



Screen Commissioning Guidelines for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

Screen Content

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Programming that contributes to a sense of national identity and reflects the cultural diversity of the Australian community.

Diversity and inclusion are at the heart of everything we do. A broad range of perspectives, approaches and ideas makes us stronger, more creative and better able to engage with the Australian community. As the nation's leading public broadcaster, we have a responsibility to reach and remain relevant to all Australians. As part of that responsibility, we must ensure that diversity, inclusion and belonging are embedded across every stage of content development, commissioning and production.

The guidelines form a key part of our vision to look and sound like contemporary Australia and our commitment to placing diversity, inclusion and belonging at the heart of our planning, commissioning and content-making processes. The guidelines recognise that diversity is not simply about representation, but about creating environments where people are respected, valued and able to contribute fully – strengthening the Australian stories we tell.



Representation and Inclusion

The guidelines focus on five key areas of representation to support more inclusive screen content and production practices. Productions are also encouraged to consider other aspects of diversity, including geographic, socio-economic and generational diversity where relevant.

The guidelines acknowledge that people may experience multiple, intersecting identities, and encourage productions to consider how these experiences may impact inclusion.



The guidelines cover:

1. Gender Representation

Female, male or gender-diverse identities.

2. Indigenous Australians

People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

3. Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

People who are not Anglo-Celtic by descent and/or whose first language is not English.

4. People living with disability

People living with an intellectual, psychosocial, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments.

5. The LGBTQIA+ community

People who identify as having diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.



The guidelines cover:

On Screen

How your content reflects diversity and inclusion in its subject matter, or in talent and cast.

Off Screen

How your key creatives, production teams, and crew reflect diversity and inclusion.

Career Progression

What measures you are taking to encourage and support under-represented groups in the media industry.



Content Types

We recognise there are several content types that may have different considerations.

Scripted

Drama and comedy

Non-Scripted

Documentary, factual, entertainment, arts and live events

Children's

Scripted live action, animation and factual

What you need to do

The guidelines set out the framework for demonstrating representation of diversity on screen and off screen. Consideration should be given to:

1. Diversity on screen – how diversity is reflected in your content, including through the subject matter and/or who appears on screen.

2. Diversity off screen – diversity in key creative, production and crew roles.

3. Career progression – how you will create practical opportunities for under-represented groups via attachments and other initiatives.



To track progress towards our goal of reflecting the Australian population in our content and teams, there are two deliverables required:

Screen Inclusion Action Plan

The Screen Inclusion Action Plan captures how your production intends to meet the Screen Commissioning Guidelines for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging. It is completed in two stages: Part A at commissioning to outline your approach, and Part B at the end of production to reflect on outcomes and key learnings. For further information, please visit the [ABC TV Independent Production Portal](#).

The Everyone Project

Productions are required to register with The Everyone Project. The Everyone Project manages the collection of voluntary diversity information directly from cast and crew, enabling the ABC to measure and report on representation across commissioned productions while protecting individual privacy. Find out more about [The Everyone Project](#).



On Screen Guidelines

Content and Subject Matter

Is your content about under-represented communities, backgrounds and experience?

Does your program tell authentic stories about or through the eyes of diverse Australians?

Is the story about, or reflective of, a diverse Australian community? (i.e. themes, storylines, subject matter, segments). Casting must be authentic when portraying diverse people and communities.

Nothing about us without us

All productions about a specific diverse community or subject must demonstrate how they will include people representative of that diversity within the core creative team.

Examples of good practice include:

- Meaningful community consultation
- Cultural advisors where appropriate
- Ongoing engagement throughout production
- Avoiding tokenistic representation
- Informed consent and respectful storytelling
- Engaging people with lived experience throughout development where appropriate



On Screen Guidelines

People

What measures are you taking to identify and diversify on screen talent in the main cast, supporting cast and background roles?

Content that reflects diversity throughout the cast.

Consider opportunities across:

Main Cast

Scripted leads, presenter, narrator, host. Generally, the main cast appears in all episodes of a series.

Supporting Cast

Semi-regular cast or featured guest roles, guest presenters, panellists, experts, regular contributors, musicians.

Background Roles

Extras, cameo performers, one-off contributors, vox pops, participating audience members.



Off Screen Guidelines

Diversity and Inclusion

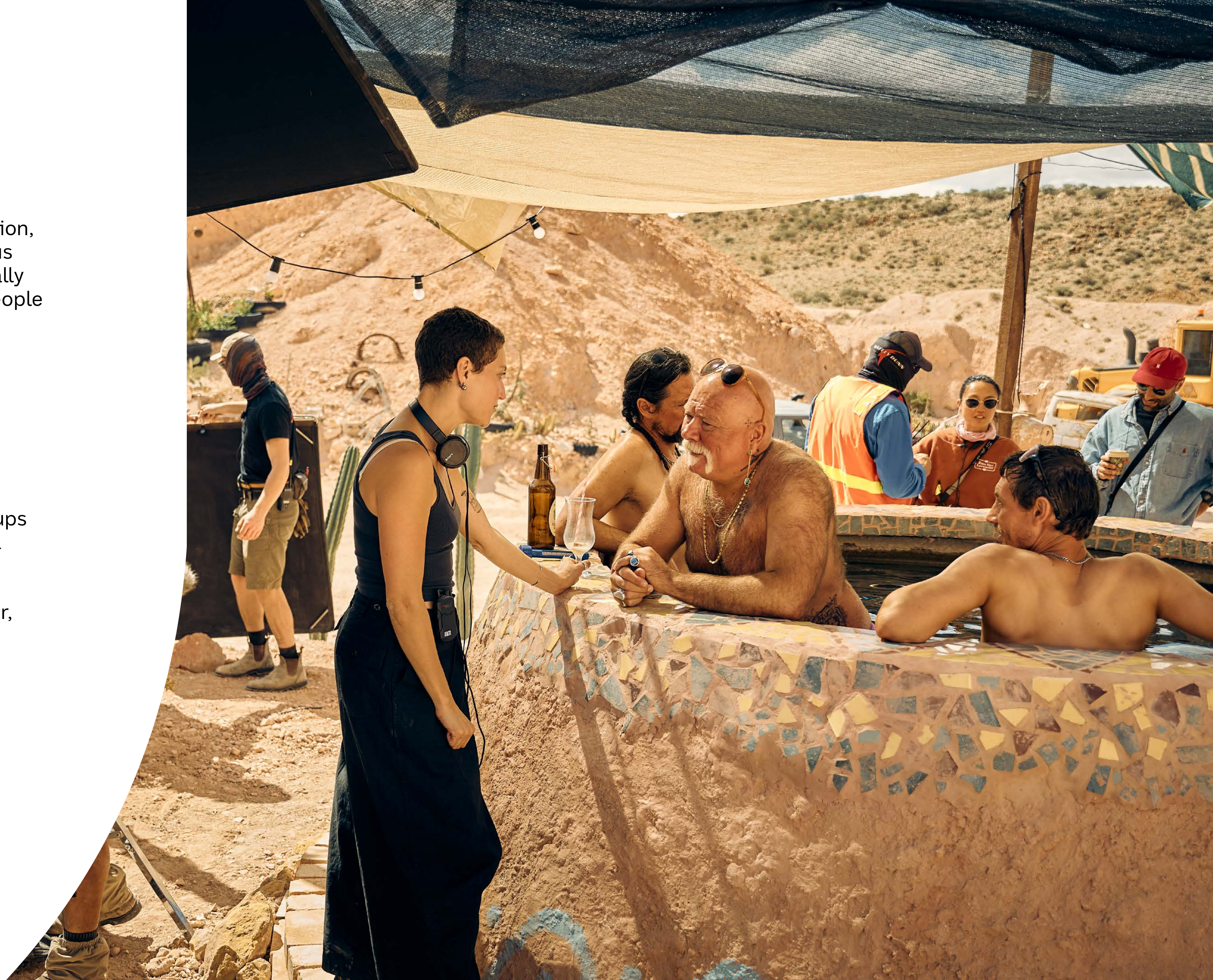
Consideration should be given to how off-screen roles reflect the diversity of the Australian population, including meaningful representation of Indigenous Australians, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disability and people who identify as LGBTQI+.

Across off-screen roles, we expect 50% are women or gender diverse.

Key Creative, Production and Crew Roles

Where possible, productions should support the progression of people from underrepresented groups into senior production and crew positions, as well as key creative decision-making roles.

Example roles include EP, Producer, Series Producer, Director, Writer, DOP, Editor.



Attachment, Internship and Career Progression

The ABC seeks to support access to the media industry for people from under-represented groups and support their career progression within the ABC and its suppliers.

The ABC expects production companies to identify genuine career development opportunities for individuals from under-represented communities. This may include existing attachment schemes, internships, industry incentives, or meaningful on-screen opportunities for diverse talent.

Your production can achieve this by:

Providing genuine production experience for emerging practitioners from under-represented groups. This may be achieved through industry attachment and internship programs, targeted initiatives, grant funding or opportunities provided by production companies.

or

Demonstrating hire of a graduate of one of these schemes in a paid role, whether their original internship or attachment was with your company or elsewhere.

The intention is to create a meaningful link between industry programs such as internships, attachments, shadow programs, etc. and inclusion in creative and production teams to build an industry that is more inclusive and representative of the Australian population.

Examples of good practice include:

- Advertising positions through diverse industry networks
- Using accessible recruitment and casting processes
- Considering pathways for diverse talent to progress into recurring on-screen roles.
- Widening talent searches beyond established networks
- Considering reasonable adjustments during interviews



What does success look like?

The ABC understands this is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Inclusive production is an ongoing practice that requires reflection, learning and accountability.

Productions are expected to identify meaningful inclusion actions and reflect on the outcomes at the conclusion of production through the Screen Inclusion Action Plan.

Insights from productions will help inform future practice, identify successful approaches and support continuous improvement across ABC Screen and, in turn, the industry.

The Screen Commissioning Guidelines for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain relevant, effective and align with evolving inclusive industry practice and the ABC's strategic priorities.

Production companies seeking feedback or guidance on their Screen Inclusion Action Plan should first contact their Commissioning Editor. The Commissioning Editor can connect them with the Diversity and Inclusion Project Manager for further support.



Additional resources

These guidelines should be used alongside relevant ABC policies, standards and guidance including:

[ABC Editorial Policies](#) →

[Reporting and Portraying Disability guidance](#) →

[Respecting Indigenous People and Culture guidance](#) →

