



Commissioning Inclusion Guidelines

2025 – 2028

Published July 2025



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SBS acknowledges the enduring connection of First Nations peoples to Country and extends our respect to Elders past and present and all First Nations people across Australia. The vibrant, dynamic and resilient cultures of First Nations peoples are central to our experience of Country and our shared identity as a nation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first storytellers of this place and their knowledge continues to enrich and shape our national story. SBS is committed to working with First Nations peoples to ensure their voices are heard and their stories are told, and in doing so, creating a more inclusive and equitable society for all Australians.



Marion Grasby's Flavours of Heart & Home



Great Australian Road Trips



Moni

Who we are, and ‘the why’

The principal function of the SBS is to provide multilingual and multicultural broadcasting and digital media services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians and, in doing so, reflect Australia’s multicultural society.

- SBS Charter

SBS is committed to ensuring that all Australians see their stories represented on screen. For more than 50 years, we have been reflecting contemporary Australia and continuing to pave the way to a more inclusive future in our industry.

Through our commissioned programs, we tell bold, distinctive stories that push boundaries, challenge perceptions, inspire change and show Australia as it is today. SBS’s Commissioning Inclusion Guidelines embody our distinct role within the media landscape as Australia’s multicultural and Indigenous broadcaster, aiming to create environments where creatives who have been historically under-represented, thrive.

They seek to continue to enhance equity and inclusion, on- and off-screen, because an inclusive screen production that embraces the wealth of lived experience of Australians is essential for achieving authentic and meaningful storytelling.

From casting talent to hiring crew, SBS will continue to collaborate with our production partners, offering practical advice on funding, training, and creative hiring, including through career pathway initiatives. Fostering sustainable change requires investment and time, and these guidelines are one of the ways SBS is continuing to create opportunities and support long-lasting careers for under-represented talent.



What are the Commissioning Inclusion Guidelines?

Australia is increasingly diverse, but that is not always reflected on the nation's screens. The SBS Commissioning Inclusion Guidelines (July 2025 – June 2028) outline our ongoing commitment to ensure all Australians see themselves, their family, friends and communities in the stories we tell through our commissioned programs. They set targets to help us achieve this – for SBS as a broadcaster, as well as Scripted and Unscripted show-by-show targets.

These build on the [SBS Commissioning Equity & Inclusion Guidelines \(2021 – 2024\)](#), which were designed to further improve equity and inclusion across all SBS-commissioned programs and internal productions.

For the first time, they outlined comprehensive representation goals in on-screen, off-screen and career progression roles, with targets applied to programs, and SBS commissioning and production teams working closely with partner production companies and industry stakeholders. You can read more about how we performed in the [SBS Commissioning Equity & Inclusion Guidelines \(2021 – 2024\) Target Report](#). These guidelines were extended for July 2024 – June 2025 as we reviewed our progress and engaged stakeholders to develop our next guidelines.

Once again, the guidelines do not apply to SBS's News and Current Affairs and Sports programming, and targets do not apply to NITV productions as we recognise NITV has unique equity goals for its slate.

SBS remains committed to ongoing accountability and transparency. We will continue to evaluate and report on three areas: on-screen representation, off-screen roles, and career advancement.

SBS also continues to invest in career pathway and content initiatives designed to support and elevate under-represented screen creatives. Learn more about the [opportunities available](#) on the SBS website.

SBS is committed to ensuring all Australians see themselves, their communities, their cultures and their stories reflected on our screens, representing the full diversity of the Australian population.



The Jury: Death on the Staircase

What does Australia look like?

31.5%

were born overseas ¹

429

languages used, including more than 250 Indigenous Australian languages ²

22.8%

use a language other than English at home ³

51.5%

were born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas ⁴

25%

have a non-European background ⁵

3.8%

are First Nations peoples ⁶

21.4%

are people with disability ⁷

50.7%

are female ⁸

49.3%

are male ⁹

Up to

11%

are people with diverse sexual orientation, sex or gender identity ¹⁰

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), [9 facts about Australia's overseas-born population](#)

² Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), [Languages Alive](#)

³ ABS, [Cultural diversity of Australia](#)

⁴ ABS, [Snapshot of Australia](#)

⁵ Estimates based on 2021 ABS data. The categories of cultural background are informed by analysis conducted through the Everyone Project. Using ancestry responses from the 2021 Census, statistical modelling was applied to determine representation, estimating that 25% of Australians have a non-European background.

⁶ ABS, [Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians](#)

⁷ ABS, [5.5 million Australians have disability](#)

⁸ ABS, [Population Census](#)

⁹ ABS, [Population Census](#)

¹⁰ According to the ABS, [4.5% of Australians aged 16 and over identify as LGBTI+](#). However, when considering broader self-identification trends and other socio-demographic factors, estimates place this figure at or above 11%, as stated in the Australian Human Rights Commission publication, ["Face the facts: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex people" \(2014\)](#). This discrepancy arises due to factors such as underreporting, social stigma, and limitations in data collection methodologies as described in the ABS Statement of regret: 2021 Census, meaning a significant portion of the LGBTQ+ population may not be fully captured in official statistics.

Target groups for inclusion

First Nations peoples

People who identify as or who are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.

Culturally and linguistically diverse

People who identify as having an ancestry or ethnic background other than or addition to Anglo-Celtic, and/or First Nations.

Non-European culturally and linguistically diverse

People who identify as having an ancestry or ethnic background other than, or in addition to, Anglo-Celtic, First Nations, or European. This includes people with African, Asian, Central or South American, Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander, and other non-European backgrounds.

People with disability

People with sensory disabilities such as hearing or vision conditions; physical disabilities which may affect mobility, dexterity or stamina; neurological disabilities; learning disabilities; and/or mental health conditions and chronic conditions requiring reasonable adjustments. Disabilities may be temporary or permanent, visible or invisible.

LGBTQ+

People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. The + represents others not explicitly mentioned such as pansexual, agender and asexual.

Women

People who identify as women.

SBS acknowledges intersectionality, recognising that individuals who identify with multiple under-represented communities often face overlapping barriers. Diversity also encompasses other factors, such as geography (including regional and remote areas), socio-economic mobility, age, and carer status. We actively encourage the exploration and representation of these communities in our content. Our commitment extends to fostering inclusive environments across both commissioned and internally produced programs, ensuring all individuals are treated with respect, valued, and recognised for their creative contributions.



Eurovision Song Contest

Broadcaster targets

As a broadcaster, SBS will measure diversity demographics across all unscripted and scripted commissioned and internal productions, to understand and track how we are representing people from historically and ongoing under-represented communities across cast and crew, across our commissioned content slate. SBS's ongoing focus is on inclusivity for a diverse cast and crew, as we strive towards fairer creative opportunities and population parity.

SBS has set targets for the representation of First Nations peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTQ+ people, and women, based on what Australia looks like today. However, industry data shows people from European and Anglo-Celtic backgrounds remain over-represented on Australian screens, and those from non-European backgrounds and people with disability continue to be under-represented. With this in mind, SBS has increased its targets for people with disability and introduced a new sub-target for non-European culturally and linguistically diverse communities, reflecting Australia's growing diversity.

	On screen	Off screen	Australian population
First Nations peoples	3-5%	3-5%	3.8%
Culturally and linguistically diverse	40-50%	40-50%	45%
Non-European culturally and linguistically diverse	24-26%	24-26%	25%
People with disability	8-13%	8-13%	21.4%
LGBTQ+	8-12%	8-12%	11%
Women	45-55%	45-55%	50.7%



Alone Australia Season 3

What is SBS asking of production companies?

In addition to SBS's own targets for commissioned and internal productions from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2028, we're also asking all scripted and unscripted partner production companies and internal productions with crews over 15 people to make best efforts to meet on-screen, off-screen, and career progression targets on their shows, outlined in the following pages.

1. Meet targets on your program

Production companies making commissioned programs (with crews of more than 15 people) must aim to achieve all three targets on their program:

- On-screen roles
- Off-screen roles
- Career progression

SBS Unscripted and Scripted targets are outlined on pages 10 and 11.

2. Talk to your Commissioning Editor and Diversity & Inclusion team early

If you are concerned about meeting targets on your program, talk to your Commissioning Editor at development. Early in your project, SBS can assist by:

- **Training and practical advice:**
The SBS Commissioning Diversity & Inclusion team can offer a training and advice session on how to source practitioners.

- **Recommending talent:**

SBS can provide suggestions of skilled talent that have worked with SBS before via initiatives or other programs.

- **Funding attachments:**

Fully funded SBS Talent Escalator crew role or other attachments.

3. Track your efforts to meet targets

SBS will ask production companies to report on how you met targets on your program (details on how to provide this report are outlined in your delivery schedule). For productions that don't meet the targets, the SBS Commissioning Diversity & Inclusion team will meet with key representatives from the production to review processes. This will be to understand what the challenges were, and why targets were not met.



Four Years Later



Latecomers



Swift Street



Contractual deliverables

We expect producers to use their best efforts to contribute to SBS achieving these targets. This will look different for each program, depending on the genre, subject matter, business model and supply of talent. Production companies of all SBS commissioned and internal productions must complete the following contractual deliverables, details of which are in the Delivery Schedule.

Complete an Inclusion Plan: Inclusion Plans do not apply to all SBS commissioned programs. Please consult your SBS Commissioning Editor to determine if this is required for your program. If applicable, The Inclusion Plan must be provided by production companies before production commences. Your Inclusion Plan (to be approved by your SBS Commissioning Editor) will detail how your production will actively foster inclusion. The plan should outline specific actions to ensure equitable representation, accessibility, and cultural safety within your production team.

Deliver The Everyone Project: Deliver The Everyone Project by registering your program and inviting cast and crew to complete a voluntary and de-identified demographic survey.

Complete an Inclusion Report: Towards the end of production, tell us about inclusion challenges and opportunities on your program. SBS will use these insights to evolve our practices.



Unscripted programming

SBS Unscripted aims to achieve the below targets on commissioned programs.

Production companies must aim to meet all three target criteria across a single show or series with crews above 15 people.

On Screen

Meet both categories

- Gender equity across all on-screen roles:** 50% women &
- Engage 30% or more** from the five groups¹ in key on-screen roles

We encourage production companies to hire for these key roles:

- Presenter
- Co-presenter
- Contributor
- Expert
- Performer

Off Screen

Meet both categories

- Gender equity across all off-screen roles:** 50% women &
- Engage 30% or more** from the five groups in key off-screen roles.

We encourage production companies to hire for these senior/key roles:

- Executive Producer
- Series Producer
- Post Executive Producer
- Producer
- Director
- Associate Producer
- Researcher
- Editor
- Production Manager
- DOP
- Sound Recordist
- Camera Operator
- Shooter Producer

Career Progression

Where relevant, advance the careers of practitioners with demonstrated ability.

- Hire practitioners who have completed industry programs such as attachments, internships, or other initiatives.
- Hire practitioners to transition them into paid production roles at a higher level of seniority.

SBS will support the long-term career progression of practitioners by offering access to mentoring meetings with an SBS Unscripted Commissioning Editor.

1. The "five groups" refers to people who identify as First Nations peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse, non-European culturally and linguistically diverse, people with disability and LGBTQ+.

For some unscripted content, it is acknowledged and accepted that editorial requirements will inform contributors, and these shows may not meet the guidelines.

Scripted programming

At SBS Scripted, we understand each story is unique, so these targets can be tailored to each program's story world and subject matter. Production companies on all SBS Scripted commissioned programs must aim to meet all three target criteria across a single series:

On Screen Target

Meet all three categories

1. **Main characters¹** to include at least: two First Nations peoples, and/or non-European culturally and linguistically diverse people, and/or people with disability.
2. **Broader cast²** to include at least:
 - Gender equity: 50% women &
 - 30% from the five groups³
3. **Inclusive casting. Producers to demonstrate best efforts to:**
 - Practice open casting for all characters who are not specifically written to be Anglo-Celtic &
 - Cast extras that are from the six groups

Off Screen Target⁴

Meet all three categories

- If the series focuses on a particular under-represented community:
1. **Writing team⁵** to include at least:
 - Gender equity: 50% women &
 - At least two key roles for people from this community
 2. **Other key creatives⁶:** Directors/Producers to include at least:
 - Gender equity: 50% women &
 - one other creative from this community⁷
e.g. At least one producer or at least one director
 3. **Production team⁸** to include at least:
 - Gender equity: 50% women &
 - one Head of Department (HOD)⁹ from the five groups

- If the series does not focus on a particular under-represented community:
1. **Writing team** to include at least:
 - Gender equity: 50% women &
 - Two key roles from the five groups (including one First Nations, non-European culturally and linguistically diverse, and/or a person with disability)
 2. **Other key creatives:** Directors/Producers to include at least:
 - Gender equity: 50% women &
 - one other creative from the five groups
eg. At least one of the producers or one of the directors identifies as First Nations, non-European culturally and linguistically diverse, and/or as a person with disability
 3. **Production team** to include at least:
 - Gender equity: 50% women &
 - one Head of Department (HOD) from the five groups

Career Progression

Where relevant, advance the careers of practitioners with demonstrated ability.

- Hire practitioners who have completed industry programs such as attachments, internships, or other relevant initiatives.
- Hire practitioners to transition them into paid production roles at a higher level of seniority.

SBS will support the long-term career progression of diverse practitioners by offering access to mentoring meetings with an SBS Scripted Commissioning Editor.

On-screen notes:

- 1 Main characters appear in all episodes and are integral to the plot.
- 2 Broader cast includes main and supporting characters. Supporting characters are named roles which sit between main cast roles and 50-words and/or extras.
- 3 The "five groups" refers to people who identify as First Nations peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse, non-European culturally and linguistically diverse, people with disability and LGBTQ+.

Off-screen notes:

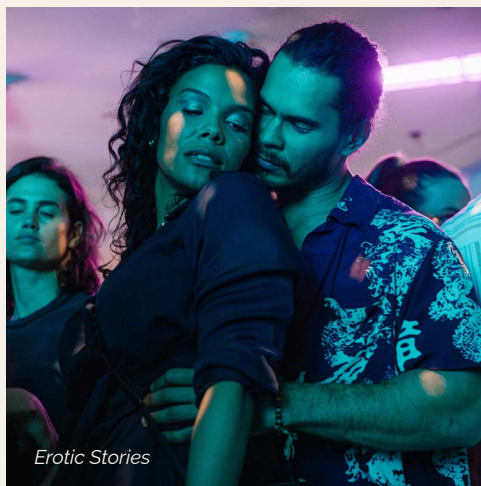
- 4 Off-screen roles: Includes writing team, key creatives and production team.
- 5 Writing team roles: Includes writers, co-writers, script/development producers and script editors. This does not include notetakers, but we strongly encourage that the notetaker is from an under-represented group.
- 6 Other key creative roles include: directors and producers (including executive producer, co-producer, associate producer).
- 7 For series set within the First Nations peoples community, the 2 out of 3 must include the lead director or lead writer and at least one person who identifies as First Nations peoples in another key creative role.
- 8 Production team includes all crew that are not HOD roles.
- 9 HOD roles include director of photography, editor, casting director, production designer, costume designer, art director, make-up and hair designer, composer, sound designer, first assistant director, line producer, production accountant, sound recordist. Examples of on-screen key roles include presenter, guest presenter, regular contributor, expert and performer. Examples of off-screen key roles: executive producer, series producer, editor, director, location director, producer, shooter producer, field producer, story producer, post producer, director of photography, production manager, post EP.

Case studies

Erotic Stories & Lingo Pictures

SBS spoke with Tess Novak, General Manager of Lingo Pictures about making *Erotic Stories*, the eight-part SBS scripted anthology series which explores intimacy from various diverse lenses.

Novak considered diversity of crew in preproduction, "It needs to be integrated early in the creative phase, starting with the writer's room [...] Diversity in the writer's room is essential. It informs the themes and characters, making it the most crucial starting point. On-screen diversity flows organically from a well-set-up writer's room."



Lingo Pictures also consulted with Screen NSW to recommend talent from diverse backgrounds who continue to experience disadvantage and be under-represented in the industry, and help inform training, "When hiring for any emerging or attachment roles, where there are barriers to industry entry, and when hiring general crew, it's crucial to bring new people into the industry [...] for behind-the-scenes diversity, keep it in mind at every step. When assessing candidates, prioritise those who face more barriers to entry. This should be part of your checklist when filling every role."

Finally, Tess spoke about Associate Producer Zaina Ahmed who was engaged through the SBS Talent Escalator Initiative: "That attachment was one of the best we've ever had. Zaina was incredible and the perfect fit for the role. She provided immense support to Liam, our hands-on producer, becoming his right-hand person throughout the challenging shoot." Following her Talent Escalator placement, Zaina continued working in the screen industry and joined the SBS Commissioning team as Scripted Development Executive in 2024.

Who the Bloody Hell Are We? & Chemical Media

SBS spoke with Tony Jackson of Chemical Media about making the three-part SBS documentary *Who the Bloody Hell Are We?* The series explores Australian history from the perspectives of Chinese, Jewish and New Zealander communities.

The production piloted a unique director model, allowing three emerging directors from the three communities to receive their first broadcast credit within a Cultural Safety Framework which encouraged two-way collaboration. Jackson and Series Producer Nick McNerney mentored three directors to hone their skills.



On creating the unique model, "It was difficult to get the key roles covered because there weren't enough people with credits that can cover the roles that the broadcasters need and then we started talking about the directors and said, 'Wouldn't it be great if we could start filling those driver's seat roles?'".

Jackson emphasised the value of engaging key creatives with lived experience, "Having the lens from within the community brought invaluable insights, making the stories truly authentic."

Finally, Jackson underscored the responsibility of Executive Producers to be allies, "As an older white male at the top, you must ensure a safe pathway for less than positive feedback so that people aren't worried about bringing it to you. Historically, there have been power imbalances, so it's crucial to create a safe space for voices to confidently step up and talk."



FAQ

Which programs do the targets apply to?

To measure targets, we will consider commissioned and internal programs. The targets do not apply to NITV productions, as we recognise NITV has unique equity goals for its slate. They also do not apply to SBS news and current affairs or sport programming, as the targets focus on progressing inclusion across our commissioned slate working closely with production partners. The targets reflect the nuanced nature of SBS programming, with specific measures applied to unscripted and scripted programming.

Are the targets flexible?

Yes, the targets are flexible according to the program. We understand each program has different challenges based on location, genre and talent supply. We encourage production companies to speak to your SBS Commissioning Editor early, to ask for assistance to collaborate on realistic and practical solutions for individual programs.

What happens if we're a small team and can't meet the targets?

We acknowledge that for certain genres and smaller teams, it may be challenging to meet the targets. The targets do not apply to production teams of 15 or less people, as we recognise it may not be viable to meet the guidelines. However, we encourage production companies to make best efforts and reach out to your SBS Commissioning Editor to try and explore solutions.

What if we can't meet the targets due to the editorial nature of the show?

For some unscripted content, it is acknowledged and accepted that editorial requirements will inform contributors, and these shows may not meet the targets. In such cases, the limitations must be discussed with and approved by the SBS Commissioning Editor to ensure they align with the program's editorial intent. Where possible, productions are still encouraged to consider inclusion across other areas of the project.

How can SBS help me meet targets on my program?

SBS can provide training on how to create an inclusive environment on your production. We can introduce you to under-represented creatives who have worked on and produced their own SBS productions through our diversity career pathway initiatives. We can co-fund crew positions for talent from historically under-represented communities on your program. When posting job call-outs, we encourage you to use inclusive wording to specifically encourage people from the under-represented communities to apply e.g. "We're especially looking to meet creatives from under-represented backgrounds including First Nations people, culturally and linguistically diverse practitioners, non-European culturally and linguistically diverse practitioners, people with disability, LGBTQ+, and women." You can also contact your state or territory screen agency. They can connect you with local creatives, share roles with their networks and direct you to diversity initiatives to join.

What is cultural safety in TV and film?

The Australian Human Rights Commission refers to cultural safety as “[A]n environment that is safe for people: where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening”. On your production, consider how you can communicate SBS’s inclusion expectations to cast and crew, and make everyone feel safe to bring their whole selves to work.

I’m concerned about getting it wrong, or making a mistake when reaching out to talent from under-represented groups – where do I start?

We want to work together with production partners to reach out to talent from under-represented communities. The SBS Commissioning Diversity & Inclusion team can provide training in how to best reach under-represented communities.

How do I report on whether I achieved the targets on my show?

SBS has Inclusion deliverables to monitor compliance against targets on your program; please see the Delivery Materials Schedule for details.

Why are the genre targets different?

Our unscripted and scripted targets are different, as each genre has different workflows, size of slate and editorial needs.

How will we measure the targets?

We are tracking diversity for SBS programs registered in The Everyone Project, a national TV and film demographic survey, between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2028. Should data from The Everyone Project no longer be available at any point during this period, SBS will seek to maintain continuity in diversity tracking through mechanisms aligned with industry standards. In addition, we use the Inclusion Report, submitted by production companies as a final deliverable, to assess show-by-show performance against our diversity targets.

When will we report on the targets?

We will publish a final report in 2028/2029, along with commissioning diversity updates each year in the SBS Annual Report. These findings will shape the next set of SBS’s equity and inclusion goals.

Who can I ask for help?

Please contact your SBS Commissioning Editor, who will be able to direct your query or connect you with the SBS Commissioning Diversity & Inclusion team. They can assist you in recruiting talent from under-represented groups at the right skill level, providing inclusion training for production companies and can answer any further questions you may have.



Four Years Later

More information

For more resources and information, visit the [SBS website](#).



Warm Props



The Matchmakers



Great Australian Road Trips

