



30 September 2008

Screen Australia

Dear Sir/Madam

This is a response to Screen Australia's Draft Statement of Intent on behalf of MOD Films.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We welcome any move towards greater accountability and focus on private sector requirements for creative and commercial success. We welcome any further support for creating sustainable businesses and social capital in parallel. In that light we hope that 'achievement' will be defined by our peers and audience, not purely by box office figures.

DIGITAL AND 'NEW MEDIA' CONSIDERATIONS

We recommend that Screen Australia drop references to 'new media' as novelty risks being exaggerated as an excuse for things to stay as they are. Digital considerations are fundamental. 'Cross-media' or 'interactive media' would be more appropriate.

Screen Australia could make a more concerted effort to support and promote awareness of innovation outside traditional film and TV to the benefit of all screen-based practitioners. Film, TV, game and less categorizable forms of interactive screen-based entertainment production lives in silos. We need help linking creative and business talent together, across these silos, to leverage synergies and create opportunities. Screen Australia is in position to not only support this framework, but reward early adopters and risk takers that succeed. For example the Canberra team that contributed to "Bioshock", one of the most acclaimed video games of 2007 (e.g. BAFTA Game of the Year) for cinematic storytelling qualities.

Screen Australia could benefit from exploring synergy with other industry bodies such as AIMIA and GDAA. More support for real-world offline networking events and cross-industry events could help dispel some of the myths and fears about digital production and identify new business opportunities.

We urge Screen Australia to support producers with online delivery costs to avoid the situation where budget shortfalls result in failures on launch due to inadequate technical planning and infrastructure.

CULTURAL MERIT

We support another previous comment that 'cultural merit' should be considered broadly and flexibly. Rigid funding criteria on the basis of national stereotypes and post codes is no way to encourage Australians storytellers to broaden their horizons and create work of global interest from anywhere in the world. Avoid putting producers in a tug-of-war situation between national funding bodies.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Like a previous commenter, we would like to see an online submission system used for all application schemes.

Screen Australia could make deadlines and events more transparent by publishing more machine-readable public information in standard formats.

- * a digital calendar file (.ics format) containing up-to-date events and deadlines
- * subject-specific RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds on all web sites so that headlines are more easily syndicated, re-used and mashed-up by other information services.

A large monolithic web site may not serve the best needs of the industry. Screen Australia could be better off focusing on cross-channel and cross-platform publishing. Allow information to flow more freely between more lighter-weight information sites that are more flexible and cheaper to manage. Please make your information suitable for dissemination to different devices and to different contexts. The notion of a one-size-fits-all destination web portal is arguably out-of-date.

Good luck with the re-launch and please feel free to contact us for any further thoughts.

Regards

Michela Ledwidge, MOD Films