

## **Comment on Screen Australia draft program guidelines from Julie Turner**

To Screen Australia,

I note with dismay the removal of animation development funding from the proposed new programs. Such funding plays a vital role in the creation of new commercially viable projects and locally-owned intellectual property in Australia. One need only peruse the Australian Animation Update in Encore Magazine (September 2008) to see the boom that's currently occurring in internationally-sold Australian animation. Local animation houses are both succeeding and growing - and how much can that be said of other industry sectors right now?

High financial returns are possible from very small sums of development funding, as my situation shows. Square i Pty Ltd is a highly-acclaimed Melbourne-based company whose animating credits include Dogstar, John Callanan's Quads (SBS), Fly TV (ABC) and various works for Cartoon Network Asia. But, like many other Australian animation houses, we've previously only ever been artists for hire, owning none of the IP in the successful TV content created. However, having just received Screen Australia animation development funds for a 13 x 10 minute commercial kids' series, this small sum (\$10,000 - \$15,000) will secure the creation of a great pitch package including draft pilot script and sample artwork. With this package, our attendance at key international animation markets in 2009/10 (where we'll be with our first own-produced, top-quality 15-minute short) is highly likely to secure finance and distribution for the series. In doing so, Square i will have made a vital transition from 'highly-skilled guns-for-hire' to 'creators and owners of commercially successful content'. Cash flow and job generation in the local sector will be tangible, and the project's IP will stay in Australia, reaping income from merchandising, spin-offs and further series. Square i will then be positioned to further develop its international networks, and business and deal-making skills, to continue pitching and delivering quality series and commercially-viable projects in the global marketplace. For \$10,000, it must be worth it!

Julie Turner  
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Square i Pty Ltd