

**FILM FRIENDLY
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**BEST PRACTICE
GUIDE FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
AUTHORITIES**

screenwest

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BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

This guide is for local government authorities (you). It will give you an overview of the needs of filmmakers and how to maximise benefits for your region/community.

We strongly encourage you to enroll in a Screenwest Film Friendly WA workshop. The workshop goes into greater detail and is the first step to becoming film friendly certified.

ENGAGE EARLY AND SET EXPECTATIONS

A filmmaker's priority is always getting their production filmed and finished.

Understanding what a film production is trying to do and how this aligns with your region's priorities is key to a successful relationship.

Meet with a production early to set realistic expectations of what both parties can offer. Questions to ask the filmmaker include:

- What kind of production is it? e.g. series, feature film, short film, advert etc.
- What is the production about?
- Who is involved in the production? e.g. the production company, the producer, the director, key cast.
- Does the film have a confirmed marketplace? e.g. ABC, Stan, Binge etc.
- Are they receiving any Federal or State government funding? e.g. Screen Australia, Screenwest etc.
- What stage of financing are they in? - are they fully financed and ready to go or are they still putting their finance plan together?
- What is their timeline, and how long will they spend in the region?
- How many cast and crew may need accommodation in the region?

PROVIDE A LOCAL CONTEXT

To minimise unexpected issues filmmakers need to understand the environment they will be working in. In the early conversations with the production you should talk about:

- Any seasonal weather issues, how to monitor these and who to contact for more information e.g. weather bureau, State Emergency Service.
- The region's socio political environment and priorities. This enables filmmaker to educate cast and crew and helps to prevent any negative impacts on the production and/or local community.

Key stakeholders you should introduce productions to at the appropriate time include:

- Traditional Owners
- Regional Tourism Association
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attraction (DBCA) local officers.
- Regional media
- Other local government authorities
- Regional high schools
- Community organisations that have a specific interest/purpose that may be useful to production, e.g. the local historical or agricultural society may be able to help source props and costumes.

Production Offices and Warehouse Space

Productions need a central office space with desks and parking. If the space has existing internet connections it is a bonus. Warehouse space and secure truck parking is also often required.

Recommended action: create a list of potential office spaces in your region that you can handout to filmmakers.

PRODUCTION OFFICES AND WAREHOUSE SPACE

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WORKING WITH FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

Filmmakers must understand and respect that Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations peoples are the traditional owners of Country.

Encourage filmmakers to develop a relationship with the Traditional Owner group/s as early as possible. This will ensure the filmmakers know what the appropriate protocols are for land access, negotiating filming permissions and filming.

Recommended action

- Establish a Cultural Contact register.
- Have a map that shows the lands of the Traditional Owner groups.

KEY ROLES – FILM LIAISON OFFICER & LOCAL FIXER

FILM LIAISON OFFICER

Single point of contact (person / staff) within the council /shire responsible for managing filming enquiries, providing information on permits and approvals, approval timelines, location information, local know how, community contacts and any other queries that may arise.

LOCAL FIXER

Filmmakers may engage with a region during project development or early pre-production phases. Hence it is important to have a local 'fixer' available. The local fixer may be the Film Liaison Officer or a community member the production can hire.

The local fixer's role is to help the production:

- find the right people to connect with in the region and schedule meetings
- build local networks
- understand local politics
- identify businesses, resources, facilities, skills and expertise within the region
- compile a list of potential filming locations
- understand the limitations and benefits of the region.

A local fixer can be critical to the success of a region, you should establish who this person before a production arrives. If you provide the fixer's contact details to us, we can add them to our regional contact database.



MAXIMISING REGIONAL BENEFITS

CREATE A LOCAL SKILLS REGISTER

Filmmakers look for people with past screen experience as they better understand production needs. This includes the need to work flexibly and to complete tasks within tight timeframes.

When a production comes to town, having a local talent pool ready to work can make the location more attractive to filmmakers. Hiring locally saves the production money and benefits the region by creating jobs and diversifying local skill sets.

Screen skills needed by productions include:

- Construction crew e.g. trade assistants, laborers.
- Extras Casting Coordinator.
- Extras.
- Stand-ins/picture doubles.
- Indigenous Advisors.
- Security.
- Traffic Controllers.
- Nurses.
- Art Department - drivers, luggers, casuals.
- Production runners, drivers, casuals.
- Unit casuals, drivers.
- Location Scout/Assistant.
- Production office support.
- Assistant Production Accountant.
- Costume Department Assistant.
- Makeup/Hair Assistant.
- Stills Photographer.

Recommended action

1. Create a Skills and Services Register listing local people and businesses with previous experience in the screen industry.
2. Update the Skills and Service Register each time a production films in the region. The register will become an important asset. It can increase local employment opportunities and make your region a more appealing destination for filmmakers.
3. When a production comes to town work with the filmmakers to establish a list of the skills they need. Recommend locals from the Register.
4. Remember to tell us you have a Skills Register so we can tell productions interested in filming in Western Australia.

CREATE A WELCOME PACK

The cast and crew always want to know what a town and region has on offer e.g. tourism experiences, shops and services, best restaurants and bars.

They also need to be made aware of any risks in the area e.g. saltwater crocodiles and be provided with the contact details for local emergency and health services.

Recommended action

- Create a Welcome Pack that can be handed to cast and crew on arrival. Local businesses may want to include discount coupons in the pack to attract cast and crew.

MANAGING COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

It is important to manage community expectations as film sets are worksites and not usually accessible to the public. Being an extra can be a great way for locals to see the behind-the-scenes of the set and increase local on-screen talent.

Recommended action

- Come to an early agreement with the filmmakers regarding local events during production e.g. a Q&A evening or school visit/s to set. This will engage the community and enable the production to concentrate on filming.
- Talk to the filmmakers about how many extras roles may be available for the local community. This can help manage community expectations.
- Identify a local Extras Coordinator who can work with the production's Casting Director - someone from the local acting group or high school drama department may be suitable.
- Get the local Extras Coordinator to tell the community what an extra does. It often involves lots of waiting around, repetitive actions and being in the background of a shot.
- Remember to add the local Extras Coordinator to your Skills Register and encourage them to add themselves to Screenwest's Crew & Services Directory once the production has finished.

PUBLICITY

All publicity surrounding a production is controlled by the production's distributor or broadcaster. It may not be possible to announce the production is filming until the shoot is completed.

Regional media enquiries and enquiries from local tourism associations should be directed to the production Unit Publicist. The Unit Publicist is responsible for managing these enquiries and the protocols surrounding any community events. They will ensure that the distributor's rights and cast agreements are not breached.

LEAVING A LEGACY

Think about what a production could leave behind that you can use to boost tourism and promote your region as ‘film friendly’ e.g. sets, props, costumes or art pieces, pieces to camera etc.

Recommended action

- Talk to the filmmaker early on and reach an agreement about what will be left behind rather than leaving the conversation to the end of the shoot.
- Encourage regional tourism associations to develop an agreement with the filmmakers to produce a tourist map highlighting the filming locations.
- Obtain a ‘piece-to-camera’ from the filmmaker talking about the benefits of shooting a production in your region. This can be used to promote how ‘film friendly’ your region is.
- Once the production has wrapped set up a meeting with the filmmakers to review
 - What worked and why
 - What didn’t work and why
 - How you could make your town/region more film friendly.

Using the feedback to improve processes can help you attract more productions to your region. Sharing the feedback with us helps us keep our best practice guides current.

LOCAL SCREENING OF THE PRODUCTION

The distributor or broadcaster determines when the production will be released. This date is often out of the filmmaker’s hands.

Recommended action

- Start the conversation early and try to reach an agreement with the distributor and filmmaker for a screening in your region once the production is released. A date may not be agreed to until the release plan is finalized. Also talk about how the filmmaker will keep the community up to date.
- Tie in your own marketing and promotion of the region alongside the production’s release campaign to leverage greater benefits. E.g. run a competition to win tickets, travel and accommodation to attend your regional screening of the film.



TIPS FOR ATTRACTING PRODUCTIONS TO YOUR REGION

If a positive relationship with a production is established at the start and maintained and enhanced throughout the production phase, then the filmmaker can become one of your strongest promoters of the region.

It is important to:

- Remember the filmmaker's primary focus is the production and creating a high-quality show on time and within budget.
- Build a positive relationship with the filmmakers and production team from the start. Be open and honest. Under promise and over deliver.
- Know the limitations of your region and don't assume that any one region can provide all of what a filmmaker needs.
- Work with the filmmaker to build contingencies into production, especially in remote areas where the unexpected can happen.
- Make sure locals are realistic in saying what they can do for the filmmaker.
- Make sure the filmmaker leaves with a positive experience of filming in your region.
- Create a register of experienced and/or appropriately skilled people, businesses and infrastructure available in the region. Keep it up to date.
- Lock down agreements with the filmmaker before pre-production starts. Once filming starts it's too late, the filmmaker will be focused on completing the film on time and on budget and wants minimal interruptions.
- Embrace the learning opportunities and benefits for the region both human, infrastructure and financial.
- Remember - the biggest benefit for the region is not when the shoot is occurring but when the production is released.

