

19th August 2022

## **NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY SUBMISSION**

**The Professional Film Crew of WA gives permission for this statement to be published online and for the PFCWA to be acknowledged as this submission's author.**

The Professional Film Crew of Western Australia is an incorporated not-for-profit association, established with the aim of providing representation for the professional crew of the Western Australian film and television industry.

Our members are behind the scenes and include “below the line” (not directors, producers, writers or actors) creatives, technicians, and associates. Our members include boom operators, art directors, assistant directors, production coordinators, lighting technicians, caterers, film accountants, makeup artists, costume crew, sound recordists, postproduction crew, logistics crews who feed, shelter and ablate the crew while shooting.

PFCWA, in a collaborative effort with other like-minded industry associations and individuals, is focused on building and securing a sustainable film industry in WA.

We are committed to assist in lobbying government and private enterprise for suitable film industry infrastructure, for now and the future. We support the promotion of WA as a filming location and provide information about the Professional Film Crew of Western Australia members.

We seek to encourage our membership to continually achieve the highest level of professional standards through the provision of information, networking opportunities and further training. We endeavour to provide a strong sense of community for our members through ongoing communication, support and social activity.

### **1. First Nations: recognising and respecting the crucial place of these stories at the centre of our arts and culture.**

Our membership fully supports the place that our First Nations practitioners hold, and must continue to hold, in the cultural life of Australia. Our members all personally benefit in complex, beautiful and innumerable ways through our collaborative experiences on First Nations projects across our enormous and linguistically diverse state.

We support all genuine processes encouraging First Nations practitioners into all aspects of our industry, and insist that adequate support mechanisms are put in place to ensure these programmes are successful and meaningful to the individuals and industry as a whole.

### **2. A place for every story: reflecting the diversity of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.**

The PFCWA boasts a workforce standing by with alacrity, eager to help tell a story in any screen manifestation. Our state has a long tradition of making quality documentary and children's television, and over the last decade we have branched even further into world-class drama, comedy and genre filmmaking. As such, we encourage our decision makers to continue to engage in all types of projects through and across multiple formats and genres. More stories, more voices, more content. In a world of accelerated globalism and shorten attention spans, it has never been more important to keep telling our Australian stories, and having Australian practitioners from a variety of backgrounds tell the stories they wish to tell, however they want to tell them... “for the sake of distant days” (king and patron of the arts, Ashurbanipal, c 600BC)

### **3. The centrality of the artist: supporting the artist as worker and celebrating their role as the creators of culture.**

The PFCWA are a collaborative workforce and while only a handful of our members double as writers and directors, we are all storytellers and creators of culture in all of our chosen areas of expertise. We are active members in the business of screen arts. We have a varied and diverse skillbase and as a consequence of our geographical isolation, WA produces hardworking, supportive and agile film practitioners who have gone on to work on large scale productions across the globe.

While the eastern seaboard of our country is enjoying an unprecedented amount of local and international film and television production, our local WA industry is currently dwindling, and we can (and should) do better, but it will take an increase of funds available to our state, and more value placed on our chosen careers. When given the opportunity to work, our film and TV crews punch well above our weights. Behind closed state borders, over the past 18 months, WA crews worked on three out of the five Screen Australia funded projects travelling to the prestigious Toronto Film Festival. However, a large percentage of our PFCWA members are currently forced interstate to find employment, part due to our lack of studio facilities and infrastructure and part due to the greater pay rates of our eastern states cousins.

We are carpenters, engineers, accountants, technicians, writers, painters, sparkies, drivers, linguists, coaches, mentors, costumers, beauticians, photographers, musicians, caterers, carers and, yes, artists. Need a house built in the morning, and safely burned down by nightfall? Get the construction and pyrotechnics crew involved. Need to turn 2022 Fremantle into 1700's France? Well, with a few creative camera angles and the right costumes - we can make that dream a reality. We are the magicians who work in the shadows. But one look at the hundreds of names in the end credits of any film (or even just the broadcast credits of your favourite sports and news broadcast) and you'll know that it takes a village to raise a child, and those kids are the stories we tell and capture for our screens - big and small.

### **4. Strong institutions: providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts and culture.**

The PFCWA members need sustainable and predictable work. Professionally, most of us are lucky enough to be doing what we love, but the current state of the WA film and television industry is not conducive to a balanced and sustainable career.

While we are encouraged by the state election promise of the new film studio and the recent announcement of the \$20M Western Australian Production Attraction Incentive, we must not be set up to fail. Through capacity building efforts and on the job training, our industry will thrive. However a pathway into this industry needs to start early, not just in a tertiary field. Prospective practitioners need to know that there is an industry for them to participate and thrive in. Preparing our graduates for a career as a freelancer and small business owner, ensures they are able to navigate through this unpredictable and ever changing work environment.

60 episodes of the ABC series, 'The Heights', were filmed entirely in Perth. This project produced a flurry of new art department crew, lighting technicians, costume workers, and camera assistants. Students, fresh out of TAFE, went through their training on 'The Heights' and are currently working in Queensland on 'Godzilla Vs Kong 2'. as well as on numerous larger east coast productions. Through comparatively cheap TV projects, like 'The Heights', we grow our capacity and ensure pathways into the industry. These long form projects, filmed over months provide employment for hundreds of practitioners and are what keeps our industry growing - without a quota system in place to ensure these programs (mostly narrative - scripted - repeat TV series) continue to be made here, then we risk losing more and more practitioners to the east coast, where these shows are in abundance.

As such, we encourage robust Australian content quotas across Australian free-to-air and streaming services and insist on WA seeing our share of the national pie. Our isolation and limited access to formal and informal networking and mentoring, further puts strain on our ability to hustle and exacerbates our out of sight, out of mind predicament.

While our members' lives are made richer and the stories we tell more diverse, the Western Australian Regional Screen Fund has meant that the crews working on the majority of productions in recent times, are working away from home, for periods much longer than a standard mining swing-shift. We are privileged to see so much of this glorious state but with few other options on the table, this work puts enormous personal, mental and physical strain on our members. The additional option to work close to home, would see crew retention and crew attraction maintained further bolstering a robust film sector in WA.

#### **5. Reaching the audience: ensuring our stories reach the right people at home and abroad.**

The performing of stories and creation of beauty through Film, Television and the Radio arts are the most powerful and portable mediums to carry our Australian stories into homes and screens around the world. These mediums must be energised and encouraged through ongoing acclamation and financial support. We need systematic engagement from all levels of government in order that these arts - these arts that connect us, teach us and stretch our knowing of ourselves - are relevant and seen in this ever changing arena.

These stories of Elders, of ordinary Australians and of the trailblazers and delinquents, need more respect, funding, and protection.