

Image: Backtrack Boys Screening

# SCREENING GUIDE

This guide is a great reference to help you plan, promote, and keep track when organising your event.

Allow four to six weeks to plan your screening, depending on how big the event is and your availability as the organiser.

## Before the screening event

**Brainstorm**

- [ ] As a first step, think about why you want to host your event and what you hope to achieve by sharing the documentary with your audience.

- [ ] Based on the above, write down your top three goals for your screening event. This will help keep you focused on what you need to do, who you need to invite and why.

- [ ] What do you want your audience to do when the lights come up after the documentary? Prepare a clear "call to action" to ask your audience to take at the screening. For example - donate, sign a petition, contact a decision maker or share a message on social media.

- [ ] Identify and reach out to potential partners and sponsors to collaborate with - they may offer you help with providing a venue, catering, event promotion etc in exchange for a thank you or displaying their branding/logo at your event, for example.

**Decide on your audience and develop a plan to reach them**

- [ ] Clearly identify your target audience i.e. the people who should attend your screening in order to best achieve your goals.

- [ ] Identify who and how many people you want to invite, how best to reach them and what time would best suit them to attend. Is your audience more likely to attend a weekday or a weekend screening? During or after work, during the day or at night? During school holidays or during term?

- [ ] Research local organisations and individuals that can help with the promotion, volunteering and spreading the word (keep a database).

- [ ] Create personalised invites for your invitees and invite them or ask to share the details of your screening with their communities, partners and networks.
    - Use our audience invitation template

- [ ] Set up your RSVP management. Consider using website platforms such as Eventbrite or Humanitix for attendee registration or ticket sales. This will help you gauge how many people plan on attending before the event. Online ticketing platforms also provide an easy way to send follow-up communications and calls-to-action.

- [ ] Consider whether you want to use your event as a fundraising opportunity. Check with the film team if you can fundraise first. Then think about a worthwhile cause your audience will be happy to support. You can also recoup costs or fundraise by selling food and drinks or holding a raffle. You can also ask for donations on the night, or follow up with attendees who've provided permission to be contacted.

- [ ] Prepare your promotional materials four to six weeks before your event.
    - Use digital promo kit template to get started

**Find a venue**

Film screenings are best held in dark environments. It's a plus if there is already a digital projector/screen and a good set of speakers available at the venue. A local cinema, hall, school, community centre or library are all great options! Consider the following:

- Capacity: Is the venue large enough to fit your audience?
- Audio-visual facilities: Does the venue have the appropriate screening equipment? Do you have access to microphones, if needed for speakers, introductions and Q&As?
- Accessibility: Is the building wheelchair accessible, and easily reached by public transport? Do you require any access support, such as an Auslan interpreter?
- Amenities: Are there appropriate toilets and facilities available on site?
- Catering: Will food/catering be provided?

- [ ] Book the venue and confirm the date and time.
    - Make sure you allocate enough time for setting up, introductions, discussions, guest speakers, wrap ups and pack down.
    - Use run sheet guide

- [ ] Check the venue has the required AV set-up. If not, you will need to organise AV externally.
    - Use tech check guide

- [ ] Film file: Make sure you find out what type of film file is required for your AV set-up at the venue - is it a DCP or MP4 file? Test that the film plays correctly at your tech check (see above).

**Guest speakers**

Plan to incorporate a discussion or panel after the documentary screening to reinforce key messages and spark a dialogue about the key issues. This could include a moderated Q&A panel, a guest speaker or a facilitated audience Q&A.

- [ ] Invite key people to speak at the event, confirm those available and arrange a time to brief them before the event.
  - Include local leaders representing some of the film's themes.

- [ ] Invite a local Elder or emerging Elder to do a Welcome or Acknowledgement to Country. You can find the appropriate contacts and groups on https://www.indigenous.gov.au/.

- [ ] Prepare a brief for the panel or speaker and/or discussion questions.
  - Use guide to panels discussions and guest speakers

# Promote your screening

- [ ] Send out invitations via email, social media etc., to everyone you have been in touch with and the broader community. Ask family, friends and colleagues to forward the invitation to their networks. Contact local groups and organisations and ask them to forward the invitation to their own mailing lists.
  - Use invitation template

- [ ] Plan a calendar of social media posts to build excitement and invite others in your network to share on their channels.
  - Use digital promo kit template

- [ ] Share promotional materials with speakers, partners and organisations and ask them to help send invitations to their networks.
  - Use invitation template

- [ ] Send out media releases to let your local newspaper, radio station and news outlets know that you will be hosting a screening - they might be able to help you promote the event. Otherwise they may be able to attend the event and cover it as a local news story. Remind journalists the morning before your event.
  - Use media release template

- [ ] Print and distribute posters and flyers with details of your screening, print them out and put them up in strategic areas.

- [ ] Send a reminder email or message a week before and a day before the event to everyone you've invited.

- [ ] Create holding slides and resources to support and reinforce your key messages and call to actions at the event.
  - Use holding slide template

# On the day

- [ ] Create an event runsheet to ensure that your event runs smoothly on the day. Refer to it through the day for what needs to happen when.
  - Use runsheet template
- [ ] Do a tech check – to ensure the sound, vision, and microphones at the venue are working correctly.
  - Use tech check guide
- [ ] Set up seating and tables.
- [ ] Set up a registration table with a signup sheet, name tags, and surveys or other relevant information. Make sure you have someone at the entrance to check names against registration.
- [ ] Set up your holding slide on the venue's screen.
  - Use holding slide template
- [ ] Gather your speakers and brief them on the event proceedings and microphone usage etc.

# During the screening event

- [ ] Take photos and/or film the panel (get permission first!)
- [ ] Collect vox pops and anecdotal audience insights.
- [ ] Remind people to take the decided action at the end e.g., donate, sign a petition etc.
- [ ] Encourage attendees to complete the survey
  - Use our audience engagement survey template

# After the screening

- [ ] Thank your guests
  We recommend thanking your guests, speakers and/or partners for attending via email within a week of the event.
  - Use our audience follow up template
- [ ] Sharing your success
  It's great to share photos from the event through a social media post. You can even share audience testimonials captured in writing or on video. You can also share any impactful outcomes of the event, and audience calls to action.
- [ ] Calls to action
  It's important to remind your audience how they can get involved and direct them to take action via the film's website, or via a local initiative. As motivated as people are at a screening, they

often need a prompt or two to get active in the weeks after! Follow up with an email, link to your survey  and links to take action.

- [ ] Email the film team and Documentary Australia with a summary of your screening and photos.

## A note about complying with your screening licence

Under copyright law, you must seek permission and obtain a screening licence from the film team or distributor to show films publicly. Hosting a film screening without the required screening licence is illegal.

After purchasing a licence, you will be provided with a licensed version of the film for your event. However, it is important to note that this is permitted for the agreed use only, and that film files must be deleted following the licensed screening to avoid breaching anti-piracy laws. If you wish to screen the film again, you will need to contact the film team to negotiate additional screening licences, with associated fees payable according to audience size and use.

For more information on screening licences, read our FAQs