



Strategic Opportunities Program

Grant Guidelines

About the program

The Strategic Opportunities Program supports innovative projects designed to strengthen the NSW screen and digital games industries. Projects that demonstrate alignment with the strategic priorities in the [NSW Screen & Digital Games Strategy \(2025-2027\)](#) will be highly valued during the assessment process.

This purpose of this program is to fund big picture, sector development projects that demonstrate significant benefits to the NSW screen or digital games industry. Under this program, Screen NSW provides support for projects with exceptional artistic and strategic potential that may not be able to access other sources of funding.

Funding under this program is only available on a one-off, single-year basis (i.e., an applicant cannot apply for funding for a project that has previously received funding under the Strategic Opportunities Program).

Applicants wishing to apply to this program must first discuss their proposal with Screen NSW prior to submitting an application.

Key information

- Funding amount: \$5,000 - \$50,000
- Applications open: Monday 13 October 2025
- Applications close: Friday 29 May 2026 (or until funding is exhausted)
- Designated Decision-Maker: Deputy Secretary, 24-Hour, Screen & Sound (or relevant financial delegate)
- Grant opportunity type: Open, non-competitive
- [Program page](#)
- [Apply here.](#)

Program objectives

The objectives of the Strategic Opportunities Program are to fund projects that:

- Build capacity within the NSW screen and digital games industries
- Support the growth and capability of NSW screen and digital games practitioners, organisations and businesses
- Are aligned with one or more strategic priorities in the [NSW Screen & Digital Games Strategy \(2025-2027\)](#):
 - Priority 1 – Creating Stories
 - Priority 2 – Building Sustainable Growth
 - Priority 3 – Improving Capacity and Capability
 - Priority 4 – Developing Audiences to Increase Demand
- Increase industry participation for audiences and/or screen and digital games practitioners from one or more NSW Government key priority areas:
 - Regional NSW
 - Western Sydney
 - First Nations people
 - People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - People living with disability
 - LGBTQIA+ people.

The Strategic Opportunities Program is funded and administered by Screen NSW, an entity within the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport (DCITHS).

Eligibility criteria

Who can apply

To be eligible for funding under the Strategic Opportunities Program, applicants must:

- Discuss their proposed project with Screen NSW staff before submitting an application
- Be an Australian organisation, including:
 - Companies and not-for-profit incorporated bodies
 - Co-operatives, trusts or local government authorities
 - 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 Strategic Opportunities Program is not open to:

- Individuals, Sole Traders, or groups of individuals
- Partnerships
- Unincorporated organisations
- Government departments and agencies
- Primary and secondary schools, tertiary institutions and TAFE colleges
- Previous NSW Government funding recipients who have not fulfilled the conditions of the funding and/or who are overdue in acquitting prior funding.

Eligible projects

Screen NSW accepts proposals for projects that:

- Build capacity within the NSW screen or digital games industry
- Are well planned and of high artistic quality and/or of strategic importance to the NSW screen or digital games sector
- Create innovative professional development opportunities for NSW screen or digital games practitioners
- Foster new and sustainable industry partnerships
- Increase industry participation for people from one or more NSW Government key priority area
- Demonstrate alignment with one or more strategic priorities in the *NSW Screen and Digital Games Strategy (2025-2027)*
- Represent value for money and efficient use of Screen NSW funding
- Have adequate levels of financial and/or in-kind support from other funding sources
- Will be designed and delivered by an organisation (and any partner organisations) with demonstrated experience in the screen sector
- Intend to be completed within one year of being funded.

Please note that if your project involves First Nations content or people, it will be ineligible for consideration if it cannot demonstrate appropriate First Nations consultation and/or participation.

What you can't apply for

Funding is not generally available for:

- Publications or magazines about screen
- Development or production of screen content

- Projects which are ordinarily eligible for other Screen NSW funding programs (e.g. Industry Development Program or Audience Development Program)
- Festivals
- Projects that have previously received funding under the Strategic Opportunities Program
- Multi-year projects.

Selection criteria

Applications are assessed against a common set of five weighted criteria:

Project merit (30%)

Applications should:

- Describe the project, its rationale, location/s, intended participants/audience, and delivery partners
- Outline the demonstrated demand for the project, including any evidence of such demand
- Provide brief information about the personnel who will deliver the project including details of their roles, relevant experience and key achievements
- Provide details of the key activities, milestones and dates for the project
- Provide key result areas, indicators and targets for the project.

Objectives (20%)

Applications should demonstrate how the project meets one or more of the objectives of the Strategic Opportunities Program, including:

- Building capacity within the NSW screen or digital games industry
- Supporting the growth and capability of NSW screen or digital games practitioners, organisations and businesses
- Alignment with one or more strategic priorities in the *NSW Screen & Digital Games Strategy (2025-2027)*
- Increasing industry participation for audiences and/or screen or digital games practitioners from one or more NSW Government key priority areas.

Benefits (20%)

Applications should:

- Detail the cultural and economic benefits of their project to the NSW screen or digital games industry.

Organisational capacity (20%)

Applications should provide brief information demonstrating that the organisation (and any partner organisations) has the experience and expertise to effectively deliver the project, including:

- An outline of the organisation's core business, aims and objectives
- An outline of the organisation's experience and expertise as it relates to the project
- Details of the organisation's governing body/committee
- Track record of the organisation, including the financial track record and experience of the organisation and any key individuals and partner organisations associated with the application
- Evidence of specialist screen or digital games industry experience.

Budget (10%)

Applicants should submit a budget that:

- Demonstrates value for money and efficient use of Screen NSW funding
- Is cost effective, including realistic income and achievable expenditure targets, as well as adequate provision for insurance and other liabilities
- Presents additional sources of financial and in-kind support available to deliver the project
- Reflects the project's size and benefit to the NSW screen or digital games sector.

Explanatory notes should be used where needed.

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 [here](#).

Please note that applicants must discuss their proposal with Screen NSW prior to submitting an application to the Strategic Opportunities Program.

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 for the project, including any proposed delivery partners
- Demonstrated demand for the project, including how the project meets the objectives of the Strategic Opportunities Program
- Industry development and participation as related to the project, including how the project will meaningfully engage with any NSW Government key priority area

- Location/s for delivering the project
- Budget, including other sources of financial and/or in-kind support
- Organisational capacity to deliver the project, including key team members and governing body
- Marketing strategy and target participants
- Milestones, outcomes, and key performance indicators
- Relevant support material (see information 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 project.

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 related to your project
- Relevant and recent examples of delivering similar projects
- A brief biography or CV for any screen practitioners or key collaborators involved in the project (maximum one A4 page per person)
- Confirmation letters and/or letters of support related to your project (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
- Where possible, documents in PDF format
- Links for externally hosted work only.

What happens after you apply

When an application has been submitted, applicants will receive an email from 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 two Screen NSW staff and one external screen industry assessor.

Grant funding allocation under the Strategic Opportunities Program is non-competitive, which means that applications are assessed individually, without reference to the comparative merits of other applications.

During the assessment process, the assessment team evaluations applications against the:

- Assessment criteria
- Availability of Screen NSW funds.

Each member of the assessment team will assess and score an application before deciding whether to recommend the application for approval.

Decision and Approval

The assessment team will make recommendations for successful applicants to the designated decision-maker, Deputy Secretary, 24-Hour, Screen & Sound (or their relevant financial delegate).

The designated 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

Outcomes are expected to take up to 4 weeks from application submission.

Award process

Successful applicants must enter, 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 initiative.

Payment will be made upon receipt of the signed funding grant agreement together with a valid tax invoice. Funding amounts over \$25,000 may require additional reporting and multiple drawdown payments.

Funding recipients must comply with the terms and conditions of the funding grant agreement. Funds may be suspended, or repayment may be required if the funding recipient fails to comply with any of the terms and conditions.

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 Grant 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.

Acquittals and final reporting

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

- Overview of project
- Engagement with target participants and any NSW Government key priority area
- Delivery locations
- NSW employment outcomes relevant to delivering the project, including volunteers
- Budget (actuals)
- Evaluation of project 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 opportunities.

Publication of grants information

The NSW Government Grants Administration Guide (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

All applicants must discuss their proposed project with Screen NSW before applying to the Strategic Opportunities Program. Please contact the Industry and Audience Development Team via email at industry@screen.nsw.gov.au to schedule a time to discuss your proposal.

Screen NSW staff are available to provide technical advice and general information to potential applicants on the interpretation of the grant guidelines, including the types of initiatives 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.

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.

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>.