

TELEVISION CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

The following contains updates to the definitions of television programs for consideration in the AACTA Awards. Please note, all categories NOT listed below, remain unchanged and are available for review under Section 6.2 in the 2027 AACTA Awards rulebook.

Entertainment Program

A substantially non-scripted or lightly scripted Television Program whose primary creative purpose is live or studio-based entertainment through performance, comedy, personality or gameplay including comedy entertainment, variety, panel, chat, game show, and quiz formats and which does not feature a competition element sustained across a season toward a single winner or outcome.

This definition includes:

- comedy entertainment formats, including sketch, satire, topical comedy, comedy panel, personality-hosted comedy, chat and improvised comedy formats in which comedic intent is the primary driver of the program's content and structure;
- variety and light-entertainment specials; personality-led entertainment; award ceremonies, galas, and live event broadcasts; non-competition talent showcases;
- studio quiz and game shows in which contestants participate on an episodic basis, without a serialised arc across a season progressing toward a single winner or outcome; and
- stand-up comedy specials, where the standalone Best Stand-Up Special category is not presented in a given year.

This definition excludes:

- Programs eligible for Best Competition Reality Program, Best Factual Entertainment Program, Best Documentary or Factual Program, Best Narrative Comedy Series, Best Children's Program, Best Miniseries or Best Drama Series.

Factual Entertainment Program

A substantially non-scripted Television Program that documents, observes, or explores real people, places, events, or pursuits, where the primary purpose is to entertain, inform, or inspire. This category encompasses the full spectrum of non-fiction entertainment television, including lifestyle, observational, access, human-interest, travel, food, home, renovation, health, and formatted factual formats, and does not include programs with a competition element as a meaningful ongoing component of its format.

This definition includes:

- lifestyle formats pertaining to food and wine, travel, home, renovation, real estate, garden, health, wellness, and leisure programs presented for the practical benefit, aspiration, or enjoyment of the viewer;
- observational formats following real workplaces, services, institutions, or pursuits; and
- human-interest and personality-led factual formats; formatted factual and social-observational formats that document rather than construct reality.

This definition excludes:

- programs with a competition element as a meaningful ongoing component of their format, including programs in which participants compete across a season for a prize, title, or outcome (which are eligible for Best Competition Reality Program);
- programs that constitute a creative treatment of actuality including investigative, observational, historical, arts and science (which are eligible for the Best Documentary or Factual Program); and
- programs whose primary purpose is to entertain through comedy, performance, or studio gameplay rather than through the observation or documentation of real people and events (which are eligible for Best Entertainment Program).

Competition Reality Program

A substantially non-scripted Television Program in which competition is a fundamental and continuing element of the format, and in which a substantially consistent cast of participants, individually or in teams, compete throughout a season for a prize, title, recognition, or other defined outcome. Competition does not need to be the sole purpose of the program, provided it remains a central organising element of the series. Elimination mechanics are neither required nor determinative of eligibility.

This definition includes:

- talent competitions in singing, performance, cooking, design, building, sport, or skill-based formats in which a cast of participants progresses across a season toward a winner or outcome;
- survival, strategy, and social game formats with participants in a produced environment competing across a season;
- constructed social and relationship formats with a serialised participant arc progressing toward a resolution or outcome; and
- any substantially non-scripted format in which a cast is assembled for a season and competes for a prize, title, or outcome.

This definition excludes:

- studio quiz and game shows in which contestants participate on an episodic basis without a serialised seasonal arc (which are eligible for Best Entertainment Program);
- observational, lifestyle, or human-interest formats in which no competition element is present as a meaningful ongoing component (which are eligible for Best Factual Entertainment Program); and
- programs eligible for Best Documentary or Factual Program.

Documentary or Factual Program

A non-fiction Television Program (standalone feature, single episode, or series) that provides an in-depth, analytical, or journalistic exploration of real people, places, history, science, nature, or events. The primary purpose is to inform, educate, or provide an unvarnished record of reality through a creative treatment of actuality.

This definition includes:

- Investigative, historical, biographical, natural history, science, and arts programs.
- Pure observational ("fly-on-the-wall") formats where producers document events as they unfold naturally without steering the narrative.
- Standalone programs of less than 60min duration, or series consisting of two or more episodes.

This definition excludes:

- News, current affairs, sports coverage, and infotainment.
- Host-driven lifestyle, instructional, or travel/cooking programs.
- Any program falling under the Factual Entertainment definition.