

## 2026 Blacktown Shorts Film Festival

### Application guidelines

**Blacktown Shorts Film Festival** supports western Sydney filmmakers to create new short films offering:

- funding to create new work
- industry mentorship
- professional development
- screening opportunities.

Blacktown Shorts Film Festival is an award-winning screen program previously presented by Blacktown Arts as part of **Magnify** in 2019 and 2023 and later presented at Sydney Opera House in 2024 and 2025.

In 2026, Blacktown Arts will commission **3 new short films**, which will premiere alongside other selected films at Sydney Opera House.

Successful filmmaking teams can receive **up to \$7,000** to produce their short film.

Both emerging and established filmmakers are encouraged to apply. We welcome applications from creatives who are D/deaf, neurodivergent; have lived experience of disability and/or access requirements.

All short film formats are welcome including:

- narrative
- animation
- documentary.

Music videos and branded content are not eligible.

Festival Curator Vonne Patiag, Associate Curator Chidiebube Uba and the Blacktown Arts team will support selected filmmakers throughout the program.

## Who can apply

Your project must:

- be submitted by someone aged 18 or over
- be created by a western Sydney-based individual, team or organisation
- be produced entirely in Sydney, NSW
- be no longer than **7 minutes**
- have a strong connection to Blacktown City's community or culture
- be owned by the applicant (you must hold the rights to the project)
- be expected to receive an Australian film classification of **Mature (M)** (**for a definition of this rating please refer to the [Australian Classification](#)**).

You can be involved in multiple applications, but you can only receive funding for **one** project.

Individuals and groups are welcome to apply, we also welcome applications from creatives who are D/deaf, neurodivergent; with lived experience of disability and/or access requirements.

Successful applicants must complete their film within **12 weeks**, from **27 July to 20 October 2026**.

You cannot apply if you are:

- an employee of Blacktown City Council
- an immediate family member of a Blacktown City Council employee
- a Blacktown City Councillor
- an individual or group whose project is delivered outside western Sydney.

## How applications are assessed

We encourage applications that support diversity, accessibility and inclusion in the screen industry.

Shortlisted teams may be invited to meet with the assessment panel before final decisions are made.

Eligible applications will be assessed on:

- originality and quality of the idea
- the experience and creative work of key team members
- your ability to deliver the project on time and within budget
- how the project contributes to western Sydney's screen industry
- representation of diverse voices and communities.

Applications must be submitted through the **Blacktown Arts** website by:

**Monday 29 June 2026, by 11.59 pm**

Your application must include:

- a draft script
- storyboards and/or story documents
- a creative statement (written or video format)
- information about your connection to Blacktown City
- a current CV or portfolio for all key creatives
- a draft production schedule
- a completed budget.

Your budget must clearly show how the funding will be spent.

### [Budget template](#)

If your project costs more than \$7,000, you will need to explain how you will cover the remaining costs (for example through crowdfunding, sponsorship or in-kind support).

You must also include any other confirmed funding.

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## Results of application assessment

Successful applicants will receive up to **\$7,000**.

You must complete your film within the required timeframe.

Festival Curator Vonne Patiag, Associate Curator Chidiebube Uba and the Blacktown Arts team will provide producing and logistical support.

You and your team must be available for online meetings during the development process.

Your film will premiere at the **2026 Blacktown Shorts Film Festival** at Sydney Opera House.

There may also be additional screening opportunities through Blacktown Arts.

## Key Dates:

**Applicants notified:** Week of 20 July 2026

**Production and post-production:** 27 July to 20 October 2026 (12 weeks)

**Public announcement of filmmakers and films:** September 2026

**Rough cut due:** 13 October 2026

**Final film due:** 20 October 2026

## Need help?

Blacktown Arts will hold an online information session on:

**Tuesday 9 June 2026, 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm**

Please [register your attendance](#).

The session will be recorded and shared on the Blacktown Arts website.

If you have questions or need help with your application, email:

[blacktownarts@blacktown.nsw.gov.au](mailto:blacktownarts@blacktown.nsw.gov.au)