

Christopher Leech

Hello My name is Christopher Leech and I work in the Australian film industry. I have worked prominently in the steel fabrication and construction aspects of the industry over the past 21 years, since 1999. I have been fortunate enough to work on many of the larger international scale films, but also proud to have worked on our unique Australian films, like Mad Max Fury Road, Kangaroo Jack, and Australia.

I've worked in roles from steel worker, action vehicles welder, leading hand, foreman and now in Special Effects fabrication.

I believe that significant change is required to help boost our film industries viability on the world stage.

Incentives and obligations need to be applied equally across platforms.

This model would require all commercial content providers — including streaming services — to invest in new Australian content, and ABC and SBS would receive funding for children's programming.

This option is most likely to capture all new platforms and sustain the Australian industry and jobs long term.

1. Both broadcasters and digital platforms like Netflix and Stan should be required to produce Australian content, including scripted and documentary programs — they profit from Australian audiences, they should invest in Australian stories and jobs.
2. Tax incentives should be updated to become internationally competitive and applied equally across platforms; with additional support for culturally significant programming, such as those that explore contemporary indigenous and multicultural issues relevant to strengthening the Australian social fabric. Let's support content across platforms and bring more work to Australia as well as investing in home-grown content.

3. Funding for public broadcasters and screen agencies should be increased so they can continue to invest in our industry, and support Australian jobs and storytelling. This is critical to maintaining a vibrant, culturally rich, educated, creative and tolerant Australian society.

In my experience working abroad in Europe and Africa with EU, UK, NZ and South African crews; their support systems for their film industries well surpass and eclipse what Australia has done for our local film industry. Our Australian crews are of a high caliber even though their jobs are not given the same support and protection as other industries. Consequently, our sought after crews are often forced to leave their families here and find work overseas.

Tax offsets are common place and at higher rates in these other countries and they in turn have become sought after destinations in the film game, which in turn makes their industry more attractive to large and small film production investment, when it could be here, in Australia. We have world class studios, locations, creatives and quality of life yet this is not nurtured to the betterment of our country. Overseas based crews have continuous work - moving from one production to the next. But here in Australia we are lucky to get a small bite of that apple depending on our dollar value at a given time or if the government of the day can be bothered to muster interest and support our industry.

What is clear every time is that international productions value and respect the Australian hard work ethic, technical skills, can do attitude, creativity, innovation and access to amazing and diverse locations and facilities.

It is always the costs that deter them, and the often insurmountable hoop jumping required. Other countries are usually first to clinch the deal and raise incentives to bring a production's investment revenue dollars into their country.

If policy could be implemented that brings more investment in Australian and International productions then our industry will flourish.

As long as Australian content quotas are kept low then digital platforms like Netflix, Stan and free to air broadcasters will buy the cheaper imported films, drama, documentaries, children's programming and productions. Even cheaper TV commercials are used to avoid the costs of making ads here or using Australian voice-overs on overseas produced ads to meet low percentage quotas for content rules here.

So we end up not seeing or hearing our unique Australian stories, only left over reruns of overseas content. And this devalues our rich cultural fabric, and disconnects people from each other, from place and history.

The broadcasters pick up overseas content cheap and we become the dumping ground. Meanwhile our local, unsupported industry suffers and becomes nonviable; resulting in our unique stories falling by the way side. Many professional, creative and hard working people lose their careers and we as a nation lose out for generations to come.

We need our government to back our industry, write policy that helps protect, and support it and to make it competitive locally and on the world stage as well.

Thank You.

Sincerely Christopher Leech.

SFX Fabrication Technician and believer in Australia's potential to shine.

I wish for my submission to be anonymous: No

I wish for my submission to be private: No

Supporting documents:

This submission has been lodged via the [Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance](#).