

COMMENTS OF DRAFT STATEMENT OF INTENT

The draft Statement of Intent is so very general it's hard to be clear about what the details and criteria will eventually be. However, it's clear there will be big changes so I have a few brief comments that might add something.

1. Enterprise and professional development (and scripts)

Where applicants secure three year enterprise funding it is not clear how this will be administered and what will the criteria of success be. The experience at the AFC with the smaller GDI's is that these enterprises take much managing, rarely return money unless pursued and so many projects go m nowhere. A system of management will have to be in place.

2. Script Funding

Also the funding of feature scripts should take on a new aspect**commissioning scripts if necessary with teams**. The Australian system has suffered because the agencies have to wait for people to apply with scripts...the whole industry is limited to what writers get up to in their attics, generally with no money. if production houses take on the funding and assessing of scripts they will have to have guidelines of fairness and openness and transparency or there will be a mass of complaints and ill feeling.

3. Short Films

Giving a production house the slate of short films will require more money because short films do not make a profit and generally (because they are usually new filmmakers) require much assistance and maintenance from professionals that would not be profitable for production houses. I would spread the short films among many production houses (if it's going to happen) and have strict criteria of management and results. The whole idea of short films is to develop talent and the assessment s needed are huge and expensive.

4. Production Financing

The PRODUCTION FINANCING in the SOI is the least detailed but will be the most complex. What about all the programs of Short documentaries the AFC has been managing? What about animation? New media elements require careful assessing and criteria. I think this needs far deeper thought.

Feature films to come through a 'criteria based door'? What criteria? If you go

back to the old market attachment theory of the nineties you will end up with the same product as before (run by Hoyts and Channel 9) which was just as unprofitable as now. Screen Australia needs to inspire filmmakers not give them parameters and grim profit return ultimatums. You can't make films mechanically to a formula, if you could everyone would be doing it. You need creativity mixed with knowledge and audience awareness, you need risk takers and there is no success without failures. We need to challenge filmmakers to be bolder, both commercially and creatively while still requesting them to be passionate about their audience. The distributors have NEVER been any good at picking winners unless the film is finished...most of them can't really read scripts let alone develop them...it's not their training...look at their record. It's a bureaucratic cliché to dump the feature film industry in their hands. They don't do it in America. There, it's in the hands of the production companies..whose business it is to make films.

5. Low Budget features

The idea do 100% funding for low budget is a great one. It needs major thought and planning and has to be there as an **inspiration** not a sop. The films in that category would necessarily need to be bold in some way and preferably have experienced filmmakers making them (though not necessarily... the best films should be picked whatever the age of the filmmakers). This is a category that could also involve pro active commissioning. I think also the budgets of these films should be SEVERELY LIMITED and there should be concessions about crew numbers and fees and ways of setting about the making of the film plus the inclusion of private money. Low budget means LOW BUDGET, which means , essentially, OPPORTUNITY.

6. Documentaries

The handling of documentaries needs to be done with extreme care. The demise of Film Australia is a deep blow to documentary makers and there needs to be something positive and solid to replace it. Australian documentaries are wonderful and wonderful for this country and I hope the DEVELOPMENT of new documentary makers (such a big part of the old AFC) is not overlooked. I have no real suggestions and I think commissioning and outsourcing is the right way to go. More important are the individuals in charge of this commissioning and outsourcing. There should be ways for documentary makers to avoid the control of commissioning editors in television, there should be ways of making feature documentaries and/ or just long documentaries as well as Wild Life films. Encouragement, above all, should given to bold idea and documentaries that challenge the status quo and the current government (in fact ANY government). I hope this government can get rid of the idea of controlling documentaries that say things they don't want to hear.

OVERALL

OVERALL I think the potential changes to the industry indicated in this statement, while seemingly healthy and forward looking (even exciting), still need a lot of research and thought and a more clear **philosophy** than is obvious here. It's not 'change for changes sake' that will make our industry better, it's THINKING about WHAT CHANGES that will change it and only THINKING. That takes time... and research....I feel this whole change is being rushed without any real knowledge of what was going on before... and I fear for the industry that will result if more time is not taken to THINK and PLAN more carefully.

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