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FINER FILMS

Date: Friday, July 3, 2020

Australian Federal Government
via contentoptionspaper@communications.gov.au.

To Whom It May Concern,

I propose a solution for you to consider.

I understand that our small population in a large global market place that demands quality screened content places limitations on the Australian film/TV/gaming/online/content industry. We don't have enough buyers in Australia to pay for the costs of our content. It's basic economics. This places strain on our budgets, limitations on our choices, and we hope and pray that the compromises we producers have to make do not negatively impact on screen and adversely affect our potential sales. But here's the kicker. Quality Australian content exports to markets around the world and just like a well-made pair of boots, our export sales rely on the quality of our product, and other people deciding they want it so much they will pay handsomely for it. You can't do that on a shoe-string budget, as a general rule. In a global market of English speaking screened content viewers—quality Australian content sells. On this point, I want to be clear, that investing tax payers dollars into screened content cannot be shy, half hearted, or spread too thin across too many projects, compromising all of them. Significant, targeted financial support of well-made Australian stories pays dividends through international sales. For example, The Kettering incident, Lion, and The Dressmaker. My vote is for MORE FINANCIAL SUPPORT of Australian content for local and international audiences.

The negative flip side to this global market, and addition of independent streaming platforms, is that quality international content is cheaper to buy and screen in Australia and our national and local stories have been squashed purely through the economics of business margins dictated by international corporations - not beholden to the best interests of Australia and its people as networks (9,10,7 etc.) are. This is the problem we address here, and my vote is for MORE AUSTRALIAN CONTENT ON STREAMING PLATFORMS as a condition of business, in a way that has positive business results for Netflix and the like.

MY SUGGESTION IS— like GST, a tariff based on sales of the streaming platform's subscriptions from our region, could be set aside in the streaming business ledger to be re-invested into Australian, New Zealand, pacific region content. This Australian content could be produced by Australian companies, and/or the Australian registered business of that streaming service such as Netflix Australia or Disney Australia and could include third parties such as distributors. Minimum and maximum targets on production dollar per hour, and number of productions etc. could be in place to protect and even playing field for entry level, middle career and high end projects, project teams and budgets open to any form of screened content including, but not limited to online, film and TV content.

For example, lets say 10% of Netflix Australia's gross business income derived from Australians (organisations/individuals, advertisers, etc) is mandated to be spent on Australian productions in the style of a First Look Deal with Netflix Australia – and if Netflix decide they don't want to screen the completed content – that producer can shop that content around to other platforms, and if sold, could pay a kick back percentage to Netflix, to reinvest into other Australian productions.

I hope my suggestion sits well with you.

Thank you for reaching out to the community to engage with you on this very important, culturally significant, protectionist solution to a changing world.

Sincerely,

Katrina Fleming
CEO, Creative Producer, Director and Writer
Finer Films