

Asian Animation Summit

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 10–11 December 2012

Report by Tim Phillips, Investment Manager, Production Investment and Elena Guest, Project Manager, State and Industry Partnerships

The inaugural Asian Animation Summit (AAS) was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 10–11 December 2012.

Background

The AAS brought together four regional screen agencies – Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA), Multimedia Development Corporation of Malaysia (MDeC), Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA) and Screen Australia – with the goal to promote the co-production and co-financing of animation for children's television and film within the Asian region.

Intended to be a regular event, the 2012 summit was an initiative of Australia's ABC TV, Korea's KOCCA and Malaysia's MDeC, produced by Canadian publishing and event-organising company Brunico and supported by Singapore's MDA and Screen Australia.

The summit

Held in Kuala Lumpur due to its central Asian location, the two day event was attended by approximately 400 delegates. These included regional and international broadcasters, distributors and sales companies, producers and government agency representatives. The event is loosely modelled on Europe's Cartoon Forum, utilising a 'pitch'-structured format. At AAS, selected producers and creators from Australia, Korea, Malaysia and Singapore delivered 45 minute 'pitches' of selected projects to potential financing partners. In the audience were representatives from the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, China, Australia, Canada and North America, Europe and Korea.



Presented projects were either partially-financed series seeking further finance or projects in development seeking market feedback and financing interest.

The event also provided significant opportunities for meetings and general networking to facilitate project financing and regional connections. Much of the feedback around the summit included the fact that producers could approach genuinely 'A-list' children's broadcast executives in a very informal setting – access rarely provided at larger events including Europe's Cartoon Forum, New York City's Kidscreen Summit or the French television markets.

A total of 33 projects were presented – 10 each from Australia and Malaysia, nine from Korea and four from Singapore. Pitch sessions were run side by side with a maximum of three in any one time slot.

Most presentations were of a very high standard. The presenting teams had been assisted in their preparation by highly experienced consultant, **Joan Lofts**. Aside from being the commissioner of many high profile animated children's shows including *Peppa Pig*, Joan has many years of experience as a chairperson at Cartoon Forum and was therefore well placed to share her knowledge on the art (and pitfalls) of public pitching.

Screen Australia was given the responsibility of selecting all 10 of the Australian projects. The vast majority were also supported by the ABC. The producers were supported with a travel assistance package from Screen Australia in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Each Australian presentation was introduced by Screen Australia's Investment Manager **Tim Phillips**. When a representative of the broadcaster was present, the presenters would also outline why the particular project was of interest to that broadcaster. All Australian presenting teams reported back that the AAS surpassed their expectations.

Representatives of Screen NSW (**Matt Carroll**, Director, Production Attraction and Incentives), Film Victoria (**Jenni Tosi**, CEO) and the Australian Children's Television Foundation (**Jenny Buckland**, CEO) were also in attendance.

Networking events

An opening night party, sponsored by MDeC and KOCCA, was attended by almost all the delegates and offered the opportunity to catch up and discuss the first day's proceedings. Screen Australia and the ABC co-hosted a function on the second night of the event. Both **Kim Dalton** (then Head of Television at ABC) and **Tim Phillips** spoke briefly and welcomed the Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia, **Mr Miles Kupa**, to the event. Many Australian delegates spoke passionately to the High Commissioner about what they saw as the importance of concluding a treaty between Australia and Malaysia (it is currently in negotiation) and how this would lead to much greater collaboration between the two countries in the area of animated children's content.

The future of the summit

All the organising parties were very pleased with the overall outcomes of the Summit. Screen Australia will join other members of the AAS in 2013

(KOCCA and MDeC) while Singapore's MDA will retain its associate membership.

Planning is now underway for the 2013 event, to be held in Thailand.

Details are at <http://asiananimationsummit.com/>

MEETINGS OUTSIDE THE SUMMIT:

A government agency meeting was coordinated by Screen Australia for representatives from each agency to discuss new initiatives and plans for regional engagement. It also provided the opportunity to report on recent events in the region, such as the Asian Television Forum (ATF), held in Singapore immediately prior to the AAS. Representatives from all four agencies attended the meeting. There was a strong feeling of goodwill between agencies and all stated that they are keen to explore further opportunities for the industries in each country to work together.

MDA reported high attendances at the ATF, as well as increased attendances at the feature film-focused Screen Singapore, which now runs in parallel to the ATF.

MDeC spoke about the new 30 percent rebate for films produced in Malaysia and the new Pinewood Studios that are nearing completion in Johor.

KOCCA spoke about its global focus, pavilions at international festivals and markets and its Content Supporting Centre, which accepts all requests about incentives to work with Korea.

Tim Phillips was able to introduce the new Australian Government Games Fund as well as the new Enterprise Asia initiatives.

Screen Australia's Elena Guest also met with:

- **Australian High Commission** – Annette Christie, Public Diplomacy Manager, and Lauren Knight, Second Secretary
- **Asian Side of the Doc** – Keiko Bang, President, and Shawn Chua, Bang Communications
- **KOCCA** – Caiya YeeJee Kang, Assistant Manager, Creative Industry Promotion Division
- **National Film Development Corporation, Malaysia, FINAS** – Mr N Balaraman, Director, Planning and Research
- **MDeC** – Judith Cynthia Alered, Senior Executive, and Michelle Sta Maria, Business Development.