

# 2025- 26

## CORPORATE PLAN

For the period  
FY2025-2029

# CONTENTS

1.	Purpose and Vision	2
2.	Introductory Statement	4
3.	Operating Context	5
	3.1. Environment, Factors, and Focus	5
	3.2. Optimising Resources and Capabilities	8
	3.3. Risk Management and Oversight	9
	3.4. Cooperation	9
4.	Strategic Direction, Delivery and Performance	11
	4.1. Pillar 1: National Reach	12
	4.2. Pillar 2: Excellence	14
	4.3. Pillar 3: Sustainability	16
5.	References	17

# 1. PURPOSE AND VISION

The Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) was established by a bipartisan Act of Parliament in 1973 to provide education, training, and research to the screen arts and broadcast sector.

The School was founded on a cultural imperative. The *Australian Film, Television and Radio School Act 1973* (AFTRS Act) recognised the power of national storytelling and the need for Australians to have access to world-class content made by Australians for Australians. It also recognised the critical role of formal education and training in creating a thriving industry of highly skilled practitioners. Though the industry for which AFTRS was created has undergone significant change since 1973, this imperative remains.

To ensure Australians have access to world-class Australian content, AFTRS must continue to graduate the best creative talent in Australia to meet the sector's needs, from grips to production accountants and composers to radio producers.

## OUR MISSION:

Delivering world-leading creative education across the nation, so Australian talent and culture thrive at home and around the world.

## OUR PURPOSE:

Working hand-in-hand with the screen and broadcast industries, AFTRS is a global centre of excellence that provides Australians with the highest level of screen and broadcast education, training, and research.

## OUR VISION:

We believe that a country is shaped by its stories. In an increasingly complex world Australians have never needed good stories more, to understand who we are and who we can be. As the national screen and broadcast school, AFTRS' job is to train the talent who can create these stories.

Our pursuit of excellence is Australian in its nature and global in its ambition. It is empowered by the strength of First Nations cultures and the rich diversity of our society. We strive for excellence in artistry and craft, and we embrace the essential need for ethical, inclusive collaboration.

## OUR STRATEGY:

AFTRS' five-year corporate strategy, *Creating the Future*, launched in February 2021, established the foundations for meeting our purpose in a rapidly evolving operating environment. The strategy comprises three pillars: national reach, excellence, and sustainability, and is well positioned to support the five pillars of the national cultural policy, *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*.

### NATIONAL REACH

As the national screen and broadcast school, talent across Australia must be able to access our world-class training and educational opportunities that support the breadth of Australian screen and broadcast culture. Our curriculum must be flexible in its delivery and inclusive in its design.

### EXCELLENCE

As one of the world's leading screen and broadcast schools, AFTRS is committed to the pursuit of excellence in all that we do. Our unique approach to screen and broadcast education is driven by a close working relationship with industry, a practice-based curriculum that fosters deep skill-building, creative experimentation, and an understanding of the power of collaboration. Our graduates are sought-after for their outstanding craft skills and artistry. They are enterprising, highly creative, and professional. They understand the power of Australian story, underpinned by First Nations cultures, and enriched by our country's diversity, to engage, entertain and connect audiences at home and around the world

### SUSTAINABILITY

Finally, we must ensure that our work delivering world-class education across the country is sustainable. Our offering is scalable and adaptive, allowing us to grow our business and meet local, regional, and national need, in a way that is sustainable for our staff, school resources, and industry

## OUR VALUES:

### EXCELLENCE

We are leaders in our fields and strive to adapt in the face of an ever-changing Industry.

### COURAGE

We are curious, resilient and embrace challenge and the unfamiliar with open-hearted perseverance.

### COMMUNITY

We work together with respect, responsibility and reciprocity, recognising that our strength comes from inclusivity and shared accountability.

### CREATIVITY

We embrace different ideas, experiences, and knowledges in the pursuit of creative excellence and innovation.

### GENEROSITY

We share our skills and knowledge and are equipped and honoured to help tell each other's stories.

# 2. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The AFTRS Council, as the accountable authority of AFTRS, presents the 2025–2026 AFTRS Corporate Plan, covering the period FY2025–2029, as required under section 35 (1) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

AFTRS is accountable to the Australian Government through the Minister for the Arts and is administered through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts. It operates under the AFTRS Act and receives Commonwealth support through an annual appropriation in the Budget.

AFTRS’ Portfolio Budget Statement outcome is:

*“Support the development of a professional screen arts and broadcast culture in Australia including through the provision of specialist industry-focused education, training, and research.”*

# 3. OPERATING CONTEXT

## 3.1. ENVIRONMENT, FACTORS, AND FOCUS

AFTRS is a cultural agency funded by the Australian Government through the Office for the Arts in the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts to provide the industry with the talent and skills it needs to thrive.

AFTRS is also a fully self-accrediting Higher-Education provider. AFTRS is one of seven institutions evaluated and granted the Provider category status of University College<sup>1</sup> under the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021—a recognition of the “high national standing and performance of AFTRS” within the screen and broadcasting sector, and its broader contribution to Australian higher education.

AFTRS is Australia's national screen and broadcast school and one of the leading screen and broadcast schools in the world.<sup>2</sup> AFTRS provides industry-partnered training to more than 3000 Australians a year, and in FY2024–25 over 35% of those trained, were outside of NSW. AFTRS has unrivalled screen and broadcast facilities, world-class practitioner teachers and graduates who continue to impact and shape Australian culture. AFTRS alumni are behind the year's most talked-about content, from blockbuster *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga* (Yulia Akerholt, sound designer) to SXSW winner *Slanted* (Amy Wang, director), from TV series *Muster Dogs* (Monica O'Brien, director) to streaming series *Heartbreak High* (Hannah Carroll Chapman, screenwriter). Graduate David Speers' work on live broadcast platforms including ABC's *Insiders* fostered important national discussions on a weekly basis. AFTRS graduates are grips, assistant editors, assistant directors, producers; they can be found in radio stations and production offices nationally, their work viral on TikTok globally, their names on credit lists for Australia's favourite podcasts and TV shows, their leadership shaping policy and practice at screen agencies, guilds and media companies.

To sustain this level of global success, AFTRS must keep a sharp focus on the future. The industries AFTRS was created to support back in 1973 remain subject to rapid change, volatile demand and technological disruption. We are navigating headwinds in global trade, changing models of distribution and production; the deepening impact of AI; and the need for a more sustainable and accessible industry that supports diverse local voices. The tertiary education sector is also in flux as the sector grapples with structural reform, AI, hybrid and flexible learning models and financial pressures and policy shifts. This is also a time of opportunity—news models of production and distribution are giving talent across Australia

unprecedented access to audiences and changes to delivery of educational programs are opening doors to learners in remote and rural areas to participate in life changing education.

AFTRS' 5-Year corporate strategy, *Creating the Future*, is designed to meet this change and support and equip our graduates and the future resilience of our industry. It positions AFTRS as an agile organisation that can identify shifting education and skilling needs with the ability to adapt quickly, while keeping a longer view on industry trends. The School continues to hone a scalable business model that allows us to respond to emerging opportunities and sector inputs without compromising our commitment to providing the highest-quality, industry-partnered training across Australia.

Recognising AFTRS' critical role in the training and education ecosystem, in the 2024–25 Federal Budget the Australian Government announced it would increase AFTRS funding by a total of \$23.2 million over the next 4 years. The School very much appreciates this support: after a modest initial uplift in FY2024–25 annual funding, in FY2027–28, our appropriation will rise to \$36.0 million, indexed and ongoing. This increased resourcing secures future sustainability and allows us to grow AFTRS strategic ambitions and support the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, *Revive*, and its vision to grow the capability and resilience of Australian cultural sector. Like *Revive*, AFTRS' corporate strategy places First Nations values and knowledges at the heart of our activities, and centres our pursuit of excellence, equity and access with a future focus that will allow the School to continue our legacy of excellence into the next 50 years and beyond.

## SCREEN AND BROADCAST INDUSTRIES

The screen and broadcast industries are experiencing significant volatility. Screen production continues to be impacted by economic conditions globally, with production trends reflecting multi-faceted disruptions to distribution platforms and business models, economic uncertainty and evolving audience behaviour. In FY2023–24 screen production in Australia amounted to \$1.7 billion in expenditure from 169 Australian and international titles.<sup>3</sup> The industry is cooling after a cycle that benefitted from Australia's COVID-safe production conditions, high-budget theatrical features, and increased investment from streaming platforms. Expenditure was down by 29% on the previous year and 10% below the 5-year average. Despite this cooling, the screen industry employs about 55,000 people, with over 10,000 more working in radio and podcasting, and it contributed more than \$6 billion to the Australian economy, the largest amount of any creative industry.<sup>4</sup>

In this period of change, the need for education and training remains critical, with fast moving shifts in the industry and audience behaviours creating new opportunities for training. Critical skills gaps continue to be an issue that threatens industry growth—and over the next period, AFTRS will focus on scaling the implementation of its Industry Skills Framework that identifies and monitors these skills gaps and prioritises the development of new training courses for roles which experience shortages,

including production accountants, assistant directors, content leaders and location managers.

Beyond identified skills gaps, workers need regular upskilling to stay ahead of industry shifts. Viewing behaviours of Australians continue to evolve at a rapid pace, with more Australians using paid subscriptions (69% in 2024, up from 29% in 2017) at the expense of free-to-air TV, and 59% watching user-generated or short-form online video (up from 44% in 2022).<sup>5</sup> Likewise, listening habits show similar trends towards online streaming and on-demand content, with more than half of all Australian adults listening to podcasts every month (52%, 2025 The Infinite Dial).<sup>6</sup> It won't be long before on-demand content like short form video and podcasts become the dominant content format, opening new opportunities for targeted training and curriculum updates.

Research published by Screen Australia in 2025<sup>7</sup> found varying levels of understanding of industry trends, with producers showing the strongest understanding, and creatives the lowest, pointing to a clear need for targeted training and support. On AI, most industry participants expressed concern, but among those who feel prepared, more than half are excited about its potential, again suggesting an opportunity to equip practitioners with the skills they need to feel confident and ready to engage. AFTRS greets this opportunity with the development of its short course, *AI Prompt Design for Screen Practitioners*. AFTRS has also developed its AI Policy, setting out its key principles for ethical and responsible use of AI tools. AFTRS is commissioning a research project to identify the skills that producers will need to navigate and thrive in a fast-evolving landscape that calls for new capabilities and business models. It will also continue to contribute to existing workforce capacity and infrastructure research carried out by our government colleagues—from the Jobs and Skills Council, Services and Creative Skills Australia (SaCSA) to Screen Australia—and to support the capacity building work of the State and Territory screen agencies.

The introduction of training requirements under the location offset incentive has provided new opportunities for industry-partnered training, such as the On-Set Onboarding courses and traineeships offered with The Walt Disney Company Australia. Negotiations are under way with other industry partners to develop curriculum or deliver new courses that meet upskilling needs for upcoming productions.

In recognition of the need for a joined-up approach and to ensure upskilling happens across the country, AFTRS will continue to grow its network of national training partnerships, such as RMIT in Melbourne, The Mercury in Adelaide, Apple Box Studios in Hobart and Griffith Film School in Brisbane, to deliver in-person on-the-ground training that addresses those skills gaps. In NSW, AFTRS will collaborate with National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) and TAFE NSW on a Below The Line Training Pilot funded by the NSW Government through Create NSW. These partnerships will underpin a new Industry Skills Action Plan which seeks to deliver industry upskilling nationwide by coordinating AFTRS' efforts with the work of screen agencies and education providers nationwide to improve impact and reduce skills gaps. Micro-credentials

and digital badging for industry-endorsed courses will also be scoped to further focus, scale and showcase flexible AFTRS training that more easily connects hirers with a skilled workforce.

In the radio and broadcast sector, there is an ongoing need for hyperlocal content makers and skilled regional producers across the country, especially outside the capital cities, as well as need for skills in audio and multiplatform journalism. The AFTRS Flexible Delivery Framework allows us to deliver a modular version of our Graduate Diploma where students can participate in person or online and choose between one to four subjects per semester. In addition, 50% of the course being industry-focused electives, allows students to tailor their studies to their career ambitions and local industry demands. This level of choice and flexibility is enabling our radio students to remain learning and working in their regional homes so they can continue to contribute to vibrant local communities. Recent graduates have commenced roles in regional NSW in Grafton and Dubbo. AFTRS Radio and Podcasting graduates continue to be in high demand, and regional graduate employment is forecast to grow to meet this need for regional radio talent.

AFTRS will continue to work closely with industry through regular industry advisory panels, a triennial industry skills survey, and our industry curriculum partners, to ensure our training builds sector capacity, to a level that meets global standards of craft and artistry.

## INCLUSION AND BELONGING

As the national screen and broadcast school, AFTRS is committed to ensuring all people across Australia have access to our world-leading training and education. This is fundamental to our remit and a key principle of *Revive*, that commits the sector to providing clear pathways for talent across Australia into and through the industry, so our industry and stories represent all Australians.

For many, particularly those in regional and remote areas, the screen and broadcast industries can feel inaccessible, with unclear pathways and a perception that success depends more on connections than talent. AFTRS corporate strategy is actively working to change this narrative. AFTRS' goal remains that a Year 10 student in Lightning Ridge knows that a career in the screen and broadcast industries is possible for them, and they know the pathways available to them to become a gaffer, or a sound recordist, or a radio producer.

AFTRS continues to identify and remove barriers to entry for talent from remote or regional areas, meeting increased demand for training that can be accessed remotely or part-time, and which doesn't require full interruption of work, caring or family commitments, nor the move to Sydney, where cost of living is currently prohibitive. As above, a key example of this is the transformation of AFTRS' *Graduate Diploma in Radio and Podcasting*, with students now based in all Australian states. AFTRS continues to strengthen its partnership with TAFE NSW, building on the success of the pathway program launched in 2024. Eligible graduates of TAFE's Diploma of Screen and Media are granted Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL),

allowing direct entry into year 2 of the AFTRS *Bachelor of Arts Screen: Production*. Following a successful pilot cohort in 2024, the program saw increased enrolments in 2025 and is now an established entry route. In 2026, this pathway will further expand to welcome graduates from Canberra Institute of Technology. This initiative enhances accessibility and offers opportunities for regional and interstate students to pursue careers in screen production.

As with *Revive*, AFTRS is committed to the principle of First Nations First, and AFTRS' corporate strategy positions First Nations values and knowledges at the heart of the School's activity. AFTRS' First Nations Strategic Plan which was launched in 2023, provides the foundations and methodologies to embed First Nations' cultural values in all that we do. This period will see AFTRS continue to operationalise and build upon this plan. The *On Country Pathways Program* exemplifies this commitment, partnering with First Nations media organisations to offer First Nations participants a bespoke combination of training, placement, mentoring opportunities, and community support based on First Nations students' needs, interests, and ambitions. This program, supported through *Revive*, has been made possible thanks to an Australian Government grant which provides \$530,000 over two years to support First Nations training and career pathways at AFTRS. This program has already successfully delivered training in Far North Queensland. The funding from the grant also supported a training audit of current First Nations employment and training within the screen sector to provide AFTRS, screen agencies, and the industry with a clear map of the needs and gaps, as well as the areas that are well supported. The findings of the audit will be shared this financial year with a view to inform future planning. Additionally, to support First Nations pathways into the School, AFTRS has made providing subsidised accommodation to First Nations students a priority focus over the period of this plan.

The Disabled and d/Deaf Communities are an integral part of our country's story and creators with disability are a critical part of our industry's future. Following the launch of AFTRS' Disability Action Plan 2024-2027, which affirms our commitment to accessibility and inclusion, with the intention of modelling best practice and innovation to industry, AFTRS has made significant progress implementing the actions of this plan and will continue implementation throughout the course of this corporate plan. AFTRS continues its long-standing partnership with Bus Stop Films to provide at AFTRS specialised training for people with diverse abilities. In 2025 AFTRS launched a new scholarship, partnering with the Dylan Alcott Foundation for a student living with disability.

## INNOVATION

As a leading creative institution, innovation and experimentation are central to all our endeavours. AFTRS will continue to develop faculty-driven research to bridge industry knowledge and academic expertise to drive projects with practicable, immediate, and rigorously tested outputs for the industry. Integral to this process is the scoping and development of valued-based collaborations with industry, the education sector, and

relevant cultural and community organisations nationally and internationally.

The successful *Digital Future Summit* series continues to deliver as a valued platform, connecting Australian and international screen and broadcast industry leaders with educators and government in discussions on collaborating, adapting, and capitalising on technological changes. The 2025 edition focused on anticipating our screen and broadcast industries in 2030 and surfaced the emerging challenges and opportunities the sector is grappling with. Over 1,500 participants attended these sessions from across the country and around the world. Outputs from this event will continue across the next period as AFTRS produces a series of white papers and roundtables.

New technologies and workflows continue to increase the Australian screen industry's reach and impact. AFTRS' priority is to support the Australian sector with the skills and expertise needed to meet these emerging opportunities. To do this AFTRS will continue to invest in emerging technologies and systems in the rapidly changing fields of virtual production and visual effects, and its volume studio continues to be used as a teaching tool in the *Master of Arts: Screen*. In 2025, guided by its new AI Policy, the School will engage with generative AI technology, considering the ways AI can be used as a tool to further our strategic objectives, in alignment with our values, ethical considerations and compliance requirements. The School is developing a range of resources for its Award courses and dedicated Short courses to build skills and support reflective discernment in this fast-moving area.

Beyond technology, creative innovation and reflective practice are at the heart of the AFTRS way of learning and teaching. Accomplished practitioners are invited to share their creative processes with students, provoking them to experiment with new ways to make and tell stories. Recent guests have included luminaries such as filmmaker Jane Campion, screen executive Amanda Duthie, cinematographer Lawrence Sher, writer Hannah Carroll Chapman, audio producer Jess Shane, comedian Mitchell Coombs, journalist Patricia Karvelas, radio presenter Richard Kingsmill, director-producer Dena Curtis, VR artist Sarah Ticho and writer-director Justin Kurzel. We will continue to grow the seminar series and the visiting scholar's series to foster a strong research culture, expand our research networks, and promote collaboration in the space. In addition, early in 2025, we launched *Ways of Knowing*, a research event to showcase staff research across the school—a project that hopes to increase research visibility. Over the period of this plan, we look forward to working with the School's new Artist-in-Residence, actress, writer and director Mia Wasikowska, who will host a series of Masterclasses directed to staff and students and a series of one-on-one mentorship sessions with students from across the award courses.

As we strive to enhance our capacity for disseminating research, we are implementing strategies designed to support the publication ambitions of our staff. Similarly, we recently initiated a student research showcase as part



of the *Master of Arts Screen: Business* presentation at Screen Forever, with plans to expand this initiative to include additional award programs, such as the *Master of Arts: Screen*.

Central to innovative practices, AFTRS has embarked on the creation of AFTRS' Research Manifesto to define the School's role as a research hub that attracts and generates research collaborations across the sector, nationally and internationally. In partnership with industry and other relevant organisations, AFTRS will continue the development of the *Research Fellowship Program* to foster innovation and offer a staff research fund to build capacity and research leadership.

## ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

AFTRS is committed to supporting and promoting environmental sustainability across all its activities and it is a key part of our corporate strategy. The Environmental Sustainability Strategic Plan (ESSP) sits within the sustainability pillar of the strategy. AFTRS is also committed to supporting the government's ambitions and the goals and reporting requirements of APS Net Zero 2030. The School's work in this area will continue to be guided by First Nations knowledges and values as articulated in AFTRS' First Nations Strategic Plan. The ESSP recognises the First Nations concept that "Country is Alive" is at the heart of sustainability.

The ESSP was launched during FY2024–25. This ensures AFTRS' goals, activities and measures respond to the responsibilities, requirements, and best practices of this new landscape. AFTRS is committed to active efforts to reduce its carbon emissions to zero by 2030.

The ESSP covers all areas of AFTRS' operations: infrastructure and operations, transport, curriculum, sustainable productions, and research and knowledge exchange. It includes specific initiatives and targets to be measured and reported against annually.

AFTRS is a member of Sustainable Screens Australia, an emerging industry-funded initiative working to provide industry access to resources, education and toolkits to measure production carbon footprint accurately and encourage sustainable production practices. The School continues to be involved in Green Ears, a cross-industry initiative bringing the Australian radio industry together to be more environmentally sustainable. Sustainable Screens Australia is an advisory partner to Green Ears.

## 3.2. OPTIMISING RESOURCES AND CAPABILITIES

The Australian Government has allocated \$28.310 million to AFTRS for FY2025–26, a revised amount from that detailed in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

Building on the initial funding provided in the previous financial year, the additional investment from the Australian Government will enable AFTRS to strengthen its strategic priorities. This funding will support strategic investment in students and staffing, including the recruitment of critical roles, enhancement of infrastructure and systems, and the delivery of high-quality teaching and remote training. These initiatives are essential to expanding access, improving educational outcomes, and fostering long-term professional development across the screen and broadcast industries.

Now in its second year, the Australian Government is providing a total of \$530,000 over two years to support First Nations training and career pathways. This investment is contributing to improved employment outcomes and long-term economic empowerment. Continued support through initiatives like this is vital to closing the employment gap and fostering inclusive, sustainable opportunities for First Nations communities.

A further \$500,000 was provided in FY2024–25 to support accommodation for First Nations and financially disadvantaged students through to FY2027–28.

AFTRS has budgeted to generate an additional \$10.112 million to supplement its operations for the financial year. AFTRS makes revenue from several sources, primarily through student fees for Award courses and Short course programs and revenue from corporate training. Combined with the Government appropriation, this own-sourced income creates a total revenue budget for FY2025–26 of \$38.422 million. Over the coming year, AFTRS aims to maintain its own-sourced income, including expanding the national reach of its Award courses and engaging in new partnerships to ensure its financial sustainability. Philanthropic funding will be sought to increase the number and value of scholarships, and for specific projects.

AFTRS has a Capital Management Plan covering the acquisition and updating of technical resources and facilities to support its activities across each year of the corporate plan. The School reviews its budget plan annually. Supporting the corporate plan's strategies, the Capital Management Plan allows flexibility across FY2025–2029 to adapt to equipment and facility needs and meet the needs of AFTRS' diverse student population.

The School occupies a purpose-built campus in the Entertainment Quarter at Moore Park in inner-city Sydney, NSW. In the FY2022-23, AFTRS signed a lease extension to 2028, with further extension options through to 2036.

### 3.3. RISK MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT

AFTRS continues to build upon on comprehensive work undertaken in reviewing its risk management approach. AFTRS has been progressing its maturity and learnings through its implementation of the principles and processes within its Risk Management Policy. Operating with an approach of continuous improvement and leveraging the skills within the Finance, Audit and Risk Management (FARM) Committee, AFTRS is committed to the ongoing strengthening of its risk culture across the period of its strategy and embedding risk management into all organisational activity. For example, AFTRS has recently completed a review of Production Risk Management, which has resulted in changes to processes to align with industry best practice, alongside new industry standards including accessibility, sustainability and well-being.

AFTRS is in the process of conducting a thorough review of its risk identification, assessment and reporting, which will be completed during FY2025–26.

AFTRS' risk position is set out in the quarterly reviewed risk register. The risk register continually evolves and is a 'live' document that tracks and evaluates the AFTRS' overall risk environment at the operational and strategic levels. This allows AFTRS to be proactive with its resourcing to ensure risks are being addressed promptly. While risk is constantly monitored and assessed as part of the Risk Management Policy, AFTRS also conducts an annual review to ensure all ratings, risks, definitions, mitigations and action plans are accurate and relevant. This review also involves refresher training on risk management for relevant staff.

The FARM Committee oversees the organisation's Risk Management Framework and Risk Registers to ensure the requirements of the PGPA Act are being met. In addition to the Committee's oversight of AFTRS' risk management practices, the Committee examines the applicability, management and mitigation strategies of particular risks identified in more depth. The Risk Register is also provided to the AFTRS Council.

### 3.4. COOPERATION

AFTRS values its role within Australia's cultural ecosystem, supporting the capacity and growth of the creative sector. Looking to the next year, AFTRS will continue to work closely with government agencies, industry partners, and education partners to achieve its purpose of being a global centre of excellence, providing Australians with the highest level of screen and broadcast education, training, and research. With over fifty active partnerships, sustaining these industry networks will remain a priority that will allow us to both support and be supported by our sector colleagues.

Over the period of this plan, AFTRS will continue to liaise closely with the Office of the Minister for the Arts and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts. AFTRS has active relationships with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Department of Education. AFTRS also values its strong relationships with our fellow portfolio agencies. AFTRS supports the work carried out by SaCSA including their research into skills and workforce shortages in the creative sector.<sup>8</sup> AFTRS also supports Screen Well's initiatives to improve mental health outcomes in the screen industries, Bus Stop Films' accessible filmmaking training, and Inclusively Made's efforts to build the sector's capacity to create inclusive content and employ people with a disability.

AFTRS is a founding member of the Screen Leaders group, convened by the Office for the Arts, which works collaboratively to promote excellence in national screen storytelling and grow a highly skilled, future-proof workforce that can strengthen our sector's impact at home and on the global stage. AFTRS also looks forward to its continued participation in the Workforce Capacity Working Group, that brings together the Federal and State and Territory Screen Agencies. Alongside NIDA, AFTRS' focus with this group over the next year is how the sector can forge clearer talent pathways through education into screen careers and close current and emerging skills gaps. Outside of this group, AFTRS is in continual dialogue with Screen Australia and the State and Territory screen agencies, gathering intelligence on skilling needs and providing subsidised access to short courses.

This year AFTRS helped facilitate the annual collaboration of the National Arts Training Organisations (the ARTS8)—*Perspective*. The workshop brought together students and artistic leads from all eight organisations for three days of creative exchange at the National Institute of Circus Arts in Melbourne, culminating in an extraordinary live performance captured on camera. The success of these workshops confirms the value of the ARTS8 collaborating to share learnings, combine strengths and develop spaces for creative innovation.

AFTRS and NIDA will also continue to work closely together, through shared staff training, including a wellbeing program led by the counselling staff of AFTRS, NIDA and the National Art School. Recognising the importance of cross-institutional networking for our students, we will also continue our alumni and student social events, and curriculum partnerships.

Extending and strengthening AFTRS' educational networks is key to fulfilling AFTRS' mission's commitment to either delivering or supporting the delivery of world leading education across Australia. Building on partnerships to deliver our short courses at Edith Cowan University in Perth, RMIT in Melbourne, The Mercury in Adelaide and Apple Box Studios in Hobart, we will seek partners to expand our training reach and address skills gaps in the Northern Territory and the ACT, and continue to explore collaborations with our VET partners TAFE NSW and Canberra Institute of Technology.

AFTRS is an active member of, nationally, ASPERA (Australian Screen Production Education & Research Association) and, internationally, the organisation of film schools, CILECT (Centre International de Liaison des Ecoles de Cinéma et de Télévision). Faculty members from AFTRS attend both conferences, participating in keynotes, presenting papers and sharing knowledge in the pursuit of excellence in screen and broadcast education.

Cooperation with industry partners will be at the forefront of this year's activities as the School prioritises industry-partnered training with regional, national and global reach. This has included partnered short courses in Darwin, Cairns, Perth, Hobart, Melbourne and Adelaide; industry panels with Screen Canberra, with Flickerfest in Sydney and at Revelations in Perth; Radio and Podcasting courses in high schools from Belconnen (ACT) to Wagga Wagga (NSW) and Launceston (TAS) with The Smith Family; hosting conferences such as Antenna Documentary Film Festivals' *Doc Talk*, below-the-line summit *CrewCon* with CrewHQ and Screen NSW, as well as the Screen Editors Conference *Cutting It*; and partnering with industry conferences around the country, including Screen Forever (Gold Coast), AACTA Screen Festival (Gold Coast), Regional-to-Global (Lennox Head), the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia Conference (next in Hobart). AFTRS also partners with a range of film festivals, including Adelaide International Film Festival, Sydney Film Festival and Melbourne International Film Festival's Accelerator Lab. Many of these partnerships will continue over FY2025–26.

The national screen industry guilds will remain critical partners, and AFTRS has an active partnership with each of them. Outcomes include screen business courses delivered nationally in partnership with Screen Producers Australia, a short course designed with the Australian Location Managers Guild, and hosting the upcoming Australian Screen Composers Guild conference.

A primary outcome from these partnerships is that the knowledge and expertise of our industry partners flows down to our students through our industry-aligned and tested curricula. One of the most successful outcomes of these partnerships is AFTRS' placement and internship program. Building on the success of the established *Graduate Program*, the industry placement elective offered in the third year of the *Bachelor of Arts Screen: Production* builds on previous successes: over 25 places will be offered to students with partners including The Solid State, Flying Bark, Knuckles animation, Soundfirm, Post Lounge, Home and Away, Endemol Shine, Cheeky Little, Mightly Sound, Blue Post, Media Stockade, ABC Studio and

Broadcast, ABC Radio and Audio, ABC Post Production, Jungle, Studio Gilay, Paramount +, Easy Tiger, Cutting Edge and See Saw. Over the period of this plan, the School will continue to grow AFTRS' *Graduate Program* which continues to yield excellent outcomes for graduates and industry. These thirteen-week paid industry internships offer clear employment pathways for creative, multi-skilled and motivated graduates from the *Bachelor of Arts Screen: Production*. In 2024, ABC, BBC Studios, Endemol Shine, Eureka, ITV Studios Australia, WildBear, and SBS participated, with several graduates offered positions at the end of their placements.

Another excellent student-facing outcome of AFTRS' partnership with industry, is the School's collaboration with broadcasters and exhibitors to provide exhibition opportunities for student works made at AFTRS. This includes showcases on streaming platforms such as SBS On Demand, ABC iView and DocPlay, prestigious screenings at Westpac OpenAir Cinema on Sydney Harbour, or programs that tour regional and interstate film festivals. Students in the *Graduate Diploma in Radio and Podcasting* have the opportunity to test and engage audiences through live radio broadcasts such Show Radio, an over 30-year partnership with the Royal Easter Show.

The School is also committed to providing access to its purpose-built venues to alumni and industry, through ongoing agreements such as those with Bus Stop Films and the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia and ad hoc partnerships with industry such as Netflix, EP Australia, Arena Media, Screen Australia, Persian Film Festival, Taiwan Film Festival, Hong Kong Film Festival, Stranger Than Fiction and Sustainable Screens Australia, Made in the West Film Festival.

AFTRS continues to partner with the Australian International Documentary Conference, running the *Leading Lights* program, which in 2024 included 40 emerging and diverse non-fiction storytellers from across Australia offered exclusive professional development opportunities and four recipients given the chance to pitch their projects to key industry partners and donors following 1:1 pitch training and mentorship.

Finally, AFTRS is grateful to the generosity of organisations and individuals in the screen and broadcast sector who partner with the School to subsidise scholarships for students from under-represented groups or low socio-economic backgrounds, including Sony Australia, the Hoyts Group, Constellation Creatives, ARN, Nova Entertainment, EON Broadcasting, and Commercial Radio & Audio Francesca Beddie, Australia for UNHCR, Gentle Giant Media Group and the Onbass Fund, Pariya Taherzadeh, Anita Jacoby AM, as well as Andrew Myer and the Kenneth Myer Fellowship Trust.

# 4. STRATEGIC DIRECTION, DELIVERY, AND PERFORMANCE

The AFTRS’ Corporate Plan is designed around the three strategic pillars of AFTRS’ five-year corporate strategy, *Creating the Future*: National Reach, Excellence, and Sustainability.

As this final phase of the corporate strategy unfolds, the School’s corporate plan continues to guide and focus priorities, enabling the School to deliver AFTRS’ mission and provide Australians with access to the highest level of screen and broadcast training. In an operating environment that presents fresh opportunities, risks and challenges, this plan allows us to remain adaptable, resilient, and fit-for-purpose while upholding the commitment to creative excellence for which AFTRS is renowned. The principles supporting each pillar inform the strategic areas of focus articulated in the School’s corporate performance measures and key activities, including the Portfolio Budget Statement performance objectives and activities.

PILLAR 1: NATIONAL REACH	PILLAR 2: EXCELLENCE	PILLAR 3: SUSTAINABILITY
<i>Giving all Australians access to our world-class learning</i>	<i>Industry-aligned and forward-facing</i>	<i>Adaptive, resilient and fit-for-purpose</i>
First Nations Outreach & Inclusion Flexible Delivery	Learning & Teaching Research Industry Engagement	Business Development Resourcing Creativity & Wellbeing
AREAS OF STRATEGIC FOCUS		
1.1. First Nations Culture 1.2. Outreach & Inclusion	2.1. Talent Development 2.2. Industry Skills Training 2.3. Research & Innovation	3.1. Effective Organisation

# 4.1. PILLAR 1: NATIONAL REACH

Giving all Australians access to our world-class learning.

As the national screen and broadcast school, AFTRS engages, upskills, and supports the most talented learners in all states and territories. The pillar of national reach is supported by two strategic areas of focus –First Nations’ cultures and outreach and inclusion.

## Strategic focus: 1.1. First Nations' Culture

Embedding First Nations’ values within AFTRS by including First Nations’ knowledges, voices, values, and pedagogies to build the capacity and knowledge of our staff, graduates, and industry.

Corporate Performance Measure	Key Activities	Year Targets and Source			
		2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
Embedding First Nations’ values within AFTRS through the inclusion of First Nations’ voices, values, knowledges, and pedagogies to build the capacity and capability of our staff, students, graduates, and industry	Grow First Nations’ Community Stakeholders & Projects	2 First Nations-led partnerships per year			
		Source: AFTRS agreement database			
		2 MOUs in place with First Nations’ Community-controlled organisations per year			
		Source: AFTRS agreement database			
		Support 2 First Nations’ media and education conferences per year			
		Source: Sponsorship component: AFTRS agreement database; Event Attendance component: Registration Records / Calendar / Approval Evidence			

## Strategic focus: 1.2. Outreach & Inclusion

Supporting under-represented talent across Australia to work in the Australian screen and broadcast industries by building an inclusive school culture that celebrates all Australians and creating a flexible and responsive model of delivery that builds on AFTRS’ established strengths, delivering face-to-face learning in the School’s world-class Sydney campus.

Corporate Performance Measure	Key Activities	Year Targets and Source			
		2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
Ensure AFTRS reflects Australian society by supporting diversity across its activities	Deliver courses accessible to learners across the country	3,000 participants in industry training per year			
		Source: Award Course data component: Student Management System (SMS); Short Courses, and Industry training data component: Customer Relationship Management system (CRM); First Nations, and Outreach workshops / programs component: CRM / FN&O Partnerships Projects Register; Executive agreed programs component: CRM; Other Executive-agreed industry training component: CRM / Registration Record			
		40% of course enrolments outside of NSW	45% of course enrolments outside of NSW	50% of course enrolments outside of NSW	50% of course enrolments outside of NSW
		Source: Award Course data component: SMS; Short Courses, and Industry training data component: CRM/ Registration Records	Source: Award Course data component: SMS; Short Courses, and Industry training data component: CRM/ Registration Records	Source: Award Course data component: SMS; Short Courses, and Industry training data component: CRM/ Registration Records	Source: Award Course data component: SMS; Short Courses, and Industry training data component: CRM/ Registration Records
		1 partnered industry event per State and Territory outside NSW per year			
		Source: AFTRS agreement database			

1.2. Outreach & Inclusion — continued

Corporate Performance Measure	Key Activities	Year Targets and Source			
		2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
Cont'd	Partner with community organisations and high schools to build bridges from under-represented communities into AFTRS	8 Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CARM) community-led projects across Australia			
		Source: AFTRS agreement database / FN&O Partnerships Projects Register			
All Australians can access our world-class learning	Create a remote learning strategy that capitalises on AFTRS' strength in delivering hands-on practical learning across the country.	Develop the Remote Learning Strategy.	Implement the Remote Learning Strategy, and review to align with the new corporate strategy. recommendations from the review of the Flexible Learning Framework	Maintain the Remote Learning Strategy in alignment with the new corporate strategy.	Continue to maintain the Remote Learning Strategy in alignment with the new corporate strategy.
		Source: Development component: Executive endorsed report on strategy output	Source: Implement and review component: Executive endorsed report on strategy output	Source: Executive endorsed report on strategy output	Source: Executive endorsed report on strategy output
		4 interstate delivery partnerships per year across industry training and award courses			
		Source: AFTRS agreement database			
		Award 36 scholarships to students across Australia per calendar year			
		Source: Panel reports			
		Continue to implement the recommendations from the Disability Action Plan.	Review the recommendations from the Disability Action Plan to align with the new corporate strategy.	Implement the recommendations from the Disability Action Plan review in alignment with the new corporate strategy.	Maintain the Disability Action Plan in alignment with the new corporate strategy.
		Source: Executive endorsed report on plan output	Source: Executive endorsed report on plan output	Source: Executive endorsed report on plan output	Source: Executive endorsed report on plan output

# 4.2. PILLAR 2: EXCELLENCE

Industry-aligned and forward-facing.

Working together with industry, AFTRS offers the highest level of screen and broadcast training. Our graduates are sought-after for their outstanding craft skills and artistry. They are enterprising, highly creative, and professional. They understand the power of Australian story, underpinned by First Nations’ cultures, and enriched by our country’s diversity, to engage, entertain and connect audiences at home and around the world.

The pillar of excellence is supported by three strategic areas of focus —talent development, industry skills training, and research & innovation.

## Strategic focus: 2.1. Talent Development

Empowering student learning through a model of teaching excellence and an experiential curriculum that is inclusive, flexible, and national in its reach.

Corporate Performance Measure	Key Activities	Year Targets and Source			
		2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
Educate and train new talent to help grow and support the industry	Deliver accredited courses	300 award course enrolments per calendar year			
		Source: CRM			
		100 award course graduates per calendar year			
		Source: SMS			
Empower the learning of screen and broadcast storytellers and practitioners through an inclusive, experiential curriculum	Build and implement a learning & teaching plan through the Student Success Pathways Framework to deliver AFTRS’ unique approach to creative pedagogy.	Implement the Student Success Pathways Framework.  Source: Implementation component: Executive endorsed report on Student Success Pathways output	Review the Student Success Pathways Framework to align with the new corporate strategy.  Source: Review component: Executive endorsed report on Student Success Pathways output	Maintain the Student Success Pathways Framework in alignment with the new corporate strategy.  Source: Executive endorsed report on Student Success Pathways output	Continue to maintain the Student Success Pathways Framework in alignment with the new corporate strategy.  Source: Executive endorsed report on Student Success Pathways output
	Create a Belonging & Inclusion Strategic Plan that commits AFTRS to ensuring equitable access to its world-leading training and education and fostering an inclusive community where everyone can thrive and contribute uniquely.	Implement the Belonging & Inclusion Strategic Plan  Source: Implementation component: Executive endorsed report on plan output	Review the Belonging & Inclusion Strategic Plan to align with the new corporate strategy.  Source: Implementation component: Executive endorsed report on plan output	Maintain the Belonging & Inclusion Strategic Plan in alignment with the new corporate strategy.  Source: Executive endorsed report on plan output	Continue to maintain the Belonging & Inclusion Strategic Plan in alignment with the new corporate strategy.  Source: Executive endorsed report on plan output

## Strategic focus: 2.2. Industry Skills Training

Partnering with industry on the design, development and delivery of a range of courses that meet immediate need and provide pathways to life-long careers in the screen and broadcast industries.

Corporate Performance Measure	Key Activities	Year Targets and Source			
		2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
Ensure Australian screen and broadcast practitioners have the high levels of skills required to compete in an increasingly global marketplace.	Deliver industry-aligned training	75% of recent graduates are applying the skills they learnt in their AFTRS course, professionally  <i>Source: Graduate Outcomes Survey</i>			
		Annual consultation with industry stakeholders, including Industry Advisory Panels and triennial skills survey  [Triennial skills survey due for delivery 2027–28]  <i>Source: Industry Advisory Panels component: Panel attendance register/Individual agreements; Triennial skills survey component: Executive endorsed report</i>			
	Partner with screen & broadcast stakeholders to provide targeted training	10 industry training partnerships  <i>Source: AFTRS agreement database</i>			

## Strategic focus: 2.3. Research & Innovation

Providing the industry with the new knowledge it needs to keep Australia at the forefront of global innovation. Supporting a culture of enquiry, exploration, and rigour through the School’s research programs.

Corporate Performance Measure	Key Activities	Year Targets and Source			
		2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
Drive innovation in the screen and broadcast industry and practice-based education through research	Develop a faculty-driven research project that bridges industry knowledge and academic expertise	2 industry research projects are disseminated per year  <i>Source: Document component: Published on AFTRS website; Agreed applied research event component: Published event registration</i>			
		1 First Nations-led research partnership per year  <i>Source: AFTRS agreement database</i>			
Provide industry with new knowledge to keep the nation at the forefront of global innovation	Partner on values-driven, future-focused industry research projects	2 industry-partnered research projects per year  <i>Source: AFTRS agreement database</i>			



# PILLAR 3: SUSTAINABILITY

Adaptive, resilient and fit-for-purpose.

The School has a suite of scalable, adaptive, face-to-face and online offerings that allow us to grow our business whilst meeting local, regional, and state and territory demand for graduates in a sustainable way for our staff, our school resources, and our industry.

The pillar of sustainability is supported by a strategic area of focus — an effective organisation.

## Strategic focus 3.1. Effective Organisation

Sustaining an adaptive, efficient, and resourceful business that supports AFTRS’ mission as a global centre of excellence for screen and broadcast education, training and research.

Corporate Performance Measure	Key Activities	Year Targets and Source			
		2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
Ensure an adaptive, efficient, and sustainable business that supports AFTRS as a global centre of excellence for screen & broadcast education, training, and research	Growing a culture that celebrates and embraces belonging and inclusion with shared accountability for addressing patterns of systemic marginalisation	AFTRS staff community reflects a wide variety of lived experience and actively seeks to increase meaningful opportunities and participation of people who have been systematically marginalised.			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Average total remuneration gender pay gap of less than 5% across the organisation.</li></ul> <i>Source: AFTRS Payroll system</i>			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>51% Female and non-binary representation and at a leadership level</li></ul> <i>Source: AFTRS Payroll system</i>			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>9% of People living with disability<sup>9</sup></li></ul> <i>Source: AFTRS Payroll system</i>			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>5% First Nations</li></ul> <i>Source: AFTRS Payroll system</i>			
		5 focused School community activities that promote belonging and inclusion			
		<i>Source: Communications plan / published comms</i>			
	Develop and implement a staged environmental plan	Ongoing implementation and review of the Environmental Sustainability Strategic Plan			
		<i>Source: Implementation component: Executive endorsed report on plan output</i>			
	Ensure the organisation is financially sustainable and scalable	Maintain own-sourced funding value [Based on 2022-23 reported own-source funding value <sup>10</sup> ]			
		<i>Source: AFTRS Finance system</i>			
	Infrastructure Audit	Annual review of the Technology Strategic Plan against the priorities of the corporate strategy			
		<i>Source: Executive endorsed report and plan output</i>			

# 5. REFERENCES

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<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023) *Film, Television and Digital Games Australia FY 2021-22 survey*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/technology-and-innovation/film-television-and-digital-games-australia/latest-release>

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/getmedia/44398826-357b-4cce-9ad8-f00bc14349e8/Screen-Australia-Industry-Survey-2025.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> SaCSA, *Creative Workforce Scoping Study*, <https://sacsa.org.au/our-projects/creative-workforce-scoping-study/>

<sup>9</sup> Australian 16% of Australian population is living with disability—of that 53% participate in the workforce.

<sup>10</sup> Australian Film Television Radio School (2022), *AFTRS Annual Report 22-23*, <https://www.transparency.gov.au/publications/communications-and-the-arts/australianfilm-television-and-radio-school/australian-filmtelevision-and-radio-school-annual-report-2022-23>.

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