



Dear Actors & Agents,

The Casting Guild of Australia (CGA) would like to offer some tips and information to actors which we believe will help them, and us, through the casting process:

CASTING PLATFORMS:

Casting Platforms are essential to be on. Casting Directors spend the majority of each working day using them.

Different Casting Directors use different platforms. When choosing which casting platform/s you are on, please do your research and consult with your agent to work out which platform or platforms are best for you.

Casting platforms are not just used by us to brief projects, collect suggestions, send out audition requests and collect tapes. They are also used for general searches – when we are looking for inspiration.

We also send audition tapes to directors / producers / network / studio on these sites. So, when we send off a tape (or suggestions) on a casting platform – an employer is also able to see your profile, access your reels and cv. If you are not on these sites, or if your profile isn't updated, the people hiring you will not know about your previous work.

Our advice is if you're going to invest in your acting career – being on the major professional casting platform/s is a most important investment. Remember that the cost is tax deductible.

We also recommend that whatever site or sites you choose have a vetting system in place for those who can post audition notices. Also being mindful that the projects you are submitted for, at the very least, have all MEAA minimum fees, terms and conditions upheld.

The main search tools we use on casting platforms are:

- Age Range
- Gender
- Actor Base location
- Ethnicity
- Unique attributes

Please check these fields are accurate and up to date on your profiles.

Tips for your profile:

- Have a showreel, scenes or past self-tapes for us to view. If you have these, we will be able to send them direct to client producers and directors and would be more likely to be able to make more 'offers' rather than asking you to audition.
- Update your credits each time you film something new.
- Have a headshot that is less than 5 years old and update it if you change your look. We need the actor in the headshot to look like the person who walks into the room or who is on the self-tape (i.e. avoid overly made up, heavily filtered or touched up headshots)

SELF TAPES:

Most of our Casting Director members will continue requesting self-tapes for the first round of auditions and then call-backs will mostly be in person, either in the studio or on zoom.

As mentioned above, a professional profile on any casting platform will be a very valuable tool for you for the reasons set out. However, you should never be expected to pay to submit a self-tape on any casting platform. If you do not have a professional profile on the casting platform being used for self-tape submissions, you should still be able to submit your work without cost, the Casting Director will provide the appropriate link. The CGA will always insist that any casting platforms used to receive tapes are cost-free for an actor to upload, regardless of membership.

Also, please never feel the need to go to a professional studio and pay to record a self-tape. Self-tapes can be recorded at home, on a smart phone.

It's important to remember that an audition is never a final performance (it will never be perfect - that is an impossible ask). An audition is purely an indication of where you as an artist may take a role. We expect a self-tape to be rough around the edges - as long as we can see and hear you clearly, it's fine. That essence of who you believe the character is, is far more important than the perfect lighting, sound or line read.

When we request a self-tape, it is really important for us that you *confirm* or *decline* the request to your agent within 48hrs. If we don't hear within 48hrs we have to assume you are not available. Please understand that if you don't *confirm* or *decline* this will also mean that we won't be able to replace you with another actor so they will miss out on this opportunity (and this could be you in future!). Treat it like being invited over to a friend's place for dinner and not replying to the invitation – we don't want to have dinner by ourselves!!

If you have difficulty self-taping at home, the Equity Foundation have a self-tape studio in most capital cities for members to use free of charge. You can visit [Self Test Studios](#) to find a self-tape studio in your city.

New self-test support is also available in Sydney for MEAA members with 25+ years of experience, please see here: [Senior Equity Members Self Tape Support](#) This is an NSW pilot program the Equity Foundation hopes to roll out nation-wide.

Pearl Tan recorded some great simple advice on how to self-tape. You can find these four videos on YouTube – just search ‘Pearl Tan self-test videos’. Equity Foundation with Media Super also have some excellent “how to” videos here: [Self-Test videos](#)

EQUITY SELF TAPE GUIDELINES:

The CGA were part of the consultation process of the [Equity Self Tape Guidelines](#) and we always strive to meet these agreed terms. In the (hopefully rare) event lead times can't be met (such as a Covid recast or an unavoidable scheduling change) consultation with all parties (Casting Director, Agent and Actor) is vital to find the easiest solution for all.

It is frustrating for our members that often there aren't enough hours in a day for us to be able to provide more detailed constructive feedback to actors on their self-test. We really appreciate the time and effort that actors and agents put into this process. Rest assured we watch every test (sometimes more than once)!

We understand the importance of knowing the outcome of your audition and we 100% encourage all our guild members to let actors know if it is a YES or NO as soon as they can. We are working with the casting platforms to have a Yes/No feedback button to streamline this process. Sometimes the casting can take months from the initial auditions and we are unable to officially say a role is cast until an offer has been accepted - so there may be a long delay before any status update can be issued.

SELF TAPING - THE POSITIVES & NEGATIVES:

We understand the audition landscape has changed dramatically for you and for us in the past few years with the move to self-taping. We acknowledge that many of you feel there are positives and negatives to these changes. We wanted to acknowledge below some of these positives and negatives:

Positives

- Casting Directors are able to give opportunities to more actors than in the past when restricted to time in the room. As a result, Actors have more opportunities to be seen for different projects and Casting have greater ability to find the right person for the part.
- Actors no longer have to work their lives around audition times. Getting to a studio at an appointed time, dealing with public transport, parking, giving up other work or working around school pick up, childcare etc.
- Actors (and casting directors) are able to live in locations not as close to major metro areas where most casting offices are located.
- Actors are able to be easily considered even if on holiday or working in a remote location.

- Actors have time to send in scene work they are happy with, rather than having 20 minutes to do multiple scenes with nerves on top. This also benefits the casting team - As a result we are often seeing auditions of a much higher standard and likely more reflective of what an actor is capable of.
- Casting Directors are getting to see work that the actor has selected as their preferred take.

Negatives

- More opportunity equals more competition. Now that casting can consider more actors - all the actors face more competition for a role. (But at least actors who may not have been seen will be in with a shot.)
- Feeling unseen – we know working in front of someone is a very different experience to working at home. We are missing the connection that comes with working together in a room. Know that you ARE seen – even if you don't feel it.
- Not getting direction. Whilst most of us send performance notes with our audition scenes – there isn't an opportunity for immediate re-direction in the room. This is a tough one. Often - re-direction wasn't given, but actually, we are often looking for an actor's instinct for the role. When an actor's instinct is bang on – it's invaluable for a director. We do acknowledge though, not receiving immediate feedback can be difficult for some actors.
- Actors don't automatically have a reader assigned by a Casting Director, so need to ask a friend, or record other dialogue yourself. Please know – of course having a reader you're happy working with will be an advantage to your work. BUT if you don't have a great reader – trust that if your work is still good – Casting Directors are very adept now at looking past an imperfect reader.
- We acknowledge time is a negative factor for some actors, it can take some people more time to do a self tape than it did when they came into the room. (But it does mean you no longer have to travel, take time off work, pay for parking, get a babysitter etc)

MEAA:

Besides being part of an important and powerful community, what you get from MEAA membership is a result of many years of hard work and enormous efforts in defining, maintaining and improving minimum fees, terms & conditions. Hopefully you will never need the backup of the union to step in and take action on your behalf - but if you do, this will be an invaluable investment. Do note, if you are not a member and you get into difficulty the MEAA will be limited in how they can help, if at all.

THANK YOU:

Finally, a huge thank you to all the actors for the work you put into your auditions. The best part of our day is receiving new tapes, we are always excited to see what you have done with the role in your self-tape and we really appreciate all your efforts.

Thank you,

CGA Film & TV Committee and Executive Committee Members:

Aeshlie Wheeler, Annabel Clayton, Annie Murtagh-Monks Anousha Zarkesh; David Newman
Faith Martin; Greg Apps; Kate Leonard; Kirsty McGregor; Nathan Lloyd; Nick Hamon; Nikki
Barrett; Stephanie Pringle, Peter Rasmussen, Tom McSweeney; Thea McLeod

On behalf of all Members of the Casting Guild of Australia 2023