



Australian Government



# SCREEN AUSTRALIA RESOURCES FOR DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS

February 2012

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## FUNDING PROGRAMS

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### Development and production

Screen Australia's Documentary Unit offers development support and production finance for both one-off documentaries and series through its Convergent Television: Documentary Programs.

#### Development:

- Primarily for experienced documentary makers
- Up to \$30,000 available per project
- Time-critical and matched funding also available

#### Production financing:

- **Domestic: National Documentary Program (NDP):** incorporates the National Interest Program and Making History Initiative, aiming to provide a distinctive slate of projects with a sense of cultural ambition and a budget scale that separates them from other documentary investments.
- **Domestic: General Documentary Program (GDP):** funding to match a domestic broadcaster's licence fee. Matched post-production funding up to \$100,000 is available, if 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.
- **International Documentary Program:** funding for projects with international finance as well as a domestic broadcast licence fee.
- **Signature Documentary Program:** supports projects that are bold in form and/or content, with a strong creative vision. Stories can be local or international with Australian authorship. The program can also provide post-production funds.
- **Special Documentary Initiatives:** Special documentary initiatives are offered from time to time. Check the website for details.

See [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/documentary](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/documentary)

### Indigenous

Screen Australia's **Indigenous Department** is interested in investing in documentary projects which not only exhibit strong original ideas and a skilful grasp of documentary form and storytelling, but also provide professional development opportunities for key team members.

To be eligible for funding from the Indigenous Department, applicants and their projects must have Indigenous Australians in key creative roles; a minimum of the writer and director must be Indigenous. Funding is not intended for projects by non-Indigenous filmmakers with Indigenous content.

See [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/indigenous](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/indigenous)

## All Media

The **Digital Ignition Program** supports innovative, non-linear, interactive storytelling or game content that has a significant narrative component. It provides funding for screen practitioners to explore new opportunities, including new tools for storytelling, new platforms for reaching audiences, evolving finance plans and revenue models, new professional collaborations, and lower barriers for new talent to break through.

The program offers project development support as well as an annual targeted workshop.

Through the **All Media Production Program** Screen Australia invests in the production of strongly narrative projects that take risks and push the envelope of creative storytelling on traditional and non-traditional platforms. Storytelling across multiple platforms is encouraged.

The program also includes scope for special initiatives with content platforms, aggregators and developers.

See [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/allmedia](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/allmedia)

## Enterprise

Screen Australia's **Enterprise Program** provides funding over a three-year period to support a small number of production companies that have identified opportunities to develop and expand their business in terms of turnover, range and number of projects and/or the range of business activities undertaken to enhance the company's sustainability. The Enterprise Program has now been running for three years providing funding to 21 companies. The Enterprise Program and guidelines are currently being reviewed.

See [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/enterprise](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/enterprise)

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# INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS

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A documentary approved as a co-production is regarded as a national production of each of the co-producing countries. This means it is eligible to apply for any benefits or programs of assistance available.

In Australia, projects approved as co-productions can apply for investment from Screen Australia and they will bypass the significant Australian content (SAC) test and be deemed an Australian film for the purposes of the Producer Offset (see below).

An international co-production must be made under the terms of one of the arrangements in place between Australia and the co-producing countries. Australia has treaties with the United Kingdom, Canada, Italy, Ireland, Israel, Germany, South Africa, Singapore and China; Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with France and New Zealand.

For more information, see [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/coproduction](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/coproduction)

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# PRODUCER OFFSET

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Screen Australia administers the Producer Offset, a refundable tax offset (rebate) for producers of eligible Australian programs. The Offset is worth:

- 40 per cent of Qualifying Australian Production Expenditure (QAPE) for features
- 20 per cent of QAPE for non-features.

The Offset is paid through the Australian company tax system after a project is completed and Screen Australia has issued the production company with a Final Certificate. Broadly, in order to be certified, a film or program must meet a number of criteria. For documentaries, the QAPE must be at least \$250,000 per hour and total QAPE must be at least \$500,000, and for features, the total QAPE must be at least \$500,000.

See [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/producer\\_offset](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/producer_offset)

Instead of receiving the Producer Offset, eligible documentaries with budgets of \$500,000 or less can apply for a Producer Equity payment equal to 20 per cent of the budget (see below).

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## PRODUCER EQUITY PROGRAM

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Screen Australia's Documentary Unit administers the Producer Equity Program which provides a direct payment of funds to producers of eligible low-budget Australian documentaries (budgets of \$500,000 or less), equal to 20 per cent of the approved budget.

### **Projects with Screen Australia investment**

Producers applying to Screen Australia for documentary production funding should apply for the Producer Equity payment in the context of their funding application.

Projects with Screen Australia funding approved on or after 1 July 2011 are eligible.

### **Projects without Screen Australia Investment**

Producers not applying to Screen Australia for documentary production funding will need to satisfy a number of provisions including the eligibility criteria in order to access the Producer Equity Program.

The project must have commenced pre-production on or after 1 July 2011.

See [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/producerequity](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/producerequity)

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## MARKETING SUPPORT PROGRAMS

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Screen Australia's marketing activities aim to assist Australian productions in reaching wider audiences, on any platform. In order to do this, we want filmmakers to understand, consider and implement the marketing needs of a project from inception through development, production and distribution.

**Funding programs** relevant to documentary makers include:

- **Theatrical P&A** – funds to enhance a theatrical documentary's marketing campaign and increase both audience and revenue.
- **Festival & Marketplace Travel** – grants to practitioners to attend a range of international events.
- **International Festival Materials** – grants to enable creation of the screening and promotional materials required when films are selected to screen at key festivals.

See [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/funding/marketing\\_funds](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/funding/marketing_funds)

**Information resources** include:

- **Festival and market profiles:** profiles of key international festivals and markets, including tips for attendees.
- **Marketing guides:** tools to help filmmakers identify what marketing opportunities exist, in order to maximise the efforts of their marketing and publicity team from day one, including *Directory of International Sales Agents*, *Working with a Unit Publicist*, *Working with a Unit Photographer*, *Producing an EPK* and *Marketing Budget Estimates*.

Screen Australia also hosts stands at a number of international markets including the European Film Market (EFM) Berlin, Cannes Film Market, MIPCOM and MIPTV.

See [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/marketing](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/marketing)

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## NFSA'S FILM AUSTRALIA COLLECTION LIBRARY AND SALES

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Administration of the Screen Australia Library and Sales functions was transferred from Screen Australia to the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA) on 1 July 2011. The collection is now known as the Film Australia Collection (FAC).

For more information about the FAC Library and FAC Program Sales see

[www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/film-australia-collection](http://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/film-australia-collection)

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# DOCUMENTARY-RELATED PUBLICATIONS

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## Statistics

### *Documentary Statistics*

Comprehensive statistics on production, funding, distribution and exhibition of Australian documentaries are available through the Research section of the Screen Australia website.

See [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/research/statistics/documentaries.asp](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/research/statistics/documentaries.asp)

## Find a Film database

The Screen Australia website has a **searchable film database** with over 4,000 Australian documentary titles since 1980, with credits, synopses, sales contacts and subjects.

See [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/films](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/films)

## Budgeting

### A–Z Documentary Budgets

Screen Australia's A-Z Budgets are Excel templates designed to provide a guide to preparing budgets in the format required by funding bodies. The Documentary Budget gives an indication of the QAPE (Qualifying Australian Production Expenditure) status for Producer Offset applicants.

See [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/a-zbudget](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/a-zbudget)

## Getting started

Screen Australia publishes a number of printed and online information guides that may also be of interest, such as:

- *Getting Started in the Film, Television and Interactive Digital Media Industry*: A guide to training courses, attachments and finding work
- *I've Got a Great Idea for a Film*: What to do if you have a great idea for a film or have written a script and don't know what to do next
- *Information for Filmmakers*: A guide to organisations and information sources for film and television production in Australia
- *What is a Synopsis? An Outline? A Treatment?* A short and simple explanation of synopses, outlines and treatments for drama and documentary

See [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/filmmaking/Getting\\_Started.aspx](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/filmmaking/Getting_Started.aspx)

## Photocopying this guide:

This guide is regularly updated. Please check the Screen Australia website prior to copying to ensure you have the most up-to-date version:

[www.screenaustralia.gov.au/filmmaking/Getting\\_Started.aspx](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/filmmaking/Getting_Started.aspx)

Screen Australia's Publishing Unit welcomes amendments/additions to this guide.

Please phone (02) 8113 5800 or toll free 1800 213 099, fax (02) 9357 3714

or email [info@screenaustralia.gov.au](mailto:info@screenaustralia.gov.au)

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