

GUIDELINES

First Nations Short Film Program

Script Development Initiative



South Australian **Film Corporation**

The South Australian Film Corporation is committed to supporting First Nations filmmakers to tell their stories, develop their screen storytelling craft and build their professional careers through practical learning opportunities and mentoring.

What is on offer?

The **First Nations Short Film Program** (FNSFP) is a skills development program for First Nations storytellers at all career levels. The objective of the program is to support the career development of South Australian First Nations writers, directors, and producers.

The program will support scripted short films (not unscripted, factual, or documentary).

Stories that include the use of First Nations languages are encouraged.

This program will be delivered in two phases.

Experienced First Nations script consultants and/or mentors and an experienced supervising producer will provide support across both phases.

Phase 1 – Script Development Initiative (commencing July 2026)

Phase 1 will be delivered in partnership with The Mercury. South Australian First Nations writers are invited to apply with a concept for a 7–10-minute short film script.

Up to five (5) teams will be funded to develop a short film script from early concept to polished final draft. The writers will receive support through workshops, one-on-one feedback sessions and industry mentorship.

Phase 1 will include a three-day in-person script development workshop with mentors (see Key Dates).

A networking event during Phase 1 will help writers to connect with short film directors and producers.

By the end of the program, each writer will deliver a polished short film script and be eligible to apply for Phase 2 – **Production Initiative**.

Phase 2 – Production Initiative

Projects successfully developed through the First Nations Short Film Program Script Development Initiative (Phase 1) will be invited to apply for the Production Initiative (Phase 2). Only those projects will be eligible for Phase 2.

Applicants will be required to apply as a team (writer, director, producer).

Up to two (2) teams will be selected to receive support through workshops, one-on-one feedback sessions and industry mentors, and up to \$45,000 per project to produce their short film.

SAFC staff will work with the teams to introduce them to experienced crew and Heads of Departments.

GUIDELINES

First Nations Short Film Program

Script Development Initiative



South Australian **Film Corporation**

About the Teams:

This is a skills development program for the South Australian First Nations screen sector. The writer and the director must be First Nations. Priority will be given to projects with First Nations producers.

Experienced producers who are not First Nations will be considered on a case-by-case basis where they can demonstrate a prior track record in successfully producing scripted short films to a high standard.

Who is eligible?

Key eligibility requirements and criteria are defined in the [SAFC Terms of Trade](#).

In addition, for Phase 1:

- The writer must identify as First Nations
- The writer can be at any career stage
- The writer must demonstrate a commitment to screen writing and/or other body of writing work
- The writer must own or have option to acquire the rights to develop the work
- The writer must be available to meet all program deadlines and participate in all meetings

If you are not sure if you are eligible, please contact the SAFC.

How will applications be assessed?

Phase 1 – Script Development Initiative

The selection panel will comprise of representatives from the SAFC and The Mercury, a program mentor and an independent First Nations screen practitioner, to assess:

- The originality and creative ambition of the concept
- The overall quality of the pitch materials
- The track record of the writer
- The benefits of the program to the writer's career
- The willingness of the writer to engage in the script development process and to work professionally and to a high technical standard within the timeframes provided, as demonstrated by their Professional Development Statement

GUIDELINES

First Nations Short Film Program Script Development Initiative



South Australian **Film Corporation**

How do I apply?

Applications can be made through the SAFC's online grant portal safilm.smartygrants.com.au

You will need to submit:

- **A one-line description or 'logline' and a 1–3-page synopsis of the idea**

For tips on how to write a synopsis visit [Screen Australia | Info Guide | Story Documents](#)

- **A short bio**

Include your name, your current job title (if applicable), your home town, your professional goals and any relevant achievements or accomplishment in the screen and or arts industry.

- **A Writer's Statement** (maximum of two pages)

Include your vision for your project, the theme, the genre, style, tone and other film references. Ask yourself what are the motivations and goals for telling this story? What do you want to say? And why are you the best person to tell this story?

- **Professional Development Statement** maximum (maximum one page)

Tell us how participating in this program will help you to achieve your goal of becoming a screenwriter and director and how you will benefit from the program

- If available, please provide examples of your previous writing.

Where can I find out more?

For more information, please contact SAFC First Nations Programs Lead Brian Scarce on +61 8 8394 2020 or brian.scarce@safilm.com.au.