



# WHAT IS A FILM LIAISON OFFICER?



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To be credited as Film Friendly, Regions and councils are required to provide a one-stop-shop approach to accommodate all of a production's needs by appointing a Film Liaison Officer who will promote, co-ordinate and manage all aspects of filming enquiries to assist filmmakers in obtaining the necessary approval, support and access to council services in a timely manner.

This ensures the applicant is not required to separately identify, contact or negotiate with multiple departments or persons within one agency, and is kept informed about the progress of the application. Having a consistent channel of communication to the applicant will also enable the agency to understand and manage the impact of filming activity in the region.

The Film Liaison Officer (FLO) will be required to attend Screenwest training on Film Friendly and ensure the maintenance and update of the council's Film Friendly website.

This is not intended to be a new position, or an imposition on Councils and does not require a person with film experience. The duties of the FLO can be undertaken by a person or a team as part of a wider set of duties and each council is best placed to decide how to establish its FLO. This will not usually be a full-time dedicated position, but it does need to be a full-time council staff member who has the authority to co-ordinate the different departments of council involved in deciding approvals and managing filming. At the same time, it should be a staff member

whose duties are flexible enough to allow time for consultation with filmmakers, and for site visits. Councils need to be able to accept and process applications, and respond to ongoing enquiries, five days a week and should ensure that suitable staff are available to cover the whole period of production, and to cover staff absences holidays and other leave, including sick leave.

It is recommended that when identifying the most effective person to act as the FLO, consider staff who have:

- + knowledge of the agency's internal structure & permitting requirements – to support the effective coordination of internal approvals;
- + knowledge of legislation & regulations which apply to public land the agency is responsible for;
- + risk management, problem solving, stakeholder management, communication & negotiation skills – to support a flexible approach for the benefit of all stakeholders
- + understanding or experience of the screen industry or experience in fast turnaround activities/events;
- + availability to respond to applications during standard working hours;

The long hours that filming involves may mean that council staff need to be in touch with filmmakers after hours and at weekends.

Council should provide an after-hours contact number for the Film Liaison Officer or delegate, such as a Ranger. Councils are encouraged to ensure that delegated staff are familiar with the approval process and able to deal with issues that may arise.

Include formal recognition of the function of the FLO within the council – position description. This will assist in retention of corporate knowledge and ensure that the management of film permit applications is recognised as an important council responsibility. Ensure all agency staff know to direct filming requests to the FLO.

Screenwest will offer training and ongoing support to Film Liaison Officers and will work with Councils to develop processes to streamline and simplify filming applications and approvals.

## WHAT DOESN'T THE FILM LIAISON OFFICER DO?

The FLO does not need to have the authority to approve all the separate internal decisions required to approve a film permit application, such as traffic management plans or parking permits.

As necessary, an agency can process parts of a filming application in different areas of the agency. For example: a council decision to approve a filming application may require separate internal approval from parking, building services and traffic management. The FLO will liaise with all these areas, collect any necessary internal approvals, assess the overall application and communicate with the applicant on behalf of the agency.

Although the FLO is responsible for confirming the applicant has been granted any relevant external approvals required for filming (police approval to use a firearm), it is the applicant's responsibility to apply for these external approvals.

Where public land is leased to a tenant, the FLO may not be able to approve or refuse a film permit application, however may choose to act as a liaison between the applicant and the tenant to help make the process more streamlined.

