



## AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S TELEVISION FOUNDATION

### **Project Development Funding Guidelines**

The Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF) is the leading body for Australian children's media, making Australian children's lives better through screen content that reflects our culture and our values, and which makes an enduring contribution to their cultural and educational experience.

Australian children deserve to hear their voices and see their world reflected in the programs made for them, and to see local stories and their culture on screen.

The ACTF invests in and supports children's media which is made specifically for Australian children.

We provide a multifaceted assistance program for producers and writers including project development, production funding, international market representation and recoupment.

These guidelines set out the requirements for ACTF project development support which is often the first step in working with the ACTF on your project.

### **What We Look For**

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#### ***Audience***

All projects should target the Australian child audience and, in our opinion, be likely to be of interest to Australian children.

Television projects should be aiming for the appropriate classification for the section of the child audience the program is targeted to. That might be either G or PG classification or P or C as defined by ACMA.

Feature film projects should be aiming for a 'G' or 'PG' rating from the OFLC Classifications Board.

Projects aimed at a teen audience (under 18), which may attract an M rating, may be considered by the ACTF, if in the ACTF's view there is market interest and if the content is appropriately handled. Consideration of these projects would be subject to available ACTF funds.

## ***Your Project***

Projects can be based on an original idea, or adaptations of a novel or other work.

We look for originality and new ideas not already in the marketplace, or currently on television.

Projects should have an Australian voice and point of view.

Projects should reflect Australia's cultural diversity and consider the diverse interests and experiences of the child audience. They may also reflect other areas of diversity such as family composition, gender identification, ability, religion, the different locations and lifestyles of children across Australia.

It would be expected that any project that contains Indigenous content, themes, or storylines would have Indigenous writers or creatives on the producing and/or development team and if specific to a community must be accompanied by written permission from the relevant Indigenous community, authorising the Applicant's use of such material.

If the project is an adaptation of someone else's work (such as a novel, play, character or concept developed by one of the team), the Applicant must obtain or have optioned the work or character and have obtained all the necessary rights from the creator prior to making an application for development funding.

Options should have a reasonable length of time to run following any ACTF Development Funding approval, to allow for the project's realistic development, commissioning, and financing timeline.

Copies of all contractual documentation, demonstrating that the Applicant has obtained the necessary legal rights to deal with the material on which the project is based, must accompany the application. If such options or chain of title documents are not provided with the application and all in order, the project will be unable to be considered for funding.

## ***Format and Genre***

We provide funding for television series, one-off television programs, telemovies and feature films.

Programs can be aimed at commissions from a public broadcaster, commercial broadcaster, pay broadcaster, video on demand service, or theatrical release.

Format and episode length vary, and it is useful to familiarise yourself with the types of formats, series lengths, and episode lengths that broadcast platforms usually commission for your intended audience's age group.

Funding is available for a range of genres including live action drama, animation, factual, documentary, and other genres as may be commissioned for a child audience.

Before applying for development of a theatrical feature film, it is worthwhile speaking with local distributors about their requirements in this area, and their interest in the genre and age group.

## ***Levels of Development Funding***

We will only fund one stage of development on any project at a time.

We require as a minimum that award rates are paid to contributors involved in the development of a project.

To develop a feel for the levels of funding and stages of development that we have previously funded, please look at the [funding section](#) of the ACTF website, or discuss with our

Development Managers ahead of applying for funding.

Projects with an offer of matched development funding from a broadcaster, distributor, co-producer, or state agency will assist an application, but are not a pre-requisite.

### ***Applicant and Creative Team***

We will consider the experience of the creative team when assessing projects for funding.

Whilst ACTF does not require that all the proposed creative team have experience in their relevant area, projects with a strong and experienced producer, story producer, or writer managing the project are preferred.

ACTF is committed to providing opportunities to new voices and emerging talent in the development of children's programs and encourages Applicants to include at least one emerging writer in the development of their project, whether it is as notetaker, participant in the workshop, co-writer or another opportunity.

ACTF is committed to diversity both on screen and off, and Applicants are encouraged to consider diversity in their teams before applying. We believe that diversity of voices in development brings diversity of story and character, and authenticity to the project, and that diversity in the room reflects the child audience.

### ***Project Assessment***

ACTF development funding is in high demand and as such funding rounds are competitive and projects are assessed on criteria\*\* including:

- Is the audience at the forefront of the idea?
- Is it entertaining?
- the quality of the existing development materials
- originality of the idea and the existing development materials
- its potential to appeal to an Australian child audience
- the appeal and relevance to the stated age group
- experience and track record of the creative team
- Is it the applicant or creators' story to tell?
- How are the world and characters in the project reflected in those developing the project?
- Is it authentic?
- cultural relevance
- format
- reflection of Australian society
- existing interest from local and international broadcasters, distributors, and investors
- does the application propose matched development funding from a broadcaster, distributor, the producer or co-producer, or state agency
- proposed or anticipated production budget (projects should have a production budget that is capable of being financed)
- if there is an experienced producer attached
- if there is an experienced story producer/head writer attached
- likelihood of the applicant and/or attached team being able to take the project from scripting, through financing, and into production
- whether it fills any gaps ACTF have recognised in the market
- marketability; and
- any other issues the ACTF may consider relevant.

\*\* Not all criteria would be expected to apply to all projects.

## **How to Apply**

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### ***Applications – General***

Applicants should permanently reside in Australia or be Australian citizens.

An Applicant can be a company or individual. If there are two Applicants on a project, they must have the appropriate agreements in place – setting out their co-development or co-production arrangement, and rights in the work to be developed – ahead of applying to the ACTF.

If the Applicant is a company, it should be incorporated in Australia, and have Australian-based management and control. We may require a personal company director's guarantee when contracting with companies.

We require all Applicants to provide an Australian Business Number (ABN).

If the Applicant is an individual, they should be the creator or the holder of the copyright in the project (i.e., have an option in the underlying work).

If the Applicant is a company, the rights to the project must have been assigned to the Applicant company prior to an application to the ACTF being submitted (i.e., they must have already obtained and paid for the option ahead of applying to ACTF).

All applicants are required to read the Project Development Funding Guidelines and discuss their project with a member of the ACTF Development team before applying for development funding.

For the remainder of 2023, the ACTF accepts development funding applications at any time via the ACTF Funding Portal. Turnaround time for assessment and decisions will vary depending on volume of applications received, and whether the ACTF requires further documentation or information from you once your application has been submitted.

Once received, you will be contacted by one of the ACTF team as we work through the application assessment process.

Decisions on whether the ACTF will invest in a project will be notified 4-6 weeks after the deadline.

In exceptional circumstances ACTF may consider a project outside of the rounds – this is at ACTF discretion.

Applications are submitted via the application form on the ACTF website which can be found [here](#).

All Applicants should retain copies of material submitted.

## ***Application Form & Materials Required***

All Applicants must fill out the ACTF Development Funding application form available on our website [here](#), and as a part of that form you will be asked to provide the following:

- a 4-5 line synopsis of the project
- a one-page synopsis of the project
- any existing development materials;
  - for television projects these may include a concept document, series bible, and episode scripts
  - for a feature film these would include, as a minimum, an extended treatment for the film or a first draft script
- a CV and background on the Applicant (whether company or individual) and their track record
- CVs for the creative team proposed for this stage of development including writers, script editors, story producer, workshop participants, etc.
- Information on how the project has been, or will be, developed with a creative team that reflects the diversity within the story world and how the writing team will bring an authentic voice to your characters.
- all relevant legal documentation such as rights/option agreements and consent from Indigenous communities (see below).
- evidence of marketplace or broadcaster interest in the project (if applicable)
- confirmation of matched development funding from State Agency or Broadcaster (if applicable)
- Development budget for the proposed stage of development
- Proposed finance plan for this stage of development

A full checklist of items needed ahead of completing the application form can be found [here](#).

### ***A Note re Feature Film Projects***

It is preferred that feature film projects be at least extended treatment stage or 1<sup>st</sup> draft script before applying to ACTF for development funding. In special circumstances, we may consider a project at an earlier stage; however, this would be for exceptional projects or ideas, or from a highly experienced feature film team.

We may choose not to fully fund development of a feature film project and partner with Screen Australia or a State Film Agency, Distributor, or Broadcaster to match whatever is being asked from the ACTF for the relevant development stage. Please discuss feature film development with the ACTF team before applying.

Only creative teams – consisting of at least a Producer and Writer – may apply for development funding for feature films. However, our preference would be for a creative team consisting of Producer, Writer and Director attached to the project, although we understand that this may depend on the development stage of the project. We also prefer that more than one member of the creative team applying for funding have a proven track record in fully produced feature films – in their proposed role or similar.

One member of the creative team should be the primary Applicant for the purposes of performing the obligations under the deed of funding, and receipt and disbursement of funds. If one member of the team is the sole applicant, they must hold the rights in the project and provide chain of title.

Alternatively, teams can formalise their relationship in a company structure.

## **After the Application is Submitted**

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### ***Funding Decisions***

Upon submitting your application via the ACTF Funding portal on the website, you will receive acknowledgement that it has been successfully submitted.

Once the application has been reviewed, you will receive notification that it has been received and you will be contacted by a member of the ACTF development team with regards to any queries, or for further information or clarification that may be needed. You may also be contacted by a member of the ACTF legal team should they require any additional information with regards to chain of title review.

The Applicant will be advised of the timeline for a funding decision once the application and chain of title documents have been reviewed.

All offers of ACTF development funding are subject to the ACTF's standard terms and conditions and limited to a reasonable time period. If the ACTF Standard Agreement is not executed by the ACTF and the Applicant within 60 days of the offer being made, it will be withdrawn and the Applicant will need to re-apply. Full details will be provided in the letter of offer, should you be successful.

### **If You're Successful**

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#### ***Funding***

ACTF development funding is cashflowed in stages aligned with the development of the project. These will be outlined in the letter of offer as they relate to your specific project.

ACTF funds cannot be spent on purchasing the rights to use existing works (such as optioning a book). All rights in the existing work must have been acquired prior to applying to the ACTF for funding.

A percentage of the ACTF development funds will be withheld until final delivery of all materials and receipt of the acquittal paperwork.

#### ***Copyright***

The ACTF will own a share of the copyright in funded projects, until development funds, including the administrative premium, are repaid. Funds can be repaid by the applicant at any time, otherwise, they should be included in the production budget for the project and repaid on the first day of production.

Further explanation of these terms can be provided by the ACTF's legal department and will be outlined in the letter of offer and long form agreement. Applicants should satisfy themselves that they can accept these repayment conditions prior to applying, as these conditions are not negotiable.

It is strongly recommended that Applicants obtain independent legal advice prior to making the application.

#### ***Credits***

If a project proceeds to production, the ACTF is entitled, at its discretion, to receive a single card full frame end credit, comprising the ACTF's logo and the words "Developed with the assistance of the Australian Children's Television Foundation".

### ***Further Involvement***

The ACTF will have the first and last right of refusal to distribute funded projects to the Australian education market, and to develop educational resources for such projects if the projects are finally produced.

Where the ACTF invests a significant amount in development of a project, or provides second round funding, it may include an option in the agreement for first and last right of refusal for international distribution rights, which the producer may use to demonstrate market interest in the series in negotiations with broadcasters. Should the Applicant already have a distribution partner on the project, or alternative plans for the project which are likely to see the project go into production, this condition may be waived. It is best to discuss any issues directly with the ACTF in relation to specific projects.

These conditions, along with any that may be recommended by the ACTF Board on a particular project, are determined on a case-by-case basis.

### ***Delivery and Acquittal***

The ACTF expects the development of any project that it invests in to be a priority for successful Applicants, and that it will be completed in a timely manner according to the schedule provided and agreed upon, prior to contracting.

The ACTF Development Agreement will set out a delivery date for the development to be completed, and all materials and acquittal to be delivered.

The applicant will be required to fill out a detailed acquittal of expenditure of the development funds in a form prescribed by ACTF, including providing relevant invoices and/or receipts. This acquittal is similar in form to a Cost Report, and a template will be provided in the long form agreement.

### ***Payment of Award Rates***

The ACTF expects that Writers and Script Editors involved in any project will be paid at no less than the minimum Australian Writers' Guild rates for children's television. Information on current rates is available from:

The Australian Writer's Guild at [www.awg.com.au](http://www.awg.com.au).

### ***And Finally...***

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#### ***Confidentiality***

The ACTF will respect the confidentiality of applications.

However, it does have the right to:

- provide the existing development materials and final delivery materials to external assessors;
- include details of the name of the project, the applicant, the creative team and ACTF funding amount, and a brief synopsis in its own documents and publications including on its website and newsletters; and
- add the Applicant's and creative team members' email addresses to the ACTF e-news mailing list. The ACTF's Privacy Policy can be found [here](#). The ACTF's Privacy Collection Statement can be found [here](#).

***Warranty and release***

Applicants are required to execute the deed of warranty and release which accompanies the application form.

***Changes to guidelines***

The ACTF may change these Guidelines at any time. Any such changes will be updated on the ACTF website [Funding Section](#).