SBS and screen agencies launch new short-form content initiative for diverse communities

SBS today announced the launch of the Short-Form Content Initiative, a commitment to providing increased opportunities for Australian creatives from diverse communities through the commissioning and production of content for SBS On Demand.

Partnering with five of Australia’s screen agencies, including Film Victoria, Create NSW, Screen Queensland, Screenwest and South Australian Film Corporation, the initiative aims to increase the career development opportunities within diverse and underrepresented groups, including those from multicultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island and LGBTQI+ communities*.

The co-funded initiative aims to address the disparity between Australia’s many communities and their involvement in the local screen industry. Building on SBS’s successful Diversity Talent Escalator scheme, the new Short-Form Content Initiative will foster new and emerging Australian talent and highlight the benefits of diversity in all its forms to online audiences.

SBS and screen agencies will collaborate with creative teams to develop, produce and deliver a range of scripted and non-scripted content projects, which will premiere on SBS’s streaming platform, SBS On Demand, from mid-2019.

SBS Director of TV and Online Content, Marshall Headl, said: “Australia is one of the most multicultural countries in the world; however multiple studies have demonstrated a lack of diversity within the sector. The stories we tell and the talent that we foster at all levels of production should reflect the diversity of our communities.

The new Short-Form Content Initiative further strengthens SBS’s commitment to growing diversity in the screen sector, encourages greater collaboration with screen agencies to support the local creative industry and ultimately, will influence how we tell stories on screen.”

The production of short-form content enables practitioners to develop their core skills, in addition to providing opportunities to transition into the wider industry. Each project in this new initiative will need to demonstrate that two of the three key creatives (writer, director, producer) are from backgrounds presently underrepresented in the screen industry.

The Short-Form Content Initiative launches today in Western Australia with interested applicants encouraged to contact Screenwest for more information, with other states to follow shortly.

*SBS recognises diversity as “differences in gender; age; Aboriginal identity; cultural and linguistic diversity (CaLD); disability; sexuality and gender identities, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+); location (including regional and remote regions) and socio-economic status”.