



Commissioning Equity & Inclusion Guidelines

2021 – 2024

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SBS acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continued strong spiritual and cultural connections to land, sea, sky and community. We pay respect to their Elders, past and present, and recognise their unique knowledges and wisdom, and we extend that respect to all First Nations peoples today whose perspectives, contributions and cultures enrich our society.



Guided by the SBS Charter, we explore, reflect and champion the rich variety of cultures and experiences that shape and define Australia.

As Australia's multicultural and Indigenous broadcaster, we are committed to ensuring all Australians see themselves and their stories reflected on screen, and that we are leading the way to a more inclusive future for our industry.

The SBS Commissioning Equity & Inclusion Guidelines reflect our unique role and responsibility in the media landscape and aim to create a more level playing field for creatives who have been under-represented in our sector.

SBS has set targets designed to remove barriers and increase the representation of people who identify as culturally and linguistically diverse, First Nations, people with disability, LGBTIQ+ and women - in front of and behind the camera - across its commissioned programs.

SBS has always showcased Australia's diversity, but over three years (from July 2021 to June 2024), our genre-specific targets will further improve equity and inclusion across all SBS-commissioned programs and internal productions.¹ We will measure and report on three areas: on screen, off screen and career progression, and share how we're tracking as a part of our commitment to accountability.

From casting on-screen talent to hiring off-screen crew, SBS will work flexibly with each of our production partners to support them in contributing to our goals over three years. We will also provide practical assistance, including

current funding, training and connecting them with creative talent from our many [diversity career pathway initiatives](#).

We recognise that it takes investment and time to create sustainable change. These targets are one of the many ways we are continuing our work with the sector to improve access and support long, successful careers for diverse creatives.



¹ In the Guidelines, "internal productions" refers to internal scripted and unscripted productions and does not include news and current affairs and sport.

SBS commissions programs that explore the SBS Charter and reflect contemporary Australia, both on and off screen.

We are searching for bold and distinctive stories that prioritise authenticity of voice, push boundaries, challenge perceptions and inspire change.

We want programs that are created, written, produced, directed and presented by a diversity of talent, bringing their unique perspectives to Australian audiences.

Australia is incredibly - and increasingly - diverse, but that is not always reflected on the nation's screens.

At SBS, we want all Australians, including those who are traditionally under-represented in the media, to see themselves, their family, friends and communities in the stories we tell.

What does Australia look like?

Over **300** languages spoken

39%

culturally and linguistically diverse ¹

21%

speak a language other than English at home ²

3.3%

are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ³

17.7%

are people with disability ⁴

49%

were born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas ²

50.7%

female ⁶

49.3%

male ⁶

Up to **11%**

are people with diverse sexual orientation, sex or gender identity ⁵

At SBS, we want all Australians, including those who are traditionally under-represented in the media, to see themselves, their family, friends and communities in the stories we tell.

¹ Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), [Leading for Change: A blueprint for cultural diversity and inclusive leadership revisited](#) (2018).

² Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), [Census reveals a fast changing, culturally diverse nation](#) (2017).

³ ABS, [Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians](#) (2016).

⁴ ABS, [Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings](#) (2019).

⁵ AHRC, [Face the facts: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex people](#) (2014).

⁶ ABS, [Snapshot of Australia 2016 Census data summary](#) (2016).



Under-represented communities

The guidelines focus on increasing representation of people from five under-represented groups.

- 1. Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)**
People who are not Anglo-Celtic or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander by descent, and/or English is not their main spoken language.
- 2. First Nations peoples**
People who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.
- 3. People with disability**
People with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory disability or a combination of those conditions. This also includes Deaf or hard of hearing people and people with mental health conditions.
- 4. LGBTIQ+**
People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer. The + represents others not explicitly mentioned such as pansexual, agender and asexual.
- 5. Women**
Representation of people who identify as women.

We recognise intersectionality, where people who identify with more than one under-represented community are exposed to overlapping barriers to representation.¹

SBS recognises that diversity is also reflected in other ways, including geography (including regional and remote areas), socio-economic mobility, age and carer status. We also encourage the exploration and representation of these communities in our content.

We are committed to creating inclusive environments for our commissioned and internally produced programs, where all people are treated with respect and are valued and attributed for their creative contributions.

¹ AHRC, [Intersectionality of Age and Gender](#) (2018).



Equity & inclusion targets: Frequently asked questions

WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THE TARGETS?

Ultimately, we want cast and crew on our unscripted and scripted commissioned programs to reflect Australia's population. We've set targets to track and measure how we represent communities and improve our ability to share this information.

WHO DO THE TARGETS APPLY TO?

The targets apply to SBS as a broadcaster. We are measuring our commissioned content slate over three years, combining contributions from all programs to track our performance against the goals set through our targets.

WHICH PROGRAMS DO THE TARGETS APPLY TO?

To measure targets, we will consider contributions from SBS and SBS/NITV co-productions, for commissioned and internal programs.¹ 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.

The targets reflect the nuanced nature of SBS programming, with specific measures applied to unscripted and scripted programming.

HOW DO THE UNSCRIPTED TARGETS WORK?

Unscripted targets do not apply to individual production companies. They apply to SBS as a broadcaster, and are measured by combining all commissioned documentary, factual, food and entertainment programs.

HOW DO THE SCRIPTED TARGETS APPLY?

Scripted targets apply to individual programs commissioned by SBS, and their application is tailored to the subject matter and story world.

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.

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 and screen agencies to work with SBS, to create realistic and practical solutions for individual programs.

HOW DID WE SET THE TARGETS?

In setting targets, we engaged and consulted with industry and key stakeholders, reviewed our recent commissioned content slate, and set target levels for the five groups identified. This included measuring current on-screen representation, which was assessed against Australia's population. Our analysis supported our understanding that we reflect diversity, but we need to significantly improve representation of people with disability.²

HOW WILL WE MEASURE THE TARGETS?

We are tracking diversity for SBS programs that are registered in The Everyone Project from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024, over a three-year time span. As a founding member of the Screen Diversity and Inclusion Network, we will use data from The Everyone Project – a national TV and film demographic survey, and reports from SBS Commissioning Editors and production companies.

WHEN WILL WE REPORT ON THE TARGETS?

We will publish a final report in 2024, along with commissioning diversity updates each year in the SBS Annual Report. These findings will shape the next set of equity and inclusion goals.

¹ This does not include news and current affairs and sport.

² To benchmark current diversity levels, we measured on-screen perceived diversity on SBS commissioned and internal shows that aired from 1 July 2020 to 2021. While only representing a 12-month period, it helped us better understand our current levels of representation and identify areas where we want to improve.

Equity & inclusion 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 (not including news and current affairs and sport) must complete the following contractual deliverables to help us meet our equity and inclusion targets, details of which are in the Delivery Schedule:

- 1. Cultural Safety Plan:** Cultural safety plans do not apply to all SBS commissioned programs. Please discuss with your SBS Commissioning Editor whether a Cultural Safety Plan is required for your program. For certain productions, Commissioning Editors may require Production Companies to provide a Cultural Safety Plan. Before production, deliver a Cultural Safety Plan (to be approved by your SBS Commissioning Editor) which addresses how you will manage cultural safety issues specific to your production.
- 2. 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.
- 3. Complete an Equity & 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.

How can SBS support you?

From development to completion, Commissioning Editors and the SBS Content Industry Diversity Manager will support production partners, including through connections backgrounds and reflecting a variety of lived experiences. There are also resources available for further support (see page 8-9).

Inclusion Targets: Unscripted

SBS Unscripted aims to meet the below targets, by combining results from all documentary, factual, food and entertainment shows over a three-year period. The targets do not apply to individual productions, as we understand each has unique approaches and challenges, and not all targets may be able to be met on an individual program. We're asking production companies to contribute to SBS's overall goals as appropriate to the program commissioned.

	On screen ¹	Off screen ²	Career progression
Culturally and linguistically diverse	35-40%	25-40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9-12% culturally and linguistically diverse, First Nations, people with disability and/or LGBTIQ+ in non-key roles³ & Each year, SBS Unscripted aims to provide career progression opportunities for people from these groups on SBS productions. <p>We encourage producers to hire people from these groups to help SBS meet our targets.</p>
First Nations	3-5%	3-5%	
People with disability	5-10%	5-10%	
LGBTIQ+	8-12%	8-12%	
Women	45-55%	45-55%	

¹ Examples of Unscripted on-screen key roles include presenter, guest presenter, regular contributor, expert and performer.

² Examples of Unscripted 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.

³ Unscripted non-key roles: This is a role which is not defined as a key role, and includes the remainder of the crew including runners.



Inclusion Targets: Scripted

At SBS Scripted, we are focused on true craftsmanship and will work with producers to achieve equality and change over time. We understand each story is unique, so these targets can be tailored to each program's story world and subject matter. What we're asking production companies to do is to use best efforts to achieve these targets on their individual programs. The "four groups" refers to people who identify as culturally and linguistically diverse, First Nations, people with disability and/or LGBTIQ+.

On Screen

Meet all three categories

1. **Main characters**¹ to include at least two CALD and/or First Nations people
2. **Broader cast**² to include
 - (a) 33.3% from the four groups &
 - (b) 50% women
3. **Inclusive casting**. Producers to demonstrate best efforts to
 - (a) Practice open casting for all characters who are not specifically written to be Anglo-Celtic &
 - (b) Cast extras that are from the four groups.

Off Screen³

Meet all three categories

If the series focuses on a particular under-represented community:

1. **Writing team**⁴ to include at least
 - (a) two key roles for people from this community &
 - (b) 50% women
2. **Other Key Creatives: Directors/Producers**⁵ to include at least
 - (a) one other creative from this community⁶
e.g. At least one producer or at least one director &
 - (b) 50% women
3. **Production team**⁷ to include at least
 - (a) one Head of Department (HOD)⁸ from the four groups &
 - (b) 50% women

If the series does not focus on a particular under-represented community:

1. **Writing team** to include at least
 - (a) two key roles from the four groups (including one CALD and/or First Nations writer, to align with our SBS Charter goals as Australia's multicultural and Indigenous broadcaster) &
 - (b) 50% women
2. **Other Key Creatives: Directors/Producers** to include at least
 - (a) one other creative from the four groups
e.g. At least one of the producers or one of the directors is CALD, First Nations, a person with a disability and/or LGBTIQ+ &
 - (b) 50% women
3. **Production team** to include at least
 - (a) one Head of Department (HOD) from the four groups &
 - (b) 50% women

Career Progression

Demonstrate efforts to:

1. Hire people from the four groups, in off-screen roles &
 2. Elevate practitioners from the four groups into more senior roles.
- Each year, SBS Scripted aims to provide career progression opportunities to people from these four groups on SBS productions.
 - We encourage producers to hire people from these four groups to help SBS meet our targets.

1 Main characters appear in all episodes of a series 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 Off-screen roles: Includes writing team, key creatives and production team.

4 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.

5 Other key creative roles include: Directors and producers (including executive producer, co-producer, associate producer).

6 For series set within the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community, the 2 out of 3 must include the lead director or lead writer AND at least one person who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in another key creative role.

7 Production team includes all crew that are not HOD roles.

8 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.

Practical tips

This section contains tips for creating inclusive environments, expanding your networks and inclusive casting.

Creating inclusive environments

SBS recognises the importance of inclusive environments, to ensure everyone is respected and valued for their contributions. Lived experience and meaningful collaboration with community are essential to achieve authentic and respectful portrayal.

We encourage production companies to create inclusive environments and work collaboratively with relevant communities. For certain programs which focus on under-represented communities, production companies must outline their plan to ensure cultural safety.¹

WHAT IS CULTURAL SAFETY?

The Australian Human Rights Commission refers to cultural safety as "...an 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".²

HOW CAN I BUILD AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT?

Authenticity of voice. When creating content about under-represented communities, ask, who should be telling this story? Ensure that you are working with key creatives with the appropriate lived experience.

Open conversations. Deeply engage with creatives from a range of backgrounds and create a safe space for discussion which expresses a variety of views.

Train your leadership team. Ensure your senior team leaders learn about cultural safety, equity and inclusion, including through training for your team.

Display equity and inclusion, bullying and harassment policies. Make your equity and inclusion, bullying and sexual harassment policies available to everyone. Consider displaying posters on location, outlining your policies and nominated contact person.

Appoint a cultural safety contact person. Have someone who is the point of contact for any inclusion concerns on your production. This could be an additional duty for an existing staff member.

Create a cultural safety policy for your organisation. For some programs, a cultural safety policy may be appropriate. This should outline:

- Your company's commitment to creating an inclusive environment and meaningful

collaboration with people from under-represented communities.

- How you will identify and mitigate cultural safety issues on your productions.
- Set out a clear reporting and complaints procedure – identify who will be the first point of contact, and how the complaint will be escalated and resolved.

Embed cultural safety into existing cast and crew talks. Ensure this is in place early in your production. This includes ideas like:

- **Consider adding a note** about cultural safety to call sheets.
- **Give a five minute "tool kit talk"** to all staff about the importance of health and safety, inclusion and cultural safety. It's an opportunity to tell staff about your designated contact person, company health and safety policies and process for handling cultural safety.
- **Deliver an Acknowledgement of Country** on your production. For programs focusing on First Nations themes, content and characters, producers could also extend their engagement further by inviting a local Traditional Custodian to deliver a Welcome to Country.³

FIRST NATIONS CONTENT

When making content centred on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, producers must follow [SBS The Greater Perspective Indigenous Protocol](#) and [Supplementary Guidelines](#).



¹ This will not apply to all programs.

² AHRC, [Cultural safety and security: Tools to address lateral violence - Social Justice Report](#) (2016).

³ For more information, please see this resource from [Reconciliation Australia](#).

Off screen: Expanding your network

Hiring in our industry often relies on personal contacts and recommendations. Being limited in your network can make it hard for candidates to break into the industry and gain initial credits or work experience.

Consider and explore ways to hire outside your existing network. Each conversation and relationship you build can gradually increase access to a broader talent pool.

Get to know SBS career pathway initiative alumni.

We can introduce you to under-represented creatives who have worked on and produced their own SBS productions through our [diversity career pathway initiatives](#). Our alumni include directors, writers, producers, production managers, associate producers and more roles.

Contact your state or territory screen agency.

They can also connect you with local creatives, share roles with their networks and direct you to diversity initiatives you can join.

Seek key creatives with lived experience of subject matter. Consider authenticity of voice in development. If your story is about a specific under-represented community, consider how your key creatives are connected to and reflect this background.

Advertise roles widely. Expand your approach to access new voices, including by posting job call-outs on digital channels or social media groups for under-represented communities.

Use inclusive wording to attract diverse applicants.

When posting job call-outs, specifically encourage people from the under-represented communities to apply e.g., "We're especially looking to meet creatives from under-represented backgrounds including people who identify as culturally and linguistically diverse, First Nations, people with disability, LGBTIQ+, women and people with other lived experiences".

Reach out. Contact culturally and linguistically diverse, First Nations, disability, LGBTIQ+ and women's TV and film training organisations to meet their cohort and learn how you can work together.

Be proactive. Directly contact creatives, industry guilds and screen diversity organisations to learn more about their cohort and inclusion programs.

Share your interest in screen diversity. Speak with internal colleagues and industry contacts and ask for resources or advice.

On screen: Inclusive casting

We want to reflect the diversity of contemporary Australia on our screens, so audiences can watch programs which relate to their communities and lived experiences. Here are some ideas for expanding your pool of on-screen talent:

Connect with talent from a range of backgrounds.

Encourage your casting team to search for on-screen talent from the five identified under-represented communities.

Identify new voices. Explore community, academia or other fields as potential sources for on-screen presenters, experts or commentator roles.

Casting contributors that reflect society. When casting contributors, aim to reflect Australian population statistics. As an example, culturally and linguistically diverse people make up 39% of our population, yet are often not represented at this level on screen.

Open casting. Consider people from under-represented communities for all roles, unless they are specified for particular groups.



More information

SBS EQUITY & INCLUSION WEBSITE

For more resources and information about equity and inclusion, see our [SBS Commissioning Equity & Inclusion website](#).

ASK SBS FOR HELP

If you're not sure where to start, just reach out to your Commissioning Editor or the SBS Content Industry Diversity Manager at diversity@sbs.com.au.



