



## Development of a documentary idea for ABC TV

### Development for Documentaries

1. Idea (newspapers/ books/ chance meetings/ issue)
2. What's the story you want to tell?
3. How do you want to tell it? What story telling devices will you use? E.g.:
  1. Following characters as the story happens?
  2. Using a presenter?
  3. Using recreations to tell us what happened in the past?
  4. Using archive?
  5. Using interview?
  6. Develop the timeline of your documentary
  7. Where and when does the story start and finish?
  8. How long will it take to shoot your documentary?
  9. How long will it take to tell your story on screen? What duration would the documentary be?
4. Negotiate access to interview subjects. Make sure your participants are willing to be filmed.
5. Write a 2-3page outline or treatment of your film to show to potential investors. How will the story unfold over the course of your film? How might the story end? Why will audiences be interested in this programme?

A useful reference for writing outlines and treatments can be found here  
[http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/documents/SA\\_publications/IG/WhatisaSynopsis.pdf](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/documents/SA_publications/IG/WhatisaSynopsis.pdf)
6. You might shoot a character or 'sizzle' reel to show people the characters and story you want to follow.

### Pre –Commissioning

1. Negotiate who will be the 'key creatives' on the film e.g. director, writer, editor
2. Scripting as necessary
3. Prepare schedule. Plan when you will shoot your film and what resources you will need to do it.
4. Prepare budget
5. Prepare finance plan that shows who the investors in your programme will be.
6. Secure finance partners and raise finance

### Commissioning

If a broadcaster agrees to help finance your film, they will 'commission' the film and pay a licence fee to broadcast the programme on various platforms (such as ABC1 or ABC2, Iview, a program website).

### Pre Production

1. Find cast if necessary
2. Recruit production crew
3. Get release forms signed from your participants
4. Title check

## **Production**

1. Location filming as necessary.
2. Make sure you take excellent stills photographs that can be used for publicity.
3. Remember to pay extra attention to the sound recordings on all filming.

## **Post Production**

1. Digitise and Log rushes.  
All your footage will need to be digitised so it can be edited. You'll need to 'log' the rushes. This means writing down what happens in the footage, with the right time code, so it can be easily found again.
2. Write shot lists that will make up 'sequences' in your film that help tell the story.
3. Find the useful lines of 'sync' that help tell your story. 'Sync' is what we call the words said on camera by the participants in the programme.
4. Editing pictures
5. Editing and mixing sound
6. Adding Graphics
7. Adding music (you will need to secure the rights to use any music)
8. Legal checks and rights clearances
9. Record narration
10. Colour grading
11. Show to broadcasters for editorial feedback at 'rough cut' and 'fine cut'
12. Show final version to contributors
13. 'Reversion' according to finance partners needs (e.g. overseas broadcasters often have different duration requirements).

## **Transmission**

1. Marketing and publicity
2. Trails/ Posters/ Press
3. Transmission

For the latest ABC TV Documentaries please visit us at: <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/documentaries/>

You can find out more about how ABC TV Documentaries works with Independent Producers here: [http://www.abc.net.au/tv/independent/factualdocumentary\\_about.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/tv/independent/factualdocumentary_about.htm)