declined twice you cannot submit another application for the same project.
- You can submit a maximum of two applications per project through this program in any one financial year without market interest.

Definitions

An Eligible Producer is 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 **‘Experienced Producer’** is defined as having at least one credit as a producer on a feature film that has been released on a minimum of 5 commercial screens in one territory OR a primetime broadcast drama series or telemovie OR in the case of documentary, a producer or director with at least one ‘Eligible Documentary Credit.’

An **‘Eligible Drama Credit’** under this program is a drama film or program of at least 10 minutes duration which has:

- Screened at a [Marquee Film Festival](#), or
- Been nominated for an AACTA Award or Academy Award, or
- Been broadcast by a recognised commissioning platform, i.e., broadcaster or channel, or
- Had a commercial theatrical release.

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 (i.e., broadcaster or channel), or
 - Had a commercial theatrical release, or
 - Been invited to screen at IDFA, Hot Docs, or equivalent
- An interactive linear documentary which has been publicly released.

Diversity Commitment

Screen NSW is dedicated to promoting fairness and equality in its programs and interactions with the community. Our main priorities include supporting increased participation in the industry of people from underrepresented groups, including:

- Regional NSW
- Western Sydney
- First Nations people
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- People living with disability
- LGBTQIA+ people.

Supporting this participation encourages genuine storytelling and fosters inclusivity.

Screen NSW believes it is crucial for the narrative and characters of projects it funds to reflect the lived experiences of diverse communities. Furthermore, Screen NSW values the cultural expertise of the applicant's creative team in conveying an authentic story. Therefore, when evaluating applications, we consider the cultural authorship of the creative team as a significant factor.

To effectively contribute to the cultural and economic well-being of the state of NSW, screen content should resonate with and cater to our audiences. Embracing diverse ideas and fostering a diverse workforce will strengthen our local screen industry, making it more relevant to local audiences and more competitive globally.

Funding

Available funding

- Up to \$50,000 depending on the project type and level of market interest.
- Requested amounts should be reasonable and relative to the development stage and proposed activity, the scope of the final project being developed and align with our [Budget Guide](#).
- Applicants are expected to supplement this funding with their own or third-party contributions and Screen NSW funding is generally a partial contribution to the next stage of development.
- Screen NSW funding is provided as a development investment which must be repaid from the production budget unless we elect to rollover into the production. Development funding automatically rolls over into production and is treated as Screen NSW Equity or producer equity in accordance with our [Terms of Trade](#).
 - If the project goes into production and it is not funded by Screen NSW, the development funding will be treated as Screen NSW equity and is repayable.
 - When conversion to production does not occur, the funding is treated as equity and is not repayable.

What you can get funding for

Funding is for the development of a project and/or to secure market attachment for production finance.

Funding requests could include:

- Writers room costs, [series bibles](#), draft to draft for fiction series or one-off projects

- Draft to draft for fiction features
- Research, writing of [treatments](#), teasers
- Strategic shooting for [documentary projects](#)
- Proof of concepts, prototypes, concept art, test shooting (360-degree projects only), script, pitch documents
- Advanced stage projects with significant market interest, budgeting, scheduling, casting, travel to finalise production finance.

Development budgets cannot include funding for:

- Office overheads
- Legal fees
- Option fees
- Items already expended prior to applying for development funds
- Graphic design or printing costs associated with a pitch deck
- Catering costs for writers' rooms over \$200 per day.

Funding request caps

The total requested contribution from Screen NSW should not normally exceed:

Project Type	No Market Place	With Market Interest	With Market Co-finance
Fiction: Feature (draft to draft)	Up to \$25,000	Up to \$35,000	Up to \$50,000
Fiction: Series	Up to \$25,000	Up to \$35,000	Up to \$50,000
Fiction: Web/Online Series	Up to \$10,000	Up to \$20,000	Up to \$30,000
Fiction: Budgeting & scheduling	N/A	Up to \$5,000	Up to \$15,000
Documentary: Feature, Broadcast series or One-off	Up to \$15,000	Up to \$25,000	Up to \$35,000
Documentary: Web/Online Series	Up to \$10,000	Up to \$15,000	Up to \$20,000

Budget Guide

Note: The caps are applicable solely to Screen NSW's contribution. The applicant or third party is expected to cover the difference between the Screen NSW contribution and the budgeted cost.

Fiction

Cost	Maximum Amount	Development Stage
Writer's Fees	Up to \$10,000	Outline, Treatment or Scriptment
Writer's Fees	\$10,000 - \$30,000	Bible and Pilot episode (incl. polish)
Writer's Fees	Up to \$20,000	Per Draft (incl. polish)
Script Editor's Fees	Up to \$3,000	Bible, Outline, Treatment or Scriptment
Script Editor's Fees	Up to \$6,000	Draft to Draft
Producer's Fees	Up to \$3,000	Bible, Outline, Treatment or Scriptment
Producer's Fees	Up to \$5,000	Draft to Draft
Director's Fees	Up to \$5,000	Bible, Outline, Treatment or Scriptment or Draft
Consultant(s)	Up to \$3,000	Story, Subject, Research, Social Strategy, Digital, Mentor
Reader's Report	\$500	N/A

Documentary

Cost	Maximum Amount	Development Stage
Writer and Director's Fees	Up to \$5,000	Any Stage
Other Fees	Up to \$2,000 each	Producer, Researcher, Script Editor, Consultant(s)
Research Materials	Up to \$1,000	Any Stage
Shooting	Up to \$15,000	Teaser, Proof of Concept
Editing	Up to \$10,000	Teaser, Proof of Concept
Legal Fees	Up to \$2,000	N/A

Selection criteria

Your application will be competitively assessed against the following criteria listed below in order of our priorities:

Story

- The underlying idea's strength, distinctiveness, originality and dramatic potential
- Does the story feel timely or particularly resonant?
- The quality of the submitted materials: what work needs to be done on story, structure, character, dialogue, tone, etc.
- Is there clarity about genre and does the script deliver on it?

Audience

- The applicant's demonstration of pathway to audience appropriate to the project's budget size and financing strategy
- Potential of the project to reach and resonate with its target audience.

Creative Team & Development Plan

- Does the team have the skills and relevant experience to advance the project towards production and deliver on its creative vision
- The appropriateness of the development plan for this stage of funding.

Participation and Diversity

How robustly does the project advance [diversity](#) across one or more of the following:

- On-screen representation of diversity in protagonist/s, themes, narrative
- Key Creatives and project leadership
- Industry access and opportunities for training/career progression/mentoring
- First Nation's content and/or participation.

Screen NSW does not currently support projects with significant First Nations' content without a member of the key creative team coming from an appropriate background. With co-writing teams of Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers, the original concept must come from the First Nations writer. This must be demonstrated in the application.

Cultural and NSW Economic Benefit

- How the project generates cultural value in terms of local storytelling i.e., content and/or authorship
- How the project generates NSW economic value in terms of local storytelling i.e., content and/or authorship.

Start your application

[Apply here.](#)

Assessment process

The [Investment Team](#) assess projects across all our development programs. Regular meetings are held with Investment Managers and the Head of Screen NSW.

Final recommendations and approvals will be made in writing to the relevant financial delegate of the Secretary (Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade), typically the Head of Screen NSW.

Please ensure your application addresses all the [Selection criteria](#).

What happens once you've submitted your application and timing of decisions

- Your application will be assessed by our [Development Assessment Panel](#).
- Screen NSW aims to turnaround applications from receipt to decision meeting in 8 – 10 weeks.
- Please note that funding allocation follows a competitive process. Evaluations will consider the Selection Criteria outlined above, the availability of funds at Screen NSW, the variety of content and genre in Screen NSW's pipeline of projects and teams across all platforms, and the applicant's perceived need for Screen NSW funds.
- You will be advised via email regardless of whether your application has been successful or declined. If you are unsuccessful in your funding application, you may contact our Investment Managers who will provide some feedback.

Award process

Successful funding recipients will enter into a standard non-negotiable agreement with Screen NSW, setting out the terms and conditions of the funding.

Support and contact

Screen Investment team
investment@screen.nsw.gov.au