



# BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR REGIONAL AREAS

## OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



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## INTRODUCTION

Royalties for Regions, underpins the State Government's long-term commitment to developing Western Australia's regional areas into strong and vibrant regional communities that are desirable places to live, work and invest. Royalties for Regions focuses on delivering benefits to regional WA through six objectives:

1. Building capacity
2. Retaining benefits
3. Improving services
4. Attaining sustainability
5. Expanding opportunity
6. Growing prosperity

The Western Australian Screen Fund (WASF) sits under this umbrella. WASF is a Western Australian State Government Royalties for Regions funding initiative, provided through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. It provides production funding that encourages regional film industry activity, builds local capacity, and contributes to the liveability and vibrancy of regional Western Australian Communities.

### Our WA Regions

There are nine regions in Western Australia that the State Government's Department of Regional Development promotes and facilitates the economic, business and social development of and they are:

- + Gascoyne
- + Goldfields-Esperance
- + Great Southern
- + Kimberley
- + Peel
- + Pilbara
- + Mid West
- + South West
- + Wheatbelt

These regions are established as part of the Regional Development Act 1993. For more information visit <http://www.drd.wa.gov.au/regions/Pages/default.aspx>

# BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR REGIONAL AREAS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The Best Practice Guide for Regional Areas has been developed as a useful tool to assist Regions to attract and lever the best benefits of Film and Television productions being shot in their region. It is focused on best practice for engaging with productions, developing and executing regional outcomes for the benefit of the community and getting the highest return for both the regional community in which the film is being shot and for the filmmaker.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to note that although film production does bring major benefits to regional communities, both during production and when the film/TV series is screened, one of the stronger recommendations and insights has been it is better to 'under promise and over deliver', particularly with production expectations.

This will be an evolving document to incorporate continued learnings.

## WORKING WITH THE TRADITIONAL PEOPLE OF REGIONAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Western Australia is a broad State, the largest within Australia. When working in the regions filmmakers need to understand and respect that Aboriginal people were the first peoples of our State and are the traditional owners of the land. They have been connected to and cared for the land for over 40,000 years.

There are hundreds of different Aboriginal groups within Australia, each with their own distinctive language, customs and lore. This is particularly true in the north of Western Australia where in some areas English is the second language and Aboriginal people can speak up to three or four Aboriginal languages and dialects.

Under Aboriginal lore<sup>2</sup> and custom, Aboriginal people have cultural responsibilities and rights in relation to the land of which they are the

traditional owners. This knowledge becomes critical for filmmakers who wish to film in areas within the state, particularly remote areas. Establishing who the local traditional owners are prior to the film shoot and creating a working relationship with them, will assist greatly in knowing what areas are sacred and what the appropriate protocols are for access, filming and when lore is being carried out etc.

Aboriginal people have a living spiritual, cultural, familial and social connection with the land. Aboriginal people have made, are making, and will continue to make, a significant and unique contribution to the heritage, cultural identity, community and economy of Western Australia. As filmmakers understand, respect and learn to work with the traditional owners of the land then great value can be brought to the community and the film industry.

1. The guide has been developed through a broad consultation process with both screen practitioners who have shot films throughout regional Western Australia and feedback from regional experts. A range of practitioners have been involved in the process from highly experienced to relatively new to the industry so that we obtain a broad view of working in the regions. This being the case some information within the guide may be more useful for some than others.

2. The term 'lore' refers to the customs and stories the Aboriginal peoples learned from. the Dreamtime. Aboriginal lore was passed on through the generations through songs, stories and dance and it governed all aspects of traditional life. For further information go to: [http://www.workingwithatsi.info/content/PI\\_laws.htm](http://www.workingwithatsi.info/content/PI_laws.htm)

## WELCOME TO COUNTRY

'Welcome to Country' protocols and ceremonies have been part of Aboriginal culture for thousands of years for welcoming visitors to country. Despite the absence of visible borders, Aboriginal groups had clear boundaries separating their country from that of other groups. Crossing into another group's country required a request for permission to enter — like gaining a visa — and when that permission was granted the hosting group would welcome the visitors, offering them safe passage.

Filmmakers need to ensure they integrate a 'Welcome to Country' ceremony prior to their shoot. This is a small ceremony where traditional owners, usually elders, welcome people to their land. This is a significant recognition made through a formal process, although it's up to the elder how they decide to carry out the ceremony. It can also depend on the location of the event and the practice of the Aboriginal community in the different regions in Western Australia which can vary greatly.

During a 'Welcome to Country' the elders will welcome those in attendance, film crew, actors, staff and guests to their country. It might be just a simple speech or a performance of some sort, like a song, traditional dance or a didgeridoo piece.

It is important to note that a 'Welcome to Country' is often considered a right and not a privilege. (Creative Spirits, 2016)<sup>3</sup>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

It is important for filmmakers working in the regions to understand the difference between 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgement of Country'.

'Acknowledgement of Country' is a way that filmmakers can

show awareness and respect for Aboriginal culture and heritage and the ongoing relationship the traditional owners have with the land on which the film is being shot. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can perform 'Acknowledgement of Country'. (Creative Spirits, 2016)<sup>4</sup>

**Below is a sample 'Acknowledgement of Country' where the traditional custodians are not known:**

*'I would like to show my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, of elders past and present, on which this meeting/ event is taking place.'*

**Below is a sample of 'Acknowledgement of Country' where the traditional custodians are known and an example has been used for the Halls Creek region in the north of Western Australia:**

*I would like to acknowledge the Kija people who are the traditional custodians of this land. I would also like to pay respect to the elders past and present of the Kija nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginal people present.*

Knowing who the traditional custodians of the land on which the film shoot is occurring is critical and will ensure that you do not make an error in protocol. For example, the Shire of Halls Creek has the Aboriginal nations of Jaru, Kija, Kukatja, Walmajarri, and Gooniyandi.

## RECOGNITION OF COUNTRY IN FILM CREDITS

In showing the traditional custodians respect it is strongly recommended that the traditional custodians and land on which the film was shot be recognised in the film credits. For example, the Shire of Murray in the Peel Region of Western Australia would acknowledge the 'Bindjareb

people of the Pinjarup land'. If the film is shot across several regions ensure that you acknowledge all groups on the land the film was shot.

## SMOKING CEREMONY

A smoking ceremony is one of the most significant ancient ceremonies performed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The ceremony involves smouldering various native plants to produce smoke which are believed to have cleansing properties and the ability to ward off bad spirits.

Sometimes during production, if local Aboriginal people are involved they may request a smoking ceremony for the production team and or premises that the shoot will occur in. The smoking ceremony will be conducted by local elders or someone nominated by the elders.

3. Creative Spirits (2016) Welcome to Country & Acknowledgement of Country, Retrieved 20 June 2016 from: <http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/spirituality/welcome-to-country-acknowledgement-of-country#ixzz4D1XtFIdI>

4. Creative Spirits (2016) Welcome to Country & Acknowledgement of Country, Retrieved 20 June 2016 from: <http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/spirituality/welcome-to-country-acknowledgement-of-country#ixzz4D1XtFIdI>

## KEY INSIGHTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- + Establish a register of the traditional owners and who the main contacts are for all areas within your region and keep the contact list up to date.
- + Develop a map of your region and make it available to the production team of the areas the different traditional owner groups are responsible for and tie it in with your contact register.
- + Establish a local consultant or regional group who can connect the production team with the appropriate traditional custodians and who understands the local protocols and politics. This may be the Regional Film Liaison Officer.
- + Allow time for the Production Team to sit down with the traditional custodians to develop a relationship and so they can gain an understanding of who they are .... where they come from.... who they know.... what connection they may have to the land and the traditional custodians. Allowing time to do this up front is critical and will assist greatly with the production process.
- + Film makers are looking for particular shots for their film and as they do not have local knowledge they may not be aware of the sites available in your region. Local knowledge of traditional custodians may give them access to locations and sites they were not aware of that may assist with the film production staying in your region longer and even add to the story line of the film.
- + It is critical for the region to assist film makers to develop relationships with traditional custodians as they will provide an understanding of the cultural protocols for areas in which they are going to shoot, where males and females may not be able to go and where they may or may not be able to shoot. Even entering a waterhole can have a protocol required where you acknowledge the spirit of the waterhole prior to entering.
- + In the north of Western Australia it is useful for the regions to know when Aboriginal lore takes place for young men moving from boyhood to manhood, as this may have an impact on the film shoot particularly in the more remote areas in working with the traditional custodians.
- + It is important for the regions to work with the traditional owners of the land to establish the protocols of bringing Aboriginal actors from a different area into another traditional custodian's area and what the required protocols are that will need to be followed. This will be essential for not only the film makers and traditional owners but also for the Aboriginal Actors.
- + Sometimes film makers make want to shoot a story associated with a particular Aboriginal group in another custodial area of another Aboriginal group. It would be beneficial for the regions to pre-establish what protocols and sensitivities may need to be considered with the traditional custodians and inform the film makers.
- + Establish who does the 'Welcome to Country' and 'Smoking Ceremony' in each traditional owner area within your region and the contact. Establish the wording for an 'Acknowledgement of Country' that can be provided to the film makers to use when required.
- + Work with the film production and traditional owners prior to pre-production to establish the protocols and ceremonies for the production so they are clearly established prior to going into pre-production.

# INITIAL PREPARATION PHASE OF FILM PRODUCTION

## CONTENT OF PRODUCTION APPROPRIATE FOR REGION OR LOCATION

It is important for each Region to work through what subject matter for productions they may not wish to be in their region, e.g. Kununurra community may not wish to have a film production about a 'man eating' crocodile as they are focused on tourism benefits of the rivers and waterways. While a production may generate an income while the film is being produced the ongoing affect to a region or location once the film is released may be positive or negative. This will assist Regions, productions and Screenwest to be clear on suitability of productions for your Region.

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Every person interviewed as part of the consultancy process has expressed the importance of a Region having a local fixer/consultant to be available during the project development stage of the film to work with the filmmaker. The project development stage is the critical time for the filmmaker to determine which region is best suited to shoot their film.

The Region may be able to provide that person, who may be the Film Liaison Officer, or the filmmaker may contract a local fixer/consultant who can assist in building the local networks, understands the local politics, knows what resources and skills are available in the community, knows the limitations and benefits of that region and knows who the 'go to people' are within the region. As this position can be critical to the success of the Region in securing the production it would be of benefit for the Region to establish who that person is within the region prior to film productions coming to the region on scouting trips. It is recommended to provide those contact details to Screenwest so they can add to their regional database and provide that information to filmmakers who may be interested in shooting their production in your region.

The local fixer/consultant would work with the Location Manager to establish a schedule to meet the appropriate regional people and know what is available in the region - locations, resources, expertise and facilities - to promote the suitability of the region for the film production.

## Key players in the region to meet with and brief on the project are:

- + Local Government
- + Regional Development Commission
- + Regional Tourism Association
- + Regional Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- + Regional Media
- + Regional Community organisations
- + Regional High Schools

Department of Parks & Wildlife Rangers situated in the regions are an important asset for the Location Manager in touring the region to find appropriate film locations and who know the protocols and procedures associated with accessing those locations. Many of the rangers in the northwest of Western Australia are traditional custodians and will have a deep local knowledge on the range of locations within the region that most tourist and government agencies may not be aware of. Having the contact details of the Department of Parks & Wildlife Rangers and the areas they cover is beneficial.

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***Establish with community what their real wants and expectations are and reach agreement on what is realistic and practical to manage hopes and expectations during production.***

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**Key insights/recommendations:**

- + Establish a local fixer/consultant or Film Liaison Officer for your region and provide those details to Screenwest to list on their Regional Database.
  - + Establish early contact with the filmmaker to gain basic information of the requirements of the production.
  - + Organise a meeting/business afterhours with the filmmaker and regional stakeholders to establish the needs of the production and introduce the services, businesses and facilities available in the region. The filmmaker will not be aware of resources available.
  - + Meet with the key players in the region to ensure they are know what is happening during all stages of early development.
  - + Under promise and over deliver.
  - + Once you have established that the project will go ahead in the region establish a regional liaison committee to meet in the initial development phase, pre-production, production, post production and wrap up.
  - + Work with local government to establish a one point of contact film liaison officer who understands production requirements and can deal with any enquiries from the production team.
- + Establish with community what their real wants and expectations are and reach agreement on what is realistic and practical to manage hopes and expectations during production.



# UTILISING SKILLS WITHIN THE LOCAL REGION AND BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY



As more screen production is shot in your Region, the regional capacity and skill sets will continue to develop therefore increasing the capacity of the region to attract further productions. The following strategies are noted to build the regional capacity.

## INTERNSHIPS

Screenwest supports filmmakers establishing professional attachments on productions (however the internships referred to here are not at that same professional level) to build the capacity of your region, particularly in young people, which is one of the hoped-for outcomes of the Western Australia Regional Film Fund.

Film production often inspires young people, particularly those that are creative and even those that are disengage. Internships can increase the capacity and skill level of young people with those skills being transferable into other industry areas. It can inspire them onto bigger and greater ventures in their life and provides them with an opportunity most young people do not get, particularly in regional communities. Through utilising internships the filmmaker will be able to contribute back to the community and is a way of them leaving a legacy while at the same time building the capacity of the region.

Through past productions shot in regional areas, many of the interns

have gone on to work within the industry or have been gone on to further education, training or employment. Having local young people experienced in film production also provides an ongoing human asset for the region when trying to attract future productions.

Filmmakers will not have the time or capacity to provide personal mentoring support for the interns as once the shoot commences the focus becomes completing the film on time and on budget. This being the case, it is beneficial for the region to have a register of local agencies that can provide the pastoral mentoring support to the local interns while the filmmaker will provide the professional/industry mentoring.

### Key insights/recommendations:

- + Establish a local community agency such as an employment service, community based organisation or local government in your region who can be involved in the selection of interns and provide pastoral mentoring during and post production.
- + Work with the filmmaker to establish a list of possible internships as early as possible and assist in establishing the relationship between the local agency and the filmmaker for the selection of interns.
- + The Region needs to be realistic on the number of internships that

are possible for the filmmaker to offer as they will need to have the capacity to provide the professional/industry mentoring.

- + Interns should be over 18 years and left school.
- + Ensure the internships build on what is already happening within your community and work with the filmmakers to set up internships that are tied to the community so the benefit is ongoing. For example, the local acting group may have people interested in set or costume design or the local training organisation may have an interest in internships for construction with set design.
- + Ensure there is clarity with the internship as to who they are attached to within the production team and the role of the production person in overseeing the intern.
- + All interns will need to complete a confidentiality form the same as the production team.
- + Make sure a role requirement statement is developed that provides clarity for the interns as to what they have to do and what the production will provide them with while on the internship, i.e. meals, cover travel costs.
- + Interns need to be adding value in some way to the production while they are learning and gaining skills.

- + Ensure interns are covered by volunteer insurance with the filmmaker or the local agency. Ensure the cover is confirmed in writing by the appropriate group with Certificate of Currency.
- + Have one person from the community, usually the community organisation involved in the selection and mentoring of interns, who is the central liaison point for the production team on any matters concerning internships.

### FILM SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONS

Bringing professional film skills into your regional community, especially remote areas, and building a skills base will greatly assist in building regional screen industry skills, knowledge and local capacity over time. The skills will be transferable into other industries and your region will be developing your capacity to attract further productions into the future.

Filmmakers continually look for people who have past film experience as they understand the requirements, flexibility and urgency of the industry in getting the job done within tight timeframes. Film skills development needs to be seen in the broadest context of the film industry and includes everything from on-set skills to off-set such as:

- + Construction crew such as trade assistant, labourer/casual labour;
- + Extras Casting Coordinator;
- + Local people as extras;
- + Stand-ins/picture doubles;
- + Indigenous advisors;
- + Security;
- + Traffic controllers;
- + Nurse;
- + Art Dept drivers/luggers/casuals;
- + Production runners/drivers/casuals;

- + Unit casuals/drivers;
- + Location Scout/Assistant;
- + Production office support;
- + Assistant Production Accountant;
- + Costume Department Assistant;
- + Makeup/Hair Assistant;
- + Stills Photographer:

The Region needs to establish a Skills Register of people and businesses who have had previous experience in the film industry and or whose skills set match the requirements of the production. Each time a production is shot in the region the Skills Register needs to be updated and expanded. This register becomes a critical asset to the region not only in attracting future productions but also offering those skill sets to other regions where productions may be shot but where they may not have the skill sets required. The register can also be provided to Screenwest so they are aware of what asset are available in your region to inform potential productions looking at shooting in Western Australia.

The WA Screen Fund requires a percentage of the film budget to be spent regionally so regions that have people and businesses who have had previous experience in the film industry become a higher priority to filmmakers over regions that have limited assets. Further to this, it will save the filmmaker money not having to hire people and bring them into the region and instead accessing local people. It will also benefit the region through increasing regional spend the providing further experience and skill development to local people and businesses.

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## KEY INSIGHTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- + Establish a *Skills Register* of people and businesses who have had previous experience in the film industry and or whose skills set match the requirements productions.
- + Before pre-production work with the filmmaker to establish a list of general skill sets required for the production.
- + Before pre-production hold a business after hours or stakeholder meeting with the filmmaker and local businesses and skilled individuals to inform the filmmaker of the skills available in the community and to hear from the filmmaker about the requirements of the production.
- + Have the local Film Liaison Officer build relationships with local people and businesses to build their film industry capacity.
- + Each time a production is shot in your region keep an accurate record of who worked on the film, what businesses were contracted and what they did, including the contact details. Use this information to update the Skills Register.
- + Prior to pre-production involve the regional and/or State Registered Training Organisations such as TAFE so that locals may be able to obtain RPL credits for those that work on the film set.
- + Ensure all local people and businesses offering their services to the production understand and are committed to 'under promising and over delivering' and to positively working with the filmmaker to achieve the agreed outcomes ensuring the filmmakers positive experience attracts further productions to be shot in the region.
- + Have frank conversations with locals and the filmmaker on what is needed from local contractors and the requirements of the film industry, ensure agreements with the filmmakers are locked into a written contract, ensure ongoing open communication during contract period and do not assume or gloss over any issues.
- + Work with local training organisations and Regional Development Commissions to upskill and educate locals and businesses in the region on the skill sets required for film production. This may include getting local people ticketed e.g. traffic control, establishing first aid/on-site nurses, chaperones, childcare workers, drivers and production runners etc.
- + Work with Screenwest to upload the Skills Register and keep the register updated for future use by the film industry to attract further productions to the region.

# PRODUCTION

## PRE-PRODUCTION

### SITE LOCATION

A central location for a production office with access to desks, phones, NBN and other requirements such as parking for the production trucks is essential for filmmakers. Community Resource Centers have been an effective asset for regions to provide potential site locations for the production office. For more remote locations, mining companies and pastoralists may also be able to assist. Establishing different potential locations in the region for a Production Office becomes an asset the region to offer to filmmakers which can assist greatly in securing productions to your region.

Regions are great assets for filmmakers for local knowledge around seasonal issues such as weather, rainfall, potential flooding and any major machinery movements from local mining companies that may affect the shoot in particular areas. While it is standard practice for producers to inform all local authorities of the production with all agreements in place, producers need to be aware of the challenges of some regional locations. While you may have a signed agreement to shoot on a road during a particular period of time, if a major breakdown occurs at a nearby mining company and requires moving major machinery through the area in which the filmmaker is shooting, the shoot will be delayed. Working with your major regional industry bodies will assist in minimising the risk to the filmmaker.

### RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management is essential for all productions both in terms of OHS and timing of the shoot and with the changing weather conditions this has

become more critical. There are now more occurrences of flash flooding and in the north filmmakers may not fully appreciate the challenges of shooting in a community that is 40 degrees and dry, a rain storm occurs 10kms away and soon afterwards you have a flash flood in the area they are operating in. Regions need to work with the producer to ensure they have the contact details for critical regional agencies, such as the SES, to monitor and be aware of changing conditions and any potential risks to the area they are shooting in.

There have been two recent catastrophic events in the Kimberley and Peel Regions with fire that behaved in a way that was not expected, destroying vast areas of land and an entire town site. Regions need to ensure that producers are aware of the season they are going to shoot in and have contingencies in place so that if there is a fire there are alternative locations in which to complete the project.

In the north of Western Australia the rivers and oceans have crocodiles, lethal jellyfish and sharks and in the oceans of the south even more sharks, and in recent years there are growing numbers of predators and attacks. When operating in those environments regions need to ensure producers are aware of the risks specific to your region and increase their mitigation strategies to manage the recent growing risk.

### BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Local business in your region are passionate about the region and often innovative in dealing with situations and challenges. Contracting local businesses for filmmakers can provide a more cost-effective approach for the producer

and meets the requirements of the regional spend. Take the time during pre-production to establish a relationship with the filmmaker, clarify the requirements of the shoot and reach agreement around services required and prices and confirm in writing.

Engaging a local fixer/consultant early to establish a network and resource list of regional businesses, facilities and recourses for the Production Manager to contract during production is essential and can lead to cost savings for the filmmaker and increase the regional spend. Meeting early with the business community will enable accounts to be established where practical which will assist with cash flow for the producer.

The region needs to understand that film production budgets are tight and strictly managed to ensure there are no cost over runs, so there is no misunderstanding on what revenue local business will generate. Once the budget is locked in there is minimal flexibility to working with the filmmaker prior to pre-production is essential in locking in the contracts and costs.

In productions that have extended shoot periods such as moving into a second season of a television series, regional businesses need to understand that film production budgets do not increase, often they decrease, so that prices for accommodation and other services are not significantly increased.

Where a producer is working in a regional area for an extended period there may be a possibility to tie in the script with local business and location names and secure a longer term financial deal through promotional opportunities in the

production which may lead to longer term outcomes and benefits for your region. Regional businesses may also be interested in permanently changing the name of their business or location to match the script. This occurred during the filming of the long running television series McLeod's Daughters which greatly benefited both the production and regional community.

Early liaison with the filmmaker is important regarding set builds, as there may be the possibility of working in partnership with them to build more permanent structures that can be left behind on completion of the shoot for tourism promotion. If agreement can be reached early the additional costs of building permanent structures could be shared between set design and the region.

Come to an early agreement with the filmmaker regarding an open day for the production, local events during production such as a Q/A evening, visit to local schools and a wind-up event. This will engage the local community but also enable the producer to ensure people remain away while the shoot is happening.

Provide a register of local expertise, businesses and services to the production team and encourage them to buy locally as much as possible.

Develop and provide Welcome Packs to the production to provide to crew and cast on arrival to increase regional spend by providing discounts and promotion of the regions attractions, restaurants, services and tourism products while

the cast and crew are staying in the region. This is can also be beneficial if the cast and crew family visit during the production period.

Develop an Extras Coordinator from the regional community to work with the casting director, who would mentor the regional person and increase their skills and expertise, as they work to secure regional people as extras for the production. Working with the local acting groups or regional high school drama department may provide an appropriate person for the role and build on their knowledge and expertise which will remain in the community once the production has concluded. Provide that contact to Screenwest to add to the regional asset list.

Be clear with the regional community on exactly what an extra does to ensure false expectations are not created. Community members often will not be aware that it can involve lots of waiting, just being in the background of a shot and a lot of repetitious actions.

Work with the producer to obtain a breakdown of estimated extras employment numbers so that the expectations of your local community are not raised higher than the reality.

### Key insights/recommendations

- + Work with Screenwest to establish your region as a Film Friendly Region and build a register of businesses, facilities and contractors available that are skilled and experienced in working with the film industry.
- + Establish a regional liaison committee to work with the filmmaker prior to pre-production to establish longer term economic, built & cultural benefits and innovative legacies for the region.
- + Work with the filmmaker to provide a briefing document to local business and community on what the production is about.
- + Work with the filmmaker to quantify the regional spend and engagement and ensure there is clarity for regional businesses and community so that expectations are realistic.
- + Establish a register of resources, expertise and facilities that are available for the production.
- + Ensure that the production has a policy of using 'best endeavours to buy/hire local' in relevant crew contracts.
- + Don't over promise the capacity and experience of local business, be clear on what is able to be purchased and delivered, work with businesses to set up short-term accounts and payment structure early so that bills are issued and able to be paid on time.



*Develop and provide Welcome Packs to the production to provide to crew and cast on arrival to increase regional spend by providing discounts and promotion of the regions attractions, restaurants, services and tourism products while the cast and crew are staying in the region.*

***Understanding regional conditions at certain times of the year for the filmmaker is essential and one of the reasons why contracting local drivers and runners will be effective for them.***

- + Establish a process where local businesses can provide invoices as soon as possible and ensure they understand that the production company is set up for production only and the company closes once the film is finished.
- + Work with local businesses to establish processes where they can source product not available regionally as this becomes a benefit to the filmmaker as it would be classed as regional spend.
- + Work with the filmmaker to secure screen credits for local support.
- + Work with the production to establish systems that record the regional spend throughout the production and a breakdown of local businesses and individuals contracted for the production and the services provided.
- + Establish a system with local businesses to track the regional spend created through the Welcome Packs by providing discounts and promotion of the regions attractions, restaurants, services and tourism products while the cast and crew are staying in the region and their family visits.

**PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY**

Work with the filmmaker to establish at the commencement of production a community inclusive open day where a 'Welcome to Country' ceremony is provided to cast and crew so the local community feels engaged with the production from the start. During the event work with the filmmaker to clarify the process for the shoot and timing and seek the communities support to ensure the shoot is not interrupted. Inform them of the critical nature of filming and potential cost implications of delays so they have an understanding. Inform them of the closing and thank you event and time it takes overall to fully complete the film.

Establish one person, which should be the Film Liaison Officer, who can deal with any community enquiries and direct them to the appropriate person during the shoot. This person should also work in partnership with the production community liaison person.

Establish a process with the filmmaker at the commencement of production to inform accommodation, local restaurants and other essential service industries if the shoot is going into overtime to ensure cast and crew can still access local services at completion of the shoot day.

Understanding regional conditions at certain times of the year for the filmmaker is essential and one of the reasons why contracting local

drivers and runners will be effective for them. Local people will be aware of any large numbers of kangaroos known to congregate near roadways close to shooting locations during particular times of the day, especially if the shoot has run late or started early. Local drivers will also be aware where there may be no fences, especially in the north, to contain stock so they wander the roads along with wild donkeys and camels. Providing a register of potential local drivers will be of great benefit to the filmmaker.

There are alcohol restrictions in some far northern regional towns and total alcohol bans in some Aboriginal Communities. To assist in minimising the risk of contravening regulations and putting the production at risk, it is very important the full production team understand about these restricted areas re: alcohol consumption and not being able to take alcohol into Aboriginal Communities. There are substantial fines for an individual who brings alcohol into a restricted area. This being the case, it would be beneficial for the region to develop a map, or document that notes any alcohol restrictions within different areas within the region where the shoot may occur.



**Key insights/recommendations**

- + Engage the filmmaker early to establish the process of production and critical timing of the shoot.
- + Work with the filmmaker to tie in all regional requirements such as any alcohol restrictions into cast and crew agreements.
- + Hold a 'Welcome to Country' event at the start of production.
- + Ensure the filmmaker is aware and informs all cast and crew about the risks associated with the particular regional areas, especially in the north of the state where it is very hot, there is plenty of water and people are tempted to swim, but crocodiles are present.
- + Ensure all commitments to the filmmaker during production are met.
- + Ensure any engagement by the actors in community events and activities while on site during the shoot has been pre-arranged and confirmed by the production.
- + The regional media and tourism association to work with the Unit Publicist to establish agreed protocols to manage all media associated with the shoot and community events involving cast members to ensure media distribution rights and agreements with cast members are not compromised.

**POST-PRODUCTION**

Effective preparation for post-production can play an essential role in the filmmaker leaving a legacy behind for the regional community to benefit from while at the same time saving them costs due to not needing to remove some components.

On completion of the shoot, discuss with the filmmaker about any sets, props, costumes or art pieces that may be left behind that the community can use for tourism promotion and attraction. Where possible establish those agreements during pre-production as the time available in post-production will be limited as the filmmaker is focused on meeting the time frame to get everyone from the production out of the region.

Work with the filmmaker during or before pre-production to reach agreement with the Regional Tourism Association to develop a tourist map highlighting the locations where the film was shot.

In the long gap between the end of the film shoot and its cinematic release, it is very important to work with the film producer to establish a process to keep the community informed of the progress so they don't feel they have been abandoned. Often the cinematic release is out of the hands of the film producer and sits with the film distributor.

**Key insights/recommendations:**

- + Work with the film producer to establish longer term economic, built & cultural benefits and innovative legacies for the region prior to or during pre-production.
- + Work with the production team to hold a thank you community event to acknowledge the support of the community, local business, extras, and all those that supported the production and also to acknowledge the cast and crew.
- + Inform the community of the gap between completing the shoot to the screening of the film

and establish a communication process with the filmmaker to keep the region informed of the progress where appropriate up until the premiere of the film.

- + Work with the filmmaker to hold a local screening of the film on or just prior to the cinematic release as a way of thanking the community for their involvement and celebrating the completion of the production and what has been achieved in partnership with the filmmaker.
- + Obtain a 'piece-to-camera' from the filmmaker as to the benefits of shooting a production in your region. This can be used as promotion for your region as a film friendly region and a great place to shoot productions.
- + Carry out a review and wrap up meeting with the filmmaker establishing what worked and why; what didn't and how to improve; and implement the feedback to assist in attracting further productions to your region.
- + Share the outcomes of the review with Screenwest to develop best practice for engaging with regional stakeholders, developing and executing on regional outcomes for benefit of the community and getting the highest return for both the regional communities in which the film is being shot and for the filmmaker.

## + PREMIERE OF FILM

Work to reach agreement with the filmmaker and distributor to feature your region at the premiere of the film where possible. This could involve providing local produce and wine at the premier screening, doing giveaways at the premier for accommodation stays in the region etc.

Run a competition offering tickets, travel and accommodation to attend the regional premier/ screening of the film. If a positive relationship has been established from the start and maintained and enhanced throughout the production phase then the filmmaker can become one of your strongest promoters of the region.

### Key insights/recommendations:

- + Work with the filmmaker to involve the regional community in the national and international premiere of the film where they can promote the region, local product and produce.
- + Work with the filmmaker to explore ways to tie in the film's regional premiere with regional events such as a major anniversary, book launch, regional competition or other major event.
- + Ensure the region is informed of the film premiere.
- + Ensure all agreements are in place relating to the premier of the film prior to or at the commencement of pre-production.





# WHO IS WHO & HOW TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY CARE ABOUT

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## KEY FILM INDUSTRY POSITIONS

### PRODUCERS

Producers are often responsible for coming up with the idea for a film or television series and/or selecting a screenplay. They secure the rights, choose the screenwriter and story editing team. They raise the development financing and supervise the development process. Producers then plan and coordinate various aspects the production to bring the project to reality. This includes selecting the production team, coordinating the production, overseeing directing and editing, arranging finance and managing the budget. Finally, the producer will select distributor and oversee the marketing and distribution of the production.

### EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Executive Producers play different roles for different productions. Sometimes they oversee the work of the producer on behalf of a studio or the financiers. They may ensure the film is completed on time, within budget, and to agreed artistic and technical standard. They generally contribute to the film in some way and usually do not work on set. They can have little or no involvement in the production of a film or television program but are nevertheless credited for being connected to it in some way. They may have assisted in securing finance for the film or be the author of a novel that has been made into a film or television series and therefore be credited as an executive producer, despite having little or no involvement in the actual creation of the film or series.

### DISTRIBUTOR

Distributor determines the marketing strategy for the film, the media by which a film is to be exhibited or made available for viewing, and often sets the release date and other matters. They create the plans for the release of the production to ensure it reaches big audiences and the production makes a profit. They often do not commence their role until the completion of Principal Photography and the film is handed over in the completed format for distribution and marketing.



## KEY STAGES OF FILM PRODUCTION

It is important for regions to understand that it takes on average seven years for productions to move from concept development to cinematic release. There are however productions that are able to shorten the time-frame and Ben Elton's *Three Summers*, shot in the Peel Region, is an example of this. From concept development to cinematic release it took just over two years.

1

### CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

This is where the Producer comes up with the idea for a film or television series and selects a screenplay. They secure the rights, choose the screenwriter and story editing team and develop the concept.

2

### DEVELOPMENT / EARLY PRE-PRODUCTION

This stage is where the Producer raises the development financing and begins the development process. This stage can include finalising the script, bringing on board the Director and key production positions including Production Manager, securing the Distributor, scouting for suitable locations, developing the production budget, securing funding for the production, working with the regions where the production will be shot to establish needed resources. **This is a critical stage for the region to work to secure the project for their region and to ensure producers are aware of the resources, skills, knowledge and expertise available in their region.**

3

### PRE-PRODUCTION

Pre-production is where the planning and coordination of various aspects of the production occur to bring the project to reality. This includes finalising and contracting the production team, crew and cast; securing resources required; contracting local businesses and individuals; finalising the budget; securing the last of the funding. Pre-production may initially occur outside of a region and then have a 'bump-in' where the production team move into a region to prepare and finalise for the shoot. This is an important stage for the region to establish strong working relationships prior to the commencement of pre-production so they can assist with the smooth 'bump-in' of the production into the region and ensure they lever the highest benefits for the region and the production with contracting local people, businesses, services and facilities.

4

#### PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY – ALSO KNOWN AS PRODUCTION

Once production or the shoot starts the production team are focussed on getting the shoot completed on time and within a strict budget. Any delay or disruption to the shoot will have an immediate financial impact. The production budgets are managed on a day to day basis with regular reports provided to the film underwriter/insurer who has the right to sack the Producer and Director if the film is running over budget or at threat of not being completed on time or at all. Regions play an important role in assisting the filmmaker to ensure the production is able to be completed on time and that any regional impacts are minimised for the production. This was evident with the shoot for Three Summers where they had a major rain storm causing a flood which could have impacted on the next day's shoot with 150 extra's plus cast lined up. The local Shire was able to provide equipment and sand bagging which enabled the shoot to continue on time.

5

#### POST-PRODUCTION

This stage occurs initially within the region involving 'bump-out' of the production team and then outside of the region. Post-production takes longer than the actual shooting of the film and can take several months to complete because it includes the complete editing, colour correction, and the addition of music and sound. This stage also involves test screening with a test audience and based on responses may involve further editing of the film. It is important for the regions to understand the duration of this stage as often people think that once the film is shot it will hit the cinemas within a couple of months. Breath is a good example where the cinematic release was almost two years after the production was completed.

6

#### CINEMATIC RELEASE

This is where the film is released to cinemas. Films are initially released in Australia and New Zealand first, if an Australian production, and then the rest of the world. In the majority of cases there are two distributors involved, one for Australia/New Zealand and the other for the rest of the world. The Distributor often sets the release date as they create the plans for the release of the production to ensure it reaches big audiences and the production makes a profit. This is often based on a broad range of issues such as when other productions are being released, seasonal timing etc.

7

#### OTHER RELEASES

Once the cinematic release has occurred then the film is released through airlines, online platforms, DVD, Netflix, Foxtel, and the TV rights are sold.

## TIPS FOR ATTRACTING PRODUCTIONS TO YOUR REGION

- + Under promise, over deliver.
- + Be aware of the limitations of the region and don't assume that any one region will provide all of what the filmmaker will need.
- + Ensure regional stakeholders are realistic in what they can deliver to the filmmaker.
- + Ensure your region understands that the cost to produce a film in your region vs in a city can be significantly higher so that your stakeholders have an appreciation of the commitment of the filmmaker to your region.
- + Don't be unrealistic in your expectations of what the filmmaker can do for the region as their primary focus is the production and creating a high quality and saleable product competed on time and within budget.
- + Build positive relationship with the filmmaker and production team early and be open and honest with them.
- + Ensure the filmmaker leaves with a positive experience of shooting a film in your region and becomes your strongest promoter therefore assisting in attracting further productions to the region.
- + Establish and keep updated a register of experienced and or appropriate people, businesses and infrastructure available in the region for the film industry.
- + Work with the film maker to build contingencies into production especially in remote areas where the unexpected can happen.
- + Remember that agreements with the filmmaker will need to be locked down before or at the commencement of pre-production. Once the shoot starts it will be too late as the production team will be focused on completing the film on time and on budget with minimal or no interruptions.
- + Once the budget is signed off by the filmmaker and funders they are not able to make major changes to the budget so all regional contracts will need to be finalised during pre-production.
- + Embrace the learning opportunities and benefits for the region both human, infrastructure and financial.
- + Assumptions are the mother of all stuff ups. Don't assume everyone in the region and the filmmaker is on the same page as you - check; don't assume people understand what you are saying – get them to repeat and confirm in writing;
- don't assume people burn with the same passion as you for your region – inspire others; don't assume you know what drives someone or the filmmaker – make the time to know
- + Thank the filmmaker and the production team.
- + Filmmaker and Distributor can become a major seller of your region.
- + Remember the largest benefit for the region is not when the shoot is occurring but when the film is released. The focus of the Filmmaker and the Distributor will be on selling the film to audiences and it becomes the region's responsibility to tie in your own marketing and promotion of your region with the launch of the film to lever the highest benefit for your region.
- + Keep in touch with the filmmaker between post production and the premiere.



## CASE STUDIES

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### **KIMBERLEY**

Mystery Road: The Series  
(Kununurra)

### **PEEL**

Three Summers (Fairbridge)

### **SOUTH WEST**

Breath (Denmark)  
Go Karts (Busselton)  
Jasper Jones (Pemberton)

### **PILBARA**

RED DOG: True Blue (Karratha)

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