

Dear Minister for Communications, CyberSafety, and the Arts

Re: Supporting Australian stories on our screens – options paper

Australia has long led the world in telling its stories. That the world's first feature length movie *the story of the Kelly Gang*, came from Australia is testament to our country's ingenuity and passion for film and television. It is a tradition that is alive today, with critical and international successes of countless Australian movies and TV shows. These traditions, and successes start here, in Australia on our screens at home.

My husband works in the Australian film and television industry, and a large part of our household income comes from his work in this industry. He has worked on numerous iconic Australian and international productions, and as a partner I am incredibly proud of what he has achieved. Without content quotas and sufficient funding, he would not have had the same opportunities to pursue a career in which he has excelled.

A quota for Australian content on our screens is crucial, in not only telling our stories but in supporting our film and television sector. It is a sector which employs over 45,000 people across Australia, and which contributes billions to the Australian economy¹. I am concerned that without a meaningful quota in place, as well as other incentives, that a homegrown film and television sector may be lost. In this regard the current quota system needs to remain.

As well as maintaining content quotas for traditional free to air, the quota system also needs to be extended to streaming services. Services such as Stan already shows and produces considerable Australian content but can do more. Netflix, with over 11 million Australians subscribing to the service² has a long way to go in producing Australian content. By encouraging Netflix, Stan, and the numerous other streaming services which operate in Australia, to support the Australian film and television sector through producing Australian content, our stories will continue to be told on screen.

Coupled with an updated the quota system, tax incentives for Australian and International producers to make Australian content could also be an effective tool to support and develop Australia's film and television industry. Tax incentives would encourage shows to either film in Australia (previously this has included *The Leftovers* and *Preacher*) or to continue to develop and shoot Australian based shows (such as *Stan's the Gloaming*). In both of these cases local crews have been hired, and there has been a demonstrable contribution to local economies which justify the tax incentives.

Finally, financial support for the production of Australian film and television is equally important as content quotas and tax incentives. As mentioned above, the production of films and television in Australia contributes billions into our economy. In recent years considerable amounts of money have been taken out of the budgets for the ABC and SBS. These two providers, as well creating Australian drama and documentary content for adults, are the leading contributors to Australian content for children and teens. It would be hard

¹ Source: Screen Currency valuing our screen industry, Screen Australia, 2016

² Source: Almost 14 million Australians have subscription or pay TV, Roy Morgan, July 2019

to find an Australian who was not educated, soothed or entertained as a child by shows such as Play School, the Wiggles, or even Bananas in Pyjamas. Without the adequate funding or the push of content quotas these shows may never have been made.

Australians have so many incredible stories to tell, and it would be a shame to lose those stories because we have abandoned the quota system. An increase in funding coupled with tax incentives for Australian and international production companies to create Australian content can help to ensure a thriving screen sector in our country for generations to come.

Thank you for reading and considering this submission.

Regards,

Madelyn Anderson