

National Cultural Policy Submission

Screen Voice

Submitted: On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation

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

We endorse and support the points made in the SPA submission and add to that:

It is imperative the voices of our First Nations creative workers are more prominent – we must see more First Nations stories, that are, importantly, told by First Nations creatives. The stories are what make Australia unique – it's our shared stories that set us apart from the rest of the world. The screen industry is perfectly placed to share these stories both domestically and internationally and proactively assist in continued reconciliation.

It is essential we see increased diversity within these First Nations stories and voices – old and young, traditional and contemporary, aspirational and educational, country and city, etc. These stories are wholly unique and apart from the primary and direct benefits – artistic collaboration, jobs, up-skilling, community outreach etc, they have a significant cultural and financial export value to the screen industry.

There now exists an opportunity to increase domestic audience reach – to promote reconciliation and collaboration. First Nations commission need to extend beyond NITV, and secondary channels. It is imperative these stories are reflected on all platforms. This can only occur with increased investment – tailored to both emerging practitioners and in the opportunities that exist for those creatives practicing in the industry already.

Intellectual Property (IP)

With the increased movement of the industry at large towards investment by foreign owned companies, as well as the multiplatform nature of the environment, it is imperative that First Nations stories and ICIP remain the property of First Nations people. The cultural significance of these stories is too important *not* to be protected by a statutory policy / framework and the terms by which First Nations stories are protected through legislation.

A Place for Every Story

We endorse and support the points made in the SPA submission and add to that:

We are proud promoters of the “Make it Australian” Campaign. In the absence of clear

regulations around localized commissioning quotas for SVODs, the decreasing amount of Australian content on our screens (of all sorts) is evident. Our screen stories are an important part of Australia's culture and there should be a place for every Australian story and for Australian storytellers. A NCP should work to create a regulatory framework that ensures the curve starts to run upwards once again.

As a group of predominantly Western Australian Producers it is imperative that the stories from all the states are told. There has always been a distinct bias (whether conscious or unconscious) in favour of east coast productions. All our main stream broadcasters, and therefore the commissioners of programming, are based in Sydney and/or Melbourne. The majority of the industry is based on the east coast. To address this, we strongly recommend that a NCP regulatory framework addresses the imbalance pertaining to regional production and stories.

The Centrality of the Artist

We endorse and support the points made in the SPA submission and add to that:

As producers, we are central to the Screen Industry, and more so to its sustainability. Yet, independent producers are increasingly vulnerable. International mergers of the "big" companies and studios are on the up, and as a result, the once clean lines between Broadcasters and Producers are progressively blurring - the industry is becoming global. Those commissions and opportunities that have been traditionally reserved for the independent producers are slowly being eroded.

We face the future of the screen industry in a disadvantageous position with the procurement of increased rights by content acquirers becoming the norm, and not the exception. We need a future NCP that considers this fact and puts in place policies/ regulations by which the local industry can be sustained.

Central to this is the notion of Intellectual Property (IP). With each commission that is granted to a foreign owned company, IP, and its associated economic and cultural benefits, for both the producers and the wider industry is owned and controlled offshore. Navigating a feasible pathway to ensure the retention of Australian IP within Australia, should be central to the NCP.

Strong Institutions

We endorse and support the points made in the SPA submission and add to that:

Arguably, the collective that is "the independent screen sector" is an institution in its own right – continually raising awareness and lobbying Government, working to sustain the industry and its jobs, maintaining and in turn highlighting the cultural and economic benefits of the industry both domestically and internationally, and ultimately communicating Australian stories and storytellers to the world. It is crucial that a NCP puts in place policies to fully support the very practitioners that keep the industry going, yet are most at risk in the changing landscape.

The independent screen sector is heavily reliant on the support of government agencies, state agencies and private investors. As we face an uncertain future, institutions such as Screen Australia must work *with* the industry to ensure its cultural and economic sustainability. Prioritising Australian storytellers, stories and importantly the retention of Australian IP – within Australian - is central to this.

Screen Voice fully supports a review of Screen Australia to ensure it, as the leading screen industry institution, remains fit for purpose.

Reaching the Audience

We endorse and support the points made in the SPA submission and add to that:

This can only be done if we start to see increased Australian productions on our many and varied platforms. And as such would support policies that ensure there is increased Australian content produced by Australian companies seen by Australians.

Please tell us how each of the 5 pillars are important to you and your practice and why. Feel free to respond to any or all that are applicable to you:

First Nations

Put simply, we are a diverse bunch of Producers and our Screen cultures should better reflect all of us.