

EPISODE 9
DRAFT VERSION 2
RUN TIME 29.45
HOST Aimée Lindorff (AL)
GUEST Rowena Billard (RB) Screen Culture and Community Director

Resources:

- [Screen Queensland Screen Culture Funding](#)
- [British Film Institute How to Set Up A Film Festival](#) - this document is from 2001, so doesn't incorporate digital programming, but is a good starting point to consider your event.

Considering applying for Screen Culture Funding? Hear from Screen Culture & Community Director Rowena Billard - otherwise known as Rosie - for an interesting discussion about what defines screen culture, how to approach your application, and what to consider when applying.

This episode is for cultural producers looking to apply for screen culture funding for the first time. Please note: The deadline for applying to Screen Culture Funding has been extended to **30 October 2020**. You can get more information about the specifics of the Screen Culture Funding program from the Screen Queensland website or by contacting Rosie and the Community team on 07 3248 0500

AL	Welcome to SQ On Air, presented by Screen Queensland - exploring the issues and news affecting the Queensland Screen Sector. I'm Aimee Lindorff and this episode we talk with Screen Culture & Community Director Rowena Billard - or Rosie - about Screen Queensland Screen Culture Funding Program. What to consider when applying and how screen culture supports a vibrant screen industry.
AL	Rosie, thank you so much for joining us on SQ On Air.
RB	No worries at all. Happy to be here.
AL	Now, you oversee Screen Culture Funding. What are we talking about when we talk about Screen Culture.
RB	We're talking primarily around the events and festivals which is supported by the Screen Culture Funding Program. Screen culture obviously encompasses mostly

	how we relate to screen and how we connect with film in our daily lives, and how we can get the broader community connecting with film, if that makes sense.
AL	So we're really talking about not just audience engagement with the film itself, but talking about film, having that cinematic experience, really about engaging with storytelling through screen.
RB	And across many different platforms. We connect with screen now in so many different ways, it's not just the traditional cinema versions. We connect on our phone, we connect on our TV, we connect on our tablet, we connect when we're talking with people. So it's an interesting world that we live in now, because it's not as traditional as it used to be.
AL	Most definitely, and when we talk about screen culture, we're not just talking about cinema, we're talking about gaming now as well, and that very audience direct, at home, in their bed, with their phone engagement.
RB	So we're talking about games, we're talking about how you connect with your multi platform web series on YouTube and different things like that, so it's a really all-encompassing space when you're talking about screen, because you're not just talking about one particular siloed thing, because it goes all out into all areas of your world, I would say.
AL	Particularly now that everyone's got a device, effectively, in their pocket, that discussion has shifted away from that single cinema engagement into that multi platform, cross platform content heavy engagement with story.
RB	It has grown and gotten bigger, but I think you still connect in that same way that you may access your content differently, but you still would talk and have engagement with your community, your peers, around the content that you're accessing and engaging in different way. It's still the same way that you would engage and talk to people like, "Oh my goodness, did you see that film, it posed this question. You know? You have to see this film. I'm not going to give you spoilers, but this is the best thing I have seen." Do you know what I mean? And I think that's kind of the screen culture when you're talking about that, when you're talking about how is it connecting you with your broader world. And that may be just within Queensland, within Australia, and from an international perspective.
AL	And it's not just audiences either, it's within the industry, networking with other people working in the space and learning about the latest and greatest new innovation in screen, and also having those opportunities to develop your professional skills amongst your peers.

RB	<p>Yeah, it's a big thing that we do encourage through the Screen Culture program, is industry sessions, how can I connect with my fellow peers around different trends in the industry, how can I learn about this, how can I connect and work with other people and collaborate. And I think obviously, this year has certainly been different but I think we are still connecting, we still are seeking to collaborate, and using those festivals and events as a jumping off point to connect around your projects or whatever you're working on.</p>
AL	<p>That's a pretty big remit for someone who's working in screen culture, particularly screen culture funding. What are some examples, I guess, of the programs or events that receive Screen Queensland screen culture funding?</p>
RB	<p>The program in itself is quite flexible, so we do support probably traditional cinematic events to more new platforms and different things like that, so in the traditional sense, you're looking at that festival space, of your Brisbane International Film Festival, which is on right now, which is so great to see, that everyone's coming back and it's doing really well, and I think you have the Gold Coast Film Festival is another one that we've support. Vision Splendid Outback Film Festival was just held in Winton, which regional central western Queensland, I should say, to be specific, and it's a great festival in an outdoor cinema and it brings the community together, and I think that's what we're looking for, is seeing how you connect with your audiences. How do you bring the community together to access your content through the program.</p> <p>And then from a non-traditional sense, not really non-traditional, but we do support some gaming festivals and stuff like that. So I think if you were looking to apply to the program, just have a conversation if you're not sure whether you're going to be fitting within it.</p>
AL	<p>So the screen culture funding applications are open now. They close October 23rd?</p>
RB	<p>Yes. October 23rd. So not too far away. Yeah. We do two rounds every year of the program, and the reason being is the first round is for events occurring from 1 July to 31st of December, and the second round is for events occurring from 1 January to 30 June, because the program runs by financial year. The second round, and breaking it up into two rounds, allows for the second part of the financial year for more events to... People thinking about events in that second part too actually do have the chance to apply, because if you're only doing one round per year, then you're doing it so far in advance that people may not necessarily be thinking that far ahead. Although we do ask you to think a little bit far ahead.</p>
AL	<p>I do want to talk about the impact of the pandemic shutdown, particularly on the industry. Gold Coast Film Festival is obviously one of the big notable programs that were immediately affected by the shutdown. They had their program launch,</p>

	<p>and then a couple of days later, had to announce the cancellation due to the federal restrictions. How do you see the pandemic impacting screen culture throughout the... Obviously, so many events that we would normally have as part of our calendar haven't gone ahead, or for those like BIFF have had to pivot their model quite substantially. What are your thoughts on that?</p>
<p>RB</p>	<p>Well, obviously we've been working with all those events that have had to pivot or reschedule their events from March, June, April and so period. And most of them have pivoted to online delivery or holding it later in the year, and Vision Splendid is another example of that. They went from June to holding it in September, and they just made the decision to reschedule because they had the opportunity to have that kind of space. And going forward, I think you're seeing more hybrid models, of a mixture of physical events or holding multiple smaller events. Obviously restrictions are changing all the time at the moment. They're becoming more expansive in Queensland, so some of the restrictions are being lifted, so that creates more opportunity for festivals going forward in the traditional sense.</p> <p>I think what it has given most festivals the ability to do is to think more broadly about how I want to market my event online. And the V Fest initiative was part of that that we did through COVID, was festivals pivoting to online delivery in new and different ways to broaden the reach of their event. So I think that is one of the things that's been an opportunity. If there's a good thing that's come out of it, it's the fact that it's given all these events space to think, "How can I..." and going forward, festival directors when they're applying, "How can I take my event in a new way to access new audiences and bring them to my event in a new and different way?"</p>
<p>AL</p>	<p>Talking about particularly the V Fest funding initiative, one of things I've found is how providing digital access has broadened the accessibility to physical events, or what we've previously accepted as physical only events. Do you see that continuing now that we're moving back into that physical event space?</p>
<p>RB</p>	<p>I do hope events consider those options as well, because it gives the ability for regional Queenslanders, for example, and not just with a Queensland focus I'm responding to this, to access events happening and occurring, say in southeast Queensland, or for example, the Port Shorts Film Festival will be held as an online event this year. Usually that's just a straight physical event, but this year they're doing the Best of Port Shorts as an online festival, and that will broaden the reach of that, so that more Queenslanders will be able to go up to Port Douglas, technically speaking, and attend the event, and see the content that's being generated from the region. And that will be more widely accessed by all of Australia, which I think is just an incredible sort of [inaudible 00:18:25] that they've done this year.</p>

AL	I think it was Lucy at Gold Coast Film Festival was talking about, particularly the People's Choice Awards, that delivering that program, the gala event, online meant that it had something like fivefold engagement, was five times their typical numbers, which is remarkable for a festival from southeast Queensland.
RB	<p>Oh, it's incredible, and I think that's another example of it, just increases the reach of your event. And what it does, I think, is that it not only increases the reach it that moment, it actually makes people go, "You know what? Next year, if I can, I'm going to go to that." So it puts a placeholder in people's mind about the opportunities that they can to connect with other filmmakers and other content that they wouldn't necessarily have had before.</p> <p>It is marketing Queensland films, Queensland creatives, I think that's the thing that you're looking at. It takes the reach of your event and the content of your event more broadly outside of Queensland, to Australia, to the world. You know what I mean? So I think that's the exciting pivot that's been happening. We've been able to attend international festivals ourselves from our home. You could do Toronto, you could attend the Sydney Film Festival this year online, because they couldn't do a physical event.</p> <p>So more people probably attended that. You could go to Cannes this year online. And I think, at least going forward in the next couple of months, more festivals will be doing more hybrid models. I do hope that continues with some of the content.</p>
AL	It certainly says something about being in the room with people and experiencing a film together.
RB	It creates a sense of community and engagement, yeah, because when you're at home watching content that may not necessarily that may not be necessary , you're connecting in a different way, and we have all been there doing that through this online world that we live in now, through the different platforms that we're accessing those content. But I think there is something to be said, I love it, obviously, because I work in the space, of sitting down in a cinema and connecting with people and watching the content at the same time. It's just a different experience.
AL	Beyond regional engagement, also offers a range of opportunities for engagement with people who have access needs or different access requirements, like people in the disability community or language community. So to see that integrated a little bit more and seeing physical events think about that a little bit more must be very encouraging moving forward.
RB	It's definitely encouraging. We do support the Wide Angle Film Festival, which is all about accessibility, and access for people with different access needs, whatever they may be. And so they great remit of doing that, and they work with

	<p>different events as well, around that content access. Obviously just different films that you couldn't access otherwise from the mainstream cinema, like NTV, Stan, your Netflix, or whatever. I think sometimes they don't curate the programs it would take years for you to see. Festivals allow you to get that content sooner. There's sometimes a reason why they call it a festival film, because you wouldn't access it otherwise. And I think that's just one of the great things about the whole program in general.</p>
AL	<p>Well, let's talk about the program. So I have a program in mind, or I have an event in mind, and thinking about, Rosie, I've been pondering it for a while. Number one, how do I know that my idea has legs for funding?</p>
RB	<p>I think when you're considering your event, consider who's your audience. Why does this need to be... Why are you creating this event? What's its purpose? Is it to market your own project, then that necessarily won't fit within the program. Does it have a larger community engagement point? Is it, say, for example, are you showcasing cinema that would not otherwise be accessed by a certain community, or the larger community audience that you're looking at? What's your point of difference from other events that is happening in that kind of space?</p>
AL	<p>It is a new concept, it is a new idea that I'm thinking about, but it's the first time I've ever run an event. How do I find the best people to support the project?</p>
RB	<p>What I tend to do, if you're new to this space, is I tend to connect you with other festival directors that have run events before, just so you can get some ideas around what is required, because running festivals and events is a very particular experience. Do I need a DCP, how do I get in contact with the cinema, what do I need to do? The lag time in all those different things that you have a concept of, and you don't know what you've got going is the main thing. So I think always, and I try and connect most people with different other festival directors and different community festivals because I think you're better together when you're leveraging off one another, and learning off one another. So that's one of the key things that I've been suggesting.</p> <p>Everyone wants to help one another. I think that's one of the great things about Queensland. I think in the Queensland industry, and Queensland festival industry, is that people want to connect and help one another with their events, or share content, whatever it is. I think there's a great reciprocity nature to the industry.</p>
AL	<p>I think there's a bit of a, and you mentioned with the DCP, there's a bit of a myth that, even when it comes to running film events, you just buy the DVD, plug it into a large screen television, and that's the gist of it, right? But it certainly is a very intensive processes. Copyright, intellectual property to consider, there's marketing, there's insurance.</p>

<p>RB</p>	<p>Yeah, there's negotiating with the deal agents about getting the film and the rights to it. It's a whole process, and that's why I say, you don't know what you don't know, and talking with people who have done it before and have navigated it, because there's no specific training for a film festival director. Not that I'm aware of. It's all people that have done it before and have learnt from running the event, and having things go a little bit interesting, as I like to say.</p> <p>Well, I always interesting because it's always an opportunity to create something different and deliver something different to the people. So I think that's the thing that's the reason why I connect people with other event organizers, because honestly, even don't be afraid to ask questions of your peers would be the main thing that I would be suggesting. And if you are considering an event that's a new event, just reach out to myself and just say, "Hey, I have a question about this."</p>
<p>AL</p>	<p>Looking at developing for screen culture funding, how developed should the event be before I reach out Screen Queensland?</p>
<p>RB</p>	<p>I think it can be in the early stages for your event, if you're considering applying. When you are applying to Screen Queensland, in your stage, that's when it needs to be at a more thought-out level, I would say. You need to have a plan, you need to have considered what your event will be, the shape of it, how long it will run, is it a one day event, is it a two day event, is it day event, is it an evening event? Am I holding industry sessions? How many film screens do I propose that we will be screening? Is it just speeches, is it shorts? Will there be Q&As with filmmakers if possible? Will I be reaching out to that? Will I have an awards program? Will I have a short film contest?</p> <p>All these things you need to have considered before we start your application. They don't need to be, obviously, set in stone, because there is some flexibility between when you apply and then, if you are successful with your funding, to when you actually are holding your event, because obviously you have proposed dates of when you would hope to be holding your event. You have a proposed venue where you hope to be holding your event, but that venue may not be available for those dates, so you may need to shift that by the time that you get to that point. So I think you do need to have a good consideration around those elements. You do need to have an audience engagement plan. How do you propose to get your audience through the door? And I think now we will be seeking to have some kind of COVID safe plan, like how do you seek to mitigate any audience nervousness from attending your event, potentially from a pandemic point of view.</p> <p>Your marketing plan, your social engagement plan, audience engagement I should say, how many films you look to be screening what's your venue cost? Your projection of attendance? And they need to be realistic, do you know what I</p>

	<p>mean? You don't want to say you're going to be having 2,000 people at your event and you know the reality would be something different, you may be three or four hundred, or something like that. Or you may be saying, "I project that we'll be holding 16 events," when you've not held one before. Be realistic about what you can achieve, because we want to support you in achieving those things.</p> <p>And I think even when you talk to Screen Queensland, we do have external assessors to program, so just make sure it's on the page, and just read through your event plan and stuff like that to make sure that you have everything that you're thinking about that's on page, and don't assume knowledge, because otherwise we will be asking you some questions just for clarification purposes, because we do interrogate, because it is a competitive program, and the funding is not unlimited, as most things.</p>
AL	<p>That does raise the question, is it better to design a small event and over-deliver, than to over-promise to look more appealing?</p>
RB	<p>I think it's a mixture between the two. I think, if it's your first-time event, I think smaller is sometimes better, if you've never held this kind of event before, because that gives you the ability to figure out what you want the shape of the event to be. When we look at the applications, we do want to see if you have a vision to hold another event in the future. How you seek to grow the capacity of the event, if you, or whether you want to keep it at a certain level. So I think smaller sometimes is better, if it's your event. If you've held events before, it's okay to project, "We want to grow, we want to do these things," because you have delivered an event in the past and you know what you're doing, presumably. And so I think it's just something that you need to consider, like, what's your five year plan, what's your three year plan. Or if it's a two year plan that you have for your event.</p> <p>That's not to say that you can't apply just for a one-off event. You can. It's totally fine. But we just need to see some kind of strategies around how you're going to be doing that. We're just looking for some kind of consideration that you're not just going, "Oh, let's hold an event," because we do want to see some rigor there.</p>
AL	<p>All right, so breaking down some of the items that you have to deliver as part of the application process, particularly the business plan, because that seems quite large. You say business man and immediately, you're like....</p>
RB	<p>Yeah, I know, I know. People are always, "Oh, my goodness." But we're not asking for a 30 page document. We're not asking for a massive business plan. But we are asking you to consider the business of running the event, you know? Do you have those strategies involved? Do you have some kind of projection? So this could be a five page document, a 10 page document. But we do hope that it's more than</p>

	<p>just a one page document. When you're looking at a one page document as a business plan, that's generally not... That's just your foreword, I would say. I would think that you just need to have a little bit more rigor around how you're doing the delivery of the event, and how you project to be doing your business plan there. I think it's kind of like we're trying to ask you to think a little bit commercially about your event.</p>
AL	<p>And on that note, having a finance plan within the business plan is obviously crucial, because you need to... Screen culture funding will only cover so much.</p>
RB	<p>Because the program is limited, we can't entirely support the whole event. In an ideal world, you know... But, we do hope to see in a finance plan that you are looking to seek other sponsors and other... That you are looking to get community engagement. Because when we're seeing that you're getting other sponsors involved, we're hoping that you'll be getting the community involved in your festival and event, and engaging with it, to create some kind of... Building out the marketing of the event and the engagement across the board with the community. So there are events that do that quite well, in getting the engagement from the community to help drive interest in the event. But obviously, because the funding is limited, we can't wholly cover the event, so we do hope that the finance plan is considered in that.</p>
AL	<p>So in looking at applying for screen culture funding, how much of my budget should I kind of think reasonably Screen Queensland could apply to that?</p>
RB	<p>Well, that's a tricky question. I think when you're looking at your audience projections and stuff like that, what are the costs that are you covering. If you're seeking 100% funding from Screen Queensland, why? We would be interrogating that. What are your alternate sources? What are the costs that you are covering? Is it venue costs, is it the cost of the projector, getting the DCPs? Those are costs that are completely supported through the program. Like, how you're marketing it. I think it can be quite varied into how much you're asking, but I think it needs to be realistic. If you're asking for 75% or 50%, what are the other costs that you have associated and why? I think it's just building the business case around it, about why are you seeking a certain level of funding.</p> <p>Not to say that... Because the program is so limited, you may be applying for a certain level, but unfortunately the capacity of the program means that you will get somewhat less than that. And that is just the way that, unfortunately, the program runs, because we have such limited funding</p>
AL	<p>So one of the key points for the event proposals asks for an explanation of how the event will present new opportunities for Queensland filmmakers and the public. And that's really Screen Queensland's focus, isn't it? Is about providing</p>

	<p>those opportunities for Queensland stories, for Queensland storytellers, but also Queensland audiences to engage with screen.</p>
RB	<p>Yeah, and also, it definitely is one of the remits of the program is to ignite that passion for Queensland stories, I think is important, and I think promoting and connecting and showcasing Queensland talent to audiences and also to each other, so they can learn from one another, I think is important, and a key part of the program. And to that end, we do encourage within the programs, how will you be providing opportunities for Queensland filmmakers to learn, to showcase, and that may be through a shorts program, features, whatever it is, and engage with one another, I think is networking experiences. And if that's not a part of your program, that's fine, but I think we do look at how you'll be creating opportunities for up and coming filmmakers.</p> <p>For example, if you're holding a regional event, how will you be creating an opportunity for those to ignite the passion of the... I don't know, Christopher Nolan that's living in Gladstone? You know? You know, 50 year old Christopher Nolan, how are you igniting that passion? Or Christine Nolan, I should say, whoever that person is. I think that's probably... Speak to those opportunities that you are seeking to create for filmmakers and also ensuring the regional audiences and audiences in general are connecting with Queensland filmmakers, and their content, to show their work. Because it helps promote that sense of, we have talent here, and I think it's worth acknowledging and showcasing</p>
AL	<p>It's interesting you're talking about that, because I think, again, the trap is with events, that people just assume it's about watching movies, but it's really about fostering that community and the industry and finding ways, with your funding and your funding application, to articulate that.</p>
RB	<p>Yeah, it's definitely about fostering filmmakers and Queensland talent, and fostering the hunger from the general public for stories from Queenslanders. And I'm not talking about just the normal sort of, the idea of what an Australian film is, whatever it. We're talking about Australian stories, Queensland stories, whatever that might be. It might be a sci-fi. It might be a dystopian drama. Whatever that might be. Or it might be a rom-com. I think it's just fostering the hunger "What's Queensland filmmakers? What's this filmmaker doing? I need to see that film. Did you see that person's film?" I think that's the opportunity of the program, is that it creates that showcase, and a nexus point for people to connect around that content.</p>
AL	<p>We've talked a little bit about sponsors, and I note too, in the marketing plan aspect of the application, it says, not only having a viable and having an ability to implement the marketing plan, but it also questions media support. Is it necessary to have media support before you make an application?</p>

RB	<p>No, not necessary. But I think if you have media support, I think that's probably what we're talking about. It's not a fundamental requirement that when you're applying that you have media onboard. But we're looking to see if you will be engaging media, and how you will be doing that. If you are engaging media. You may have a social media plan, you may have a grassroots campaign which is completely different. But I think if you can talk to the media engagement for your event, I think whether it's regional ABC radio, or the local paper, I think where you can talk to these elements, that you will be providing the marketing of your event, and how you'll be seeking to implement it. I think that's what you need to be considering when you're applying.</p>
AL	<p>I think that's a, again, one of those really interesting traps where people assume that your event will be found. If you build it, they will come. There is such a saturation of content that it's sometimes hard to break through, so you do need to think about these things before you start thinking about delivering an event.</p>
RB	<p>For sure, you do need to consider, and this goes back to the audience engagement plan, how will you be reaching them to engage with your festival? How will you be connecting with them to go, "Oh, I must go to that event." And not just starting three or four weeks out from your event. How you're going to be planning a proper forward plan about how you're going to build that momentum and drive attendance towards your event. You see it all the time when people are marketing the big movies or whatever. If you just drop a movie, it's just going to go, and no one's going to see it because no one knew it was happening.</p> <p>You need to create an awareness and an opportunity so people can make time for it, because we are so saturated, as you said, by different content coming at us all the time. Different festival events that we have. So we are so saturated by content that we have, different personal events coming at us, I think you need to create the opportunity for people to find your event. Having a proper marketing plan, having a proper marketing plan slash engagement plan, I think that's what you need to be looking.</p>
AL	<p>Coming back to my event that I'm building, what's the first step that you recommend for anyone who's developing an event?</p>
RB	<p>I would say consider the marketplace, and where you'll be holding your event. Just kind of sketch it out. What's the shape of it? Is it a one day event, is it a two day event? Am I looking a five day event, even, from Thursday to Sunday, something like that? Is that a four day event? I think that's what you need to be considering. What content will I be showcasing? And then start looking at the market around that. Where am I holding my event? Is it in Brisbane? Is there something similar to that? Is it in Regional Queensland? Is there something similar</p>

	to that? What will be my point of difference where I'm holding it? And why am I seeking to do this, and what's the outcome that I personally want from my event?
RB	<p>I think those are the things you need to be considering. Because it's quite a huge task and undertaking to hold a festival. So I think just making sure that you are aware of the things that you want to achieve out of it.</p> <p>if you're seeking Screen Queensland funding, just reach out to me, myself. I think any time you have a question, I'm looking to hold an event, what do I need to do, what do I need to... What are the things that I should be considering? Listen to this podcast, I think is another thing. Have a look at the website. There are so many different events out there that you can see models of how things can be shaped and paradigms that you can look to follow, but also pivot in a new way</p>
AL	You can find out more about Screen Queensland's Screen Culture Funding Program on the Screen Queensland website. screenqld.com.au