

2027 AACTA AWARDS

Voting and Assessment Governance Framework

Purpose

Voting in the AACTA Awards determines which productions, performers and practitioners are honoured with Australia's highest screen accolade. This framework sets out how that judging is structured, who takes part, and the safeguards that keep every result rigorous, representative and fair.

Principles

Every AACTA Award is decided by the people best placed to judge the work. Our process rests on four commitments:

- **Expertise** - work is judged by members with the professional standing and craft accreditation relevant to the category.
- **Representativeness** - voting draws from across the screen industry: Free-to-Air Television, Streaming/SVOD/Subscription Television, Online, Film and Documentary.
- **Integrity** - conflicts of interest are declared and managed, and voting is confidential.
- **Accountability** - the process is governed by defined, published procedures, with a clear route to raise concerns.

How each category is judged

All award categories, with the exception of Short Film, are determined by accredited **Professional members** only, strengthening the experience and expertise behind every result.

- **Film and Television (Production and Acting)** - nominees and winners determined by all Professional members across two rounds.
- **Feature Documentary** - nominees and winners determined by all Professional members across two rounds.
- **Craft Awards (Film, Television and Documentary)** - determined by Professional members from the relevant Professional **Chapters**, so each craft award is judged only by members accredited in that craft. Feature and Television Documentary craft shortlists are combined for assessment.
- **Hair and Makeup** and **Music** - Television and Film candidates are combined and determined by the relevant Chapter(s) in a single round.

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We would like to acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. Always was, always will be.

- **VFX or Animation** - determined in a single round by accredited members of the relevant Chapter, alongside invited members of the Visual Effects Society (VES), who participate by expression of interest.
- **Best Online Drama or Comedy** - nominations and winner determined by a dedicated **jury**, recognising the online space as a distinct and fast-growing creative discipline.
- **Short Film** - a **Pre-Selection Committee** shortlists the field, after which the category opens to the broader membership. Professional, General and Youth members all determine the nominees (Round 1) and the winner (Round 2).
- **Short Film vote weighting.** Short Film is the only category open to members across accreditation tiers, so votes in this category are weighted to reflect accreditation. A Professional member's vote carries full weight (100%); a General member's vote is weighted at 50%; and a Youth member's vote at 25%. This keeps professional expertise at the centre of the result while genuinely welcoming the broader membership into the category.

Assessment panels and juries

Two categories are assessed through a convened panel: the Short Film **Pre-Selection Committee** and the Best Online Drama or Comedy **jury**. The following applies to both.

Composition. Panels comprise experienced screen practitioners and industry professionals with demonstrated standing in the relevant field. The majority are practitioners with significant experience in the discipline under consideration, complemented by members who bring broader industry knowledge and emerging-practitioner perspectives. Panellists are accredited AACTA members and/or specialists invited for their recognised expertise in the relevant area.

Size. Each panel comprises a panel of 6 - 8 members, constituted to provide a balance of expertise and perspective appropriate to the category.

Selection criteria. Panellists are selected for demonstrated professional experience and credibility in the relevant discipline, and for their capacity to assess work impartially against the awards criteria.

Eligibility. To be eligible for appointment, a panellist must hold current AACTA Professional membership or equivalent recognised professional standing in the screen industry, and meet at least one of the following:

- a demonstrated professional record in the relevant discipline, evidenced by significant screen credits or 5 or more years of industry experience;
- recognition such as a prior AACTA nomination or award, or comparable festival or industry recognition;
- In addition, for the Short Film Pre-Selection Committee, demonstrated expertise in short-form filmmaking including, but not limited to, the writing, direction and production of short films; craft and post-production practice in short-form work; short film festival programming and curation; screen education and academic scholarship in film or screen

practice; and the development, funding or delivery of short-film initiatives extending to practitioners with a substantial recognised body of short-film work.

- In addition, for the Best Online Drama or Comedy jury, demonstrated expertise in online or digital screen content including, but not limited to, writing and creation; direction and production; performance and comedic talent; editing and post-production craft; and the commissioning, development or programming of online and digital content.

Panellists are additionally selected so that each panel, collectively, reflects a balance of experience, background and perspective appropriate to the category.

Obligations of appointment. Before voting, panellists must view all entries allocated to them, assess those entries against the assessment criteria, and declare any conflicts of interest. Panellists observe confidentiality as a condition of appointment.

Awards criteria. Entries are assessed on their merit as screen works. Across all categories, assessors consider:

- **Originality and creative vision** — the ambition, distinctiveness and creative intent of the work.
- **Storytelling and execution** — the effectiveness of the narrative, concept or subject in achieving its aims.
- **Craft and technical achievement** — the quality of execution in the relevant disciplines; in the Craft Awards, the specific craft under consideration is the primary basis of assessment.
- **Overall achievement** — the work's success as a complete screen production relative to its ambition.

Work is judged on merit alone, without regard to budget, production scale, distribution platform or commercial performance.

Appointment. Panellists are appointed by the AACTA Awards Department, under the oversight of the Awards and Industry Development Manager. Membership is drawn from two sources: direct invitation, and an open **Expression of Interest (EOI)** process through which members may put themselves forward. All candidates are assessed against the selection criteria before appointment.

Tenure and refresh. Panel composition is reviewed and refreshed each awards cycle. To support fresh perspective and guard against entrenchment, no individual is entitled to ongoing membership by default, and continuous service is limited to 2 consecutive years except where continuity is specifically required.

Conflicts of interest

Declaration. All panellists and jurors are required to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest before assessment begins including where they have worked on a submission, hold a credit or commercial interest in it, or have a close personal or professional relationship with those involved.

Determination. The AACTA Awards Department, together with the relevant panel or jury chair, determines what constitutes a conflict in each case.

Recusal. A member with a declared conflict does not take part in the discussion of, or vote on, the affected submission.

Checks. AACTA carries out checks to identify any undeclared conflicts of interest to the best of its ability from the information available to AACTA.

Independence, confidentiality and scrutiny

Voting is conducted by secret ballot, and panel and jury deliberations are confidential. Panellists commit to confidentiality as a condition of appointment.

Voting is administered by the AACTA Awards Department, and results are verified before release by AACTA's independent invigilator, PKF. The AACTA Awards Department is responsible for the consistent application of this framework and for resolving questions of eligibility, procedure and conduct.

Questions, expressions of interest and review

Express interest or ask a question. To express interest in joining the Short Film Pre-Selection Committee or the Best Online Drama or Comedy jury, or for any question about voting, email the AACTA Awards Department at awards@afi.org.au.

Raising a procedural concern. An entrant who wishes to raise a concern about the conduct of the assessment process may do so in writing to the AACTA Awards Department. Concerns relating to eligibility or procedure are considered by the AACTA Awards Committee.

Membership and accreditation. Ahead of voting, please ensure your accreditation is current. For membership queries, contact AACTA Memberships at membership@afi.org.au.