



QUICKSILVER PRODUCTION FUND 2025
SUBMISSION GUIDELINES
Reissued 8 September 2025

Applications open at 10.00am **Thursday 28 August 2025** and will close on **Sunday 12 October 2025** at 11:59pm.

Supported by the South Australian Film Corporation, the Quicksilver Production Fund supports the professional development of creative talent by providing funded production opportunities of short form content that demonstrate an authentic, original artistic vision.

In a new initiative for 2025, Quicksilver is this year being additionally supported by Country Arts SA through the Country Arts Foundation to enable greater support for regional and First Nations filmmakers.

Quicksilver is an inclusive opportunity for South Australian practitioners who are committed to pursuing a professional career in the screen industry.

Applications are strongly encouraged to include **at least one Key Creative (Key creatives being Writer, Director or Producer) from groups underrepresented in the South Australian screen industry**. These include First Nations practitioners, female identifying writers and directors, practitioners from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, Deaf or Disabled practitioners, those from LGBTQIA+ communities and practitioners from regional and remote areas of South Australia.

Applications are invited from teams with projects that will be able to deliver within 12 months of contracting.

All applicants are encouraged to seek feedback on their scripts before submitting. This can occur through The Mercury's Writers-In-Residence Script Consultation Program. **Bookings for Quicksilver Script Consultations will be available to book in September via The Mercury [Website](#).**

All applicants are also strongly encouraged to attend The Mercury's Quicksilver Information Session on **Monday 8 September at 5.30pm** at The Mercury and the upcoming [Launch Lab](#) program of workshops, free for Mercury Subscribers.

INITIATIVE OUTCOMES INCLUDE:

- Screen credits for cast and crew.
- Production of a short form project of a suitable level to be programmed on the national or international festival circuit.
- Demonstration of craft, technical and creative expertise.

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- Excellence in scriptwriting.
- Facilitation of new career pathways for practitioners.
- New creative collaborations of cast and crew, including people from underrepresented groups.
- Connection through the Launch Lab Program.
- Connection through the online Quicksilver Production Community.

WHAT IS OFFERED:

We will fund six (6) short films or web series pilots with a grant of \$25,000 each.

With the additional support of Country Arts SA (CASA) through the Country Arts Foundation:

- **Regional First Nations Grant:** One (1) of the grants will be awarded to a project led by Regional First Nations Key Creatives (majority First Nations team based in regional South Australia).
- **First Nations Grant:** One (1) of the grants will be awarded to a project led by First Nations Key Creatives (majority First Nations team), with regional involvement viewed favorably.

*Majority First Nations key creative team is defined as two out of three key creative roles (Writer, Director, Producer) being First Nations.

In addition to the cash grants offered, in-kind support is also provided by way of equipment and production facilities hire, public liability and volunteer insurance cover, a suite of contract templates & production forms, paid project mentoring from an above the line (ATL) industry mentor, a 1hr script consult, and use of the Iris Cinema for auditions and a cast & crew screening.

Funded films will be contracted by The Mercury under a Production Grant Agreement (PGA).

Country Arts SA will have the first right of refusal to include the Country Arts SA supported First Nations films in the 2026 (if delivered by March 2026) or 2027 Nunga Screen program in negotiation with film makers depending on the requirements for their future festival run.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

Applications will be assessed holistically on the following criteria:

- The strength and originality of the story and quality and standard of writing.
- The quality and originality of the directorial vision.
- The readiness of the project to advance into production.
- The viability of the production in relation to the proposed budget and delivery date.
- The demonstrated benefits to the team in relation to stated career ambitions.
- The inclusion of people from underrepresented groups in the project.

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ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA – PROJECTS:

- Each project should be no more than 12-minutes in duration (including credits) and can be documentary or narrative fiction, live action or animation.
- The finished project must be able to be viewed as a standalone project with a beginning, middle and end. (i.e: not a web series pilot that ends on a cliff hanger leading into the next episode).
- Projects must be able to demonstrate the viability of the proposed budget.
- Projects may be original works or adaptations, though proof of copyright must be provided.
- Sizzles, Trailers, Music Videos, News and Entertainment & Reality formats and Commercials are not eligible.
- X-rated, overly violent or disturbing content, hate, propaganda, demeaning, defamatory or culturally insensitive content will not be considered.
- Specific requirements may apply to projects which involve participation or content with the following communities: d/Deaf, disabled, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTQIA+, or those from other under-represented groups.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA – TEAMS:

- Key Creatives (Writer, Director, Producer) must not be enrolled full-time in a film, television or interactive digital media course at a film school or other educational institution. Applications from part-time students will be assessed on a case-by-case basis only where the project does not form part of the assessable material for the course and where the applicant holds all copyright for the project;
- An individual applicant must not be:
 - (a) a full-time employee of a broadcaster or commissioning platform (e.g., an SVOD service);
 - (b) employed on a full-time basis by educational or training institutions; or
 - (c) acting in the capacity of a trustee of a trust.
- All members of the key creative team (Writer, Director, Producer) plus all crew attached to the project must be South Australian residents and 18+.
- Majority First Nations key creative team is defined as two out of three key creative roles (Writer, Director, Producer) being First Nations.
- Teams are strongly encouraged to include at least one key creative (Writer, Director, Producer) who belongs to an underrepresented group.
- Teams are strongly encouraged to include at least one Head of Department (HOD) who belongs to an underrepresented group.
- The applicant should be the Producer and must be a subscriber to The Mercury at the time of the application. If funded, all other key creatives (Writer + Director) must also become subscribers of The Mercury. (Subscription assistance for applicants from underrepresented groups is available via the Supported Subscription offer. Please complete an [EQI](#) to register).
- All Heads of Department (HODs) attached to the application who are intending to use/access Mercury facilities (e.g. Edit Suite, Colour Grade Studio and Sound Lab), programs (including Launch Lab workshops and Script Consultations) and equipment, are required to be subscribers to The Mercury to receive access to these subscriber benefits if the project funding request is successful.

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- All applications must include an attached Producer, Writer and Director with at least two individuals across this combination (the Key Creative Team).
- A project may have more than one Producer attached.
- Each key creative team can only apply with one project per round.
- Writers and Directors may be part of the key creative team on up to two projects provided the key creative teams are different.
- Producers may be attached to up to two projects provided the key creative teams are different.
- Key creatives who have received three previous Production Grants in total from The Mercury are not eligible to apply.
- Any member of the key creative team in default of any contractual obligations to the SAFC or The Mercury, will not be eligible.
- Regional applicants are required to provide their address in the application form that demonstrates their regional location. To be eligible for the Country Arts SA supported First Nations Regional grant, the applicant cannot live in a location classified as MM 1 (major cities). To check if you live in an eligible location, visit the Health Workforce Locator and Modified Monash Model tool.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Projects are encouraged to attract additional funding outside of the Quicksilver Production Fund.
- Non-South Australian cast will be considered where the producer has demonstrated the significant track record and need of the non-South Australian cast member.
- Whilst not essential, where the team has little or no experience, practitioners are encouraged to approach a mentor in the form of a Mentor Producer or Mentor Director to help strengthen the competitiveness of their application. Should the team be successful, they will also be assigned a paid industry mentor of their choosing or paired with a suitable recommendation by the SAFC or The Mercury for one of the three key creative roles (Writer, Director, Producer). Should the team be successful, they will also be assigned a paid industry mentor of their choosing or paired with a suitable recommendation by the SAFC or The Mercury for one of the three key creative roles (Writer, Director, Producer).
- Applicants must declare that they have control of the copyright of the project through the online application form. If the project is a documentary, the applicant may be asked to provide evidence of access in the form of personal releases (template can be provided) or a letter of intent.
- Selection is competitive and will be based on the strength of the script, creative vision, the career-building opportunity for the cast and crew and the ability to deliver the project on time and on budget.
- Submitting visual materials and previous work as part of the Creative Proposal is encouraged.
- The inclusion of First Nations stories or characters must adhere to the [Indigenous Pathways and Protocols Handbook](#) available on the Screen Australia website.
- Any story containing First Nations content must have at least one First Nations key creative (Writer, Director, Producer) attached.
- The Mercury reserves the right to amend program eligibility criteria and guidelines at any time to ensure alignment with industry standards, participant needs, and evolving sector priorities.

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- Employers (including producers) comply with all legislation relating to providing a safe workplace including state and federal harassment and discrimination legislation. From 1 July 2019, people working or volunteering with children in South Australia must, by law, have a valid child related clearance.
- If funded, you must comply with SAFC Terms of Trade.

SUBMISSION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

In line with prevailing screen industry standards, all applications must be completed in full and submitted by the deadline. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

Stage 1. Written Online Application Forms submitted via The Mercury website [HERE](#) by 11.59pm on Sunday 12 October 2025.

Stage 2. Short-listed applicants will be invited to attend an interview at The Mercury in late October/early November.

Stage 3. Successful applicants will be announced following the interviews. Unsuccessful short-listed applicants will be provided with feedback on request, and subscribers will be entitled to produce their work using The Mercury's facilities and equipment.

SUBMISSION MATERIALS

In the online application form, you will need to provide the following information:

- Project title, genre, format, duration & logline.
- Contact details and a bio for all key creatives attached.
- Proposed key dates from pre-production through to project delivery.
- A declaration giving The Mercury permission to use your likeness and name in relation to this initiative should your application be successful.
- A declaration regarding the ownership and rights of the project submitted, and to confirm that all relevant chain of title, releases and agreements will be provided to The Mercury on request.
- Additional information regarding the underrepresented status and demographics of the key creatives.

As part of the application, you will be required to attach the following documents **via PDF**:

1. A short CV for all key creatives (1-page maximum).
2. Proposed Production Budget (Please use The Mercury's Short Form Production Budget Template. Request a copy of the template via industry@themercury.org.au).
3. Proposed Production Schedule.
4. Release Form / Letter of Intent. For character-based documentary only, a release form/s or letter/s of intent demonstrating evidence of access to the subject.
5. Production-ready Script which must be formatted in industry-standard format (Courier, 12pt etc.) and include a TITLE PAGE with the following details: The project title, date, draft number, format, name of writer(s) AND the producer's name, address, and contact details. For documentary, treatments are acceptable in place of a script. Please note: Projects must run no longer than 12 minutes in total run time including credits. This means that from the opening frame to the final

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frame, the total runtime cannot exceed 12 minutes. Therefore, the length of the script needs to factor in time for credits. We suggest timing your scripts to ensure your script reflects a run time under this length, allowing time for end credits.

6. Creative Proposal. We recommend this creative document is visually engaging and representative of the content and tone of your project. Your Creative Proposal must include the following elements:
 - i. Cover Page including project title, genre, format, duration & names of key creatives.
 - ii. Logline (maximum 150 words).
 - iii. A Synopsis of no more than 200 words.
 - iv. Director's Vision Statement. In no more than 500 words outline what you are hoping to say with this project. Detail your creative vision including your creative influences. Describe the stylistic look and feel of the project and the kind of emotional response you are aiming for from your audience. Describe how this project 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? Walk us through your vision and how it will be achieved on a stylistic and technical level. Visual supplementary material such as look-books, storyboards and mood reels are welcome.
 - v. Producer's Statement. In no more than 500 words provide a convincing argument as to why this project should be made, who the target audience is and why the themes in your film/web series pilot will resonate with your target audience. Detail who you intend to work with on this production and how the making of this project will advance their career. Include information as to what it is about this story that makes it worth telling. Please also propose who you would ideally like as your paid ATL mentor and how you believe this mentorship will benefit the project.
 - vi. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement. The applicant should include a diversity, equity and inclusion statement where there is participation or content from the following communities: including d/Deaf, disabled, neurodivergent, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTQIA+ or other under-represented groups.
 - vii. A path to audience strategy outlining how you intend to reach your target audience.
 - viii. A film festival strategy outlining which festivals you intend to target, factoring in premiere requirements. Projects are encouraged to aim for A-list festivals in the first instance. A list of these festivals can be found [here in Terms of Trade](#).
 - ix. Key Creative Team. Please include short industry bios (maximum 250 words) of the key creative Team (Producer, Writer and Director). Where available, please provide link/s to complete samples of relevant work. Please include title, year, runtime, link, password and name of key creative involved.
 - x. Key Attachments. Please include short bios (maximum 250 words) of any confirmed heads of department and attached cast e.g. EP, Mentor, Principal Cast, DOP, Editor, Composer etc.

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- xi. Non-South Australian Attachments. Please also attach short bios (maximum 250 words) of any non-South Australian residents involved in the project and explain why they should be involved.
- xii. Contact Page including Producer contact details.

Please ensure all file names of PDF documents adhere to the naming conventions, as follows:

- CV's - ProjectTitle_ApplicantName_KeyCreativeNameCV_QS25
- Production Budget - ProjectTitle_ApplicantName_ProductionBudget_QS25
- Production Schedule - ProjectTitle_ApplicantName_ProductionSchedule_QS25
- Release Form/Letter of Intent - ProjectTitle_ApplicantName_ReleaseFormLOI_QS25
(*Documentary only)
- Script - ProjectTitle_ApplicantName_Script_QS25
- Creative Proposal - ProjectTitle_ApplicantName_CreativeProposal_QS25

INDUSTRY RESOURCES

[Screen Australia Story Documents Drama 2018](#)

[Screen Australia Suggested Script Layout](#)

[Screen Australia What Is A Synopsis](#)

[Screen Australia Indigenous Pathways & Protocols Handbook](#)

[The Hamilton Health & Safety Fund](#)

Log of Changes to Quicksilver 2025 Guidelines

8 September 2025

REVISION	DETAIL
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA – TEAMS	<p>Previously “Key Creatives (Writer, Director, Producer) must not be:”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) A full-time employee of a broadcaster or commissioning platform (e.g., an SVOD service);(b) employed on a full-time basis by educational or training institutions; or(c) acting in the capacity of a trustee of a trust. <p>This has been amended to “An individual applicant must not be: (a), (b) or (c).”</p>
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA – PROJECTS	<p>Additional Criterion: Specific requirements may apply to projects which involve participation or content with the following communities: d/Deaf, disabled, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTQIA+, or those from other under-represented groups.</p>
SUBMISSION MATERIALS	<p>Addition of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement.</p>