

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

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NSW Local Government Filming Protocol

June 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

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Foreword

The film industry in Australia has a long and distinguished history. Australia was one of the first countries to produce high quality local and international productions. NSW is now at the forefront of the Australian feature film and television drama production industry.

The NSW Government is supportive of the screen industry in all its forms. A strong local screen sector attracts investors, creates jobs, stimulates growth in the economy and maintains NSW as the leading destination for screen production in Australia.

The *NSW Screen and Digital Games Industries Act 2025* (SDG Act) sets out principles for assisting the screen and digital games industries. These principles apply when decisions are made in relation to screen or digital games production including under the SDG Act or another Act. Under the SDG Act, a decision-maker may be a Minister, the head of a government sector agency, or a local council. The decision-maker must ensure the following principles are complied with in making the decision:

- Applications for access to locations, services and approvals for screen or digital games production must be decided within timeframes provided in either a policy published by the decision-maker making the decision, or the applicable filming protocol.
- If a timeframe for deciding the application is not provided in a policy or protocol, then the decision must be made within a reasonable timeframe.
- Access to locations and services for screen or digital games production must be supported whenever practicable, considering public amenity, safety, security and other operational requirements.
- Fees for access to locations, services from government sector agencies or other approvals for screen or digital games production must be kept to a minimum and reflect only the cost of the access, service or approval being provided.

In addition to these provisions, the SDG Act creates a scheme for local councils to be recognised as screen production friendly. Described in the SDG Act as screen production friendly ‘accreditation’, this scheme will be guided by criteria and guidelines (to be developed). The SDG Act specifies that there will be a register of screen production friendly local councils, production spaces and locations that are accessible for screen production.

As well as local councils, NSW Government agencies and authorities are obliged to support screen production, as set out in the *Premier’s Memorandum M2021-06 Making NSW Film Friendly*. The memorandum directs government agencies and state authorities to facilitate filming by adopting policies aligned with those for local government authorities determined by this Protocol.

Status and Scope

This Local Government Filming Protocol (Protocol) is issued under section 119D of the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act). It provides information and guidelines for making and determining applications for approval to conduct filming for the purposes of and as required under Chapter 7, Division 4 of the LG Act.

The key elements of the Protocol are:

1. Under the provisions for filming approvals in the LG Act, councils must grant an application for filming unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. Councils are also required to give filmmakers a timely written response.
2. There is a presumption that filming activities are allowed on public land. However, filming on public land is always subject to conditions and exclusions in the applicable plan of management, which govern the use and management of that land. Councils are required to have a plan of management for community land as prescribed under LG Act and may have plans of management under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and *Crown Land Management Act 2016* (see section [Relevant Legislation](#)).
3. Council fees and charges associated with location filming must be reasonable and cost-reflective and should be included in council's annual Operational Plan and Revenue Policy. Fees and charges listed in the Protocol are the maximum that can be charged and increase with Consumer Price Index (CPI) each year.
4. The Protocol recognises that location filming requires a balance between the interests of the local community – both residents and businesses – and the screen industry's requirements. The Protocol refers filmmakers, councils and the general public to codes of conduct for filmmakers, including matters such as safety.

The Protocol also acknowledges that local councils have a strong track record of successful collaborations with private sector partners. These collaborations can enhance public facilities for residents and visitors, stimulate economic development, and encourage events in a council's area.

The Protocol has been prepared in consultation with local councils, government agencies and the screen industry. It replaces the NSW Local Government Filming Protocol 2009.

The Office of Local Government (OLG) acknowledges that not every situation or issue that arises with filming projects can be addressed in one Protocol. Specific guidance and advice, where application of the Protocol is unclear, can be provided by Screen NSW.

Filming means recording images (whether on film or video tape or electronically or by other means) for exhibition or broadcast (such as by cinema, television or the Internet or by other means) and includes such acts or things as may be prescribed by the regulations as being filming, but does not include:

- Still photography, or
- Video recording of a wedding ceremony or other private celebration or event principally for the purpose of making a record for the participants in the ceremony, celebration or event, or
- Recording for the immediate purposes of a television program that provides information by way of current affairs or daily news, or
- Any act or thing prescribed by the regulations as not being filming.

Legal Framework

The *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act) provides the legal framework for how councils manage screen and film-related applications for approvals. Chapter 7, Part 1, Division 4, of the LG Act outlines the regulatory function councils perform in relation to filming applications and activities. Sections 119B (2) and 119C (2) specifically require councils to adhere to the Local Government Filming Protocol. It is binding on both councils and filmmakers.

Under the LG Act, a council can seek the approval of the OLG Departmental Chief Executive to adopt its own filming protocol, but it will only be approved if it is found to be comparable to this issued Protocol.

Information for local councils

Overview

Councils have a key role to play in managing filmmaking due to their ownership or management of public land, their regulatory responsibilities and the facilities and services they can provide.

Councils' roles include the management of parking, traffic regulation and the use of council-managed land.

Councils need to respond to enquiries from the film industry in relation to the use of public spaces for which they have regulatory responsibility. Councils also need to provide any information on permits, applications, licences, or leases that may need to be included when submitting a filming proposal.

Within the context of a presumption of approval, councils also have a role in maintaining a balance between community interests and economic development, as well as environmental, cultural and heritage protection.

Filmmaking and the benefits of council collaboration

Every film made in NSW enhances future opportunities by increasing screen production capacity, creating jobs, showcasing local skills, and attracting investment in infrastructure. This keeps our state competitive and benefits entire regions through employment, training, trade, and the supply of goods and services.

Screen industries work in everyday locations such as buildings, streets, and landscapes where stories unfold. No studio set can replicate a harbour vista, a stunning beach, or a vibrant street. Filmmakers bring their workplace to diverse locations, involving people, vehicles, equipment, and facilities.

Effective filmmaking relies on collaboration between the crew and the community, including local residents, councils, businesses, police, and government agencies. This protocol aims to foster understanding of what is best practice for councils and filmmakers alike, to recommend efficient and effective timeframes for approvals, to simplify procedures, and build strong working relationships for the benefit of local councils and NSW as a whole.

Point of contact – the Film Contact Officer

Councils are encouraged to appoint a Film Contact Officer (FCO) to help filmmakers obtain the required approvals, support, and access to council services. A single point of contact within council will assist applicants to obtain permission for filming. As filming projects may occur after-hours and on weekends, councils are encouraged to provide an approved filmmaker with an after-hours contact within council.

Councils can determine who the FCO contact (or team) in council should be. The role does not require the creation of a new, dedicated position and it does not need to be a person with film experience (although it is open to councils to designate who they wish to fill the role). The FCO will need to coordinate with different departments of council to approve and manage filming.

Screen NSW can offer ongoing support to FCOs and work with councils to develop processes to streamline and simplify filming applications and approvals. Councils are encouraged to provide their FCO contact details to Screen NSW and update them as required. Screen NSW will then be able to alert councils to new or updated guidelines, tools, and resources. The Production Attraction Team at Screen NSW can help with any queries. The team can be contacted by email at attraction@screen.nsw.gov.au.

Filming impact categories

Filming operates in a range of scale and complexity when ‘on location’. Table 1 below sets out filming impact categories to provide guidance for filmmakers in making a filming application and for councils in assessing applications. While filmmakers should give councils a clear indication of the filming impact category that they believe will apply to their filming activity, discussion with the council may be needed and before a council determines the category within which it will assess an application.

Most filming applications received by councils are for lower budget, short duration location filming, such as television commercials, which are typically agile in decision-making and are time constrained. These types of production will most often fall into ‘low’ or ‘medium’ impact categories. The recommended timeframes in this Protocol seek to balance the requirements of this sector of the industry for timely decisions with the workload for councils.

Larger television commercials, television series, and feature films typically have longer location filming duration and greater complexity, requiring longer application processing times for councils. These filming activities will most often fall into the ‘high’ impact category. In addition, if an application involves road occupancy, it will most often fall into the high impact category.

The 'no impact' category accommodates filming that effectively has no 'out of the ordinary' impact on residents and/or commercial activity within a local government area. Typically, this may include filming activity such as real estate filming, reality television, and background photography for visual effects 'plate shots'. In impact, these filming activities have a negligible footprint, similar to news crew filming.

Filmmakers must be aware that should a filming activity require any form of approval from a council or government authority, it may require assessment as at least low impact and will be subject to an application and assessment. In certain instances, an approval may be obtained separately to an application process under this Protocol. Examples of such approvals would include:

1. Any application that includes using weapons, explosives or other special effects, and if excessive noise is to be generated, but otherwise meets the no impact provisions, will need to be considered as low, medium or high impact.
2. If a permit or approval for use of crown or community land is required, the filming project will be assessed at a minimum as low impact.

Table 1 - Filming impact categories

Filming elements	No impact	Low impact	Medium impact	High impact
Cast and crew	6 or less total crew and cast	7 to 25 total crew and cast	26 to 50 total crew and cast	More than 50 total crew and cast
Vehicles	No disruption is caused to the council's community stakeholders, retailers or motorists or events in the vicinity of the activities	No more than 4 trucks/vans	No more than 10 trucks	More than 10 trucks
Vehicle parking	Vehicles associated with the activities are legally parked at all times and are not driven onto footways, parks or plaza areas	Small or no unit base required	Unit base required	Large unit base required
Locations	Not applicable	Usually, 1 or 2 locations	No more than 4 locations	More than 4 locations
Equipment: Risk management, public safety and Work Health and Safety (WHS)	Public safety is maintained at the locations at all times during the activities Should any specific filming activity require an approval it	Minimal equipment and lighting	Equipment used (Examples include dollies, trucks, medium-sized cranes, jibs)	Extensive equipment

Filming elements	No impact	Low impact	Medium impact	High impact
	<p>must be assessed as 'low impact'</p> <p>Filmmaker responsible for assessing risk and seeking own legal advice on need for public liability insurance</p>			
Construction	No construction - activities are restricted to footways or public open space areas only	No construction	Some construction	Significant construction

Filming Proposals and application form

The act of filming does not of itself require an approval by councils, nor is it subject to fees. What may require approval, and attract fees, are activities associated with filming where approval is required under legislated or regulatory authority or services are provided to the filmmaker.

The LG Act requires a filming proposal to be made in the approved form. Councils may develop an application form to suit their requirements and functionality, however, this form must comply with the minimum requirements below (see Appendix C: Model Application Form).

Acknowledgement of application and notification of fees

Section 117 of the LG Act states that:

1. The council must within 2 days after the day on which a filming proposal is lodged with it:
 - a. give written acknowledgment of its receipt to the person who lodged the proposal, unless the council rejects the application under subsection (2), and
 - b. if a fee payable for any application made in the proposal has not been determined or paid, advise the person what that fee is.
2. The council may reject an application made in a filming proposal if the application is not clear as to the approval sought or if it is not easily legible.

The LG Act further provides that the applicant must be informed in writing of an unsuccessful application within 3 business days of the decision being made, giving the reasons for its determination.

Timely and effective government responsiveness to filming activity acknowledges the significant economic and social value of the screen industry to NSW. In addition to the requirement of the LG Act that councils acknowledge receipt of filming applications within 2 business days, this Protocol recommends ideal application assessment and notification timeframes.

Table 2 - Filming application processes by impact categories

Application and impacts	No impact	Low, medium and high impact
Application and notification	<p>No application or permit required (unless the land is Crown land or certain council-controlled community land, in which case it may be low-impact, and an application or prior notification may be required – check with council prior)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notification to relevant council/state authorities is recommended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application required Public liability insurance required Notification to relevant Police Area Command, Police District, council and NSW Government authorities required
Council acknowledgement of application (required under legislation)	Not applicable if no approvals required	Councils to acknowledge receipt within 2 business days of submission, preferably by automated email acknowledgement of receipt at submission
Council rejection of application	Not applicable	A council may reject an application made in a filming proposal if the application is not clear as to the approval sought or if it is not easily legible
Council refusal of application	Not applicable	Councils are required by the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> to advise an applicant of refusal of an application in writing within 3 business days of the determination to refuse the application with details of the reason for refusal
Reasons for refusal	Not applicable	Public amenity, safety, security or other operational requirements

Table 3 below sets out the recommended timeframe from the date of submission of an application for a council to advise an applicant of approval of an application, and of fees that may apply to the approval.

Table 3 – Best practice approval timeframes

Application and impacts	No impact	Low impact	Medium impact	High impact
Council best-practice approval timeframes	Not applicable	5 business days	7 business days	15 business days <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notification to include activity that involves actual filming or associated activity that may impact road users, requiring approval.• Prior consultation with council is mandatory and additional fees may apply for traffic guidance schemes (TGS) or traffic management plans (TMP).

Fees and charges

Legislation underpinning the Filming Protocol includes ‘provisions for determining fees for an application and fees and charges for services related to an application, made in a filming proposal’¹. Fees associated with filming projects must be set in a transparent manner and on a cost-reflective basis.

The Maximum Fee Schedule for film applications is set out in table 4 below. The schedule has been updated to reflect costs associated for council assessing film applications. This Maximum Fee Schedule will be updated annually in-line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) ([Appendix B: Fee Schedule – Adjustment](#))

Section 116 of the LG Act specifies that filming proposals must be accompanied by the fee payable for each application made. Fees charged for applications cannot exceed the maximum amount noted in the fee schedule, below. Councils may choose to impose lower fees or no fees at all.

Councils can apply additional cost-reflective charges in circumstances such as:

- when ‘exclusive use’ of a public location is required
- to recover revenue lost when metered parking areas are needed by filmmakers
- to recover costs for services provided by the council
- for hiring council facilities.

¹ Section 119(D)(2)(d) of the *Local Government Act 1993*

Any fees charged must be no more than what the general public would pay. Higher fees may not be charged for a location that a council believes is subject to frequent filming. Charging different application fees for filming in a ‘peak season’ or an ‘off peak season’ is also not permitted.

Additionally, a bond may be reasonable and necessary in certain cases. (For example, if there is a risk of damage or the need for a clean-up where additional costs may apply).

Councils must publish the interest rate they will apply to bonds for specific sites and specific usage. Bonds should be repaid or released as soon as practicable after the completion of filming and site clean-up, preferably by electronic transfer.

Council filming application and traffic management plan fees are non-refundable when a filmmaker decides not to proceed with an application. However, councils can elect to refund the fees if filming does not proceed. Barricading assessment fees are non-refundable.

Parking fees applicable to metered or timed parking areas are refundable if filming does not take place and parking spaces are not used or barricaded.

Maximum fees and charges

This Protocol addresses concerns of councils that there is adequate cost-recovery in assessing filming applications and, where required, managing aspects of filming activity. The Protocol recommends that councils apply a non-refundable Application Assessment Fee and an Approved Filming Application Fee that reflects costs across the three filming categories.

Where a council is asked to assess an application submitted in less than the recommended minimum application assessment timeframe for each of the impact categories: Low Impact (5 days), Medium Impact (7 days) and High Impact (15 days) councils may apply an optional additional assessment fee, at a rate of 250% the usual maximum filming permit fee for each category.

Councils are not obliged to process late filming applications, but should they choose to, the additional fee compensates the required prioritisation.

Table 4 - Maximum fees and charges

Fees	No impact	Low impact	Medium impact	High impact
Application assessment fee	No fee	Maximum fee: \$100 (payable at application and non-refundable)	Maximum fee: \$100 (payable at application and non-refundable)	Maximum fee: \$100 (payable at application and non-refundable)

Fees	No impact	Low impact	Medium impact	High impact
Number of locations per application	Unlimited number of locations	Up to 2 locations	Up to 2 locations	Up to 2 locations
Payment method	Not applicable	As per a council's approved payment method	As per a council's approved payment method	As per a council's approved payment method
Additional maximum application processing fees – on approval	Not applicable	\$180	\$385	\$670
Late application maximum assessment fee – for assessment of an application submitted within the recommended minimum assessment period	Not applicable	\$450	\$963	\$1675

Fees for processing Traffic Management Plans

Fees for assessing/processing traffic management plans (TMP) and traffic guidance schemes (TGS) apply as per councils published fee structure applicable to any other user. Council is only permitted to charge for barricading/parking of metered or timed parking zones. No charge is permitted for unrestricted parking spaces.

Table 5 - Traffic Management Plan (TMP) assessment – maximum fees per TMP in each impact category

Low impact	Medium impact	High impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop/go traffic control - local or council-managed road Police consultation if required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop/go traffic control - multi-lane or state road Police consultation if required Transport for NSW consultation if required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road closures Police consultation if required Transport for NSW consultation if required
\$140	\$400	As per council's standard road closure fees

Presumption of approval

Councils must not unreasonably withhold the approval of a filming application and are expected to provide filmmakers with any necessary approvals unless exceptional circumstances arise or where council is required to refuse the application under legislation. The presumption of approval recognises the benefits the film industry provides to NSW and local communities, supporting NSW as a screen ready, world-class production destination.

Filming activities are allowed on community land even if a council's management plan does not specifically mention filming. Councils that have a filming exclusion in their Local Environment Plans (LEPs) due to having approved the previous Standard Instrument LEP will need to amend their LEP to allow filming to take place in certain zones.

It is also important to note that councils have no editorial function, provided the filmmakers are complying with the law. They do not have the authority to withhold approval based on content.

Review of application refusal, conditional approval or fees and charges

Applicants whose filming proposal has been refused or who are dissatisfied with conditions placed on an approval, or with fees and charges, are encouraged in the first instance to speak with the council or relevant approving authority or other relevant Government agency where it is the landowner. An applicant may also seek advice and potential mediation through the Production Attraction Team at Screen NSW.

If a resolution is not reached through these means, Section 100 of the LG Act sets out the process and conditions under which an applicant may request a review of a council determination of an application. This includes the following conditions:

1. The request for a review must be made within 28 days after the date of the determination.
2. An approved fee must, if required by the council, be paid in connection with a request for a review.
3. As a consequence of its review a council may either confirm or change the determination.
4. The decision whether or not to review the determination must not be made by the person who made the determination.
5. If the council reviews the determination, the review must be made by the council or another delegate of the council who is not subordinate to the delegate who made the determination, or if the council made the determination — the council.

6. The council must give notice of the result of the review to the applicant as soon as practicable after the review.
7. If the council or its delegate changes a determination, the changed determination replaces the earlier determination as from the date of the review.
8. A determination on a review may not be further reviewed.

Parking and road rules

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) has developed detailed guidelines for Road Occupancy Licensing, including recommendations of good practice to councils and the screen industry for managing film related road closures and parking of vehicles on road and road related areas associated with filming. The Sydney Metropolitan Filming Guidelines include a process flow and checklist of the approvals that may be required, depending on the proposed filming or parking activity.

In New South Wales there is a hierarchy of roads ranging from major interstate and regional transport routes to roads carrying only local traffic. TfNSW is responsible for managing State Roads, and local government (councils) are responsible for managing with TfNSW Regional and Local Roads.

Approval for lane or total closures of State Roads is a matter for TfNSW. However, separate council and police approvals for any major film industry activity or special event is mandatory, as councils and police have broader responsibilities to the community to consider environment, crowd and safety, business, and other community impacts.

TfNSW would involve councils and the police in consideration of any significant road closures. Approval for lane or total closures of Regional and Local Roads is a matter for councils and police, however where there is significant potential disruption to traffic, TfNSW is also routinely involved.

In urban areas with limited available parking, requests to accommodate parking in association with filming can be a source of concern for local residents and businesses. However, the ability to park vehicles containing equipment, sets, costumes, and catering is essential for filming on location.

Councils cannot apply any 'premium' charges for parking of film vehicles over and above what is charged to the general public.

It is recommended filmmakers and councils consult as early as possible to discuss parking and unit base requests.

Parking

Parking for a substantial shoot will be required for four different purposes:

1. **Essential vehicles** – those carrying camera, grip, and lighting equipment. Filmmakers need to park these vehicles as close as possible to the shooting area to limit the time and difficulty involved in moving equipment. Councils are encouraged to allow barricading for these vehicles.
2. **Unit parking** – unit parking is required for the support vehicles. These include the catering truck, makeup and wardrobe vans and cast caravans. Where councils cannot accommodate the unit vehicles near the essential vehicles, especially in built-up areas, they are encouraged to designate areas for unit parking. If there are standard costs associated with these areas for any other usage, then these costs can be charged to filmmakers on the same scale.
3. **Clear for shot** – parking spaces that are cleared for filming a scene that involves action or required to be clear for visual purposes.
4. **Cast and crew private vehicles** – these will normally be parked in areas that are available to the general public. Costs may or may not apply, as for any community member.

Minimum recommended parking spaces per filming category

Parking is an essential component to filming and presents challenges for applicants and councils. Councils are encouraged to collaborate with applicants to provide parking as close as possible to a filming location whilst balancing the needs of the community. The recommended minimum number of parking spaces below reflect the average number of essential vehicles that an applicant would have associated with each of the filming categories. Councils should be aware that parking spaces are sometimes required to be 'clear for shot' which may be of essential creative importance to filming activity.

Table 6 - Recommended parking provision

Parking and impact	No impact	Low impact	Medium impact	High impact
Parking approval, spaces, fees	No council approval required and no additional fees payable where vehicles associated with the activities are legally parked, adhere to regular signage and parking fees and are not driven onto footways, parks or plaza areas	No or small unit base Recommended minimum 4 spaces (at cost if parking meters exist)	Unit base required Recommended minimum 10 spaces (at cost if parking meters exist)	Large unit base Recommended minimum 15 spaces (at cost if parking meters exist & assessment costs by council traffic team if applicable)

Resident and commercial consent (Low, medium and high impact categories): If barricading and/or parking impacts commercial tenants, residents (or other affected parties) an applicant must have consent from all immediately affected parties - no guarantee of securing spaces via barricading or other services is given.

The applicant is expected to manage the minimum allocated parking spaces and the purpose for which they are used.

An applicant may request additional parking spaces, but it is at council's discretion to approve this request. Council must not unreasonably withhold the approval of additional parking requests, especially for essential vehicles, and are expected to provide the applicant with necessary approvals except under circumstances where public amenity, safety, security or other operational requirements demand that approval is not given.

Restricted and unrestricted parking

Unrestricted parking zones or period parking zones, with or without pay parking devices or resident parking schemes, are the most suitable for the parking of filming vehicles. Restricted parking zones installed for reasons other than safety may be considered, provided the impact on the traffic efficiency of the road network is minimal. This process may have associated recoverable costs.

Reserved spaces and barricading

For this Protocol, barricading is not considered to be a road closure or 'exclusive use'.

Providing spaces to accommodate essential vehicles, and where possible, unit vehicles, close to the filming location may require road areas to be reserved and barricaded for a period before, during, and immediately after filming activity.

This is best done using temporary barriers, barrier boards, or any other appropriate means. This is a legitimate part of the film-related activity and if required, must be requested in the filming application.

Barricading may be undertaken by any person (not limited to licensed traffic controllers) as long as parking is in a designated parking area as permitted by the approved film permit issued by council. If barricading on an active vehicle transit lane, licensed traffic controllers are to be used.

For low, medium and high impact approved applications advanced community notification must include barricading details, including a production mobile phone contact and confirmation of the application/permit ID number if applicable. These details are to be included on community notification letter drops.

If barricading takes place in a time-restricted zone, then notification on physical and/or fixed notification signage at the affected barricading site is required. Signage, such as a weather sealed printed 'A4', or visual messaging board (VMS) board employed by the filmmaker but is subject to assessment by council.

Truck parking

Section 200 (2A-2) of the Road Rules 2014 allows heavy and long vehicles to stop on a length of road in a built-up area for longer than one hour if the vehicle is stopped for a purpose connected with filming. These vehicles must be clearly identified, and the council notified. Where these vehicles are parked on a road with 'unrestricted' parking, no parking fees will apply.

The needs of residents and businesses must be considered, and sometimes it may be appropriate for the filmmaker to offer alternative parking or compensation to residents who will be adversely affected.

Parking fees

Sourcing suitable parking at a reasonable cost has been a major challenge for filmmakers.

Fees for parking are to be limited to the costs of processing applications and any services required to reserve areas to accommodate vehicles. For example, there may be fees associated with the placement of barricades and signage and the control of traffic – but only if council provides these

services. The only exception to this is where spaces usually subject to metered parking will result in lost revenue to council.

For high impact barricading/parking, council is permitted to charge an assessment fee for parking requests. Parking costs are to be cost recovery only.

Parking charges are refundable if filming is cancelled prior to use of parking spaces. Parking assessment charges may not be refundable if council has already undertaken this assessment.

Stand plant or similar premium charges by councils to production are not permitted.

Metered parking

These funds can be recovered by council as a cost recovery component. Calculation of the costs recovered should be based on presumption of full space occupancy for the period the parking space is used. No additional premium charge can be levied.

Barricading

Approved barricading would not attract fees unless council supplies barricading and/or signage in zoned and restricted parking areas. In this case, council costs are recoverable.

Alternative parking for residents and businesses

Where alternative parking arrangements are required for businesses and residents, there may be costs to the production, although these should arise only if essential and reasonable. All costs should be transparent and consistent.

Road closures

Councils are responsible for managing regional and local roads and Transport for NSW (TfNSW) is responsible for managing State Roads. Councils have powers under sections 115 and 144 of the *Roads Act 1993* to allow local road closures under certain circumstances.

Road closures for filming that qualify as 'Class 3 or 4 events' – defined by the Transport for NSW [Guide to Traffic and Transport Management for Special Events](#) as having minor impacts on the traffic network and minimal disruption to the non-event community – may, if appropriate and subject to the Council's event policy, be approved directly by councils without referral to the Local Traffic Committee (LTC).

In these cases, councils can and should still seek stakeholder support from agencies such as NSW Police, NSW Ambulance, and Fire & Rescue, as appropriate.

Local notification requirements remain unchanged for these examples, and Transport for NSW Road Occupancy Licences must still be obtained for closures that are adjacent to or affect state roads or traffic signals.

Addressing community concerns

Councils and filmmakers should work together to manage community concerns. Councils should be able to address community concerns by imposing appropriate conditions on approvals, for example, noise restrictions, and notification requirements for filmmakers to residents and businesses.

Councils should indicate the appropriate coverage area for such advice and be provided with a copy of any communication the filmmakers make to the community. Filmmakers have a role in communicating with affected members of the community (residents and businesses) so that disruption is minimised. Filmmakers must also specify a contact person and phone number for the production.

Councils are encouraged to provide relevant communication on their public platforms (website, social media) to help minimise enquiries and complaints from residents and businesses.

Table 7 - Community notification of filming activity

No impact	Low impact	Medium impact	High impact
No community notification required If filming is taking place on private land, the activity must have consent by the private landowner or occupier	Community notification required with a minimum of 48 hours prior to filming and/or associated activities	Community notification required with a minimum of 72 hours prior to filming and/or associated activities	Community notification required with a minimum of 10 business days prior to filming and/or associated activities

Note: For low, medium and high impact categories, community engagement can commence prior to council approving a filming application but community notification must be as per agreed terms with council.

Failure to comply

If filmmakers fail to comply with a council's requirements or there are a significant number of reasonable complaints about a production's filming activities, then the council may:

- contact Screen NSW within business hours to discuss
- cancel any approval that has been issued
- instruct the filmmaker to cease activities immediately and remove all personnel and equipment from the site
- require the filmmaker to forfeit any fees paid to council and any security bond held by council to offset losses, damages, or outstanding amounts
- require the filmmaker to justify the approval of any future applications that may be submitted
- enforce their powers under the NSW Local Government Act 1993 and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 for breaches of approvals, licences, or consents, as well as for conducting activities without required permissions
- charge for any costs relating to failure to comply.

Note: All sub-contractors hired by an applicant are the applicant's responsibility, with any non-compliance by sub-contractors the responsibility of the applicant.

Information for filmmakers

Code of conduct

The screen industry and Screen NSW have adopted a Code of Conduct for Location Filming in NSW. Filmmakers must ensure that all crew on location understand and comply with this code of conduct. The Code of Conduct for Location Filming is available at the Screen NSW website.

Applications for filming approval

A person intending to conduct a filming project is required to submit a filming proposal to council unless the project can clearly be categorised as 'no impact'. Table 1: Filming impact categories give guidance for both councils and filmmakers on assessing which impact category filming activity is likely to apply to a filming proposal. A filming proposal:

1. Must be on council's approved application form.
2. May contain applications relating to the whole or part of a filming project.
3. Cannot be lodged for more than one filming project.
4. Must be accompanied by:
 - a. All matters that are required under law.
 - b. Items specified by council that are necessary to enable council to assess applications adequately.

If a filming application is successful, the council will issue a Filming Application Approval notice.

The applicant is required to apply for any external approvals required and provide copies of these when lodging a film proposal (for example, NSW Police permit to use firearms).

Presentation of filming application approval issued by council

A filmmaker must have a physical or digital copy of the application approval, and associated barricading if relevant, on location at all times and from the commencement of the first associated activities. If requested the application approval must be presented to any member of the public and/or council or police.

Land ownership and use

Public land

Public land falls under various forms of public ownership and control. Public land may be owned by state agencies (hospitals, schools, railways, power utilities, public reserves and national parks). Roads can be public land, controlled by Transport for NSW (main roads) or councils (local and regional roads) or the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) (Crown roads). Council-owned land is either operational (depots, waste facilities, council buildings) or community land (parks, playing fields and land not identified as operational). There may also be restrictions to accessing public land, such as in water catchment or wilderness areas.

The types of approvals required to access and use public land, and who is responsible for providing these approvals, depends on the status of the land, the owner or steward of the land, and other legislative requirements. Approvals may be within the authority of a council to grant, either under its own authority or by authority delegated from others. It is therefore advisable for filmmakers to contact council in the first instance to determine the types of approval required.

In certain circumstances, filmmakers may need a licence or approval to film on public land. For example, this might be when they need to film on a road or have ‘exclusive use’ of public land, or where a government agency requires formal approval to undertake activities on its land. Councils are to include fees associated with ‘exclusive use’ in their annual fees and charges.

It is important to note that the short-term use of public open spaces, such as parks, playing fields, malls, plazas, or roads that are normally open for public use, is not considered ‘exclusive use.’ An exception to this rule is if the public is prevented from using the location, for example where a film crew wishes to have the ‘exclusive use’ of an area.

Exclusive use charges are to be in line with other user’s charges to exclusively book a site as per published fees on council’s website.

Councils are able to apply exclusive use charges in circumstances where public safety or disturbance is of concern. In addition, applicants may request exclusive use, but councils may determine whether exclusive use of a location is permissible. For the avoidance of doubt, parking and barricading, unit base, and/or catering do not constitute exclusive use.

If a filmmaker wants to apply and pay for exclusive use for filming activities, outside of an existing Development Consent that applies to the location, this can be permitted subject to council assessment.

If an existing/long standing booking is in place for a location e.g. a sports oval, a park or community hall, council can, at their discretion offer a filmmaker the option to financially compensate the existing booking, to be negotiated and resolved directly between the two parties.

Key points to consider include:

1. The nature of the land may determine what filming is possible. Filming is excluded from certain land, such as wilderness areas. Also, approval may not be granted to use land if public safety is compromised.
2. News and current affairs filming does not require approval on public land, but other filming and associated activities may be subject to approvals. Approval may depend on the nature of the land and the nature of the activities for which it is used.
3. Councils and other government agencies may require additional approvals in their roles as regulators of the land. Examples include ensuring environmental protection, public safety, and traffic management.
4. Applications for filming and associated activities on community land can be made even if there is not express approval in the council's applicable plan of management.
5. Particularly sensitive community land may be exempt from filming. Examples include the presence of an item of First Nations significance, or because it is a critical habitat for a threatened species.

Private land

Filmmakers must seek approval from the landowners to film on private land, such as homes and business premises. This approval usually takes the form of a location agreement detailing the terms, conditions, and fees for the filming activity.

Filmmakers do not need approval from a council for filming and certain associated activities that are entirely on private land. However, when filming is over more than two consecutive days, they are required by the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008 (Codes SEPP – [Section 2.114\(d\)](#)) to lodge a Film Management Plan with the council.

Filmmakers must also notify surrounding residents and businesses at least five days before filming commences. There is no fee for lodging a Film Management Plan.

It is an applicant's responsibility to ensure compliance with any applicable restrictions, such as those outlined in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008 Subdivision 4 and the general development standards.

The Police Area Command or Police District should be advised in case they receive enquiries or complaints and, importantly, to assess if other approvals are needed, for example, a permit to use firearms.

If filming does not exceed two consecutive days, filmmakers should still notify councils so they can evaluate if any associated activity on public land or roads requires approval. For example, running a cable across a footpath from a private property to a generator, or managing reserved vehicle

parking to ensure public safety. Fees and charges may apply and conditions on filming may be imposed if required.

The Codes SEPP specifies that a Development Application is required if a private property is to be used for filming for more than 90 days in a 12-month period.

Crown Land

Under the *Crown Land Management Act 2016* local councils now manage dedicated or reserved Crown Land as if it were public land within the meaning of the *Local Government Act 1993*. This means that council-managed Crown reserves that may have been subject to a separate filming approval process under previous Crown Lands legislation, now fall within the Local Government Filming Protocol.

Filmmakers should therefore contact the local council or visit the [Crown Lands website](#) to check on the land status and obtain the appropriate approvals for filming.

Construction

The State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008² states certain temporary structures and alterations or additions to buildings or works are 'exempt development' if the development is for the sole purpose of filming. This only applies for short-term filming projects where the development will not remain in place for more than 30 days within a 12-month period or as otherwise required by the SEPP³. Development consent may be required in certain cases, for example if a temporary structure will remain at a location for over 30 days or as otherwise required by the SEPP.

To ensure public safety, the development must not be accessible to the public.

A Film Management Plan (FMP) must be prepared and lodged with the consent authority for any high impact filming application or if the filming is to be carried out for more than 2 consecutive days. The FMP should address any concerns that council may have with extended filming beyond two (2) consecutive days at one location (includes all associated filming activities) and up to 90 days. See [Codes SEPP Part 2, Division 3, Subdivisions 4, 5 & 6](#) for types of development, development standards and requirements for a Film Management Plan.

To ensure public safety, the development must not be accessible to the public.

² See Codes SEPP Part 2, Division 3, Sub-divisions 4,5 & 6 for types of development and development standards

³ NOTE: The NSW Screen and Digital Games Strategy 2025-2027 proposes that the 30 days within a 12-month period before a DA is required is increased to 90 days

Drones

The following applies if drones are involved with filming:

- an applicant must advise council of drone use as part of their filming application
- Additional council fees for drone usage are not permitted
- Council is not obliged to provide take off/landing areas
- An applicant can only be refused the use of drones if drone use is excluded in the area as defined by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)
- An applicant is to adhere to CASA (or current regulatory body) guidelines and the pilot requirements as per their pilot/operator licence or conditions
- Filming applications must provide CASA approvals to council if requested
- If requested, an applicant must provide council with evidence of public liability insurance (PLI) cover that includes the use of drones.

Noise⁴

If filming approved under any of the Low, Medium or High Impact categories is to take place after 10pm in a residential area, a production must notify residents within a 200m perimeter.

For filming approved under any of the Low, Medium or High Impact categories, ambient nighttime noise level is not to be raised between the hours of 10pm and 7am without council approval and consent from the immediate neighbours to the filming location.

Noise complaints to be processed as per councils existing noise complaint framework.

⁴ The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) regulates noise through the Protection of the Environment Operations (Noise Control) Regulation 2017 and is the over-riding regulation for all filmmaking activity.

Risk management and work health and safety

All film production companies require a work health and safety policy and, depending on the filming activities, may need to prepare a safety report. They also require workers compensation insurance and public liability insurance. FCOs should sight safety and insurance documentation and can contact Screen NSW if they have any concerns.

Stringent safety requirements apply to the screen industry, especially in relation to special effects, stunts, and the use of firearms and weapons. Only appropriately qualified people are permitted to operate in these fields. Filmmakers must be able to satisfy the council that they hold all necessary licences and permits for the proposed activities.

Screen Producers Australia have released National Guidelines for Screen Safety. These guidelines provide advice on how to manage safety in screen industry workplaces and comply with state and federal workplace health and safety legislation. They can be accessed from the Screen Producers Australia [website](#).

Filmmakers must undertake hazard and risk assessments of any locations or premises in which they propose to film. If councils already have risk or hazard assessments of premises or locations under their control, they must cooperate with filmmakers to make further detailed assessments.

Filmmakers need to check the level of public liability insurance required by the council and have councils listed as an interested party on public liability insurance policies, if required. Filmmakers should expect to provide cover for \$20 million in most cases, but more may be required for significantly higher risk projects. Any additional cover should be negotiated openly and in good faith between council, their insurer, and the production company.

Councils may also consider reducing the level of public liability cover required for low-risk productions, such as a low impact filming.

Relevant Legislation

Local Government Act 1993

Chapter 7, Part 1 Division 4 Approvals for filming

The purpose of this Division is to establish a streamlined procedure for obtaining any council approvals necessary to conduct filming

Section 119D – Applicable filming protocol.

(a) the filming protocol, issued by the Departmental Chief Executive under this section, as in force from time to time, or

(b) if the council has adopted its own filming protocol and it has been approved by order in writing by the Departmental Chief Executive – that filming protocol.

Filming Approval Act 2004

An Act to facilitate filming in national parks, marine parks and certain other areas under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014*, and for other purposes.

Crown Land Management Act 2016

Part 5, Division 5.12 General, Section 5.62 – refers to the use of crown land for filming purposes.

Road Rules 2014 - Section 200 (2A-2)

The driver of a heavy vehicle, or a long vehicle, is permitted to stop on a length of road in a built-up area for longer than 1 hour if the vehicle is stopped for a purpose that is ancillary to or connected with the lawful carrying out of a filming project (within the meaning of the *Local Government Act 1993*) that is approved under that Act.

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

In NSW, Plans of Management are legal documents that guide the sustainable management of National Parks. They outline how natural and cultural values will be conserved and recreational opportunities maintained. These plans are developed and maintained by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008

Refer to Part 1, Division 2 for general requirements for exempt development.

Refer to Part 2, Division 3, Sub-divisions 4,5 & 6 for types of filming related development and development standards.

Appendix A - Application minimum requirements

Applicant Details

- Production Company/Organisation Name, address, contact number and email
- Producer name, contact number and email
- Production Manager name, contact number and email
- Location Manager name, contact number and email.

Production details

- Name of production
- Production summary/synopsis/script (attachment)
- Type of production (e.g., TV commercial, documentary, reality tv).

Location details

- Location (list additional locations if more than one)
- Date of use, from – to (include proposed date and back up/wet weather date)
- Time of use (incl. crew arrival and departure)
- Description of activities and development proposed
- Personnel numbers
- Vehicle details and parking requirements (include a parking plan if applicable).

Supporting documentation (as required)

- Public Liability Insurance certificate of currency
- Traffic management plan (when required)
- Parking plan
- Authorised safety report (when required)
- Community notification letter
- Environmental management plan (when required)
- Any required approvals (e.g., Police, NSW Fire, Transport for NSW).

Payment of the Application Fee

- Include fees and applicable payment details.

Appendix B - Fee schedule adjustment

Definitions

In this Schedule:

- **Adjustable fee amount** means a fee amount prescribed under this Protocol.
- **Consumer Price Index** means the Consumer Price Index (All Groups Index) for Sydney published by the Australian Statistician.
- **Consumer Price Index number**, in relation to a quarter, means the number for that quarter appearing in the Consumer Price Index.
- **Financial year** means a period of 12 months commencing on 1 July.

Adjustment of fees

Each adjustable fee amount is to be adjusted on 1 July each year for inflation as provided by this clause.

The adjustable fee amount that is to apply for the financial year commencing on that 1 July is to be determined by multiplying the adjustable fee amount that applied for the previous financial year by the annual increase in the Consumer Price Index during that previous financial year.

The annual increase in the Consumer Price Index during a financial year is to be calculated as B/A where:

- B is the Consumer Price Index number for the last quarter for which such a number was published before the end of the financial year.
- A is the Consumer Price Index number for the last quarter for which such a number was published before the start of the financial year.
- If B/A is less than 1 (as a result of deflation), B/A is deemed to be 1.

Before the start of each financial year after the first year of the operation of this clause, the Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government is to publish notice of the amount of each adjustable fee amount for that financial year (as adjusted under this Schedule) on the website of the Office of Local Government.

Rounding of adjustments

If the determination of an adjustable fee amount for a financial year under this Protocol results in an amount that is not a whole number multiple of \$1, the amount calculated is to be rounded up to the

nearest whole number multiple of \$1 and that amount as so rounded is the adjustable fee amount for that year.

Appendix C - Model application form

Please save a copy of your completed application for your records. Supporting documentation to be attached, with a copy of your application, to an email.

With submission of an application the associated application fee as stipulated under the Local Government Filming Protocol is liable for payment and is non-refundable.

Once an application is received and processed, the relevant filming application approval fee is payable, and cancellations will only be accepted in writing.

No refund of fees (additional to the application fee) will be issued for cancellations that are received less than 5 business days for low impact filming, 7 business days for medium and 15 days for high impact filming prior to the first shoot or associated activity date.

(Insert council name) takes no responsibility for any third-party commitments entered into by the applicant if an application is refused.

For further information regarding your application please contact us.

Email: **(insert council email)** **Telephone:** **(insert council number)**

Privacy & Personal Information Protection Notice

Purpose of Collection: For management of parks and open spaces in the Council area and data analysis by Screen NSW.

Intended recipients: Council staff and approved contractors of the Council and Screen NSW.

Supply: Film Production & Photography Application is voluntary however a completed application form is required for filming & photography in the councils' owned and/or managed land and buildings.

Access / Correction: Contact the Council Customer Service Team to access or correct this information.

APPLICANT DETAILS	
Applicant/Organisation	
ABN	
Address	

KEY PERSONNEL	First Name	Last Name	Phone	Email
Producer				
Production Manager				
Location Manager				
Unit Manager				
Traffic Controller				
PRODUCTION DETAILS				
Production Name				
Production Type - (TVC, Doco, Feature film etc.):				
Production summary				
Production Company				
Onsite Contact				
Dates & Times				
Location				
Shot Sequence Description (*must be completed in full details and complete sentences)				
Production personnel No (approx.)				
Traffic/Pedestrian Control				

Onsite Equipment Component (*Must include all external equipment including dollies, jibs etc. – ‘film equipment’ as a description will not be accepted)	
Production vehicle parking (inc. Unit bases, locations and how many meters required)	
Number of ticket parking spots	
Barricading of required spaces (Time & Date)	
Catering Location	

ESSENTIAL PRODUCTION VEHICLES (No general crew vehicles permitted for permits under any circumstances)

Description	Registration No.	Vehicle Length