

National Cultural Policy Submission

1471194

Public and anonymous

Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am a parent of three children 10, 12, 14 years, a film lover and also a screen producer based in [REDACTED]

I've been in the industry for more than twenty five years, and in that time witnessed immense changes to the landscape, both as a producer and also as an Australian audience member.

The proliferation of stories on all screens has meant we are now in a hyper competitive market for audience attention and it's a very tricky landscape to navigate for those working in the industry, and also for parents of Australian kids.

My personal experience with my kids is that while they have largely fallen away from watching episodic tv (in favour of You Tube or selected title binging) they have turned to cinema - as for them it presents an exciting opportunity to do something with their friends, or with their parents, as a special outing and event to be enjoyed together. The problem is finding anything for them to see that is not made in America.

As an audience member who's deeply vested in trying to see Australian Films at the cinema I know how hard it is for me to even to find a session to see them in. There are such limited release windows, sessions and locations available that by the time I can see an Australian film it's already disappeared.

And for my kids they are not even aware of the Australian titles to see, such is the lack of market awareness for them.

And yet, it feels critical at this time to consider big questions around our national identity, what it means to be Australian. Shared values, a sense of community and a point of difference for young people, who are the future of who we can be and facing unprecedented global challenges.

As the age of AI looms large upon all of us, including upon our industry here in Australia, I believe the structure we have set up (to largely be a place where offshore production is supported financially in order to create jobs, industry capacity and a flow on economic impact) will start to erode.

Our distinct national identity, complex and evolving, has a unique place within the creative and cultural industries in Australia where we can both explore this and discuss it at scale. There is no more empathy building medium than cinema, and far from dying it presents a unique opportunity to embed itself as cultural and national identity architecture. A source of national pride.

Audiences, cinema exhibitors, screen agencies and distributors need to work together to make this possible. It happens in other territories around the world, so is not impossible and there are models to reference.

A few suggestions:

1. Cinemas should be treated as cultural infrastructure, 'a place for people to come together' with support for independents and Australian content obligations for chains.
2. The distribution system needs structural support — marketing rebates, P&A funding, coordinated release strategies
3. All films screening in cinemas should be required to screen an upcoming AUSTRALIAN film trailer prior to the film commencement (such an easy win!)
4. Australia needs a dedicated screen export body

5. Audiences need to be treated as active participants in Australian cinema, not passive consumers.