

## Emerging Writers' Incubator Writer Applicant Guidelines

### *About the opportunity*

The Emerging Writers' Incubator (the Incubator) is a nationwide initiative to develop underrepresented scripted writing talent in the Australian screen sector.

The third year of the Incubator is presented by SBS, in partnership with Screen Australia, VicScreen, Screen NSW, Screen Tasmania, Screen Queensland, Screenwest and the South Australian Film Corporation, with the assistance of the Australian Writers' Guild.

Working with some of Australia's leading production companies, the Incubator aims to promote inclusion among Australian screenwriting talent and provide significant work experience in drama production to writers with lived experiences that have been underrepresented in the sector.

For the purposes of this initiative, underrepresented means those who:

- identify as First Nations Australians
- are from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- are Deaf or hard of hearing or people with disability
- are female or trans/gender diverse
- identify as LGBTQIA+, and/or
- are located in regional and/or remote areas.

Six successful candidates (Selected Writers), one from each of the participating states and territories, will be employed full time for 12 months in leading Australian production companies (Host Companies) acclaimed for their delivery of Australian drama.

The successful Victorian writer will join Victorian production company Kindling Pictures production company, focused on sparking ideas and igniting careers.

Founded in 2022 by multi-award-winning producer, Imogen Banks, Kindling invests in bold, visionary storytellers, with a key interest in supporting the careers of emerging filmmakers, bringing diverse and uniquely Australian stories to the global stage.

Placements will commence from approximately November 2023 (or as soon as possible after contracting). The Selected Writers will work across the Host Companies' entire drama slate, irrespective of commissioning network or platform.

## ***Who is eligible?***

Applicants must:

- Be an early career writer from one or more of the following backgrounds:
  - identify as First Nations Australians
  - are from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
  - are Deaf or hard of hearing or people with disability
  - are female or trans/gender diverse
  - identify as LGBTQIA+, and/or
  - are located in regional and/or remote areas
- Meet at least one of the experience criteria:
  - Have participated as a writer in a scheme run by a major screen agency, organisation and/or broadcaster in Australia (e.g. AWG Pathways, Screenability, AFTRS Talent Camp, Cinespace's Package to Pitch, Impact Australia), and/or
  - A writer or co-writer credit on a piece of completed narrative fiction (television episode, feature film, or webseries of at least 30 minutes cumulative duration), and/or
  - A writer who is currently in development on a project with support from a broadcaster, major online content provider or screen agency/organisation), and/or
  - A body of work in related areas (e.g. playwright)
- Not have been previously engaged by Kindling Pictures (or any related entity) for three months or more in a script department or in-house development role or similar, and
- Be available to undertake a full-time, paid placement for a period of 12 consecutive months, and
- Meet the general eligibility requirements set out in VicScreen's Terms of Trade and Screen Australia's Terms of Trade.

## ***What are the key dates?***

Applications Open: 15 May

Applications Close: 16 June

Unsuccessful Stage One and Two Applicants Notified: week commencing 21 August

Shortlist Interviews: 18 Sept – 13 October

Successful applicants notified: week commencing 16 October

Successful writers commence: prior to 23 November 2023

## *What do you need to do to apply?*

Applicants must provide:

- A completed application form, including any additional documentation and materials listed in the form
- Up to 1-page statement outlining where you are at in your writing career and how participating in this scheme will benefit your career development
- Up to 1-page of your writing CV/credits
- A 10-page sample of screenwriting (for Stage One assessment), and
- A full-length writing sample, i.e. a script for a half-hour or hour episode of television, or a feature film script (reviewed as part of Stage Two assessment only).

## *Who can you talk to about this initiative?*

- If you have general queries or queries about submitting your application, please contact Fergus Harte, 03 9660 3216
- For all other queries, please contact Jana Blair, Manager, Industry Skills and Development, 03 9660 3273

## **The details**

### *What is the assessment and selection process?*

#### *Writer applications and assessment*

- **Stage One Assessment:** VicScreen will receive and assess all writer applications for eligibility. They will produce a longlist of applicants based on the career statements, CVs and 10-page writing sample for SBS, Screen Australia and Kindling to assess by 28 July 2023
- **Stage Two Assessment:** SBS, Screen Australia and VicScreen will work with Kindling to select a shortlist of writers from that state, reviewing all application materials (including the full-length writing samples) from the shortlisted writers. They will select the three (3) shortlisted candidates that they wish to interview by 1st September 2023

#### *Interviews*

Kindling will select a narrative screen project from their slate and set a script assessment task for the three shortlisted writers. This can be an oral or written script assessment. Interviews and tasks will be coordinated by Screen Australia.

The interview panel will include representatives from Kindling, VicScreen and SBS and/or Screen Australia. Interviews are estimated to take place between 18 September and 13 October. Interviews will be grouped by state and each state's interviews will take place over 3 days during this period.

## *Selection*

Once all interviews have been completed, Kindling, SBS, Screen Australia and VicScreen will discuss the shortlisted candidates and mutually agree on the Selected Writer, having regard to the most suitable and appropriate match between Kindling and the Selected Writer.

Decisions will be made within 3 days of the final interview and will be communicated to the Selected Writers following final consultation and confirmation with the Host Companies.

## ***What are the Assessment Criteria***

Each eligible applicant will be assessed taking into consideration the below criteria:

- The writer's objectives for undertaking the placement, including how it will assist their career development and what specific skills they expect to gain from the experience if successful
- The writer's perceived ability to successfully engage with Kindling's slate across the 12-month period
- The standard of the supplied writing sample, and its demonstration of the abilities and skills of the writer, and
- The alignment of the writer with the diversity and inclusion aims of the initiative.

Previous funding to undertake a placement or equivalent program will be taken into account.

## ***What funding is available?***

Kindling will be provided with funding of up to \$80,000 in total as the salary for the Selected Writer (inclusive of superannuation, payroll tax, insurance, workcover).

Kindling is responsible for ensuring that the Selected Writer is paid according to all applicable legislation and industrial awards including the superannuation guarantee and workplace insurance.

The successful applicant will enter into a standard employee or contractor agreement containing provisions consistent with these guidelines with Kindling before commencing the placement.

## ***How will the placement work?***

Kindling will facilitate opportunities and support their Selected Writer to perform and develop their skills in accordance with the indicative role description provided as Annexure A.

All intellectual property generated by the Selected Writer in the course of their employment or engagement with Kindling will be the property of Kindling. Each writer's credit, where applicable, and associated benefits will be determined by AWG standard agreements.

To the extent that a writer may subsequently be engaged as a writer of an episode of television, that work will fall outside of the scope of their duties under the initiative and will not be funded under the initiative.

Any fees due to the writer will be met by Kindling separately in respect of such work in keeping with the Miniseries and Telemovie Agreement 2010 (MATA) (2022 rates) or Series and Serials Agreement 2008 (SASA) (2022 rates) as negotiated between the writer and Kindling, in accordance with the relevant industrial agreements.

Where and to the extent that the Selected Writer owns original scripted projects that existed prior to their employment relationship which they do not wish Kindling to own as part of this engagement, these projects must be disclosed and specifically excluded from their employment arrangement at the time their employee or contractor agreement is negotiated and agreed.

Kindling will be expected to outline a plan for managing the Selected Writer in accordance with the above.

### ***What are the Terms of Funding?***

Funding will be provided as a grant to Kindling to pay the salary (and other benefits) of the successful applicant over the year placement.

The Selected Writer will be required to enter into a standard employee or contractor agreement containing provisions consistent with these guidelines with Kindling before commencing the placement. SBS, Screen Australia and VicScreen reserves their right to request a copy of these agreements at any time.

At the mid-point and the conclusion of each placement, the Selected Writer and Kindling will be required to each deliver a report offering an update on how the placement is working for each party and sharing any suggestions for the ongoing shape of the initiative.

It is a condition of funding that successful applicants co-operate with VicScreen, Screen Australia, and SBS in any PR and press activity relating to their participation in the Emerging Writers' Incubator. Participants may also be asked to contribute to future seminars or workshops to share their experiences and knowledge with other filmmakers.

VicScreen, Screen Australia and SBS acknowledge and appreciate the effort that all applicants put into their applications however, due to high volume of applications received, partners will be unable to provide feedback to individual applicants.

### **Ready to Start your Application?**

[Start your application](#)

## **ANNEXURE A:**

Company: Kindling Pictures

Position: In-house writer

Supervisor's: Imogen Banks and Emelyne Palmer

Location: Fitzroy, Melbourne.

### **Position Description:**

Kindling Pictures is a creatively led production company, focused on supporting the careers of emerging talent and bringing ideas to life. We are looking for an individual who is a passionate storyteller to join our team as an in-house writer. This role will provide a unique opportunity to learn about production and the role of a professional screenwriter.

The selected writer will work across our existing development slate; from assisting with pitches and funding applications, participating in writers' rooms and providing notes on script deliveries. They will also be mentored to identify new ideas and IP, to expand our development slate and database of emerging writers.

At the beginning of the placement, Kindling will be in production on an 8-part drama series. During this period, the writer will gain an understanding of how scripts evolve throughout production and how each role operates, from script coordinator to showrunner, gaining both practical skills and invaluable knowledge.

They will also work across the post-production process of the series. Gaining an understanding of how and why structure of original script is changed in the edit and what ultimately ends up on screen.

We love to collaborate and are constantly curious. In expanding our Kindling family, we are looking for a writer to work with through mentorship and as someone we can also learn from, incorporating new ideas and opinions, whilst being guided in preparation for a successful career in the industry.

### **Professional Development Plan:**

The development plan outlined below offers the broad strokes in the skills and knowledge that will be available to the writer, one which will be curated to the individual to match their interests and skillset. Providing a collection of practical skills and industry exposure, designed to address the knowledge gaps emerging writers often face when breaking into the workforce. The writer will come away from this placement with practical skills to secure ongoing employment. Providing the opportunity to form strong relationships with writers, producers and creatives, who will ultimately support their ongoing career growth and a broader understanding of the tv scripting process from development through to production.

## **THE BASICS – Practical Skills are employment skills.**

Throughout the placement there will be a focus on equipping the writer with the practical skill set to secure ongoing work across various scripted fields. Including, working in-house for a production company in addition to working in production, for example as a script coordinator all the way through to freelance writing and notetaking.

## **RELATIONSHIPS ARE KEY – Getting your foot in the door is often the hardest first step.**

The writer will have the opportunity to build a strong working relationship with Kindling, in addition to working with different screenwriters, networks and commissioners, funding bodies and agents. This will aid the writer with practical skills in building relationships, allowing for first hand professional growth.

## **WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENS – The nuance of the writers and how they are constructed.**

One of the biggest hurdles new writers face is understanding the dynamics of a writers room. Through this placement, the applicant will be offered a broad exposure to the varying processes involved in the development phase of a script by sitting in on a wide range of rooms, covering different formats, genres and each with their own process.

## **THE POWER OF THE PITCH – How to effectively sell your idea and make it a reality.**

Throughout the placement, the writer will have the opportunity to hone their pitching abilities through the exposure to different audiences, whether it being a producer, network of fellow writers. The writer will be encouraged to pitch their own material, allowing the writer to form an understanding of how to communicate and sell your idea in a pitch document and how to tailor the language for your intended audience.

## **SCRIPT NOTES – How to read between the lines and knowing when to kill your darlings.**

The writer will be provided with access to notes on scripts, having the opportunity to observe how experienced writers interpret notes, implement feedback and the way in which problem solving can often take place. This will allow the applicant to learn how to give and receive feedback, identifying creative solves and allowing for an understanding of how nuanced the process can be.

## **THE FULL PICTURE: FROM SCRIPT TO SCREEN – Preparing for the showrunner culture.**

The basic architecture of story development and screenwriting, often means writers work in siloed environments, and don't gain on set experience, until they are in a script producer/series creator position. With the rise of showrunner culture in Australia, this lack of early exposure and understanding of how scripts impact production can make the transition from screenwriter to showrunner quite challenging.

Through this placement, the applicant will see how the scripts evolve from early development, through to production. They will gain an understanding of how scripts impact production and how to creatively solve problems.

## **THE DARK ROOM – How the script is re-written in the edit.**

The writer will be involved in the postproduction process, watching various versions of cuts whilst observing the comparison between the shooting script to the final product. Learning how to problem solve during the edit, how words can translate to screen through processes such as rescripting through ADR. This will allow the applicant to gain a deeper understanding of the restructuring of a script and the translation process from original script through to its transition onto screen.



## Core Accountabilities and Learning Objectives

<p><b>Kindling Development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take an active role in in-house development efforts including notetaking, participating in ideation sessions, research, pitch document creation, editing and design etc.</li> <li>• Building an internal database of 'writers to watch'. This will involve reading spec scripts, writing coverage, and attending theatre shows.</li> <li>• Read and evaluate potential projects for development, including writer submissions, concepts, treatments, scripts, books, etc. Through this process and with guidance from Imogen, they will learn how to identify a writer's strength (ie: plotting/ dialogue / character) and be encouraged to make recommendations on this basis.</li> <li>• Prepare supporting materials for development funding applications, as required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Writers Room:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work across a broad spectrum of genres and formats to hone notetaking skills.</li> <li>• Learn how writers are selected based on the story being developed and how to curate a balance of skills and minds.</li> <li>• Understand the dynamics of a writer's room. How to contribute constructively and learn what stops flow.</li> <li>• Learn how episodes are plotted based on the genre, format, and underlying IP of the series – for example Streamer V Linear / one-hour V half hour / Book adaptation V original concept.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pre-Production</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read producer and network notes during early script development. They will also be encouraged to give their own script notes and hone this skill.</li> <li>• Learn how scripts evolve based on department requirements and restrictions.</li> <li>• Learn how to write Scripts with production in mind. Understanding the logistical and financial impact of script on production.</li> <li>• Gain understanding of how scripts translate to production - how they are broken down and scheduled.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Production:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist the script department in managing production requirements. This could involve, assisting the script coordinator with updating and issuing script amendments, taking notes in production meetings, running checks for legal etc.</li> <li>• Opportunity to shadow the showrunner and understand the relationship between writer and director during production.</li> <li>• Learn how actors can impact script and how to write with cast in mind</li> </ul>
<p><b>Post-production:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assembling all script materials for final deliver. This could involve; updating episode synopses to match the final edit. Writing character descriptions.</li> <li>• Watch Cuts – see how script evolves through the edit.</li> <li>• Learn how ADR is used as a final rewrite.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personal Project</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Kindling Pictures team to develop an original concept</li> </ul>

## Essential skills

- A resourceful self-starter; deadline-oriented with a strong work ethic and attention to detail.
- Can work both collaboratively and independently.
- Reading and writing for the purposes of critical analysis.
- Writing marketable material for the purposes of both national and international sales.
- Local and international knowledge of the film and television industry/market.
- A demonstrated understanding of the fundamental principles of storytelling for television.

## Desirable Skills

- Knowledge of Final Draft
- Design skills – knowledge of Adobe programs such as Photoshop and Illustrator