

MEDIA RELEASE

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Government funding for television – a better way?

Friday 18 June 2010: Screen Australia will review its funding of television production to ensure that the organisation is supporting the television production industry and Australian programming in an optimum way.

“It is vital that Screen Australia has a role in ensuring the continued investment in a diverse range of television programming including quality drama, innovative children’s television and documentaries that record matters of national significance. This review will allow us to develop a new blueprint for Screen Australia’s support of the television production industry,” said **Ruth Harley**, Screen Australia’s Chief Executive. “The television environment is changing dramatically and Screen Australia has not looked at how we fund television drama since the creation of the new organisation. The introduction of the 20% Producer Offset for television allows us to explore how we can play a more active role in the creation of innovative television.”

In the 2009/10 financial year, Screen Australia provided over \$35 million in funding to almost 80 television programs. Screen Australia-supported programs enjoy acclaim from audiences and critics alike and include the television dramas *East West 101*, *Rake* and *Rush* and the documentaries *The Snowman*, *Kokoda* and *Bombora*. Screen Australia provided seed funding for the *Underbelly* series as well as funding for the interactive children’s series *My Place*. The organisation has allocated an indicative \$35 million to the funding of television in the 2010/11 financial year.

Screen Australia’s television drama and documentary funding programs include:

- Television Drama (including Low-budget Drama)
- Children’s Television Drama, and
- Documentary Production including the five areas of funding:
 - The National Documentary Program
 - The Domestic Documentary Program
 - The International Documentary Program
 - The Special Documentary Programs
 - Special Documentary Initiatives.

The review will look at Screen Australia’s role in the development and production of innovative and nationally significant television programming taking into account levels of investment. It will also allow the organisation to look at funding eligibility requirements including minimum licence fees, hold back provisions and marketplace attachments. In addition, Screen Australia will evaluate the funding allocation for NDP projects including the provision of funding to different broadcasters as part of the review.

Screen Australia announced its television funding review as part of the release of its new Terms of Trade. The new Terms of Trade are largely unchanged from the draft released for comment in late 2009. They set out the core terms on which the organisation will transact business, simplifying wherever possible and enhancing consistency across all programs.

“We believe these terms are fair and balanced, and anticipate that they will remain in place for the foreseeable future,” said Dr Harley.

The new Terms of Trade take effect from 1 July 2010 and apply to all projects approved for funding from that date. Details of the key changes can be found at

www.screenaustralia.gov.au/industry_support/Terms_of_trade_July10.asp

Terms of Reference for Screen Australia’s television funding review can be found at www.screenaustralia.gov.au/tvreview. Screen Australia will consult with all interested parties during July and August. Written submissions will close on 30 July 2010. Screen Australia anticipates releasing the outcomes of the review in November, and the new program guidelines will take effect from 1 July 2011.