



The Melbourne Screen Hub (MSH) is a not-for profit entity, we act on behalf of approximately 40 companies, mostly small businesses, who are the backbone of the Victorian Screen Industry. It was originally formed 3 years ago as a collective of highly experienced film industry practitioners who recognised the pressing need to provide a strong, industry led approach to maintaining and growing our industry. We provide a home base for the vehicles, equipment, and personnel, providing a secure 24hr accessible site while working to establish a Hub which can accommodate all aspects of Screen Business and provide a Screen Training scheme in collaboration with partners in education and industry.

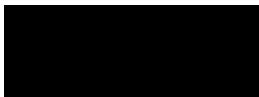
We write to you with great concern for the Location Offset reform:

- The uplift to the Location Offset was announced/committed to in May 2023, as part of the federal Budget. This was very well received by our members and the greater industry, putting Australia into favourable competitive position with other places around the world to attract productions. The proposed uplift was recently introduced to the Parliament within the *Treasury Laws Amendment (Delivering Better Financial Outcomes and Other Measures) Bill 2024*.
- International film and TV projects create significant work and training opportunities for all our businesses and Australian practitioners across the whole screen workforce; for cast and crew, for facilities and equipment suppliers, for a whole range of service businesses. International projects have allowed businesses to grow, which in turn provided services that would never have been affordable or available to the local sector – it makes for higher quality Australian film and television to be seen worldwide.
- **It is vital that these reforms are reviewed and passed as soon as possible.** Most of our businesses lost significant income in the last 12 months because industrial disputes in the US (the writers and actors strikes) put a halt to international production for most of this period. While the industry continues a slow recovery, our businesses are desperate for the increase to the Location Offset to take effect, we are confident that it will trigger an immediate and much-needed return to stronger levels of activity and employment.
- MSH was fortunate to receive some funding from the Victorian Government to help us grow our establishment, moving to a larger site so we can include

more tenants and broaden our services to the film Industry. This expansion has not arisen out of hubris; it has been identified and encouraged by Vicscreen as a necessity to the health of the local industry. The delay in the reform **is already having** serious consequences to our affordability of the new site.

- We have seen some public suggestions the Location Offset reform be combined in some way with the Government's plans to introduce content obligations for streaming services. We believe the two should not be conflated. Both areas of regulation are important, but they address different policy areas with distinct objectives. The content obligations are complex and draw a range of varied opinions which requires a longer time for the Parliament to resolve, while the Location Offset is a long-standing measure that has broad support across the Parliament and industry.
- Delay to implementation of the Location Offset reform **is already a direct and significant impact on local employment**, business activity and the level of broader economic benefit. Our members have in recent months been involved in pre-production and planning on several international productions that have either paused pre-production planning or worse, relocated production overseas. The producers of these shows openly indicated that the ongoing uncertainty about the Location Offset directly impacted their decision. It is contributing to greater industry instability already affected by Covid, the reshaping of distribution via streaming services and recovering from international strikes.
- This Location Offset reform has broad support from the industry and has been through detailed consultation. It has been recommended by previous Parliamentary Inquiries in 2017 and 2019. It was announced in the 2023 Budget, and we are urging it be passed as soon as possible, to provide a real boost to Australian workers and businesses. We appreciate the Parliament's history of collaborative support for the screen sector and are encouraging this to continue through support for this bill.

For and on behalf of Melbourne Screen Hub



Ian Anderson
General Manager