

Streaming for Australia

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WHY STREAMING VIDEO ON DEMAND SERVICES ARE AN ENGINE FOR THE ARTS

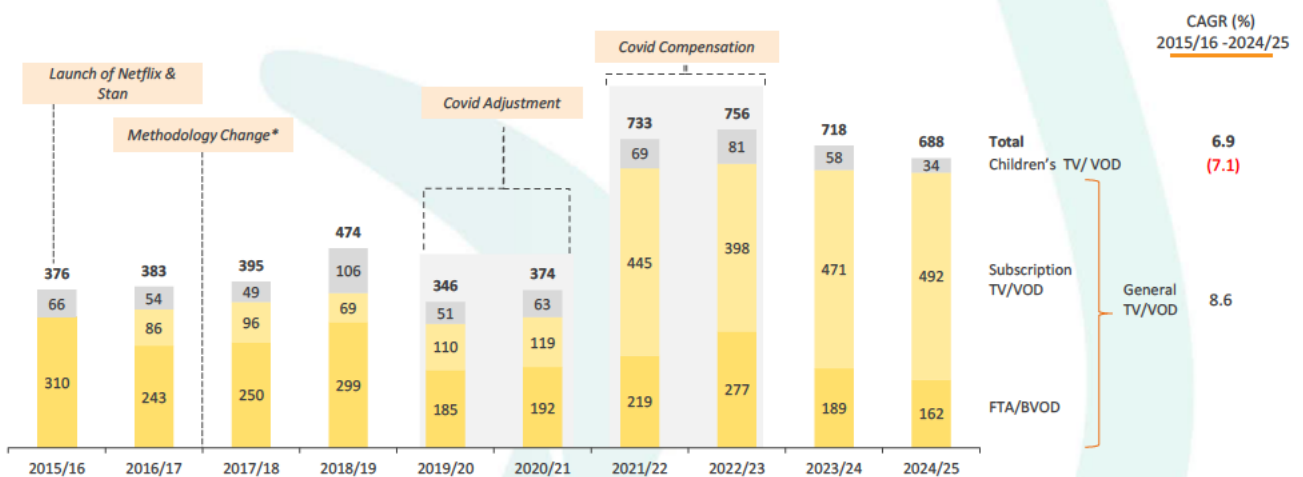
Streaming Video on Demand (SVOD) services are an **integral part of the Arts** in Australia. While broadcasting has historically relied on live sports, news, reality television and light entertainment to engage audiences, most SVOD services have built their businesses by connecting the world’s best storytellers - wherever they may come from - to global audiences. This has created a richer environment for audiences; from premium services such as *Apple TV, Disney+, HBO Max, Netflix, Prime Video, Paramount+* and *Stan* to more specialised offerings such as Japanese Anime on *HiDive*, or LGBTQI+ content via *OutTV*.

SVOD services are an **engine for the arts** in Australia. Whether it is Disney+ connecting global audiences with our favourite *Blue Heeler, Bluey*, Netflix supporting Trent Dalton’s singular voice on *Boy Swallows Universe*, or Prime Video helping *Narrow Road to the Deep North* score an Emmy Nomination; the evidence that Australia’s stories shine brighter thanks to SVOD services is clear. SVOD services are the structural anchors for the modern screen ecosystem; they are the place where development, production, distribution, audience reach and global monetisation increasingly converge.

The data bears that out. SVOD services are the engine behind the 6.9% compound growth rate in expenditure on Australian stories over the past decade and are now the **principal source of demand for ambitious, high-risk Australian storytelling.**

In 2024/25, SVOD services represented **72% of total investment** in screen drama content.

Figure 1: Total investment in Australian Drama by commissioner type (\$ m)



Note: * Eligibility for inclusion for TV and online titles revised to 30 minutes or longer (from 60 minutes or longer), Source: Screen Australia, Oliver & Ohlbaum Analysis

Local content regulation has formalised the role of SVOD services as an engine for the Arts.

The Government committed in Revive to legislate local content regulations. While we did not consider the legislation to be necessary given the SVOD services' ongoing track record in investing in high-quality Australian stories, we note our role as a key stakeholder in bringing Australian stories to life and placing them into Australian homes and homes across the world. All members captured by this legislation are now working constructively with the ACMA to comply with the investment and reporting requirements.

We welcome the Government's commitment to wait four years before commencing a statutory review of the Act.¹ This is the right approach; it would be risky to layer additional reform before this legislation has been bedded down and its impact has been fully understood.

SVOD services are also the engine for career sustainability, not just content investment.

Significant SVOD investment drives repeat employment, career progression and skills deepening/ This provides unprecedented opportunities for crew and early career creatives, but it also creates an ongoing need for investment in skills and training.

SVOD services are delivering on this need and investing more than any broadcaster on skills and training to support the sustainability of the Australian screen industry. Initiatives include:

- Netflix investing over \$10 million AUD since 2021 in capacity building programs with partners such as Screenworks, NIDA, AFTRS and Bus Stop Films,²
- *Prime Video's* partnership with NIDA to develop new writers and directors, or
- *Disney's* ILM partnership with the *NSW Government* for their Jedi Academy.³

SVOD services are also a cultural export engine for Australian soft power by helping Australian shows shine brighter on the global stage.

The Australian stories made by SVOD services are more ambitious than the Australian TV series that were created pre-streaming. And they must be; in a streaming environment, audiences are in control. For them to select any program, Australian or otherwise, it needs to win the competition against anything the world produces. A global audience is built one viewer at a time. And winning that competition doesn't come cheaply – Australian programs on SVOD services cost an average of \$5.1 million per hour in 2024/25 – more than five times the average cost of scripted drama on free-to-air television. But with that cost comes opportunity; these stories are connecting with

¹ See Section 121FZY of the Legislation

² <https://about.netflix.com/en/news/how-netflix-continues-to-support-diversity-and-development-in-australian>

³ See page 10 of [this report](#) for more details.




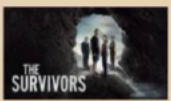
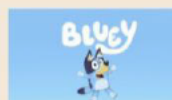





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audiences in Australia and around the world.⁴ And that helps Australia and Australians to be seen around the world, it helps shape how we are perceived and what values we represent.

 <p>Territory Peaked at #2 in Global shows on Netflix (October 2024) 40th most hours viewed of shows available globally* (H2 2024)</p>	 <p>Boy Swallows Universe Peaked at #3 in Global shows on Netflix (January 2024) 60th most hours viewed of shows available globally* (H1 2024)</p>
 <p>Apple Cider Vinegar Peaked at #3 in Global shows on Netflix (February 2025) 57th most hours viewed of shows available globally* (H1 2025)</p>	 <p>The Survivors Peaked at #2 in Global Shows on Netflix (June 2025) 65th most hours viewed of shows available globally* (H1 2025)</p>
 <p>Bluey Most streamed programme in the United States in 2024 (55.6 billion viewing minutes on Disney+)</p>	 <p>The Artful Dodger Disney +’s most successful Australian Original title to date, with particularly high viewing in the US and EMEA</p>
 <p>Deadloch Reached Top 10 TV Shows on Amazon Prime Video in over 165 countries</p>	 <p>The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart Set records for highest viewership of an Australian series worldwide, ranking in the top five shows in 78 countries on Prime Video in August 2023</p>
 <p>Last King of the Cross Became the streaming service’s most-watched local series in its first week</p>	 <p>NCIS Sydney Reached a US audience of ~10 million viewers with its premiere episode alone</p>

It is now clear what role SVOD services play in the overall eco-system; they are builders and promoters of Australia’s outstanding talent both in front of and behind the camera, and they are the home of **premium, internationally competitive and exportable** TV series.

On its own, an engine can’t move.

Broadcasters, both public and commercial, have a role to play in supporting great story ideas. And screen producers have a responsibility to writers, directors, actors and skilled crews to raise more capital for new productions and allocate that money widely to make the best possible show. That money should not just come from SVOD services in Australia; it should come from private investors, from streamers and broadcasters from all over the world. Producers need to build these global connections as audiences are now global as well.

A modern content ecosystem gives audiences more pathways to access content than ever before, and regulatory approaches should recognise this diversity. Distinct and different from SVOD services, we now see User Generated Content services thrive – in fact, YouTube is the world’s

⁴ We note the Public Consultation Paper identifies this as a key goal for NCP2, see pages 4 and 5 of the consultation document.

largest video-streaming platform⁵ – and creators are able to connect with audiences there at scale. Micro Dramas,⁶ vertically filmed short episode serials, are another form of storytelling that is rapidly gaining in popularity globally. These platforms create new pathways for creators to find their voices.

When the engine works better, everyone benefits.

Streaming for Australia acknowledges that this process is important to many stakeholders, and this means the Government is likely to hear a thousand voices and a thousand ideas. Given our significant role in bringing to life Australian stories and sharing them with the world, we urge the Government to continue to work proactively with us to ensure that any policy idea submitted through this consultation process is evaluated thoroughly to ensure that it is evidence-based, effective and that any intervention considered is proportional to the problems identified.

Poorly calibrated intervention could risk stalling the very engine now driving growth in Australian stories. By contrast, well-designed policy can make the engine better, faster and run more smoothly, creating a path for more stories to be told, and for more rewarding careers for Australia's most talented storytellers and screen sector talent both above and below the line.

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The graphs and data presented in this submission are taken from an in-depth report commissioned by Streaming for Australia and ANZSA. It can be found [here](#) and provides a detailed evidence-base to assist in future policy development.

⁵ <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/youtube-is-now-the-worlds-largest-media-company-and-it-is-only-getting-bigger-c32bff3b>