

SBS calls for diverse and First Nations creatives to get curious about contemporary Australia through new documentary initiative

SBS and NITV have announced the launch of *Curious Australia*, a new, nationwide initiative seeking submissions for standalone, half-hour documentaries reflecting the diversity of people and experiences of contemporary Australia.

In partnership with Screen Australia, and state and Territory agencies Film Victoria, Screen NSW, Screen Queensland, Screen Tasmania, Screen Territory, Screenwest and the South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC), *Curious Australia* will support screen practitioners from under-represented backgrounds in the sector to bring their diverse stories to Australian screens. Successful documentaries will be commissioned for SBS platforms, including SBS VICELAND, NITV, and SBS On Demand.

Criteria for *Curious Australia* applications includes two key creative roles on a project being held by people from an under-represented background, including those identifying as First Nations Australians; women, those with diverse age backgrounds; people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds; people living with disability; people of diverse sexuality and gender identities including LGBTQIA+; people from under-represented locations (including regional and remote areas); and people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Projects must be stand-alone unscripted documentaries suitable for a half hour television slot, and they should reflect SBS's Charter and explore issues relevant to contemporary Australia in an innovative way.

Susie Jones, Commissioning Editor, Documentaries, at SBS, said: "Through *Curious Australia*, we've partnered with Screen Australia and screen agencies around the country to seek out documentaries which put the spotlight on those things that make Australia unique, the people that inspire us to see things from a different perspective, and authentic stories that spark curiosity, enlighten and engage audiences in powerful and entertaining ways. It's an exciting new addition to our factual offering across the network, providing a unique opportunity for documentary-makers to tackle contemporary Australian stories and issues while also supporting the development of diverse creative talent in the sector."

Kyas Hepworth, Head of Commissioning and Programming at NITV, added: "We're really looking forward to seeing bold and unique stories from First Nations documentary makers across Australia uncovered through this initiative, exploring and reflecting the diverse experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today."

Screen Australia's Head of Content, Sally Caplan, said: "*Curious Australia* aims to discover exciting, new content from documentary filmmakers with genuine and powerful Australian stories to share and explore. We are thrilled to be partnering with SBS, and state and territory agencies to bring these captivating projects to audiences around the country."



Film Victoria CEO, Caroline Pitcher, said: “Victoria is home to a wonderful diversity of people and communities - each with their own story to tell. Alongside SBS, Film Victoria is proud to be backing our local creators to share and celebrate their diverse screen stories with audiences around Australia.”

Grainne Brunson, Head of Screen NSW, said: “Screen NSW is committed to levelling the playing field and sharing the stories of screen practitioners from under-represented backgrounds. We are pleased to partner with SBS, Screen Australia and other state and territory agencies on the *Curious Australia* initiative and look forward to seeing these diverse stories brought to life on screen.”

Kylie Munnich, CEO at Screen Queensland, said: “SBS has long been at the forefront of diverse commissioning and programming. As part of our core commitment to identifying and supporting diverse Queensland-made screen stories, Screen Queensland’s goals are aligned with those of SBS. We are proud to partner in this career-building opportunity for under-represented screen creatives working in factual storytelling.”

Screen Tasmania Executive Manager, Alex Sangston, said: “Screen Tasmania is committed to supporting Tasmanian screen practitioners to develop and produce stories that reflect the diversity of people and experiences within our community. We are proud to be supporting this new groundbreaking initiative from SBS, which will provide a powerful storytelling platform for practitioners from under-represented backgrounds to inspire, intrigue and entertain audiences.”

Jennie Hughes, Director of Screen Territory, said: “Screen Territory is delighted to be a part of the *Curious Australia* initiative. The Northern Territory is a unique and diverse place where Indigenous languages are still widely spoken and First Nations culture is interwoven intrinsically in the fabric of our multicultural society. Screen Territory looks forward to continuing to build on our strong relationship with SBS and for Territory screen practitioners to have the opportunity to contribute to the national story in adding their voices to this important initiative.”

Screenwest CEO, Rikki Lea Bestall, is thrilled to be partnering with SBS on the *Curious Australia* initiative, saying: “Screenwest is committed to developing the talented pool of diverse storytellers in Western Australia and providing opportunities for their stories to be showcased to the rest of Australia”.

South Australian Film Corporation CEO, Kate Croser, said: “The SAFC is committed to supporting and promoting South Australian screen practitioners with diverse experiences, cultures and backgrounds who can tell compelling stories on screen that reflect the enormous diversity of their audiences, and engage them in new and exciting ways. We are proud to partner with SBS on this exciting national initiative.”

Curious Australia is targeted at mid-career practitioners working on lower-budget, exciting and risk-taking projects.

Submissions can be made directly with relevant local screen agencies in each state or the Northern Territory. Applications will close 12 July 2021.



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