

National Cultural Policy Submission

Submitting: As an individual

What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you? Feel free to respond to any or all pillars:

First Nations

Most organisations have robust First Nations teams and policies in place. Just need to ensure that it is not tokenistic

Strong Institutions

I am writing in relation to the film and television industry specifically. I believe the underpinning institutions that support the industry could do with an overhaul to make it clear and transparent what the commercial and cultural remits are.

The original iteration of Screen Australia (The Film Finance Corporation in particular as distinct from the Australian Film Commission (development and Film Australia - certain types of documentaries) was set up in recognition of marketplace failure yet recognising the importance of Australian voices on screen.

The focus on international partners and finance as prerequisites for eligibility and likelihood of successful funding goes against this objective. The administrative aspects of the organisation should be reduced so that the organisation better aligns to support the industry and not the other way around.

Senior Executives and board members should have 3-5 year Maximum term limits. Board members should not be able to receive funding for any project which they have a pecuniary interest in while on the board. While not to suggest any board members have done anything wrong, to simply remove oneself from a current round decision meeting is not enough to remove the potential of actual conflict of interest. Just being a board member helps to identify when and how to present a project for funding. Some may argue this means you can't have industry specialists on the board however this could be alleviated by enforcing term limits for board members and having appropriately paid positions. Board positions should be advertised, and all members should be assessed and appointed on industry experience and merit.

The offset division (non-discretionary funding) SHOULD NOT be within the same building and have the same committee members as those on the discretionary side of the building for direct investment. Again, this leads to potential for many actual conflicts of interest. The offset unit would be better served within the management of the Minister's department with appropriate delegation to ensure timely process and review.

The secrecy (due to it being tax based) and extreme time lags and interrogation into non-relevant matters are causing severe financial consequences for most practitioners. This is not what and why the offset division was set up. It was set up as an alternative to 10BA to provide a way for stakeholders to have certainty for a tax-based rebate to assist in creating sustainable businesses for producers.

Experienced teams should be supported and backed. The level of overreach, and "studio" mentality needs to be addressed.

Screen Australia should be there to support – it is NOT a marketplace funder. Accordingly, its policy of investment and recoupment should also be looked at so that it really does fulfil its remit as "soft" money to support practitioners for Australian voices on Screen. The few million dollars it recoups annually could be better served propping up the film makers themselves.

Reaching the Audience

Reaching audience focus can not necessarily be judged by ratings or box office alone.