

31 January 2014

Screen Australia

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Via: feedback@screenaustralia.gov.au

To Whom It May Concern:

SUBMISSION ON ENTERPRISE FUNDING PROGRAM REVIEW

As an emerging production company, established in 2007, it is very encouraging for Aquarius Films to witness the growth of the production companies that have received Enterprise Program funding to date. We congratulate Screen Australia on its success and thank you for taking the time to consult with industry on the future of the Program.

One of the options put forward in the discussion paper is a focus on younger companies. We agree that 'Young Enterprise would help to future-proof the Australian screen sector' and the Aquarius slate would suggest that younger producers gravitate towards younger collaborators. We have already produced a number of critically acclaimed dramas by emerging talent including the breakthrough short films of *Animal Kingdom* director David Michod - *Crossbow* and *Netherland Dwarf* - and *Wish You Were Here*, the first feature from talented writer/director Kieran Darcy-Smith. All these films premiered at Sundance and have made extensive sales internationally.

This is not to suggest that Aquarius will only work with emerging filmmakers - in fact we are currently working with some very experienced directors such as Cate Shortland and Brendan Fletcher – but it does suggest that newer production companies are well placed to foster talent renewal within the sector.

While not a formal part of this review, we feel it is timely to mention one of Enterprise's

targeted programs, Features Enterprise. Aquarius gratefully received Features Enterprise funding in 2012. Since that time we have expanded the company from the founding team of Angie Fielder and Polly Staniford to include two development assistants. In late 2013, producer Cecilia Ritchie also joined the company to focus on the development of factual projects. It is pleasing to see that in doing so we are addressing some of the key characteristics of 'sustainable' businesses as identified by Screen Australia – collaboration and mixed slates and income sources.

Attracting more human resources to the company has meant we are able to pursue some of the KPIs of our Features Enterprise agreement, which relate mainly to developing feature film projects for co-financing with international partners. As all these projects come to fruition, we feel that Enterprise Program would be an enormously valuable next step for the company. To that end we would very much welcome an expansion of Screen Australia's overall budget allocation for the Program.

Aquarius would also welcome an initial expressions-of-interest phase during the application process as preparing applications can be labour intensive.

Yours sincerely

Angie Fielder, Polly Staniford & Cecilia Ritchie

Aquarius Films

Via email