



## **MARKETING SUPPORT AND PROMOTION: Screen Australia Industry and Cultural Development funding programs**

### **ATOM SUBMISSION to Stage 2 Review**

#### **WHO WE ARE**

Founded in the 1960s, ATOM (Australian Teachers of Media) is an independent, not-for-profit, professional teaching association which promotes the study of media and screen literacy. Our membership includes over 13,000 teachers and lecturers from all subject disciplines at all levels of education, media industry personnel, a range of media and education organisations and, increasingly, the general public. Australia has the largest number of media studies teachers per capita and a dynamic and active screen education culture.

ATOM aims to:

- provide professional development, training, accessible resources and curriculum advice based on the researched needs of production personnel, screen and media educators and students
- provide a national forum for public debate on media education, screen culture, new media and media education issues.
- actively promote the study and appreciation of Australian film and media through ensuring that Australian titles are included in senior media and film studies curricula throughout Australia and that students from primary to tertiary level are provided with rich resources for their study of our screen culture
- articulate the voices of Australian screen and media culture in all their cultural diversity
- promote a dialogue between screen and media culture, media educators and the production industry
- promote, encourage and reward the work of Australian screen and media practitioners, with particular reference to educational issues and audience development.

ATOM's email newsletter goes to 40,000 teachers and media industry personnel, and every year thousands of teachers attend our free screenings of feature films through partnerships with the distributors, producers, cinemas and other organisations.

ATOM publishes *Metro* magazine, *Screen Education* magazine, study guides and education kits, The *Moving Image* series of monographs and websites for features, documentaries and television programs.

For 26 years ATOM has held the annual ATOM Awards to recognise excellence in more than thirty categories of Film, Television, Animation and Multimedia. The Awards are partnered by EnhanceTV, and the categories are divided equally between film industry and student categories for primary, secondary and tertiary entrants.

ATOM runs professional development for teachers from all subject areas who use film and television in the classroom, provides resources and organises screenings of feature films and documentaries for teachers, students, industry personnel and the general public.

ATOM runs The Education Shop, The Speakers' Bureau and an online booking system. It organises an international conference every two years for Australian and overseas delegates.

ATOM has established international links with similar groups in New Zealand, Canada, the United States, England, Scotland, Wales, Japan, India and the Philippines.

## **POSITION STATEMENT**

ATOM believes that 'screen culture' organisations play a far greater role in developing Australian audiences and promoting Australian film and TV productions than is generally recognised and that ATOM's role in educating and developing new audiences is crucial.

Recent analysis has shown that one of the major challenges facing the Australian film and TV industries is connecting with Australian audiences and keeping them viewing once connected. Students who develop an active interest in and knowledge of Australian screen product and personnel are more likely to retain that interest as they enter the workforce.

We can't speak for other organisations in this area, so this submission outlines how ATOM contributes to the growth of the Australian industry by developing new local and international audiences, returning income to filmmakers, funding agencies and freelance writers, and supporting the important causes that Screen Australia markets and promotes. We argue that Screen Australia's support of ATOM is essential to maintaining ATOM's continuing strong contribution to the industry.

Many other organisations do similar and important work. This submission is not meant to blow ATOM's trumpet but to outline approaches that have worked for ATOM and which we believe are good pointers as to general directions where more research and effort should be directed.

## OUR ROLE

### 1. Developing new local audiences

There are nearly four million students at Australian primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. This is the potential audience ATOM currently engages with and hopes to retain as long-term viewers and potential producers of Australian screen productions.

ATOM sees its main role as developing audiences - especially young audiences, to enjoy, appreciate, analyse and discuss Australian screen productions - and introducing students to the practice of filmmaking.

## MAGAZINES

- Approximately half of the schools and all the universities in Australia subscribe to *Metro* and *Screen Education* magazines. This means the articles about Australian film and television have a potential audience of over two million students.
- Both *Metro* magazine and *Screen Education* magazine are geographic specific - they concentrate mainly on Australasian productions.
- The magazines play an integral part in promoting activities, conferences, products and educational resources supported by Screen Australia. For examples, recent and upcoming issues of *Screen Education* feature in-depth articles on resources such as DIY Doco and the Making History initiative, while *Metro* regularly reports on national conferences, such as the Australian International Documentary Conference, national and local film festivals, and international opportunities for Australian filmmakers.
- Online and print publications allow vigorous debate to occur between opposing points of view and give minority groups, such as documentary and short filmmakers, editors, writers, etc., a voice.
- The magazines encourage up-and-coming film and media writers by giving them an outlet in which to hone their craft, as well as providing income for established writers.
- ATOM has established a number of opt-in email lists to tell subscribers about new study guides, free screenings, professional development, the EnhanceTV ATOM Awards, conferences, etc. The lists include 22,000 secondary teachers, 14,000 primary teachers 5,000 tertiary lecturers and tutors and 12,000 film and TV industry personnel.

## STUDY GUIDES

- ATOM produces approximately 90% of all study guides produced in Australia for documentary and feature filmmakers. The study guides return hundreds of thousands of dollars to producers and investors every year through Screenrights payments as well as creating new audiences for Australian filmmakers when used in conjunction with screenings in schools and universities. (The use of a study guide in class necessitates the screening of the film at school.)
- Study guides are used throughout Australia and increasingly worldwide. Each month, collectively, more than 40,000 individual PDF study guides are downloaded from the *Metro* magazine website, <<http://www.metromagazine.com.au>> and the EnhanceTV website <<http://www.enhancetv.com.au/index.php>>.
- Once a study guide is downloaded, many copies are printed and handed out. Figures show that one study guide download can be used by more than sixty students.
- ATOM supports Australian resources that educate audiences, teachers and students about our media industry. ATOM provides advice, content and promotion for Screen Australia's Digital Learning websites, which are highly recommended by ATOM to our members. ATOM has provided critical professional input and resources into DIY Doco and many of the resources in the Digital Resource Finder. Through these resources a very large number of educators and young people have become aware of Screen Australia's unique documentaries and the power of them to entertain, inform, influence and educate. The Digital Learning websites are a very valuable resource that ATOM believes should be retained and extended by Screen Australia.

## **2. Encouraging and awarding excellence in screen production and multimedia**

THE ENHANCETV ATOM AWARDS:  
<<http://www.atomawards.org/about>>

The EnhanceTV ATOM Awards recognise excellence in over thirty categories of Film, Television, Animation and Multimedia. The Awards are open to students, production companies, independent filmmakers, educational bodies and educational producers, and celebrate the very best of Australian product.

Shortlisted entrants to the Awards not only gain high-profile exposure for their talents but also have the opportunity to further their media-making careers through networking and relationship building with other like-minded practitioners at the Awards ceremony. The Awards has a particular focus on gaining a broad range of opportunities for nominees to promote their work nationally.

The EnhanceTV ATOM Awards are unique in that they balance student entries with a similar number of professional categories, thus bringing young filmmakers and professional practitioners together in the one awards event.

#### ONLINE BOOKING BUREAU

- Online Booking Bureau — ATOM's online booking service makes it very easy for schools and organisations to book film screenings over the internet. Since ATOM built the system six years ago, we've taken more than 700,000 bookings from teachers. These screenings, most of them free, help promote Australian productions to a national audience, including regional and country areas. Our system has been used by Dendy, Icon, Hopscotch, the AFC, the NFSA, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, Paramount, Transmission Films, Village Roadshow, Disney, UIP, Phillip Noyce, Rolf de Heer and Robert Connolly and many other organisations and individuals.

#### SPEAKERS' BUREAU

- The Speakers' Bureau is a cooperative venture between ATOM, the Australian Screen Directors' Association and Screenrights that links industry practitioners with educational institutions. Experienced film industry and new media practitioners are paid commercial rates to share their knowledge through lectures, workshops and screenings in secondary schools and universities.

### **3. Developing new international audiences**

- ATOM outreach — overseas audiences reading in-depth reviews and analysis of Australian productions and interviews with Australian personnel.

Metro and Screen Education magazines are working with Gale Cengage Learning, EBSCO and Bigchalk, three international library suppliers. ATOM supplies all its articles in PDF and HTML formats. These articles can be downloaded from user-pays sites in North America and the UK. The number of downloads per year from the overseas sites is well over 200,000 articles a year. This

would indicate that there is a growing overseas market, especially in the education sector, for Australian productions.

- ATOM is also working with Informit Online at RMIT, the National Library of Australia and the Copyright Agency Limited in Australia on a similar user-pays site in Australia to increase the outreach within Australia of articles, reviews, interviews dealing with Australian productions.
- Metro is also working with overseas organisations in the promotion of Australian product and personnel overseas with the comprehensive indexing of both *Metro* and *Screen Education* magazines by the International Federation of Film Archives, the British Film Institute, *Film Literature Quarterly*, and in Australia by the National Library of Australia and ACER. This enables anyone looking for material on Australian productions or personnel to find the information quickly.

ATOM has created an online education shop <[www.theeducationshop.com.au](http://www.theeducationshop.com.au)> where articles published in *Metro* or *Screen Education* magazines can be downloaded as PDF files. ATOM is also starting to distribute Australian features, documentaries, animations and shorts to the education markets both in Australia and overseas. Our contracts are non-exclusive so filmmakers can still place their product with other distributors.

#### **4. Returning income to filmmakers, funding agencies and freelance Writers**

Our statistics show that returns to funding agencies and filmmakers from the education market (by this we mean education sales of docos and features on DVD to schools and universities, school bookings to see feature films in cinemas, Screenrights payments for off-air copying, etc.) are much larger than box office returns for Australian feature films.

- Research by Screenrights has found that programs that go to air with a study guide earn substantially more income from Screenrights than programs that go to air without a study guide. In research undertaken by the BBC in Australia, 73% of their customers said that the availability of study guides influenced classroom use. Sixty-six per cent of those who had downloaded the WILD AUSTRALASIA study guide copied the program off-air.
- ATOM supports a vibrant film culture by employing freelance writers. In 2008 it paid writers a total of \$42,000 for articles in *Metro* magazine, \$38,000 for articles in *Screen Education* magazine and \$70,000 for study guides. Their articles encourage

debate and analysis and help to develop a more informed and critical audience for Australian screen productions.

- The Speakers' Bureau - Experienced film industry and new media practitioners are paid commercial rates to share their knowledge through lectures, workshops and screenings in secondary schools and universities. This is yet another way the education sector is helping to provide income to people in the film and television industries.

## **5. Conclusion**

Many Australian organisations are doing excellent work in audience development: the Australian Children's Television Foundation, Screenrights and EnhanceTV, the National Film and Sound Archive, to name just a few. And the digital resources created by Screen Australia, such as the DIY Doco, australianscreen and Digital Resource Finder websites, are dynamic examples that have been extremely successful in the education sector.

The education sector needs to be recognised for the important position it occupies in the Australian film and TV industries. Not only are today's students the potential new audiences for Australian productions but the education sector is already generating substantial income for filmmakers and funding agencies as well as employing thousands of people who provide the resources necessary to further develop young audiences. Most importantly, today's students are tomorrow's screen content providers.

ATOM believes it is important for Screen Australia to continue to fund programs that develop audiences, especially young audiences, through the funding of study guides, magazines, awards ceremonies, conferences, film festivals, and other such programs that encourage debate, analysis and participation in the screen industries.

We believe that Screen Australia's support for ATOM should be retained because of its proven value to the industry.

Peter Tapp  
ATOM  
16/2/09

0412 473116