

next step

Short Film Initiative - Application Guidelines

Aim

This initiative aims **to assist an establishing filmmaker** to develop and produce an engaging, entertaining short of up to 15 minutes in length in any genre for festival entry.

Furthermore, the intention is that a **next step** film provides the filmmaker with the final stepping-stone they need in a mentored production environment. Subsequently they can move forward with their career and independently engage with the mainstream industry (working with the SAFC, Screen Australia, broadcasters, sales agents, distributors, private investors, etc).

This year, initially we intend to shortlist three teams to participate in an intensive and structured six-week development phase consulting with the MRC developers. Of the three projects supported with script development, one will then be green-lit for production investment of \$15,000 cash (plus \$5,000 of in-kind equipment/facilities hire from each of our sponsors, Picture Hire Australia and Oasis Post.

Who is eligible?

- Applicants must be residents of South Australia, MRC or AWG members and 18 years +.
- **‘Establishing’** is defined as a filmmaker who, in the role in which they are applying, has made one or more post-tertiary films with cash and/or in-kind production support from the MRC.

Script or practitioner development support from the SAFC, AFC or Screen Australia does not rule you out, but if you’ve produced or directed...

- a broadcast documentary or TV series;
- a short film funded by the AFC or SAFC’s Short Film Fund;
- a feature film funded in part by Screen Australia, the FFC, AFC or the SAFC; or
- a movie for a US studio or cable network

... you are no longer defined as establishing and therefore ineligible.

- This is not an entry-level initiative. For your team to be eligible, **both the Producer and Director must be ‘establishing’ filmmakers**. You need to have a track record and have created a body of work in film before you are ready for the **next step**. In exceptional circumstances, MRC reserves the right to invite a potential applicant who has not made an MRC funded short to apply.

- The screenplay will be assessed on its own merits regardless of the Writer's previous production credits.
- Prior attendance at MRC, AFTRS or AWG courses by the key creatives will be favorably considered by the industry panel.
- The applicant must be the originator of the script, the holder of the copyright, or have an option on all relevant rights in the project and must be able to deal in the rights for the project to be able to make any application.
- You must apply as a team. If you are a Writer and want assistance to find Producers and Directors to pitch your idea to, call the MRC development team.
- Applications seeking post-production funding are ineligible.
- Anyone who is in default of any contractual obligations to the SAFC or MRC is not eligible.
- Please discuss your application with a member of MRC's development team prior to submitting.

Application Materials

1. Completed Application Form

Available from MRC or download from www.mrc.org.au

2. Production-ready script

Please ensure your script is formatted according to industry standards, does not exceed 15 pages and includes the following information on the cover page:

- the name or working title of the project
- the writer's name, address and all contact details
- relevant copyright holder and contact details (if not the writer)
- draft number and date

3. Story Concept

In two sentences, describe your story in the following way:

It's a story about(*description of your protagonist/hero*)
who wants to(*your hero's goal in the story*)
but(*your hero's main problem/obstacle*).

So he/she(*your hero's plan to overcome this obstacle*)
and then.....(*what happens... how the story unfolds*).

Your story concept should be written in such a way that it engages readers and makes them want to know more about your story. If you can't describe your film in this way, then you should probably consider rethinking the structure of your story and/or your hero's journey.

4. Story Synopsis

In no more than one page describe your story in terms of the themes you are exploring through action and character. This is not the plot of the story! Don't merely tell us what happens in your story but focus on what your story is about... your message... your 'controlling idea'.

What it is that you as a filmmaker that want to say to an audience with this project.

The story synopsis brings out the dramatic issue at the heart of your story, keeps a clear eye on what's at stake for your characters and gives us an understanding of how and why your story will engage with an audience.

5. Producer's Statement

Confirm in this one page statement an understanding of the genre of your film and pitch to us **why the themes in your film will resonate with an audience**. Outline how your take on these themes is novel and fresh. Discuss your production methodology and give us confidence you can deliver the film within the time and budget available.

Include information about who you intend to work with on this production and how their skills will contribute to the outcome. Include information as to what it is about this story that makes it worth telling and in career terms, how it fits within your career path and that of your team.

6. Director's Treatment

In no more than one page, outline your project and how it will be realised. Talk to your stylistic intent for the material and how you will approach the storytelling, both visually and from a performance point of view. Discuss how this film fits into your career trajectory and why it is an important story for you to tell. What is your passion for the material, why are you the right person to tell it, why is this story relevant and why now?

7. CVs (and showreels where applicable)

Producer, Writer and/or Director. CVs must be no longer than two pages.

Filmmakers who are shortlisted for development will also need to supply the following documentation when they submit their shooting script for consideration for production funding...

8. Chain of Title Documents

Agreements clearly confirming that the Writer is the sole owner of copyright in the script and that it is an original work. Furthermore that the Writer grants to the Producer the Option to acquire certain rights in the work for the purposes of producing a film and exploiting that film in the marketplace. There will also need to be an agreement between the Director and the Producer in which the Director assigns all their rights in their work on the script to the Producer. These contractual agreements can be obtained from either the MRC or AWG.

9. A-Z Budget, Quotes, HOD Deals

The Producer needs to convince us that the team is all on the same page and that there is a plan... an appropriate methodology that will enable the film to be beautifully realised within the parameters of the available investment and schedule.

The Producer will need to negotiate with equipment and facilities providers and **supply their quotes**, which are reflected in the budget. Similarly HOD's will need to be contacted and **deal memo's or letters of support supplied** which confirm the agreed rates (or donation of their time at no cost) for their work on the film as budgeted.

10. Marketing Strategy

Considered plan prioritizing the sort of festivals which the filmmakers feel may be receptive to screening their film and why.

Please forward **5 copies** of all application materials to:

Media Resource Centre

13 Morphett Street

Adelaide SA 5000

by **12 noon Friday July 9, 2010.**

Applications received after the deadline (including by post) will not be accepted.

Terms and Conditions of Funding

- A) In the development phase, the Writer, Producer and Director will all need to commit to a structured six week development plan in consultation with MRC developers.
- B) Successful applicants must provide the Media Resource Centre with an ABN or complete a 'Statement by a Supplier' form for taxation purposes.
- C) If successful in securing production funding, the production team must be available to commence pre on Sept 6 with a view to completing principal photography in October. Delivery to the MRC will be Dec 24.



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Timeline

(as of May 6, 2010)

May 7	Next Step launch
July 9	Deadline for next step entries – 12 noon
July 19	Committee shortlists 3 projects for development
July 20 – Aug 27	Script development... 3 teams over 6 weeks - script meetings with MRC development team - rewriting/refining drafts
Aug 27	Shortlisted teams submit shooting scripts & support material
Sept 6	Committee green-lights 1 project for production
September	Contracting & Pre
October	Shoot window
Nov/Dec	Post
Dec 24	Delivery to MRC