

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

Screen Well Pty Ltd

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Securing Australia's Screen Workforce Through the Mental Health Action Plan (MHAP)

While the National Cultural Policy champions a vibrant creative sector, research shows the workforce underpinning the screen industry is facing an existential crisis. This diminishes our capacity to bring Australian screen stories to life and jeopardises future investment in the sector.

The evidence is undeniable. Griffith University's Pressure Point Report (2025) revealed that 72% of screen workers feel the industry is not a mentally healthy place to work; 48% experienced bullying in the past year; and 25% plan to leave within six months. This talent drain threatens our cultural output and the sustainability of the sector.

In response, the industry united to develop the Australian Screen Industry's Mental Health Action Plan (MHAP)—an evidence-based roadmap transitioning the sector from reactive crisis management to proactive prevention, which strengthens two core pillars of the National Cultural Policy: Centrality of the Artist (Pillar 3) and Strong Cultural Infrastructure (Pillar 4).

Crucially, the government does not need to start from scratch. Released on May 20, 2026 and funded by industry, the MHAP has already secured the support of over 60 leading organisations, including Netflix, Prime Video, Disney Studios, BBC Studios, the ABC, SBS, NITV, AFTRS, Screen Australia, Screen Queensland, Ausfilm, NIDA, and the Australian Cinematographers Society.

- Phase 1 ('ACT NOW') establishes achievable steps for all screen workplaces to manage baseline risks, directly aligning with recent Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislative changes and operationalises the NCP's goal of creating safe work cultures.
- Phases 2 and 3 ('Building a Sustainable Future') create long-term shared infrastructure to scale these practices across the country, while tackling systemic issues impacting mental health.

The MHAP delivers an exceptional return on investment across multiple portfolios, and via a public-private partnership. For the Arts and Employment portfolios, it builds workforce capability and mitigates regulatory, financial, and legal risks. For the Health portfolio, it provides an evidence-based preventative framework that reduces pressure on clinical systems. Additionally, Phases 2 and 3 can be delivered cost-effectively by leveraging Screen Well's UK Film and TV Charity partnership, which can be scaled to benefit the broader creative industries.

Under Revive, the government funded Support Act to protect the music sector. The screen sector urgently requires equivalent investment to safeguard a workforce driving over \$2.29 billion in annual production expenditure.

Screen Well respectfully requests the Australian Government commit an estimated \$2 million over three years to establish this support framework. Specifically, this investment will:

- Fund Core Infrastructure: Support the development of shared tools, training and resources outlined in the MHAP's Phases 2 and 3, enabling improved workplace practices across the sector.

- Resource Central Coordination: Enable Screen Well to drive industry engagement, governance, implementation, research and continuous improvement of the MHAP.

By investing in the MHAP, the government will unlock lasting social and economic benefits, ensuring Australia remains a sustainable, world-class destination for screen excellence. Download the MHAP here: www.screenwell.com.au/mhap