SOUTH EAST NSW REGIONAL SCREEN STRATEGY
2021 – 2024

Executive Summary Version

Prepared by Far South Film Inc for South East Arts (NSW) Inc

Photo courtesy of Hiromi Matsuoka, Indigo Pictures 2020

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Vision

By 2024 there will be a self-sustaining, active and diverse screen industry based in the SE Region of NSW creating screen stories to engage with regional, national and international audiences.

1.2 Mission

Help establish a collaborative and cooperative industry that supports filmmakers and content creators, especially diverse screen storytellers and the next generation of screen creatives, with rich partnerships with both internal and external stakeholders, making a worthwhile contribution to the regional economy.

1.3 Scope

This strategy covers the screen industry in the South East region of NSW, including the Bega Valley, Eurobodalla and Snowy Monaro shires. The boundary aligns with the existing arts region managed by South East Arts (NSW) Inc and the membership area of Far South Film Inc.

The term 'screen' is defined broadly and includes content created for physical, online and virtual platforms, including films, TV programs, commercials, social media content, web series, animation, virtual and augmented reality and games. It covers still and moving visual and related audio content.

The term 'industry' includes emerging and professional content creatives working in the region, creatives from outside the region who wish to make content within the region and businesses and organisations in the region that directly support those endeavours.

More broadly, the strategy seeks to include the views and needs of key stakeholders who support and enable the industry, through funding, regulation or collaboration.

The strategy covers calendar years 2021 to 2024.

1.4 Purpose

The document:

- reviews key elements and actual outcomes from the previous SEA Screen Strategy covering 2015/16 - 2017/18
- assesses the current state of play - key organisations and productions
- identifies the needs of regional screen practitioner via a survey conducted in late 2020
- defines key drivers, outcomes, KPIs and actions for 2021 - 2024
- identifies resources needed to achieve outcomes
- sets review milestones for future years
- serves as a tool for creatives, funding bodies and other stakeholders to measure projects against desired outcomes for the region.

1.5 Alignment

A screen strategy can only work when the environment is conducive to supporting the screen industry. A collaborative approach is needed with federal, state, regional and local government bodies as well as tourism, arts and general businesses in the region, and the broader screen industry beyond the region, who can provide work and employment opportunities for regional screen creatives.

Eurobodalla Shire In its Creative Arts Strategy 2019, there are no specific references to film or screen, and only two mentions of audience organisations (Moruya Film Club and Narooma Film Society). However, it did in the past have a film contact officer involved in the multiyear River Cottage series.

Bega Valley Shire has a stated film-friendly policy and filming guidelines on its website. There is no reference to the screen industry in its business development policy however. There is a designated film permit officer in council.

Snowy Monaro Shire includes *Information Media and Telecommunications* in its Regional Economic Strategy as an 'enabling industry' to support its main industries of tourism, agriculture, forestry and fishing but film or screen is not mentioned specifically, nor does it appear in its Arts Strategy. Council's Tourism Manager is the contact person for filming in the shire.

Screen NSW is the major screen funding body in NSW. Its major programs in 2020 seek to identify events and programs that stimulate screen content and innovative practice in NSW and supports high-quality activity, engagement and participation with one of the Priority Areas being people living and/or working in regional NSW. We note that there is no specific regional filming contact for our region listed on Screen NSW's website.

Screen Australia is an independent agency of the Federal Government funding individuals, screen businesses and industry organisations for the creation of Australian drama and documentary content for all Australians, including feature films, documentaries, TV and online content, industry development, indigenous opportunities, international co-production programs and the producer offset program. The agency promotes Australian screen stories both at home and abroad. Funding may be provided at the Development, Production or Completion stages. See State of Play for more details on priorities.

Other Stakeholders include regional business chambers, businesses, arts, tourism and community organisations wanting screen content to promote their services. There are opportunities here to better promote and coordinate the use of local crews, as anecdotal evidence suggests that the first approach is to metropolitan crews, unaware that there are local professional providers.

1.6 Methodology

In developing this strategy we have sought the input of screen creatives, local councils, tourism and business representatives, land managers as well as key arts and screen bodies in NSW.

Stakeholder Workshops were held in November 2020 in Merimbula, Bega (Bega Valley Shire), Malua Bay (Eurobodalla Shire) and Crackenback (Snowy Monaro) for key regional stakeholders to define the key drivers for a screen strategy. These workshops included representatives from council, tourism, arts organisations, chambers of commerce, filmmakers and other screen creatives including photographers and game developers. See 8.1 for details.

A **survey** gathered detailed data on the status and needs of individual screen creatives in our region. The survey was accessible online in November/December 2020 and a link was emailed to more than 200 screen creatives and stakeholders whose addresses had been collected through events and activities held by Far South Film over the last 12 months and promoted through social media, regional media outlets and South East Arts/SEA Screen. There was a 12% response rate.

Zoom **interviews** were conducted with individuals from South East Arts, Screenworks and Screen NSW.

Outcomes, KPIs and Actions were then developed by Far South Film in response to the drivers, survey and interviews.

Screen Strategy Stakeholders Workshop Bega 2020

1.7 Key conclusions

- Key drivers identified in the workshops and survey results were notably consistent across the region:

  1. Finance, support and enable content creatives to produce high quality local content.
  2. Establish relationships with tourism, local government, arts and business groups.
  3. Establish a network of creative professionals and develop a list of local industry suppliers and services.
  4. Facilitate training and skills development and involvement opportunities for emerging creatives to ensure enough skilled creatives are available
  5. Promote the Southeast region and its screen industry to external screen bodies and producers.

- Participants were keen to avoid duplication of effort, and to work together to maximise opportunities available by playing to our strengths.

- COVID has forced many organisations to move their offerings online, which has levelled the playing field for regional screen practitioners, by removing the previous distance and cost barriers. This changed environment is likely to continue into the future and offers greater opportunities for screen creatives to access professional development and content/audience development opportunities without leaving region.

- There is still a need for local on-the-ground events and support in the region to connect crews and emerging filmmakers.

Batemans Bay Networking: Guest speakers Jesse Milne & Nick Bolton

Top 10 Priorities the strategy needs to deliver for regional screen creatives

- Government funding (local, state or federal)
- Promotion of the value of the screen industry to the region
- Funding of a screen industry development position in the southeast region
- Support for getting funding (eg assistance with grant applications and crowdfunding)
- Local screen industry directory of people/ locations/equipment in the area
- Networking opportunities with other screen industry creatives
- Networking opportunities with screen content buyers (business, council, tourism, distributors etc)
- Professional development opportunities
- Skills Development
- Improved Internet access and speed
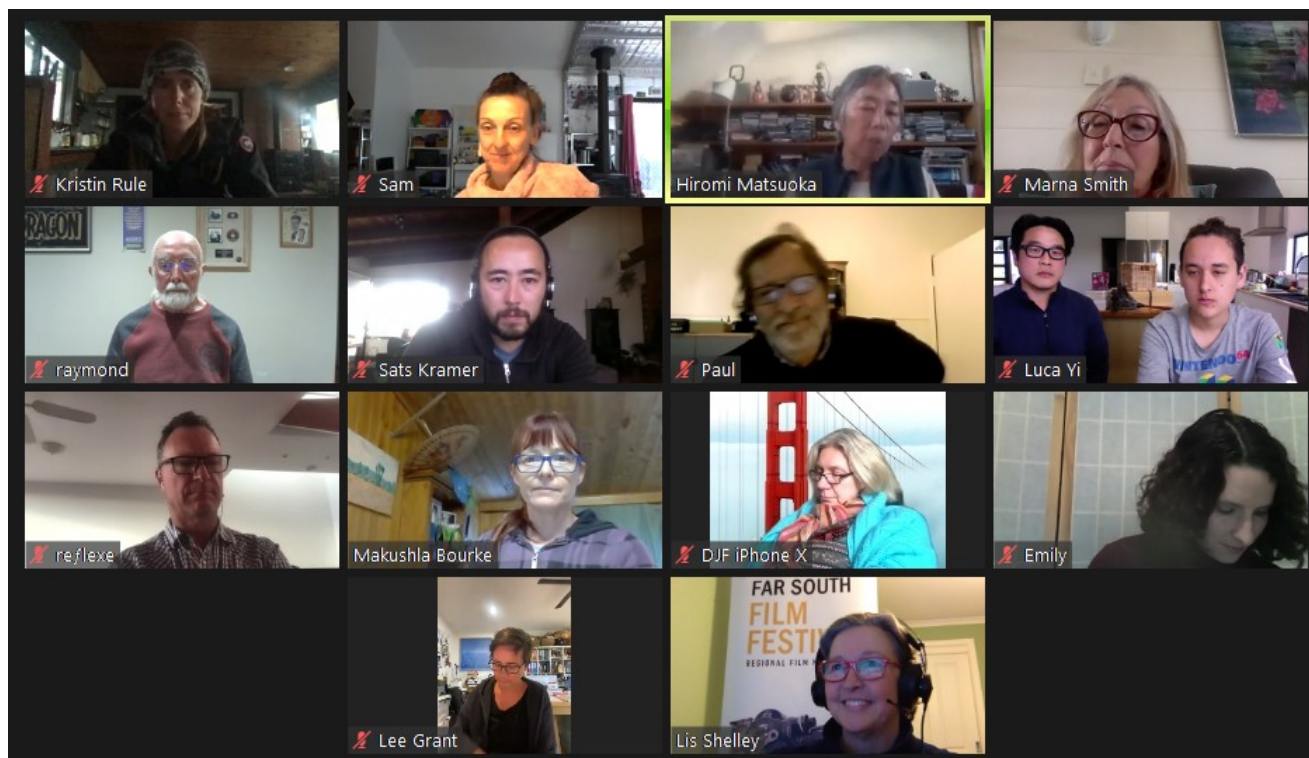
Creative Roundtable Online with southeast NSW region screen creatives during COVID lockdown 2020

5. Strategies 2021 - 2024

5.1 Drivers, Outcomes, KPIs and Actions in priority order

No.	Driver	Outcomes	KPIs	Actions	Timeframe
1	Finance, support and enable content creatives to produce high quality local content.	Screen creatives are supported with sourcing and applying for funding.	Screen Industry Development officer recruited	Apply for funding for a Regional Screen Industry Development officer position	2021
		Screen creatives are supported with professional feedback and encouragement to produce high quality content	Increase in number of projects moving from development to production stage	Hold quarterly creative roundtables / pitching events	Ongoing
		Higher production budgets for regional projects	Increase in number of successfully funded productions/attachments	Promote funding and financing opportunities to content creators in the region.	Ongoing
			Increase in average production budgets	Include budget question in annual survey	End of year
		Increased proportion of screen creatives earning their income solely from the screen industry	Survey reports increase in number of projects worked on as well as increase in proportion of screen-based income.	Include income proportion and number of projects questions in annual survey	End of year
		Recognition of the Southeast region as a source of high quality screen and content production.	Number of Southeast films accepted/awarded by film festivals.	Promote festival opportunities to content creators in the region.	Ongoing
			Amount of content broadcast or accepted by 3rd party online platforms	Encourage creators to promote their work and how audiences can watch it.	Ongoing
No.	Driver	Outcomes	KPIs	Actions	Timeframe

No.	Driver	Outcomes	KPIs	Actions	Timeframe
2	Establish relationships with tourism, local government, arts and business groups.	Increased recognition of the screen industry and its importance to the region	Evidence of growing recognition of the screen industry within the region through council, arts and tourism strategy / business development / annual report documents.	Invite these organisations to screen industry networking events and screenings of locally made content	Q3 2021
			Survey or annual reports indicate increase in budget allocation to screen-based projects	Include question on stakeholder budget in survey and review annual reporting documents.	End of year
		More local creatives involved in projects with tourism, local government, arts and business groups	Survey reports an increase in the number of projects for these organisations.	Promote screen industry directory to these organisations and invite them to cross-promote on their communication channels	Q3 2021
3	Establish a network of creative professionals and develop a list of local industry suppliers and services.	Greater knowledge of available people, skills, equipment	Increased number of contacts in directory with ongoing maintenance and growth funding	Promote directory within the region to attract more creatives.	Ongoing
		Increased promotion and visibility of screen creatives in the local area	Increase in number of creatives attending events	Quarterly networking events online and/or in person hosted in different locations in the region	Ongoing
			Increase in audience numbers at screenings, festival and online	Promotion of screen creatives work through screenings, festival and links to online work.	Ongoing
		Greater knowledge of support services in the region	Addition of secondary suppliers to the regional directory	Survey regional creatives for recommendations of suppliers	2022
			Suppliers report more enquiries for services	Promote regional directory to suppliers, regional screen creatives and external producers and screen bodies	2022
No.	**Driver**	**Outcomes**	**KPIs**	**Actions**	**Timeframe**
4	Facilitate training and skills	Well funded ongoing regionally	Regional skills/training needs are	Include question on creatives' skills and training	Ongoing

	development and involvement opportunities for emerging creatives to ensure enough skilled creatives are available	based and/or online opportunities for training and skills development	known and prioritised	needs in annual survey	
			Appropriate number of courses to meet needs are funded and held.	Apply for funding to support workshops, skills and professional development or travel for individuals to attend 3rd party opportunities	End of year
		Higher number of skilled creatives in the Southeast region leading to more sustainable industry	Increase in number, breadth and diversity of attendees at workshops, professional development events and attachments	Arrange and promote workshops or attachments for emerging and professional content creators targeting diverse groups including youth, CALD, LGBTIQ, women, carers and Indigenous	Ongoing
5	Promote the Southeast region and its screen industry to external screen bodies and producers.	Southeast region becomes known as a go-to film-friendly location for large production companies.	Increase in the number and quality of incoming productions and projects being made in the region.	Add our regional filming contacts to the Screen NSW website.	2024
			Increase in the number and quality of location images from the Southeast region on the Reel Scout database	Promote a campaign for local creatives to populate the Reel Scout database with support from experienced film scout	2022
		Increase in local screen creatives working on incoming productions and projects.	Improve and populate the regional screen creatives directory	Promote the directory to regional screen creatives	Ongoing
			Promote the regional directory to external screen producers and screen bodies	Promote the regional directory to external produces and screen bodies	Ongoing
			Increase in local resource requests from external producers	Include question on external projects in annual survey	End of year