



The Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for the Arts
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
Leader of the House
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

17 November 2023

SCREEN AUSTRALIA STATEMENT OF INTENT 2023-2024

Dear Minister

Thank you for your letter of 15 September 2023, which included your Statement of Expectations for Screen Australia for the financial year 2023-2024.

I have attached to this reply a Statement of Intent addressing the strategic priorities outlined in your Statement of Expectations.

The Board of Screen Australia looks forward to progressing the priorities articulated in the Statement of Intent to inspire, inform and connect audiences with compelling Australian screen stories. Screen Australia is committed to the five interconnecting pillars in the Government's National Cultural Policy, *Revive*, which will continue to serve as guiding principles for the agency.

I would be available to meet at your convenience to discuss Screen Australia's plans as well as broader Government priorities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicholas Moore".

Nicholas Moore
Chair

Cc. Mr Jim Betts, Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts;
Deirdre Brennan, Chief Executive Officer, Screen Australia

Encl. Screen Australia, Statement of Intent 2023-24



Screen Australia Statement of Intent 2023-24

This Statement of Intent outlines Screen Australia's response to the Australian Government's Statement of Expectations for Screen Australia for 2023-24, as set out in the Minister's letter to the Screen Australia Board of 15 September 2023.

Screen Australia welcomes the Minister's Statement of Expectations and its focus on particular Government policies, objectives and strategic priorities for 2023-24. Screen Australia's response to these expectations is outlined below, following a description of Screen Australia's role and governance arrangements.

Agency role

Australian screen content provides local and global audiences with significant cultural value; it informs our sense of who we are, offers unique forms of cultural expression, and reflects culturally relevant and diverse experiences shared by millions of Australians. The screen industry also delivers notable economic benefits and drives technological innovation.

Screen Australia's *Corporate Plan 2023-2027* (Corporate Plan) outlines Screen Australia's vision to inspire, inform and connect audiences with compelling Australian stories. This vision aligns with the relevant outcome, priorities and performance indicators set out within the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts' Portfolio Budget Statement, specifically: *To support bold, enduring and culturally significant Australian storytelling that resonates with local audiences and succeeds in a global marketplace, created by a skilled and entrepreneurial screen industry.*

Screen Australia's core functions are set out within the *Screen Australia Act 2008*:

- *support and promote the development of a highly creative, innovative and commercially sustainable Australian screen production industry;*
- *support or engage in:*
 - *the development, production, promotion and distribution of Australian programs; and*
 - *the provision of access to Australian programs and other programs; and*
- *support and promote the development of screen culture in Australia.*

Governance statement

Screen Australia is a corporate Commonwealth Entity, with its financial management regulated by the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. Screen Australia is governed by a Board appointed by the Minister. In carrying out its functions Screen Australia will:

- inform the Minister and Department of matters affecting the agency and industry
- take into account the Government's broad policy framework
- work cooperatively with the Department and portfolio agencies, in particular Creative Australia, the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) and National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA)
- provide Performance Reports, Compliance Reports, an Annual Report and a Corporate Plan
- attend Senate Estimates hearings
- provide a Statement of Intent in response to the Minister's Statement of Expectations.

Government's National Cultural Policy - *Revive*

Screen Australia welcomes the Government's National Cultural Policy, *Revive*, launched in January 2023. The policy acknowledges the important contribution of the arts, culture and creative industries to our nation's economic prosperity and social wellbeing.

Screen Australia is supportive of measures in *Revive* relevant to the Australian film, television and digital games industries, and is committed to the five interconnected pillars:

- First Nations First: Recognising and respecting the crucial place of First Nations stories at the centre of Australia's arts and culture;
- A Place for Every Story: Reflecting the breadth of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture;
- Centrality of the Artist: Supporting the artist as worker and celebrating artists as creators;
- Strong Cultural Infrastructure: Providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts, culture and heritage;
- Engaging the Audience: Making sure our stories connect with people at home and abroad.

These pillars will continue to serve as guiding principles for Screen Australia and will be implemented throughout the agency's intended activities and strategic priorities for 2023-24, outlined below.

Key strategic priorities for Screen Australia

The Minister's Statement of Expectations sets out the following strategic priorities:

Build on the work of the First Nations Department to recognise the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture to Australian society

The representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories, issues and culture on screen is critical to Australian society. Australian First Nations screen stories are popular with First Nations communities, broader Australian audiences, and international markets. For 30 years, Screen Australia's First Nations Department has been a world-leading support for First Nations screen storytellers and representation, funding content authored by and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. In 2023/24 Screen Australia will continue to support the First Nations Department and its vital work assisting First Nations screen stories, creators and businesses.

Creating sustainable careers and clear career pathways are a priority for the First Nations Department. In 2023/24, the First Nations Department will continue to explore with industry stakeholders, including Commonwealth and state agencies, the development of a national framework for Indigenous professional development. At the same time the First Nations Department will roll out a number of targeted skills development initiatives in partnership with industry.

When working with Indigenous filmmakers it is important that non-Indigenous peoples ensure respectful and safe working arrangements and environments. The First Nations Department's *Pathways & Protocols* guide is the Australian industry standard for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture and concepts. The First Nations Department intends to undertake a review of the guide in 2023/24.

Beyond the work and contributions of the First Nations Department, Screen Australia's other content departments, including documentary, online and games funding teams, will continue to support important First Nations screen stories for release across a variety of platforms.

Support productions to secure strong pathways to audiences

Screen Australia seeks to support a wide range of content that reflects the diversity of Australian experience. This includes both innovative and experimental content which may only resonate with a specific audience, and broadly popular productions that have a global reach. All productions that apply for Screen Australia funding must demonstrate a compelling pathway to their audience.

As the methods to connect audiences with screen content continue to evolve, Screen Australia will prioritise productions with strong pathways to their audience through our program guidelines and assessment protocols across all forms of screen content.

In 2023/24 Screen Australia will continue to support screen creatives to connect with domestic and international opportunities and markets, to further develop their skills, pitch projects and negotiate appropriate deals.

Collaborate with federal and state entities to address capacity gaps

Screen Australia will continue to work closely with the Office for the Arts, all levels of government, educational institution, industry partners, guilds, broadcasters and streamers, production companies and inbound productions to grow the capacity of the screen production sector.

We are committed to skills development opportunities for early and mid-career Australian crew in below-the-line roles. The Industry Development Department will continue to design and implement targeted initiatives for these roles, such as *BTL Next Step*, the *Production Crew Skills Training Fund* and the *Transferable Skills & Returning Crew Fund*.

Engage with the Australian games industry to support it to take advantage of the Digital Games Tax Offset

Screen Australia welcomes the additional \$12 million over four years, announced in *Revive*, to support digital games developers and small and medium independent games studios. Since March 2022, Screen Australia has distributed over \$8 million to local developers and studios to support the development of innovative and unique Australian games. Games supported span a wide range of genres including Virtual Reality, adventure, puzzle, horror and rhythm.

The agency looks forward to continuing its work in the Australian digital games sector, which constitutes an important and fast-growing area of the Australian screen ecosystem. In 2023/24, Screen Australia's games funding programs will include the *Games Production Fund* and *Emerging Gamemakers Fund*, which will operate until 2026/27 and will be supported by the additional funding for Screen Australia announced in *Revive*. Other opportunities to develop skills and strengthen industry connections will be available for developers, such as the *Future Leaders Delegation* which will support gamemakers to attend the Game Developers Conference in San Francisco in March 2024.

Screen Australia's games funding is intended to complement the Government's Digital Games Tax Offset. Screen Australia will continue to work with the Government, state and territory agencies, and sector organisations such as the Interactive Games & Entertainment Association and Screen Producers Australia to assist industry and further support the foundations of a thriving Australian digital games development sector.

Continue to undertake data collection and research to strengthen understanding of the challenges and opportunities for the sector

In 2023/24 Screen Australia will continue to deliver a range of advisory and research services to industry and the Australian community, including market intel and advice on sales and distribution deals; research on the production, distribution and impact of Australian content; and reports on specific issues such as diversity and inclusion. Screen Australia will also continue to provide online sector news, podcasts and videos that explore key issues and showcase Australian titles and talent.

Screen Australia welcomes the announcement in *Revive* of a triennial State of Australian Culture report, to be delivered by Creative Australia in partnership with Screen Australia.

Safety within the screen industry is an ongoing focus and the agency is committed to supporting safe working environments. Screen Australia welcomes the opportunity to engage with Creative Workplaces on the development of relevant codes of conduct. In 2023/24 Screen Australia will also work internally and with industry to explore research opportunities related to wellbeing and safety in the screen industry.

Harness and strengthen the sector's contribution to innovation and the economy

Through its use of various artistic forms and crafts, and employment of rapidly evolving technology, the screen industry provides unique cultural and economic contributions to the Australian economy.

Screen Australia will continue to fund innovative projects such as experimental content for online platforms, including digital games and virtual and augmented reality. Screen Australia will work with key government and industry stakeholders on further opportunities to build the capacity of the sector now, and into the future.

In recent years Australia has emerged as a leading destination for major drama productions, and the significant increase in spend in Australia has generated more opportunities for local screen practitioners and businesses, and wider economic benefits for Australian businesses and communities. This increase in spend has been influenced by larger-budget films and content created for global streaming services.

In this context, Screen Australia welcomes Government's commitment in *Revive* to introduce requirements on streaming platforms to ensure continued access to local content. Screen Australia will cooperate with the Department and other portfolio agencies to support the implementation of any content obligations on streaming services.

Conclusion

Screen Australia is committed to the five pillars of *Revive*, and will continue to implement the pillars throughout its activities and operations. Screen Australia will continue to evolve its practices to fulfil its strategic priorities and uphold its overarching vision to inspire, inform and connect audiences with compelling Australian screen stories.