



Australian Government

SCREEN
A U S T R A L I A

CHARTER OF OPERATIONS

2010–2011

SEPTEMBER 2010

1. Statement of Purpose

Screen Australia is the key Federal Government direct funding body for the Australian screen production industry. Its functions are to support and promote the development of a highly creative, innovative and commercially sustainable Australian screen production industry.

Screen Australia has been created under the *Screen Australia Act 2008* and was formed on 1 July 2008 to take over the functions and appropriations of its predecessor agencies: the Australian Film Commission (AFC), the Film Finance Corporation Australia (FFC) and Film Australia Limited (FAL).

This 2010-11 Charter of Operations has been drafted in conjunction with the development of Screen Australia's three-year corporate plan spanning 2010 to 2013. The vision, goals and priorities set out in this document are expanded upon in the Corporate Plan which is expected to be approved by the Minister for the Arts in the second half of 2010.

Screen Australia, across its various departments, supports the development, production, promotion and distribution of Australian screen content by:

- Supporting production of a range of content including features, documentaries, television drama and children's programs
- Supporting the growth of screen business
- Supporting marketing and screen culture initiatives which focus on engaging audiences with Australian content
- Developing high-quality scripts and proposals
- Facilitating innovation and audience-engaging online content
- Supporting Indigenous talent and distinctive stories
- Administering the Government's Producer Offset and International Co-production Program to increase the commercial sustainability of production in Australia
- Providing authoritative, timely and relevant data and research to the industry and government
- Promoting access to the extensive archive of Australian documentary screen content.

2. Vision and Goals

Audience engagement and creative story telling are at the heart of Screen Australia's vision. Screen Australia will promote an environment where audiences demand more Australian content, where screen content contributes positively to the cultural fabric of Australian society, and where a commercially sustainable and creative screen production industry can flourish.

Screen Australia's goals are to:

- A. Grow demand for Australian content (see priorities 7.1 & 7.2)
- B. Support the development of a more commercially sustainable screen industry (see priorities 7.3 & 7.4)
- C. Increase the quality, variety, innovation and ambition of projects and talent (see priority 7.5)
- D. Ensure that Indigenous content is central to the wider success of the Australian screen industry (see priority 7.6)
- E. Lead industry debate by being an authoritative source of information about the Australian screen industry (see priority 7.7)
- F. Be an efficient, responsive and accountable organisation (see priority 7.8)

3. Leadership

Screen Australia will provide national leadership within the Australian screen industry by:

- Encouraging highly-skilled development practice in Australia to facilitate the delivery to the production sector of quality screenplays
- Investing in quality screen productions that engage audiences and have cultural relevance
- Contributing to the development of a commercially sustainable screen industry by promoting the effective use of the Producer Offset and the International Co-Production Program
- Implementing programs to identify and nurture screen professionals, and working proactively with the strongest Australian talent, including renewing the industry's talent base through the Talent Escalator program
- Supporting further growth of existing screen businesses, encouraging new business partnerships and alliances and supporting dynamic businesses to develop strong slates of projects through the Enterprise program
- Leading industry debate by providing authoritative, timely and relevant data and research to the industry and government and ensuring such information results in continuous improvement to Screen Australia programs
- Actively identifying and nurturing talented Indigenous Australian screen practitioners who display bold, distinctive and diverse voices
- Playing a leadership role in the development and advocacy of policy relating to Indigenous screen content creators

- Encouraging innovation across the industry, including supporting cross-media platform applications and new ways of responding to the rapidly developing digital world.

4. Key Relationships

Screen Australia will work collaboratively with State screen agencies, screen development agencies, industry groups and guilds and other government-funded organisation such as AFTRS and Ausfilm to avoid duplication, while ensuring the provision of comprehensive and complementary programs to the industry by:

- Working through the Heads of Cultural Institutions (HOCI) to develop a strategic approach to common operational issues and avoid areas of potential overlap
- Meeting with other industry groups and guilds, as well as working with State screen agencies towards the development of joint programs where appropriate
- Consulting regularly with relevant Australian government agencies (including the Australian Taxation Office and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet – Office for the Arts) both formally through forums such as the Australian Screen Production Incentive Co-administration Committee and informally as necessary on particular issues
- Forming tripartite arrangements with Screen Australia, State screen agencies and the screen development agencies to minimise administrative overheads and to ensure the delivery of complementary programs to the industry
- Implementing a three-year research plan after consultation with AFTRS
- Ensuring Screen Australia meets the highest standards of governance through close co-operation with Government departments and agencies, including:
 - Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet – in particular, the Office for the Arts (DPMC)
 - Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
 - Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)
 - Department of Finance and Deregulation (DFAD)

5. Accessibility

Screen Australia will ensure the widest possible access to programs it has financed by:

- Ensuring that all productions have a clearly-defined audience and include appropriate marketing material
- Providing assistance to expand the distribution of Australian productions to reach wider audiences including exploring digital distribution platforms
- Encouraging screen practitioners to develop innovative and audience-engaging online content
- Maintaining access to the screen titles previously produced by Film Australia through footage sales and zero fee licensing of up to 10 minutes of content for Australian documentary makers
- Marketing titles to which it has copyright or third party agreements to local and international markets, including educational institutions
- Supporting a program of activities, such as festivals and awards, to enhance access to Australian screen culture
- Providing financing to film productions conditional on meeting suitable captioning requirements to aid the hearing impaired.

6. Governance Framework

Screen Australia is committed to the highest quality outcomes in the management and service delivery of its programs; to meeting all appropriate governance and relevant legislative requirements; and to keeping the Minister for the Arts and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet – Office for the Arts (“the Department”) fully informed in a timely fashion. It will accomplish these goals by:

- Promptly responding to requests from the Minister’s office and the Department
- Securing revenue from other sources, primarily by optimising net recoupment from screen investments
- Ensuring any efficiency gains from the merger of the legacy organisations are used to increase industry programs
- Putting in place a central framework which is effective in preventing fraud and managing risk effectively through the implementation and monitoring of Screen Australia’s risk management plans
- Maximising the clarity and effectiveness of Screen Australia’s communication with its clients/stakeholders
- Identifying and implementing improvements in the contracting process, in consultation with stakeholders
- Ensuring Screen Australia’s processes and decisions are as transparent as possible and rigorously managing any conflicts of interest that may arise.

7. Priorities 2010–11 mapped against Screen Australia's goals

A. Grow demand for Australian content

7.1 Screen Australia will invest in quality screen productions by:

- Evaluating feature film projects and investing in quality productions that are audience focused and culturally relevant
- Working with producers to secure appropriate finance plans including sources of funds outside Screen Australia to increase overall production expenditure
- Supporting the production of quality television drama and children's television
- Supporting the production of a wide range of documentaries, including high-quality productions under the National Documentary Program

7.2 Screen Australia will assist Australian productions to reach wider audiences on many platforms through its marketing programs by:

- Encouraging producers, directors and writers to incorporate an awareness of audience into their projects from inception
- Providing finance to stage workshops, master classes, seminars, conferences or special events to increase marketing, distribution and exhibition knowledge and skills
- Requiring marketing funds to be quarantined in Screen Australia-funded productions to ensure effective marketing campaigns
- Providing an umbrella service to Australian producers at major international markets and festivals
- Enhancing the reach of Australian films by supporting selected projects to strengthen their distribution and marketing strategy, including employing digital distribution methods
- Maintaining access to the documentary screen titles previously produced by Film Australia through footage sales and zero fee licensing
- Marketing documentary titles to which it has copyright on third party agreements to local and international markets, including educational institutions.

B. Support the development of a more sustainable screen industry

7.3 Through the Enterprise Program, Screen Australia will support further growth of existing screen businesses, encourage new business partnerships and alliances and support creatively outstanding businesses to develop strong slates of projects. Specifically, the Enterprise Program will fund selected companies' three-year business plans to:

- Grow business to their next stage and to produce a slate of active, quality projects
- Enable businesses to increase their skill base, take on additional professional expertise, and employ trainees and interns
- Assist businesses to develop new revenue streams and develop their presence in the international market place
- Form new business partnerships and alliances within the industry
- Provide working capital to businesses that are likely to be able to obtain the necessary working capital only from public (rather than private) sources at this point in their development.

7.4 Screen Australia will contribute to the development of a commercially-sustainable screen industry by promoting the effective use of the Producer Offset and the International Co-production Program. Specifically, Screen Australia will:

- Administer the programs in an effective, efficient and timely way
- Provide high-quality information about the programs to industry, both domestically and internationally
- Ensure the administration of the programs are undertaken at the highest standards according to legislation, regulation and Government accountability frameworks
- Participate in the Trade and Co-production Forum and contribute to the Australian Government's diplomatic strategy.

C. Increase the quality, variety, innovation and ambition of projects and talent

7.5 Screen Australia will support creative story telling and the identification and development of Australian talent by:

- Developing outstanding stories from a range of genres that engage domestic and international audiences
- Identifying and developing a pool of highly skilled writers and screen developers with outstanding commercial and creative track records
- Proactively working with the strongest Australian talent on original, creatively excellent stories with a clear sense of audience and appropriate budget expectations
- Running *Springboard*, a strategic short film development and production workshop aimed at 'the next wave' of talent
- Developing creative and audience-engaging content for innovative technologies.

D. Ensure that Indigenous content is central to the wider success of the Australian screen industry

7.6 Screen Australia will support Indigenous talent and distinctive stories by:

- Identifying and nurturing talented Indigenous filmmakers who display bold, distinctive and diverse voices
- Promoting an Indigenous perspective as central to Australian culture, and pivotal to the wider success of the Australian screen industry
- Fostering in Indigenous screen content creators the skills and ability to contribute a distinctive and diverse body of creative work, as well as the ability to work in and contribute to the wider industry
- Ensuring Indigenous works are acknowledged and recognised in both the local and international marketplace
- Playing a leadership role in the development and advocacy of policy relating to Indigenous screen content creators.

E. Lead industry debate by being an authoritative source of information about the Australian screen industry

7.7 Provide authoritative, timely and relevant data and research to the industry and Government and ensure such information results in continuous improvements to Screen Australia programs by:

- Conducting or collating audience research as appropriate including environmental modelling and the impact of program changes
- Publishing an annual production report, covering feature film, TV drama, documentaries and Post, Digital and Visual effects). This publication should present an authoritative statistical snapshot of these sectors of the industry.
- Encouraging a collaborative approach to data gathering and policy development
- Analysing the success of Screen Australia's programs and recommending reform where appropriate
- Reducing the cost of data gathering and the burden on respondents.

F. Be an efficient, responsive and accountable organisation

7.8 Provide the highest-quality outcomes in the management and service delivery of Screen Australia's programs while maintaining a balance between cultural and industry growth objectives through:

- Providing infrastructure to support and enhance the delivery of Screen Australia's programs and policies
- Managing its affairs with due diligence and meeting all appropriate governance and compliance requirements
- Promoting a high-performance culture and a committed and engaged workforce.