

ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

FILMMAKER & AUDIENCE INSIGHTS



JULY 2026

MICRO REPORT

YOUNG VOICES, PERSPECTIVES, AND LIVED EXPERIENCES

Adopting a participatory approach, Documentary Australia is collaborating with young people aged 18-30 to co-create our new youth engagement program, due to launch in 2027.

In July, we ran our first online focus group with six young people from around Australia. Through discussion, participants identified the key barriers for young people to both create and watch documentaries, as well as possible solutions.

Gathering initial input from young people is a crucial first step to developing concrete program activities that meet their needs; implementing feedback is essential to making this program truly meaningful. If you are a young person and have ideas or feedback, or would like to be a part of shaping this new initiative from the ground up, please email youth@documentaryaustralia.com.au

WE ASKED:

What do young filmmakers bring to the sector?

Anger
Challenge
Diversity
Enthusiasm
Fear
Hunger
Impact
Perspective
Risk

What does the future for young filmmakers in three years look like?

Anti-AI
Hopeful
Online
Rebellion
Surrounded
Uncertain
YouTube

What things do young people prioritise?

Defining Themselves
Enjoyment
Equity
Finding Community
Justice
Nuance
Positioning Themselves
Redefining Australia
Social Media Presence

What issues do young people care about?

AI
Cost Of Living
Environment
Gender
Human Life
Identity
Inclusion

“Having your voice be heard is a really big part of this.”

– Focus Group Participant

4 MAIN BARRIERS

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE CREATING DOCUMENTARIES



NETWORKING & PAID MENTORSHIP

There is a lack of opportunity to connect meaningfully with industry peers and experienced mentors.

REPRESENTATION

Young people are infrequently included in leadership or decision-making roles, on boards and as part of governing bodies.

KNOWLEDGE & OPPORTUNITY

There is a lack of consolidated information around resources, knowledge, opportunities and support available to emerging filmmakers.

FUNDING

There are financial barriers to creating a documentary and the current approach to support is unimaginative and limited.

“There’s a lack of imagination in terms of support for young filmmakers.”

– Focus Group Participant

5 MAIN BARRIERS

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WATCHING DOCUMENTARIES



LIMITED EXPOSURE FOR NICHE CONTENT & DOCUMENTARY

It is hard to find and access non-mainstream content or documentaries. Despite the multitude of platforms there is a desire for more curation.

DIGITAL FATIGUE & OPTION OVERWHELM

A constant rotation of content across platforms has made it hard for young people to pay attention and/or disconnect.

MISCONCEPTIONS OF DOCUMENTARY

There is limited awareness of what a documentary can be, and resistance to consistently “heavy” content such as true crime.

COST OF LIVING

There are financial barriers to young people accessing content, including streaming services and attending in-person screening events.

GLOBAL OVERWHELM

Despite wanting to be informed, global overwhelm makes it hard to engage with traumatic content, especially at home or on one’s own.

“It’s finding a third space I can go to that isn’t my couch, to really engage with something, and then be able to step away.”

– Focus Group Participant

WHAT WOULD HELP?

ACCORDING TO YOUNG FILMMAKERS...

1. Networking and mentorship opportunities with both peers and mentors, including paid mentorship
2. Increased general knowledge and awareness through learning opportunities
3. Consolidated information, resources and opportunities in one place
4. Sector representation, including on boards, at all levels of the industry
5. Assistance to reach audiences and gain exposure

“To have representation, you need to create spaces to form introductions.”

– Focus Group Participant

“Screening opportunities support young filmmakers and audiences at the same time, creating space for community.”

– Focus Group Participant

ACCORDING TO YOUNG AUDIENCES...

1. In-person screenings and collective viewing opportunities
2. Thoughtfully curated content, outside of the mainstream
3. Collaborations, physical media and grassroots marketing
4. Tapping into pre-existing communities to reach audiences
5. Opportunities for social connection and community building

“People are hungry for curation, social screenings, and the forced attention of the cinema, away from other screens.”

– Focus Group Participant



We would like to thank
everyone who participated
and shared their invaluable
insights with us.

**WANT TO LEARN MORE,
SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS
OR GET INVOLVED?**

YOUTH@DOCUMENTARYAUSTRALIA.COM.AU