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Western Australian Regional Film Fund Criteria and Guidelines

Fund overview

The Western Australian Regional Film Fund (WARFF) is a WA State Government Royalties for Regions funded initiative committed to encouraging regional film industry activity through strategic investments that builds Western Australian regional capacity and contributes to the liveability and vibrancy of Western Australian regional communities.

WARFF is established for the purpose of generating the greatest possible regional outcomes through developing and supporting regional based business, services and talent by delivering a coordinated investment strategy into Western Australian regional screen industry activities with a particular focus on:

- Purchasing goods and services in the regions
- Capitalising on tourism development opportunities in the regions
- Building capability in the regions
- Facilitating job creation in the regions
- Establishing longer term economic and cultural benefits in the regions (“innovative legacies”)
- Facilitating further investment in the regional film industry activity, including by way of achieving direct project returns.

Regional Outcomes

In order to achieve Regional Outcomes, the WARFF principally invests in film production which includes the production of audio-visual content of any format.

During the course of the application process, a Regional Outputs and Outcomes Form (ROO) will need to be developed between the Producer and the relevant Western Australian Regional Development Commission on the expected regional outcomes that the project will deliver.

Special consideration will be given to projects that deliver significant Regional Outcomes such as:

- High profile West Australian stories (such as the adaption of a best-selling/critically acclaimed WA novel, a greatly significant local historical event or identity),
- High value returnable television drama series that can confirm an extended production period in a regional area,
- An international production with a strong likelihood of reaching a large global audience.

WARFF is managed by Screenwest in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) through the nine Western Australian Regional Development Commissions, Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) and other key stakeholders. The Screenwest Terms of Trade do not apply to the activities or management of the WARFF and, whilst funded projects have benefits to the screen industry, is not a screen industry support program.



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Funding available

Stage 1: Regional scout and community liaison assistance:

Producers can apply for a small amount of funding during Stage 1 of the application process to assist with travel and negotiation of the Regional Outcomes to be delivered by the project.

This funding will be offered as a grant. Applicants are able to apply for up to \$10,000 per project if they meet the below eligibility requirements outlined below.

Stage 2: Production Funding:

The level of production funding investment will be determined by the economic and cultural value the project is considered likely to deliver to the Western Australia Region/s.

WARFF's investment is available in addition to any other public funding received, including that from Screenwest's production funding programs. Please note the required minimum multipliers below and applicable guidelines of any other public funding.

WARFF Funding offers are valid for a limited period (generally 3months) and will be outlined in the Letter of Offer, or unless otherwise approved by Screenwest.

Eligibility

WARFF has absolute discretion over the type of project it chooses to invest in.

An application must first meet the following minimum eligibility criteria in order to be considered for Stage 1 and/or Stage 2 investment.

The applicant must:

- Control all legal rights in the project including but not limited to the underlying rights in order to produce and fully exploit the project throughout the world in all media in perpetuity;
- Have an extensive professional track record that demonstrates his/her/its ability to successfully produce and deliver a project of the scope and scale proposed and/or the attachment of other individuals in positions of responsibility that demonstrate likewise; and.
- Have evidence supporting the project's potential to reach significant audiences, principally demonstrated by superior market commitment, well known source material and/or an original works from successful writers, highly regarded and well known onscreen and directing talent attachments.



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Terms of funding

WARFF investments are negotiated on the best available commercial terms for the outcomes sought given the opportunity available (i.e. the WARFF will seek the best deal possible for the benefit of the Western Australian Region/s having regard to the proposed Regional Outcomes).

Recoupment

In most instances the WARFF's investment will act as 'free gap' (i.e. first out, no fees or interest premiums) or pro rata pari passu with a commercial gap lender. Please note however, Screenwest has absolute discretion to negotiate recoupment terms as it sees fit. The recoupment structure for each project will be determined on a case by case basis.

Completion Guarantee

Screenwest requires a letter of intent from a Completion Bond prior to proceeding to Stage 2 in the Application Process, unless otherwise approved by Screenwest.

Screenwest requires the appointment of a completion guarantor for all film projects that receive WARFF funding to bond an agreed level of regional expenditure. Screenwest may consider a waiver of bond requirements for television projects on the provision of a satisfactory risk management plan for the approval of Screenwest.

Audit and Final Cost Statement

All successful applicants are required to provide some form of reporting and acquittal. Individual funding agreements set out specific audit and reporting requirements.

In the specific case of WARFF production funding, an independent audit is required of all production expenditure at project completion, including final QWAE and final QWARE.

How to apply and submitting an application

Applying for WARFF is a 2 Stage Process:

Stage 1:

- WARFF Stage 1 completed Application Form

Stage 2:

- WARFF Stage 2 completed Application Form
- Agreed upon Regional Outputs and Outcomes (ROO) Form
- All additional documents referred to in the Application Form checklist

Applications must be made at least 3 months prior to production.



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Proposals will be accepted at any time.

Submitting an Application

Please ensure all requested material is completed and submitted together. Applications that do not include all requested material may not be accepted for assessment.

Applications should be emailed to funding@screenwest.com.au

Applicants should forward all required application materials in a single email. Application materials are not to be emailed directly to individual Screenwest staff members.

For emails larger than 8MB, send via Screenwest's Hightail Account by following this link: <https://spaces.hightail.com/uplink/screenwest>

An application receipt will be forwarded to the applicant within two working days to confirm that Screenwest has received the application. It is the applicant's responsibility to contact Screenwest if an application receipt has not been received within this timeframe.

Application material(s) will not be returned by Screenwest.

Assessment

Assessment Criteria:

Applications will be competitively assessed against the following criteria:

1. The applicant's track record.
2. The quality of the overall proposal.
3. The proposed Regional outputs, and potential Regional Outcomes, from the proposed project
4. Minimum likely audience reach.
5. Minimum qualifying spend in the Western Australia Region/s (QWARE*) of \$500,000.
6. Minimum qualifying spend in all of Western Australia (QWAE) of \$1,000,000.
7. A minimum ratio of spend to WA public funding contributions as follows:
 - a. 2:1 - qualifying spend in regional Western Australia to Fund investment.
 - b. 3:1 -qualifying spend in all of Western Australia to all Western Australian state contributions when also receiving funding from other state sources such as Screenwest or Tourism WA. (*Information outlining what qualifies as Regional Spend (QWARE) and all of Western Australia spend (QWAE) is available on the Screenwest website.*)
8. The competitiveness of the investment terms proposed.

**QWARE means the amount of qualifying regional expenditure spent by the Recipient in the course of producing the Film in the region in accordance with the terms of this Agreement, being money spent*



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on the purchase of goods and services with businesses that are owned or operated within the Region, payments to individual providers who are resident in the Region, inbound flights to the Region, crew per diems paid for production activity in the region, 10% of all fees, overtime and loadings paid to non-WARR or WARC crew while in the region and including without limitation the items set out in the Regional Spend Budget approved by Screenwest.

WARFF will also take into account any other aspect of the proposal and criteria it considers reasonable in making its assessment and the terms upon which, at its absolute discretion, it may elect to support a WARFF Investment.

The above criteria, and in particular, the minimum spend ratios specified will be considered and potentially altered by the WARFF from time to time in order to optimise fund outcomes and administrative efficiency. They will be reviewed periodically and in response to market conditions. It is the applicant's responsibility to notify Screenwest immediately if any of the anticipated or actual spend ratios change or are likely to change during this assessment period.

Regional areas are those parts of regional Western Australia as defined in the Regional Development Commissions Act 1993 (WA).

Assessment Process:

Stage 1: Applications will be assessed by Screenwest Management.

Stage 2: Applications will be assessed by a panel consisting of Industry experts, Screenwest Management, Screenwest Board and a representative from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

All WARFF funding recommendations will be presented to the Screenwest Board for endorsement, with final approval of project funding by the Minister for Culture and the Arts.

Fund contact

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