



12 September 2011

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: ec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Inquiry into recent ABC programming decisions

Screen NSW is the NSW Government's dedicated agency to foster and facilitate creative excellence and commercial growth in the NSW screen industry. Screen NSW programs seek to stimulate investment and jobs through new creative and business opportunities and we promote innovation in screen content and technology.

Screen NSW is a proud co-financier with Australian Broadcasting Corporation of many independent production companies, which create quality television programs across a range of genres. In this context, we would like to inform the Senate Standing Committee of the following:

- The ABC, as any broadcaster, is best placed to determine what programs it wishes to schedule for its target audience. Programming needs change and evolve and existing shows need to end at some point, in order for new programming to fit in the schedule;
- The independent production sector has a critical role in enabling the ABC to leverage its existing resources and access high quality and diverse programming. Funding from the ABC to support independent productions can generate more production activity for audiences to view, as co-financing partners, such as State and Federal agencies and private sector financiers can contribute to the budget of the productions. Where a production is an internally ABC-produced program, we are unable to do so;
- Independent productions are equally capable of assisting the ABC to meet its Charter obligations, as ABC-produced programs. I have attached a list of the Screen NSW and ABC co-financed independent productions from 2008/9 to 2010-11 and you will see many award-winning programs in that list;



- It is relevant to note that the BBC has moved towards the commissioning model for budgetary reasons and drawn up a charter that ensures quotas for

independent production, and that this move to outsourcing has in no way diminished the quality of the work that they invest in and broadcast. An independent report commissioned by the BBC in 2005, *From the Cottage to the City: the Evolution of the UK Independent Production Sector*, showed clearly that the independent production community benefited significantly from outsourcing in growth, professionalism and commercial stability;

- The independent production sector, which includes both city-based and regional production companies, has a strong ability to reach across the whole country, creating a diversity of programming which tackles both city and regional issues. Screen NSW has co-financed some wonderful regional programming in partnership with the ABC, including the award-winning two series of East of Everything, filmed in the Northern Rivers region of NSW;
- Other than in specific areas of television content (for example, news and current affairs programming), Screen NSW believes it is appropriate for the ABC to leverage its resources by outsourcing this production activity, in order to contribute to the broader creative industries ecosystem. Talented screen industry personnel can work on a number of productions, across a range of independent production companies, rather than being in the sole employ of the ABC.
- The issue of content ownership and intellectual property is an important one in this debate. In a digital world, intellectual property ownership is a key asset of any business in the creative industries. It is increasingly important that creators retain the opportunity to develop, re-purpose and exploit their assets to build more robust and sustainable businesses and brands. Outsourcing program creation to the independent sector enables intellectual property ownership to remain in the hands of the private sector, without necessarily removing an income stream from the ABC, if it takes an equity share through its finance.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry. I would be pleased to clarify any matters, should you have queries.

Yours Sincerely

TANIA CHAMBERS
Chief Executive



SCREEN NSW AND ABC: CO-FINANCED INDEPENDENT PRODUCTIONS

2008/09	Childrens	Dance Academy Series 1 My Place Series 1	
	Documentaries	Art and Soul Love Lust and Lies (aka Not 14 but 47) Mr. Sin: The Abe Saffron Story	
	Fiction	Samson and Delilah The New Black: Aunty Maggie and the Womba	
	Indigenous	Wakgun The New Black: Bourke Boy The New Black: Jacob	
2009/10	Arts & Entertainment	Sleek Geeks 2	
	Childrens	My Place Series 2	
	Documentaries	A Thousand Different Angles (Artscape) Accentuate the Positive Chad Morgan, I'm Not Dead Yet (working title) Dick Smith's Population Puzzle Divorce: Aussie Islamic Way I, Spry: The Rise & Fall of a Master Spy Making Australia Happy Recipe for Murder The Grammar of Happiness The Inquisition	
	Fiction	Laid (aka Like A Virgin) Rake	
	Indigenous	Boxing for Palm Island Dancing with the Prime Minister Here I Am (aka The Place Between)	
	2010/11	Arts & Entertainment	The Gradual Demise of Phillipa Finch
		Childrens	Dance Academy Series 2 Dancing Downunder The Adventures of Figaro Pho
		Documentaries	A Law Unto Himself (Working Title) Aussiewood (working title) Country Town Rescue Series 1 Dancing with Dictators (aka Myanmar Times) Ochre and Ink The Years That Made Us Vietnam: Australia vs USA Wide Open Road
		Fiction	Paper Giants: The Birth of Cleo The Straits
		Indigenous	Satellite Boy