



# C31 Program Proposal Kit

Melbourne Community Television Consortium Ltd  
C31 Melbourne and Geelong  
June 2011

## Welcome

Melbourne Community Television Consortium Ltd is the licence holder for C31 Melbourne and Geelong community television.

This Program Kit is a guide for new producers and program makers wishing to make programs for broadcast on C31.

In this Kit, you'll find information and tools which should assist you to develop proposals for programs. We welcome questions about programs or proposals after you've read through the Program Kit.

### Contact details:

Street address: Level 1, 501 Swanston St Melbourne 3000  
Phone: 03 96603131  
Email: [info@c31.org.au](mailto:info@c31.org.au)  
Web: [www.c31.org.au](http://www.c31.org.au)

# Submitting a proposal

## Four major stages

Developing a concept into a program involves four major stages.

### 1. Submission of a thorough program proposal

All new ideas and concepts for a program on C31 must be received in the form of a thorough written program proposal. The following page outlines the various issues that must be covered in a program proposal, and it is advised that you attach any other documentation that supports your application. Upon receipt of a program proposal, C31's Programming Department will assess whether the producer is prepared to submit a pilot for consideration, or whether further development of the concept is required.

### 2. Submission of a pilot program

After submission and approval of a program proposal, the Programming Department will request a pilot episode for review. Pilots should be submitted on DVD. Upon receipt of a pilot, the Programming Department assesses the content and technical execution of the program for compliance with the C31 programming policy and the Community Television Codes of Practice and licence conditions. Please note that there are deadlines for pilot submission to ensure that the program qualifies for the next season's grid. You can speak to the Programming Team for more information regarding season dates.

### 3. Approval to commence series production

Once a pilot has been approved, production of the series may commence. During this time C31 can assist producers with sourcing volunteers, equipment and other practical elements to TV producing.

### 4. Commencement of broadcast

When the series is ready for broadcast, a timeslot will be assigned by the Programming Department. Producers are required to enter into a Program Broadcast Licence agreement which details the program's clearances and conditions of broadcast. At this stage, any financial arrangements are confirmed.

# What to include in your proposal.

A written program proposal should provide the information listed below. The Programming Department may request further information or documentation to support the application.

**Program Title:** We need to know the Program Title to ensure it isn't already in use at C31 or any other external programs. This should be kept to around 3 words max to allow it to be printed in TV Guides and to ensure viewers remember it.

**Synopsis (200 words):** We need a synopsis for the C31 web site and for the information of the Programming Department and Programming Committee.

**Audience or segment of community intending to cater for:** We need to know the proposed audience or section of the community which the program is intended for to ensure that it fits the requirements of our charter, our community television licence and the Community Television Codes of Practice.

**Episode Duration:** We need to know the proposed episode duration to ensure it fits our programming and scheduling requirements.

**Length of Series:** We need to know the proposed length of series to ensure it fits our season programming and scheduling requirements.

**Experience in television or media:** We need to be confident that your production and presentation team are able to produce the program as contracted.

**How much crew will your show require, and where do you intend to source this crew:** We need to be confident that your production team is sufficient to produce the program and whether you will need to seek other community television participants to complete the program as contracted.

**Will you shoot in a studio or on location:** We need to know the proposed nature of the program to ensure that it's programmed and scheduled to fit the relevant season's program grid.

**Do you possess or have access to camera equipment, lights, sound equipment, editing suites?** We need to be confident that your equipment is able to be used to produce the program as contracted and meet the technical requirements of the station.

**How do you intend to fund your program?** We need to be confident that your program funding arrangements are within the terms of sponsorship and fundraising rules arising out of our licence, the Community Television Codes of Practice and the Act.

**How will you promote your program?** We need to be confident that your program promotion arrangements are within the terms of programming, sponsorship and related policy arising out of our licence, the Community Television Codes of Practice and the Act.

**Is the material original or sourced from overseas or other television sources?** We need written proof of your ability to use material in your program—original material through program broadcast clearances, music clearances and broadcast clearances and/or material sources from overseas or other television sources through legal documents proving rebroadcast rights. Special conditions relate to some footage, music and performance rights (e.g. the Olympics). Our programming policy, the terms of the Codes of Practice and the Act promotes local and diverse programming over programming material imported from overseas.

**Do you have copyright clearances?** We need written proof of your processes for copyright clearances for performance, music and broadcast rights.

**What program classification will the program generally expect to bear?** We need to know this because it affects the timeslots in which your program could be shown.

**What program evaluation processes are you proposing to use?** We need to be confident that your program will be regularly subject to self, group and community evaluation and improvement.

**What other information about the program do you wish to provide?** We are interested in diverse and different programming and welcome your original ideas and concepts.

# Specs & Tips

## Program content

When you are developing a program concept, you should consider the following points:

### Do you know who the target audience is?

- Who will watch the show?
- Who do you want to be watching the show?
- Will the content of the program be of interest to those people?
- Is the content presented in a way which makes it accessible and interesting to a broader audience as well your target audience?

### Why would people want to watch your program?

- What is the purpose of your program?
- What will it communicate to the audience?
- Will it inform, entertain or educate the people watching?
- Why would someone want to sit down and watch your program instead of doing something else?

### Has the content been placed in context?

- Is it clear from watching the program why the content is being broadcast to the audience?
- Does the program explain what is being shown, who the people in the program are, and why their contribution is worth watching?
- If the program includes coverage of a community event, will people who were not present at the event know what is happening in the footage being shown?

## Series length

C31 programs generally run in thirteen week seasons; however, we make every effort to accommodate one-off special events, short-run series, longer series and varied episode durations.

## Episode durations

30 minute timeslot: total program duration must be 24 - 25 minutes, in 3 segments (2 breaks).

60 minute timeslot: total program duration must be 48 - 50 minutes, in 5 segments (4 breaks).

## Tape Format and Technical Specifications

Programs must meet all technical criteria including consistent audio levels; ensuring footage is in the correct aspect ratio, and correct camera focus and exposure.

- C31 accepts Mini DV or DVD (NB: Pilots should be submitted on DVD).
- C31 broadcasts in an aspect ratio of 16:9
- C31 requires audio to be recorded at -12 db and submitted as stereo or dual mono.
- For more detailed technical specifications, you should refer to the C31 Program Broadcast Licence & Programming Policy.

## Time-slots

Timeslots are arranged at the discretion of the Programming Department. Each season the Programming Department review the schedule and a time slot is determined based on programming blocks, genres, trends, ratings and other station's schedules. Please note that timeslots may change from season to season.

## Prohibition on advertising content

As a community television broadcaster, C31 is not allowed to have any advertising or product promotion within programs. This is a requirement of the station's licence, as stated in the Broadcasting Services Act and administered by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). The ACMA publish guidelines explaining the kinds of material which are not

allowed to be included in programs. These guidelines can change from time to time as the ACMA investigates viewer complaints and makes specific decisions about particular issues. Producers must be aware of potential changes to these guidelines and comply with the decisions and direction of the Programming Department.

More information regarding this topic can be found on the C31 website, and it is very important that all producers familiarise themselves with what can and cannot be done within their program. Episodes will be edited or rejected entirely if they breach the guidelines and contain advertising material.

## **Sponsorship**

Programs can purchase sponsorship time which they can 'on-sell' to sponsors to assist in covering program production costs. Sponsorship time can be used in two ways:

- *Spots*. These are similar to 'ads'. They can be 15 or 30 second ads that feature in ad breaks.
- *Billboards*. These can appear at the top and/or tail of your program acknowledging your sponsors. For example "Hound TV is proudly brought to you by Pets Warehouse and Dogs World". Billboards can be a maximum of 15 seconds combined top and tail.

## **Use of third-party content**

Program makers often want to use existing music and video content in their program. Almost all content is likely to be protected by copyright. Copyright covers music, book and plays, television programs and films, photographs and internet based content including web videos (such as YouTube videos).

As a producer you should be aware that it is your legal responsibility to ensure that you have obtained permission from the copyright owner to use the material in your program. The Program Broadcast Licence you sign as a producer with C31 requires you to cover any legal costs arising if you use copyright material without permission.

### Music

C31 has a blanket licence with APRA/AMCOS which allows the channel and its program makers to use music compositions controlled by APRA/AMCOS publishers in programs broadcast on C31 (except for use as program theme music). Note that this licence only covers the copyright owned by the writer of the music, and does not cover the copyright in recordings of the music.

Producers need to clear the use of the recording of the music with the copyright owner - for a commercially released recording this will be the record company which released the recording. Further information about the use and licensing of music can be obtained from the Programming Department.

## **C31 Studio**

C31 has a studio that is available for producers to use. The C31 studio can offer your program:

- 4 Camera compressed air pedestal set up
- Vision mixer
- Wireless lapels, handheld and wired microphones
- Digital Audio Mixer
- Mini DV tape deck (playout and record)
- 7 LED dimmable lights
- Green screen
- Autocue
- Talkback communication between studio and control room
- Green room area

Potential live broadcast set up as well as potential for video insert and overlay playout (\*may incur additional costs)

For more details and specifics please contact the Technical Manager.

Please contact the station for current rates to hire the studio.

# Reading Checklist

The following documents are available on the C31 website:

- Community Television Codes of Practice
- Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games
- Music, Copyright and Channel 31
- C31 Program Broadcast Licence
- MCTC Programming Policy
- Technical Training Guides & DVDs
- Sponsorship & Advertising FAQ
- Community Broadcasting Competition Guidelines
- Studio Booking Information

## **This proposal should be submitted to:**

info@c31.org.au, or:

Programming Department,  
C31, Level 1, 501 Swanston Street,  
Melbourne, VIC 3000

Program proposers will be contacted by the Programming Department within three (3) weeks with the result of their proposal.