



FilmAustralia leaders in documentary

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information

National Interest Program

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH INDEPENDENT AUSTRALIAN FILMMAKERS, FILM AUSTRALIA IS ONE OF THE NATION'S LEADING PRODUCERS OF TELEVISION DOCUMENTARIES AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS. OUR MISSION IS TO CREATE AN AUDIO-VISUAL RECORD OF AUSTRALIAN LIFE.

The National Interest Program (NIP) is an agreement with the Australian Government for Film Australia to devise, produce, distribute and market 100 programs over five years from July 2003 to June 2008 which:

- deal with matters of national interest to Australia; or
- illustrate or interpret aspects of Australia or of the life and activities of the Australian people.

The outcome is a curated national slate of programs that provide a "snapshot" of the nation.

On 1 July 2008 Film Australia will be merged with the **Australian Film Commission (AFC)** and **Film Finance Corporation (FFC)** to form **Screen Australia**. All assets and obligations of Film Australia will transfer to Screen Australia as of 1 July 2008 and existing program strands including the NIP and Making History will continue to operate to December 2008.

The following editorial framework applies to the transitional period and for projects commissioned under the National Interest Program (NIP) by 31 December 2008 and for delivery by 30 June 2009. The commissioning process will change after the merger to Screen Australia on 1 July 2008.

Editorial Framework

We will commission documentaries under the NIP that combine four key elements:

- an **Australian perspective**;
- **great stories** that are engaging and entertaining;
- **distinctiveness** in look and content through an approach that is fresh and original; and
- an **intelligent voice** that is insightful and revealing.

The National Interest Program will aim for balance and diversity across key content areas, production styles and distribution platforms over the 20 programs to be delivered in 2008-2009.

We will focus on five major areas for commissioning:

- art and culture
- contemporary and social issues
- history
- science and the environment
- digital content and cross media production



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National Interest Program —continued

Indigenous stories and those that bring an Australian perspective to the Asia Pacific region will continue to be part of our production slate and will be explored within these content areas.

Additional programs on Australian history will be commissioned under the Making History initiative within its own editorial framework.

Documentaries that focus on unique perspectives and feature length documentaries suitable for theatrical release will also be considered.

Criteria for Project Selection

Overall the NIP aims to produce a curated slate of programs that creates a cultural and social record of Australia.

Factors that will be taken into account in selecting projects include:

- project's applicability to the NIP framework (outlined above)
- balance across key content areas in the current slate
- capacity of the creative team to produce the project
- range of creative styles in the current slate
- range of delivery platforms in the current slate
- project's impact on NIP's production budget and cashflow including opportunities for third-party investment
- project's value to the archive

Audience

We aim to achieve the widest possible distribution and exhibition of NIP productions and to engage and connect with audiences, through television, new media, education and other appropriate outlets.

As free-to-air television remains the dominant market for Australian documentary in 2008, the majority of NIP productions will be made for television broadcast. Projects for digital and subscription channels will also be considered.

Projects for cross media and non-broadcast platforms that meet NIP criteria are a priority.

Financing

We aim to produce documentaries across a range of budgets under the NIP from fully financed to co-investment with third-party investors.

All pre-sales for programs (including international presales) will be cashflowed into the production budget. Film Australia currently has an output agreement with ABC Television for up to ten hours of documentary a year.



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National Interest Program —continued

The NIP will co-invest with third-party investors, including state film agencies, other government bodies and international partners.

The NIP may also co-invest with finance raised using the Producer Offset. Financing plans for NIP productions including the Producer Offset will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Film Australia will require a share of copyright commensurate with its investment.

The Commissioning Process

Proposals for development or production should be made via:

www.filmaustralia.com.au/production

Proposals will be reviewed by an NIP executive producer and submitted to a content meeting for discussion of development and production options.

In the case of projects requiring NIP investments of less than \$300,000, recommendations for production are made to the CEO. Recommendations concerning larger commitments are made to Film Australia's Board of Directors.

All NIP projects are developed and produced under the editorial management of one of the NIP executive producers reporting to the Head of Production.

Working with Film Australia

The NIP can be produced using one of three models:

- "inhouse" – productions based at the Lindfield site and made by independent filmmakers employed by Film Australia on short-term contracts.
- "outsourced" – productions made in association with independent filmmakers
- "co-production" – for purposes of accessing international finance or utilising the Producers Offset.

Details of Film Australia's terms of trade are available on our website:

www.filmaustralia.com.au/production