



Australian Government



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MIPCOM is the biggest international television market in the world, held annually in Cannes, France. It is designed primarily for the buying and selling of television content. It is also an important opportunity for distributors and financiers to agree to participate in new programs.

The official figures released by MIPCOM organisers Reed MIDEM stated that over 13,500 people participated in the market. The all-important number of television acquisition executives ('buyers') was reported as 4,623, plus another 1,000 'digital' buyers.

MIPCOM's international credentials were evident with new exhibition pavilions from China, Russia, India, Nigeria and South Africa and a significant increase in attendees from Latin America (now the fourth largest TV market in the world). Country of Honour, Argentina, sent a record 98 exhibiting companies with a delegation of 283 executives.

All over Cannes – from billboards on the main streets, to the stands and stalls within the Palais convention centre – Australian programming was making its presence felt. Walking down the Croisette, television acquisition executives could see **Miss Fisher** posing above the Moncler shop. Within the Palais convention centre, buyers were presented with a large billboard for Hoodlum's **Secrets and Lies**, while the producers were closing a US format deal for the show with ABC execs in LA.



Phryne looks down on the Croisette

ITV Studios Global Entertainment, with over 40,000 hours of content to distribute, including shows from its own production arm, was prominently spruiking the **Doctor Blake Mysteries**. **Love Child** had the All3Media representatives as excited as any of the high budget UK programs in their catalogue.

Children's content buyers found themselves standing in front of large stands entirely dressed up to promote Australian shows such as **Sam Fox: Extreme Adventures** (Germany's ZDF Enterprises) and **Tashi** (Belgium's Studio 100). A US 'major', NBCU, was selling Melbourne show **Nowhere Boys**.

All across the market, Australian programs were situated at the front of catalogues and deals were being reported. Distributors were saying that they wanted more Australian content because of its reputation for quality, and the fact that it can sell to broadcasters around the world.



A *Secrets & Lies* billboard in the Palais

A new golden era for Australian kids' content?

Australian children's content has historically been a solid international performer, but the feeling this year around MIPCOM was particularly positive. Distributors and broadcasters reflected on the fact that this could well be the start of a new golden period for local kids' drama, with several shows causing a real splash at the market. NBCU reported that a number of the world's leading children's broadcasters were negotiating to buy Matchbox Picture's **Nowhere Boys**, including potentially pre-buying a second series. Kids' specialist, the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF), was overwhelmed with interest in its new series **The Worst Year of My Life Again**, receiving offers from multiple buyers in the same territory. The ACTF's CEO Jenny Buckland noted that it was clear that "the comedy in the



The ZDFE *Sam Fox* stand

show... especially the physical comedy... appealed to a wide range of markets". German-based distributor ZDF Enterprises gave magnificent exposure to **Sam Fox Extreme Adventures**, from Sydney's SLR Productions – a company which had previously specialised in animation. SLR principal Suzanne Ryan proclaimed that the response to the show had been so promising that she'd "caught the live action bug".

The excitement wasn't limited to live action children's content. Australian animation series were also attracting significant interest. Buyers at Belgium-based distributor Studio 100's stand weren't being scared off by the giants, ogres and devils from the world of Flying Bark's **Tashi**. The distributor closed a deal for Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece. In a market awash with animation programs, it certainly helped that the world's leading children's TV publication, *Kidscreen*, identified **Tashi** "as one of the picks of the market". *Kidscreen* also gave great exposure to **The Day My Butt Went Psycho**, a co-production between Melbourne-based Studio Moshi and animation powerhouse Nelvana, based on the wildly popular Australian children's book. The reception of the first episodes of **Get Ace**, the first animation series from Victorian company Galaxy Pop, was also very strong, with the company receiving multiple distribution offers.

What's next?

In recognition of the rise of commissioned online content by digital players such as Netflix, YouTube and Hulu, Reed MIDEM announced that at MIPTV in April 2014 it will launch the inaugural **MIP Digital Fronts** – international screenings for original online video. "MIPTV and MIPCOM were built on the buying and selling of television programming. MIP Digital Fronts will be the first international marketplace where high-quality, original content for online web channels and app-based/'over-the-top' streaming video platforms will be traded," noted Reed MIDEM's Television Division Director, Laurine Garaude.

Meetings with distributors

Screen Australia representatives met with a variety of international television distributors to discuss sales of projects in which the agency has an interest, and also to gauge their interest in potential new projects.

The success of *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* has continued to have an impact at **All3Media International**. *Miss Fisher* was a big call for the distributor, given it hadn't previously taken a chance with an Australian drama series. Since then, it has committed to the second series of the show, as well as acquiring other Australian series *Love Child* and *ANZAC Girls*.

At a party to celebrate its 10th anniversary, the company ran a sizzle reel that both opened and closed with clips featuring Phryne.

Maartje Horchner, Head of Acquisitions, said that the current 'golden age' of television has seen increased competition from producers of content from around the world – Scandinavian dramas continue to perform well, and French and German producers are increasingly creating high quality, internationally appealing series. As the All3Media market report stated, "Whilst this increased competition is putting pressure on the number of slots available for drama, particularly with large European broadcasters, high quality returning drama remains very much in demand". 'Returning' in this context means having the capacity for further series, such as *Miss Fisher*. Soon after the market, All3Media announced a sale for *Miss Fisher* to Channel 5, an especially impressive feat given the series already screens on a subscription channel in that territory.

Samantha McMillan, Acquisitions Manager with **ITV Studios Global Entertainment**, also stressed that the distributor's preference was for returnable, rather than close-ended drama. This, rather than series length, was a driving factor in acquisitions. *The Doctor Blake Mysteries* fitted this bill perfectly, said McMillan, which is what had attracted them to the show. ITV Studios will be very happy with the results of *Doctor Blake* at the market, with a sale to one of the world's leading drama channels, BBC1, just announced.

UK-based distributor **DCD Rights** continues to be heavily interested in Australian content, including *Mr and Mrs Murder*, *The Code* and *A Moody Christmas*, as well as older shows *The Slap* and *The Straits*. Head of Acquisitions Pilar Perez talked about the 'long play' of chasing format sales – with formats often getting caught up in development, and then the pilot process. All of a sudden a show can have potentially been sitting idle for two years with little return.

Charlotte Hargreaves from **Digital Rights Group** talked about the increased focus from the company on distribution deals with digital platforms. The distributor was making increased plays to get its content on multi-territory deals on now-recognised platforms such as Netflix and Hulu, emerging platforms including viewster.com (an advertising-based, free streaming site), and blinkbox (an online VOD streaming service). The company was also readying itself for the launch of the new Xbox1 and PS4 entertainment hubs. Hargreaves reported that 80 per cent of the digital deals DRG signed were multi-territory deals, and accordingly the distributor had to be careful not to close exclusive deals that interfered with these multi-country, multi-platform, ‘over-the-top’ digital plays.

As a stand-alone entity, **Sky Vision** is a relatively new distributor. It was created when huge UK subscription television provider BSkyB acquired Parthenon Media Group in 2012 to create a distribution arm for the broadcaster. Mike Shanks, Director of Finance and Operations, said that the company is keenly acquiring new content, both drama and factual. It is also “really interested” in doing co-productions with Australian factual producers.

Film and television distributor **eOne** said that it was receptive to Australian content that was crafted with an “international scope”. Carrie Stein, EVP of Global Productions, said that the company was wary of period content. She said that being Australian created a niche, and when that was overlaid with being a period show, it made the places to sell it even more limited. Stein continued to believe format rights were an important component of eOne’s business. She said that the distributor had five formats in the US market at the moment.

Canadian distributor **Distribution360** said that one of the most exciting areas of the market at the moment was the multi-territory, over-the-top possibilities being offered by the new range of emerging online platforms. Kirsten Hurd, Director of International Sales and Acquisitions, advised that they were in discussions to acquire rights to two new Australian animated children’s series, but were also open to approaches from Australian factual and drama producers. The company, which is part of the diversified Marble Media group of companies, already distributes the Screen Australia-funded children’s show ***The Adventures of Figaro Pho*** in Canada.

Factual production and distribution company **Flame Distribution**, with offices in Sydney, London and Greece, has an interest in food, travel, history, science and crime titles. Managing Director John Caldon reported that the company was doing strong trade at the market.

Meetings with financiers

Television and film financier **Ingenious** reported that it was still hungry to work with Australian producers in respect of production finance. Investment Manager Kate Bennetts also said that the company’s ability to provide a form of gap finance had recently changed. Previously, the parameters of Ingenious’ Enterprise Investment Scheme funds had only allowed the company to provide up to 5 per cent of the total budget of the project as gap. Now, Ingenious could offer up to 15 per cent depending, of course, on its view of the commercial qualities of the project. Kate said the gap could work on features and television shows. In the case of the latter, a canny producer might be able to reduce or even remove the need for a distributor to provide a distribution advance, if it could replace it with gap and lower commissions.

Peter Sussman and Brad Sherman from **Aver Media** said that for their company to take the next step in Australia, they would probably need to set up an office on the ground. Nevertheless, they were currently happy with their market share in Australia, and were expanding their business in the UK. They said that they were providing gap finance for projects each year, but would not do so without presales and a forensic (and sceptical) analysis of sales projections.

They said that their related “media solutions” company, **Evra**, was going strongly, and was currently working for clients including several banks recovering finance from dormant film and television loans and investments.

Events

Malaysia was a major presence at this market, with a large contingent of Government officials from FINAS and MDEC, and over 50 production companies working on all content platforms. The Malaysian Minister of Communications and Multimedia, the Honorable Dato' Sri Ahmad Shabery Cheek, gave a presentation outlining 13 international deals worth over US\$50m. The Minister visited the Australian stand and was available for a photo opportunity with Screen Australia Board member Richard Keddie. Investment Manager Tim Phillips discussed the progress of the treaty between Malaysia and Australia with the Minister.

An **Australian/Malaysian Matchmaking Event** was held on Tuesday 8 October at the Malaysian Pavilion. The matchmaking event was organised by Screen Australia and FINAS. MIPCOM attendees could meet with counterparts from the other country to find out more about each other's businesses and markets. A total of 51 meetings were arranged according to compatible interests.

The Australian companies who participated were: Ampitheatre, Chocolate Liberation Front, Criya Animation, Essential Media, Exero Films, The Feds, Flame Distribution, Flying Bark, Great Western Entertainment, Matchbox Pictures, SBS, SPAA and WTFN.

The Malaysian companies included Astro Productions, Backbone Entertainment, Clover Sky, Creative Media Point, Friedchillies, Giggle Garage, Glue Studios, Inspidea, Lemon Sky Animation, Les'Copaque Production, Lil Critter Workshop, Makmur Megah, Nafalia Corporation, Peppermint Productions, Primeworks Studios, Produksi Seni 2020, R&D Communication, Vision Animation and You Jump Animation.

Potential future matchmaking events include those with businesses from Singapore, Turkey, Argentina and the UK.

The **Australian Networking Drinks** were held at the Screen Australia stand on Wednesday 9 October and attracted approximately 350 guests. The evening provided delegates with the opportunity to network with fellow Australian companies and international guests, exchange ideas and experiences and be introduced to new contacts.

The Screen Australia stand

From available data, 87 Australian companies (with 241 individual representatives) attended MIPCOM. Many used the Screen Australia stand as a base for taking meetings and doing business.

Producers that registered their details demonstrated a fairly even spread of expertise through factual, drama, kids, lifestyle and reality television (see below).

Documentary	43
Drama	38
Children	36
Lifestyle	32
Feature	28
Reality	28
Animation	26
Interactive Media	18
Variety	15



The Screen Australia stand itself comprised nine meeting tables (two with screens), and provided free wifi, a reception and message service, two computers and a waiting area.

Over 250 meetings took place at the stand across the week. Producers could book meetings at the tables in advance through the online booking system on the Screen Australian website.

Screen Australia produced a number of publications that were available at the stand:

- *Australia at MIPCOM 2013* – a directory of 69 Australian companies doing business at MIPCOM;
- *Documentaries 2013* – a listing of 53 new documentaries with Screen Australian investment
- *Doing Business with Australia* – a guide to the Producer Offset and co-productions.

A show-reel highlighting 15 recent drama, children's and documentary titles with Screen Australia investment was produced and played on two screens at the stand.

The delegation

Tim Phillips and Justine Concannon attended the market on behalf of Screen Australia. Tim's brief was to meet with distributors, potential international co-producers, broadcasters and financiers and to give support and advice to local producers attending the market. Justine managed the busy Screen Australia stand and ran the official Screen Australia activities, including the Malaysian matchmaking event and the Australian drinks function. Screen Australia Board member Richard Keddie was present at the market working on his own projects.

Screen Australia contacts:

For questions on this report, please contact Tim Phillips on +61 3 8682 1900.

MIPTV distributor/financier contacts:

ACTF
www.actf.com.au

All3Media International
www.all3media.com

TRAVEL REPORT

Aver Media
<http://averlp.com>

DCD Rights
www.dcdrights.com

Distribution360
www.distribution360.com

Flame Distribution
<http://flamedistribution.com>

ITV Studios
www.itvstudios.com

Studio 100
www.studio100.tv

Daro Film Distribution
www.daro-films.mc

Digital Rights Group
www.c4i.tv

eOne
<http://entertainmentone.com/home>

Ingenious Media
www.ingeniousmedia.co.uk

Sky Vision
<https://skyvision.sky.com>