## **Short Film Fund Webinar**

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00:00:01:24	JESSE	Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to the Screen Queensland Short Film Fund
		webinar session, where we will be running through the Short Film Fund, which
		we've just recently launched, and answering some of your queries about it.
		I'd like to start by doing an Acknowledgement of Country. We at Screen
		Queensland would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
		people as the traditional custodians of Australia, recognising their cultural and
		historical connection to land, sea, cosmos and community. Screen Queensland is
		committed to elevating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners to
		continue sharing their rich cultures and perspectives with the Queensland and
		global community through screen storytelling. Always was, always will be.
		Welcome, everybody. This is our new Short Film Fund. It's been a while since we've
		run a program of this nature, and we're looking forward to bringing it back to
		support our early and mid-career creatives in the screen sector.
00:01:15:22	PHIL	Just to let you know, if you don't know already, who we are, I'm Phil Enchelmaier,
		I'm Content Director here at Screen Queensland.
00:01:24:06	JESSE	And I'm Jesse McCart. I'm the Program Manager of Online at Screen Queensland. I
		work with Phil in the content team.
00:01:31:09	PHIL	So, we're really excited about this fund, and I suspect you are too. As Jesse said, it's
		been a while since we've had a Short Film Fund. I'm sure you've got lots of
		questions. We'll get into questions really quickly. Hopefully, you can see the Q&A
		section in this webinar, in the Zoom. Please do put your questions in now. We'll
		get into that as soon as we can. There's always, of course, the guidelines on the
		website, and if there's any questions that aren't answered, if we don't get time to
		answer all your questions today, of course you can always follow up with us. Just
		send an email to content@screenqld.com.au, and we'll respond to your questions
		as soon as we can.
		So, I guess, let's start off talking about, a little bit about the purpose of this
		program, what it is that we're hoping to see, what we're hoping to achieve with
		this program.
00:02:32:09	JESSE	Yeah, so I run the online program here at Screen Queensland, and something that
		we've noticed through this program, which is fantastic, it's supporting early and
		mid-career practitioners in our state, is that Oh, I see we've got some questions
		there. Sorry.
		One thing that we've noticed is that it primarily focuses on creatives working in
		comedy andand factual, whereas drama is under served, so that's something
		that we're looking at supporting through this program.
		We're also looking at supporting directors who have ayou know, have a
		theatrical lens on their storytelling, looking to really focus in this programreally,
		really looking to see applicants look at a festival strategy for the short films that
		they'rethat they're creating. Looking internationally at premieres of significance,
		and outside of just Queensland and Australia, so that's something that we're really
		looking to see practitioners make an effort atat focusing on.
00:03:52:03	PHIL	Yeah, so, really director-focused, and we're after your most creative, fresh ideas

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		for this. It's got a very cinematic focus, I would say. So what we're really wanting is theatrical-led.
		We're wanting these to be films that could premiere at a festival, ideally, and of course then they can have a run online, on a streamer, on a broadcaster, but they should be made for cinema screens.
		So, we'll run through just some of the Ts and Cs, but give you an overview of what it is that you can apply for, eligibility questions and things like that.
00:04:42:18	JESSE	Yep.
00:04:43:19	PHIL	So firstly, just in terms of who can apply and who we're hoping will apply, obviously, this is for Queenslanders, so you must be a Queensland resident producer or director, you can be both of those things at the same time, and current Queensland residents.
		As we said, it's a director-focused fund, so we're looking for directors who have either directed a minimum of one short film that's screened at an industry-recognised film or screen festival, and we can get into what that means shortly, or
00:05:20:13	JESSE	Domestically and/or internationally.
00:05:23:07	PHIL	Yeah. Or if you as a director do not have that credit, if this is your debut short film, that's fine, as long as you can find a producer who does have at least a couple of credits in maybe a similar space. They can be online credits, short film, TV, feature, but we just want to make sure that you have the right scaffolding around you as a director.  If you're coming into this program, thatthat the funding is something that you're going to have support in utilising, somebody who can help you put together a budget and a schedule and do the casting and crewing and all of those things.  So we'rewe're encouraging you too, if you're at that stage where you don't yet have a credit  Apparently I can't be seen. That's 'cause of the Yeah, let's just do this. There we go. Um And I'm gonna turn my video off. I was right here the whole time. Hi, everybody.  Um, yeah, so, if you areif you're just at the very start of your career, you don't have any gredits yet, we appourage you go out and find that producer. Find
		have any credits yet, we encourage you, go out and find that producer. Find somebody who you can partner with, who you can get excited about your vision and bring them onboard.
00:06:49:20	JESSE	Yeah. Something to note is that only one director, um cancan be on Like, the director's going to be on one application at a time in this program, and you need to demonstrate that you've got clear chain-of-title documentation ifon the underlying creative materials that you're producing. So if you're working from a short story or if it's a factual project based on a news item, ensure that you've got those access agreements and that chain of title all organised ahead of application.
00:07:27:04	PHIL	Yeah. Let's talk a little bit about budget and what we're wanting to see there. So in the guidelines we ask that you present a budget that is a reasonable and realistic reflection of the project's scope, and demonstrates efficient use of the funding.

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		And then a key sub point there, which you can see, is that any additional funding from other sources must be secured at the point of application. And what we're trying to get at with this part of the guidelines isyou might feel that you've got some potential to raise extra money, you might think, "Well, I could get some more money from crowdfunding," maybe some family and friends want to chip in some money as private investment, and that's OK, but we do ask that you, if you do go down that route, firstly, that you keep that limited and reasonable.
		So for example, don't say, "Oh, I'll get the 50K from Screen Queensland and I'll raise 150K from other people." If you came in with a budget like that, we would be questioning whether the film you're making really fits in with the scope of the kinds of films we want to see made here.
00:08:35:18	JESSE	And without that funding secured, it adds risk to supporting the proposal when that money might not be substantiated in the end.
00:08:44:15	PHIL	Yeah. We've got a lot of questions coming through. What else should we touch on? Maybe
00:08:52:23	JESSE	Just on some more core eligibility points. You cannot be a full-time undergraduate honours or master's student. That also extends to high school students, if there's any joining us.
		As we mentioned earlier, we're looking for short films that are planning on theatrical release in film festivals with a secondary life online afterwards. That is, if you're interested in creating web series and other things in those lines, the Online Production Grants program is still running and that runs in two rounds a year. And this is a fund supporting, yeah, projects up to \$50,000.
00:09:41:04	PHIL	Just on the run time as well - so we're looking for films between five and 15 minutes in length. Now, obviously, a question we've already had is, "Is that 15 minutes a hard cap?" Now, obviously, if you come in with a really, really brilliant film but it looks like it's going to run 16, 17 minutes, we're not going to dismiss it out of hand just because of that.
		We would encourage you to try to keep within that timeframe, five to 15 minutes, and particularly be aware of different festivals that you might be wanting to submit this to and what their requirements might be.
		On that note, one of the key documents in your application is around your strategy for release. So you get the money, you make the film, now what? We want to know that you've got a really clear idea of the pathway forward for this film. We want to see in the application form itself, what are your top three festivals that you're going to submit this to? What's the plan? What are the dates for those? Give us an idea of the timing of your own schedule for this. And just that you've thought through really clearly how this short film that you're proposing to make, strategically, where it's going to live in the market, and why you're the best placed person to take it on that journey.
00:11:09:17	JESSE	Yes, I also want to reiterate, we're open to projects of any genre and we're also open to documentary projects. So this is not a short film fund specifically limited to any particular type of film. And we also are open for proof-of-concept films, that being films that are, you know, approved for a future feature film. However, these projects need to form in and of itself a complete and coherent narrative, and not

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		be just an excerpt, or a scene, or a sequence of scenes. They must stand on their
		own as a film in and of themselves.
00:12:06:11	PHIL	Yeah, that's right. Just to touch on, as well, other creative materials. So, we are
		asking that you provide a sample of your work, or the director provide a sample of their work, of minimum five minutes' duration. And that sample, ideally, being that film that has screened at a recognised film/screen festival.
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		We're wanting, of course, a polished screenplay of the film, so we won't be accepting treatments for films that you have not yet written, and we encourage you to submit that screenplay at as highly developed a level as you can make it. And then, as mentioned, we want to see that strategy document around your pathway to market.
		Of course, again, as we said earlier, you will need to provide any evidence of chain
		of title or copyright ownership, so if you're a producer applying and you optioned a
		particular writer's screenplay, then you need to show us that you've got the
		agreement, the option on that work.
		I think we could probably dive into come questions
00:13:21:03	JESSE	I think we could probably dive into some questions.  Yes, absolutely.
00:13:22:03	PHIL	Let's see. OK, so here's a question. I'll speak to this one while you look through the
00.13.22.03	' ' ' ' '	other questions, Jesse. So this first question, timelines, "What's the completion
		timeline?" Now, naturally, we're quite flexible with this, but ideally we're hoping to
		be able to announce sometime mid to late October, and then have you contracted
		before the end of the year. And even, potentially, depending on how long that
		contracting process takes, shooting by the end of the year or early next year for
		delivery around May in 2026.
00:14:01:04	JESSE	Yeah. We have someone asking if they're able to submit as co-directors. Yes,
		absolutely. Co-directors are perfectly acceptable.
00:14:15:03	PHIL	"If you're a first-time director but also a producer or writer with a track record of
		screening work at festivals, does that count, or do you need to be paired with
		another producer?" We look at this on quite ain quite a holistic way. So if you, as
		a producer, have a strong track record but it's your first time directing, then, yes, we would, we would look at that.
00:14:38:21	JESSE	We've got one asking about, "Is there a list of these film festivals that we're
00.14.38.21	JESSE	qualifying as industry recognised?" Um, no, we're taking this on a sort of, you
		know, per festival basis. I think, if you're thinking in Australia, of festivals that we
		might be considering of this calibre, we're talking about MIFF, Sydney, Adelaide,
		Flickerfest, St Kilda. Although, there may be others and these we'll take on a case-
		by-case basis.
00:15:11:19	PHIL	Yeah. Just So, there's a couple of questions around the type, the genre or, you
		know, what type of, for example, what type of documentary projects we might be
		looking for. So just to reiterate, we aren't looking for any specific genre, any
		specific type of content.
		At Screen Queensland, we're quite genre-agnostic. What we want is for you to
		demonstrate to us that there's strong market appeal for the type of film you want
		to make.
		And so that can be of any And just to clarify we're not just we're not talking
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		necessarily commercial appeal in the sense of something that, you know, is going to be wildly popular. We're talking about You can make something that's really bespoke, really beautiful. You could make a really small, intimate art-house piece that's gotthat's not genre at all, and as long as you can demonstrate that there's
		an audience for that, then great, that's what we want to see, just show us the pathway to your audience.
00:16:16:03	JESSE	We've got a question asking for "What's the preferred budget to use?" We recommend that you use the Screen Australia A- Z budget template.
		There's a slightly reduced version of that with the A-Z budget template for digital media. That is just a slightly reduced version of the feature film budget template. We recommend that you use that. Makes it easy to cross-compare applications on our end. And it's also good practice for any early career producers who haven't used that template previously.
00:16:56:03	PHIL	A few questions that I'll just try and work through quite quickly. Firstly, "How many do we expect to fund?" We're going to fund up to five in this particular round. We hope to be able to do this again in future years. We'll see how this one goes.
00:17:16:19	JESSE	Yeah.
00:17:17:19	PHIL	But it is, ideally, this will be a fund that comes back.
		"Do TV credits count?" Potentially, yes. We're wanting to see, do you have screen producing experience or directing experience.
		"Completion funding - if you've already begun a film that needs to complete it." Unfortunately, no, this is not a completion, it cannot function as a completion fund.
00:17:41:00	JESSE	On a similar but slightly different note, "If a short film has received development funding from Screen Australia but not production funding, would it be eligible?" Yes, absolutely, as you'd have a developed script forfor a short film project. So yes, that would be eligible.
00:17:58:13	PHIL	Yeah. A question here, "When it comes to selection, how much weight is given to the story itself versus the potential of the director and their future career?" That's a fantastic question. We are looking at both, to be honest.
		So we really want to see, first and foremost, that you have a great story. And we want to see that you as a creative have clearly outlined in this application a path for that film, and also that that's going to be of benefit to you in your career. So yeah, we are about nurturing talent. It's not just about the story, though, of course, we do want the stories to be as great, as fresh, as vibrant as they can possibly be.
		Multiple applications. There's a few questions asking, "Can you submit multiple applications?"
00:19:02:10	JESSE	So a director can only be the director on one submitted project. It is recommended to producers as well toto be on Oneone project would be the recommendation. There's room to be on more than one, but being on multiple would be You'd be stretched thin. So I recommend, yeah, focusing in on one project that you truly believe in.
00:19:39:11	PHIL	Yeah. A question to do with budget, that "because it's a short film, it's assumed that most crew would be working on a volunteer or honorarium basis". We are

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		expecting you to pay award rates. That is what you should expect a fair chunk of
		your budget to go towards, is paying your crew.
		That's something that as a screen agency, we have an obligation towith our
		funding, that we're funding projects that are paying people those minimum rates,
		award rates.
00:20:20:15	JESSE	Got a question asking if we need If the applicant needs to be an Australian
		citizen. And yes. Yes, you do.
00:20:33:15	PHIL	"Do both director and producer need to live in Queensland?" Again, the answer is yes. It's As a Screen Queensland initiative, we're wanting to focus the funding that we offer to Queensland creatives. So, yeah, we do want Queenslanders to be the applicants.
00:20:59:12	JESSE	We've got a question on the documentary front. So with scripted projects, we are chasing a fully developed script. For factual, yes, we are chasing a very well developed treatment of the project.
00:21:14:14	PHIL	Yep. For directors who are wanting to debut with this short film, what would we like to see? So this is presuming that you do have a credited producer attached, but you're a first-time director. Then, yes. The question asks, "Is a writing sample OK?" Yeah, we would then be looking at your writing.
		Look, maybe you would like to upload a couple of samples, in that case. But the main thing that we're going to be looking at creatively in that case is, of course, the script for this film.
00:21:55:21	JESSE	There's a question about whether if someone on the team is a PhD student, either full-time, part-time or on a long leave of absence, whether they would still be eligible. It depends in what role.
		If the PhD student's the IP owner See, the big thing with the university tertiary
		study question is whether the funding is going towards the completion of a tertiary
		film. So if they're a PhD in, like, you knowbiology, that would be a different story versus someone in film.
00:22:33:10	PHIL	Where this particular short film would then potentially count toward their study or their whatever - their thesis or something like that. The question
		Just to go over again what we're talking about within terms of the eligibility and saying that you have to either have that one credit as a director or have a producer attached who's got two fully budgeted, professionally produced and exhibited screen projects.
		So, yes, we are setting rather a high bar with this. This is, for us, about us having a degree of justI guess, confidence in being able to give what's quite a substantial sum of money and in what's going to be a very competitive program. And in terms of what we're talking about with 'professionally produced', we're talking, I suppose, about, you know, things that have been made that have had a budget. We want to know that you can handle a budget, that you know how to look after paying people and insurances and things like that. So that is important for us for this particular round of this short film funding.
		Interesting question here. "To demonstrate strong pathway to audience, besides our own subjective take and besides the horror genre, which is having a moment,

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		how would other genres present a compelling case for this?"
		Yeah, really great question. One thing to just encourage you with is if you're not doing horror, that's absolutely fine. And we would love to see some non-horror shorts. Horror is fine too. But certainly the intel that we're currently getting from the market is that even though horror is having a moment, you also have to be a little mindful of oversaturation in that degree, and that, in fact, dramas are starting to pick up and the feature-film front around the world.
		So, how you make the case for it in terms of its pathway to market is really about talking about the festivals that you're going to apply for and how you're going to present to them - how you're gonna You know, your strategy for why those festivals. Like, why are you choosing this festival over that other festival, for example.
		And in the case of genre, of course you There are Say, for horror, there are specific film festivals that have a focus on horror, and it's probably a good idea if you're applying with a horror to target those festivals. Whereas if it's a drama, you wouldn't be focusing on those horror festivals. So that's the kind of thing we're talking about there.
00:25:42:06	JESSE	There's a question here about signing talent or co-writers that are based interstate. That is fine. The big interstate question's always about IP ownership. Ensuring that the IP is majority held in Queensland is very important to us.
00:25:57:15	PHIL	Yeah.
00:25:58:23	JESSE	And the majority of the team - and the key creative team - is as well.
00:26:03:16	PHIL	Um, a good question about So a project that might be being filmed, being produced, in a remote part of Queensland where you're going to have to take into account travel and accommodation costs and can you present a larger budget. Yes, you can. 50,000 is absolutely the cap from Screen Queensland. As we said earlier, you can submit a budget which proposes additional funding. However, the main thing is that that funding be secured at the point of application.
		So, I mean, in terms of what do we mean by "It has to be secured at the point of application"? You know, obviously, we're going to be quite pragmatic and reasonable about what that looks like. But we don't want you to be going into production, hoping to get \$50,000 of private funding or crowdfunding to make your short film and that 50,000, that half of the budget, not being secure yet. We wouldn't be able to contract with you until we know that that funding is secure.
00:27:09:08	JESSE	Would an interstate co-producer be eligible if the IP is held by a Queensland producer? Yes, yeah, they would be.
00:27:16:12	PHIL	Yeah.
00:27:19:22	JESSE	The funding is inclusive of production and marketing and festival fees.
00:27:28:14	PHIL	And insurance fees.
00:27:31:10	JESSE	And insurance.
00:27:32:13	PHIL	So do budget for contingency and insurance. Anything that you would have to budget for in a larger project, you should be budgeting for here - obviously on a smaller scale.
00:27:43:24	JESSE	There's a lot of questions around citizenship. So, the key creative team and the IP owners need to be Australian citizens and Queensland residents. That's just because this is, you know, Queensland taxpayer money being spent on this

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		program so that's important to us.
00:28:39:17	PHIL	If there are international or interstate practitioners involved in the project, they can be involved but they cannot have a majority IP stake in the project. And it  The key creative team needs to be 50% Queensland resident, And the higher that is, the more competitive it views to us.  On to that point, another question just been asked. "If the producer and director
		and all crew will be Queensland, can the writer be based in L.A.?" Yes, because as we've said, this is primarily focused on supporting Queensland-resident directors and producers. So yes, it's OK if the writer's in L.A. as long as you've got that clear chain of title.
		Another question I want to speak to here. "What kind of support will Screen Queensland provide to selected filmmakers beyond the grant itself, such as mentorship, industry connections, guidance?" All of the above. Yes, we are
		What you get when you receive Screen Queensland funding through an initiative like this - as opposed to our regular production funding - you do get a lot of that. It may not necessarily be formal. A fair bit of it will be informal. But we are certainly here as an agency to provide whatever support we can to these filmmakers.
00:29:41:12	JESSE	There's a question considering the budget and whether it can rely wholly on that Screen Queensland support. And, yes, that is absolutely fine.
00:29:50:19	PHIL	In fact, I would say we would encourage that. Where you can, stick to the \$50,000.
		OK, let's just have a quick look through any questions we might not have answered yet.
		"Are the director and producer meant to get paid as well?" Look, that's something for you to figure out in terms of your own budget constraints and whether you choose to reinvest that.
		Obviously we want to be able to pay people for their time and you need to, I guess, assess how much you are willing to reinvest as the director and producer, how much you're willing to reinvest of your own fees. I would be encouraging people to definitely put line items in their budgets for producers and directors, so that at the very least, you're getting some kind of living wage, even if you then do choose, in the finance plan, to reinvest that.
		"If we have well-known Australian talent attached, does that hold weight with the application?" It really depends on the strength of the story. Like, that is the main thing we're looking for. Look, of course having strong talent is It can be a really good thing in terms of the doors it can open to markets and just giving you that slight competitive edge in terms of getting into the different festivals you want to apply for. But that won't be a primary factor in our assessment.
		Also, if you are making that a key pillar of your strategy to say "We've got this cast member attached who's high-profile," and that's what's going to help open doors to all these festivals, we'd want to see evidence of their attachment.
00:31:45:14	JESSE	Yes.
00:31:51:00	PHIL	OK, are there any other questions that we haven't got to yet? "How many shoot

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		days have you calculated achievable for that budget?" Again, that's going to be up to you. Every film is going to be different. You know, we obviously We don't want you to try and shoot a feature on that money. We do need this to just be in that range of five to 15 minutes. So don't godon't go budgeting for a 25-day shoot. But if it's one day, if it's five days, like, that's really up to you and what the film needs.
		And "How involved are we in the creative process?" We don't take an EP credit on this. We will naturally consult through the process. We will be with you all the way through contracting, various milestones through to delivery.
00:32:53:22	JESSE	And we'll, toward the release of the project, provide support to try and ensure the success of these projects, as we're quite involved in their production. We will not
00:33:09:18	PHIL	We won't own any IP. It's grant funding, so wherever it's grant, we don't take a copyright position in it. We require you to have all necessary copyright.
00:33:23:09	JESSE	There's a question whether the Whether documentary Whether a festival credit for a documentary workbut you're applying to create a fiction work, whether you'd still be whether that criteria would still count. Yeah, absolutely. It's just a short film. It doesn't have to be, you know, like for like. That's fine, you'd be eligible with that.
00:33:54:22	PHIL	Does the five- to 15-minute run time for project apply to the pages of the script?  No. Again, if you were to submit a 50-page script, we'd be asking, "How are you going to get that into 15 minutes?" As an extreme example.
		The page-a-minute rule in screenwriting is kind of loose, so, you know, use it as a guide but don't feel too restricted by that. Like, focus on making it the best script it can be first and then look at the run time.
00:34:29:20	JESSE	There's a question around key creative roles and whether one person can be across multiple key creative roles. Yes, that's fine. If you've got a writer-director or a producer-writer, director-producer, whatever combination, that's fine.
00:34:54:16	PHIL	OK. I think if we haven't answered your question Ah. "Who will be choosing the final five projects?" We will be.
		"Confirming - is just one applicant OK?" Yes, so you could apply as a director and producer, filling both of those roles, as long as you've got the necessary credits for eligibility.
00:35:28:02	JESSE	There's a question around whether a short filmwhich is a standalone fiction work, but will be included in a larger documentary projectas a re-enactment would be eligible. Technically, yes, although that's a slightly more complicated question. And you can reach out to us directly for maybe a bit further consultation on that. But As I mentioned earlier, it would have to stand alone as a narrative piece in and of itselfas well as being a part of a bigger project.
00:36:14:16	PHIL	In terms of "When will you know the outcome?" So like I said, that'll be late October. So we're going to be making our decisions internally in the middle of October. That usually takes a week or two to be signed off, and then we'll let you know.
00:36:35:17	JESSE	"Is SQ open to topicstaboo subjects, adult themes and sensitive topics?" Yes. We absolutely are. As long as it's serving the narrative and is an interesting piece of filmmaking. The quality of the storytelling and the work is what's most important to us in this program to ensure the success of these films domestically and internationally.

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00:37:06:19	PHIL	OK, great. Well, I think we will bring it to a close there. Thank you so much for all of your questions. Thank you for your time.
		As I said at the beginning, if we haven't been able to answer any of your questions or if you have more questions after this, please do get in touch. And please just send those through to content@screenqld.com.au and we'll get back to you with some answers.
00:37:37:17	JESSE	Absolutely. There's just two more questions that rolled in while you were saying that, but I'll quickly get to them. "Does applying for the Short Film Fund impact your application for feature film development?" No, it does not. This is a separate program.  And a question about having a very seasoned producer attached, who's released two features, but you are an early-career director, maybe without those credits.
		That is fine as well. But I think it would be great to try and negotiate a good share of IP ownership for yourself in that, to, you know I think that'd be a good thing to try to do.
00:38:20:16	PHIL	OK.
00:38:22:00	JESSE	Thank you so much, everybody.
00:38:23:11	PHIL	Have a great day. We'll talk to you soon.
00:38:25:11	JESSE	Looking forward to seeing your applications.
00:38:28:00	PHIL	Which close on Friday, September 19. Don't forget.
00:38:31:03	JESSE	Yes.