



# Audience Development Program

## Program Guidelines

### About the program

The Audience Development Program provides support towards public screenings, festivals and tours that deliver opportunities for NSW audiences to see and experience quality screen content and innovative practice. These can be one-off or annual events, in single or multiple venues.

The purpose of the Audience Development Program is to support skilled film festival organisations to connect audiences with filmmakers to celebrate culture, community and collaboration and enrich the cultural fabric of NSW through on-screen storytelling.

### Key information

- Funding amount: \$5,000 - \$50,000
- Applications open: Friday 19 June 2026, 10am (AEST)
- Applications close: Thursday 16 July 2026, 2pm (AEST)
- Designated Decision-Maker: Executive Director, Screen NSW(or their financial delegate)
- Grant opportunity type: Open, competitive
- [Program page](#)
- [Apply here.](#)

### Program objectives

The objectives of the Audience Development Program are to:

- Deliver a vital, dynamic, and diverse range of screen experiences to communities across NSW
- Contribute to the growth and sustainability of a vibrant and accessible screen sector
- Support the growth and impact of NSW screen organisations

- Contribute to the development of culture through the exhibition of screen projects to a wide audience
- Increase participation for audiences and screen practitioners from the NSW Government key priority areas:
  - o Regional NSW
  - o Western Sydney
  - o First Nations people
  - o People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - o People living with disability
  - o LGBTQIA+ people.

The Audience Development Program is funded and administered by Screen NSW, a division within the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport (DCITHS).

## Eligibility criteria

### Who can apply

To be eligible for funding under the Audience Development Program, applicants must:

- Be an Australian organisation, including:
  - o Companies and not-for-profit incorporated bodies
  - o Co-operatives, trusts or local government authorities
  - o A consortium or a group of organisations working collaboratively\*
- Have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- Be legally constituted and able to provide proof of legal status
- Adhere to general eligibility requirements under the Screen NSW [Terms of Trade](#).

*\*In the case of a consortium or group of organisations working collaboratively, one eligible organisation must be nominated as the lead organisation. If successful, the funding grant agreement will be between Screen NSW and the lead organisation.*

### Who cannot apply

Funding for the Audience Development Program is not open to:

- Individuals or groups of individuals
- Partnerships
- Unincorporated organisations
- Government departments and agencies
- Primary and secondary schools, tertiary institutions and TAFE colleges

- Previous NSW Government grant recipients who have not fulfilled conditions of funding and/or who are overdue in acquitting prior funding.

## Eligible proposals

Funding is available for events that deliver opportunities for audiences to see and experience quality screen content and innovative practice, in single or multiple venues across NSW.

Eligible one-off or annual events include:

- Public screenings
- Festivals
- Tours.

## Funding

The minimum funding amount under the Audience Development Program is \$5,000.

Applicants are expected to secure other sources of financial or in-kind support wherever feasible, such as from sponsorships, grants or subsidies from other agencies, revenue from ticket sales, fundraising and other activities.

Applications that do not include other sources of financial or in-kind support to deliver their event are not typically considered as competitive.

Funding amounts requested by applicants should be reasonable and relative to the proposed event and benefit to the NSW screen industry.

Applicants can request either Single Year or Multi-Year funding.

### Single Year

Applications for **Single Year** funding cover events occurring over a single financial year.

Funding is generally not offered above \$10,000 for a Single Year event.

However, applicants requesting Single Year funding over \$10,000 may be considered if their application can demonstrate:

- o A program of eligible events to be delivered over a single financial year
- o Events that have a significant benefit to one or more NSW Government key priority area.

### Multi-Year

Applications for **Multi-Year** funding cover events occurring over multiple financial years, for example 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2027 (for 2-year funding) and 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2028 (for 3-year funding). Multi-Year funding is capped at \$50,000 per year. However, grants to most applicants are typically in the range of \$10,000 - \$35,000 per year.

Multi-Year funding has two application tiers: Tier 1 for lower amounts (up to \$35,000 p.a.) and Tier 2 for higher amounts (\$35,001 - \$50,000 p.a.). Applicants applying to either tier must have a proven history of receiving and acquitting Screen NSW funding.

Please refer to the *Organisational Capacity* section of the Assessment Criteria for additional requirements for organisations seeking Multi-Year funding.

## What you cannot apply for

Funding for the Audience Development Program is not available for:

- Industry markets, conferences, or expos
- Publications or magazines about screen
- Development or production of screen content
- Activities that have also received funding from Screen NSW's Industry Development Program for the same activity in the same financial year
- Travel to markets, conferences, meetings, festivals
- Awards or competition component of a film festival or initiative
- School focused programs
- Games festivals.

## Selection criteria

Eligible applications are evaluated against a common set of five weighted assessment criteria:

### Project merit (30%)

Applications should include:

- A clear outline and rationale for the event including evidence of the need or demand for the event, intended audience and location/s
- Information about the personnel who will deliver the event, including details of their roles, relevant experience and key achievements
- Details of the key activities, milestones and dates
- A clear explanation of how the requested funding will be used to achieve the event objectives
- Quality and viability of the proposal i.e., whether the event fulfils an industry need and/or interest in the community
- Key result areas, indicators and targets for the event.

### Audience development and participation (20%)

Applications should include:

- Well-developed strategies for increasing audience participation in, and access to, high-quality screen content
- Justification for why the event should be regarded as a priority for funding i.e., facilitating opportunities to engage with diverse screen content that audiences would otherwise not have access to
- Appropriate measures to assess the success/impact of these strategies and to integrate knowledge gained into future events and programming.

## Benefits (20%)

Applications should identify how the event will:

- Build the capacity of NSW screen audiences
- Stimulate innovative screen industry practice and audience access opportunities in NSW
- Increase participation of audiences and screen practitioners from one or more of the NSW Government key priority areas:
  - o Regional NSW
  - o Western Sydney
  - o First Nations people
  - o People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - o People living with disability
  - o LGBTQIA+ people.

Please note that when an application is received from an applicant located outside of NSW, the event must be delivered in NSW and/or have a direct and strong benefit for NSW residents.

## Organisational capacity (20%)

Applications should provide brief information regarding the applicant's organisational capacity to deliver the event, including:

- An outline of the core business, aims and objectives of the organisation
- Proven previous performance in successfully delivering similar events in the screen industry
- An outline of the experience and expertise of the organisation as it relates to its ability to successfully deliver the event
- Comprehensive details of the organisation, including board or committee, staff and governance arrangements
- Financial information for the previous year (actual) and current year (estimated)
- Evidence of the organisation's legal status
- Evidence of specialist experience in the screen industry.

### Multi-Year – Additional Assessment Criteria

#### Multi-Year – Tier 1

To be considered for Multi-Year Tier 1 funding (up to \$35,000) applicants must:

- Demonstrate a strong track record of outcomes in delivering related events of scale
- Have successfully received and acquitted grant funding from Screen NSW in three of the last five years.

### **Multi-Year – Tier 2**

To be considered for Multi-Year Tier 2 funding (\$35,001 to \$50,000), applicants must:

- Demonstrate an outstanding track record of outcomes in delivering related events of scale
- Have successfully received and acquitted grant funding from Screen NSW in three of the last five years
- Have a proven impact on the NSW screen sector.

### **Budget (10%)**

Screen NSW is seeking budgets that demonstrate value for money.

The budget should provide sufficient detail to demonstrate that the event is cost effective, includes realistic income and expenditure targets and makes adequate provision for insurance and other liabilities. Explanatory notes should be used where needed.

Recurring projects must include previous year's budget actuals. Screen NSW funding is considered a partial contribution to the initiative and applicants must provide a finance plan indicating other financial and in-kind support available to deliver the project, substantiated by supporting documentation. Please refer to the template budget link in the application form.

The level of funding sought must reflect the proposed event's size and benefits to the NSW screen sector.

## **Application process**

Screen NSW uses the SmartyGrants platform for submission of all applications. Applications made using any other format will not be accepted.

A preview of the application form can be viewed on the [SmartyGrants portal](#).

### **Late applications**

Late applications due to technical difficulties will be reviewed and eligibility determined with absolute discretion by the Manager, Industry & Audience Development, Screen NSW.

A request for late submission due to technical difficulties must be submitted by email to [industry@screen.nsw.gov.au](mailto:industry@screen.nsw.gov.au) within 60 minutes of the application close time, setting out the reasons for the request, along with any evidence.

## What to include in your application

With regard to the assessment criteria, applicants must prepare responses to all questions and submit all core materials listed on the application form, including:

- Description and rationale of event, including any proposed delivery partners
- Demonstrated demand for event
- Event engagement and participation, including target demographics and inclusion of any NSW Government key priority areas
- Location/s for delivering the event
- Budget, including other sources of financial and/or in-kind support
- Organisational capacity to deliver event, including key team members
- Marketing strategy and target participants
- Milestones, outcomes, and key performance indicators
- Relevant support material (see information below)
- Additional application materials if seeking Multi-Year Funding (see information further below).

### Support material

Support material plays a vital role in how we understand and assess applications. Please submit high-quality support material that is concise, current and directly relevant to the proposed event.

Support material for proposals involving the First Nations arts and cultural sector and/or First Nations people, organisations and cultural material must include letters of support and confirmation of involvement from the relevant communities and/or organisations (see [NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Protocols](#)).

Other support material may include:

- A program of activities
- A budget
- Relevant and recent examples of delivering similar events
- A brief biography or CV for any screen practitioners or key collaborators involved in the event (maximum one A4 page per person)
- Confirmation letters and/or letters of support related to your event (provided as one document), such as from partners, venues, key sector contacts or other funding agencies.

Please submit support material in the amount and format required, including:

- Combined files not exceeding 25MB
- Up to five minutes of video or audio recording
- No zipped or compressed files
- Documents in PDF format where possible
- Links for externally hosted work only.

### Multi-Year – Additional support materials

Applicants seeking Multi-Year funding must also provide:

- A business plan that demonstrates the applicant organisation's viability for the period of funding (2 or 3 years) including other sources of funding and the most recent annual report (which must contain most recent financial statement)
- A detailed budget of proposed events and activities over the requested funding periods
- A Strategic Plan outlining:
  - o The proposed initiatives and activities over the requested funding periods
  - o Mission and Vision statements.

## What happens after you apply

When an application has been submitted, applicants will receive an email from our secure online grants system, SmartyGrants, confirming receipt of your application.

Please note that applicants cannot edit or modify an application once it has been submitted.

# Assessment process

## Eligibility

Applications will be initially assessed by Screen NSW staff to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria, and that all application materials are acceptable. Applications deemed ineligible will not proceed to the formal assessment process.

Screen NSW will inform all ineligible applicants via email within 14 days of this outcome.

## Assessment and Recommendations

Eligible applications will proceed to formal assessment by an assessment team, which includes a minimum of one Screen NSW staff member and at least two external industry subject matter experts.

Grant funding allocation under the Audience Development Program follows a competitive process. This means that the assessment team evaluates applications against the:

- Assessment criteria
- Strength of other applications
- Availability of Screen NSW funds.

The assessment team will assess and score applications individually, before meeting to discuss the overall applicant pool and identifying a shortlist of recommended successful applications. All applications are based on their overall score and recommended in order of ranking.

## Decision and Approval

The assessment team will recommend successful applicants to the designated decision-maker, Executive Director, Screen NSW (or their financial delegate).

The decision-maker will review, consider and approve successful applications based on these recommendations.

All applicants will be informed of their application outcome via email.

## Timing

The assessment process will take up to 9 weeks from the application closing date.

Screen NSW aims to notify all applicants of their application outcome by the week commencing 7 September 2026.

## Award process

Successful applicants must enter into, and abide by the terms of, a funding grant agreement with Screen NSW, which will include all deliverables and acquittal requirements in addition to the process for dealing with any variations to the funded event.

For **Single Year** applications, funding will be paid in one lump sum per financial year upon receipt of a signed funding grant agreement and valid tax invoice.

For **Multi-Year** applications, funding will be paid in one lump sum per financial year upon receipt of a signed funding grant agreement and valid tax invoice for year one, and specified times in subsequent funding years.

Screen NSW will not enter into a funding grant agreement with an organisation who has not acquitted any previous funding or is in breach of any funding obligations it has with the NSW Government.

## Variations

Any variations to the funding grant agreement, including project scope or activities, location or timeframes outlined in the application form and Program Guidelines must be submitted in writing for approval from Screen NSW. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of the grant offer.

Screen NSW has the discretion to approve or reject any written variation request from a grantee where the funding grant agreement has already been executed.

To submit a variation request, or if you are unsure if your enquiry qualifies as a variation, please contact the Industry and Audience Development Team via email at [industry@screen.nsw.gov.au](mailto:industry@screen.nsw.gov.au).

## Acquittals and final reporting

After delivering the event and before the end of the funding period, successful applicants must provide a final acquittal report detailing the outcomes of the event. Specific acquittal materials will be identified in the funding grant agreement between Screen NSW and the successful applicant, but will typically include:

- Overview of event
- Engagement with target audiences and any NSW Government key priority area
- Delivery locations
- NSW employment outcomes relevant to delivering the event, including volunteers
- Budget (actuals)
- Evaluation of event compared to identified outcomes and key performance indicators
- Marketing and publicity.

All acquittal materials and final reports must be submitted via SmartyGrants.

Failure to comply with any acquittal and reporting requirements may impact an organisation's eligibility to apply for future Screen NSW funding.

## Publication of grants information

The NSW Government Grants Administration Guide (the Guide) requires that certain information is published in relation to grants awarded no later than 45 calendar days after the funding grant agreement takes effect (see section 6.5 of the Guide and Appendix A to the Guide).

This information is also open access information under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW), which must be made publicly available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.

In accordance with these requirements, relevant information about the funding awarded will be made available on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder as soon as possible after the funding grant agreement is executed.

All records in relation to this decision will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW).

## Support and contact

We encourage you to discuss your proposal and funding expectation with us prior to making your application.

Screen NSW staff are available to provide technical advice and general information to potential applicants on the interpretation of these guidelines, including the types of events eligible for funding and support with the online application process.

Screen NSW staff cannot help directly with your application. To maintain a fair and equitable process, staff cannot edit or correct any applications or provide advice on the content or choices required against the Assessment Criteria for this grant opportunity.

For further information or clarification, please contact the Industry and Audience Development Team via email at [industry@screen.nsw.gov.au](mailto:industry@screen.nsw.gov.au).

## Conflict of Interest Management

Any conflicts of interest will be managed in accordance with the Guide.

A conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, may be identified if staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel has:

- A professional, commercial, or personal relationship with a party who can influence the application selection process
- A relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently
- A relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation received funding under the program.

If you identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest at any time, you must inform Screen NSW immediately via email at [industry@screen.nsw.gov.au](mailto:industry@screen.nsw.gov.au).

NSW Government staff, committee members and other officials including the decision maker must declare any conflicts of interest and ensure they are managed as per DCITHS's Code of Ethics and Conduct and the Guide.

## Complaint handling, access to information and privacy

Details on how Screen NSW handles complaints, access to information and your private information is available at:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/dciths/policies-plans-and-procedures/access-to-information/agency-information-guide>