

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I have spent fifteen years working across the screen industry in Australia and the United Kingdom, spanning cinema exhibition, brand partnerships, live cinema events, and creative marketing. I held senior roles at Secret Cinema and Everyman Cinemas in London before returning to Australia, where I now lead the ANZ operation for a global film and television marketing studio. I have seen Australian content from multiple vantage points: marketing it here, working alongside international distributors and exhibitors overseas, and watching how it is spoken about and received in rooms far from where it was made. Production is funded. Audiences are not. Australia's screen policy settings measure success in volume, expenditure, and employment rather than audience reach. Marketing readiness, release strategy, and audience tracking receive far less emphasis. Many productions underinvest in marketing, leaving it late in the cycle, producing campaign materials that fall below international standards. The result is reduced visibility at festivals, limited distributor interest, and a narrower audience reach, which diminishes the cultural and financial return on the public's investment in Australian stories. This gap is structural, and it begins before cameras roll. Working in exhibition and marketing in the UK, I saw how early the conversation between creative teams and marketing practitioners begins on productions that travel. In Australia, that conversation almost always happens too late and too cheaply. I have sat in international markets and watched Australian titles struggle for attention not because the work wasn't good, but because nobody had invested in communicating why it mattered. Take bigger swings. Trust the audience. There is a challenge that sits upstream of marketing entirely. Australian screen agencies need to take greater creative risks. The streaming quota is a genuine opportunity, but volume alone is not the point. Screen Australia data shows that 14 to 24 year olds are the most frequent cinema attendees in the country, and globally, Gen Z's cinema attendance grew 25% in 2025. These audiences are showing up, but they are being reached almost exclusively by international content. The titles that stay in the cultural conversation are the ones that trusted their audiences enough to be genuinely original. Australia proves, when we back that kind of work, it belongs on the world stage. The risk now is that increased production targets quietly become an incentive toward the familiar. Funding bodies should measure not just what gets made, but whether it challenged anyone. What I would like to see The new National Cultural Policy should establish a dedicated audience development function within Screen Australia, connecting funded productions to marketing strategy from the development stage. It should support a tiered marketing asset fund with eligibility conditional on a clear audience engagement plan. Success metrics across all screen funding programs should include reach, not just completion. Audiences are smarter than we give them credit for. The policy settings should reflect that.