

28 May 2021

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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

Dear Secretary

Broadcasting Legislation Amendment (2021 Measures) Bill No.1 2021

We refer to the legislation above and welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee's inquiry into the Bill. Our comments are restricted to Schedule 1 of the Bill, relating to the New Eligible Drama Expenditure (NEDE) Scheme for subscription television.

Founded in 1983, Media World Pictures is one of Australia's leading independent film and television production companies.

The company has successfully developed and produced hundreds of hours of award-winning content for both television and the big screen – with major credits in feature films, children's series, animation and prime-time television drama. Our diverse range of original and creative content provides quality jobs for production personnel, writers, storyboard artists, actors, designers, animators, composers, sound designers and editors. Our team has produced the highest quality content, including *The Strange Chores*, *Dogstar*, *Little J & Big Cuz* (in association with Ned Lander Media and Blue Rocket Productions) and *The Circuit*. Our team is proudly based in Fitzroy North and at partner animation studio, 12Field Animation in Moonee Ponds (in the Melbourne and Maribyrnong electorates respectively).

Media World Pictures does not support Schedule 1 of the Bill and the halving of Foxtel's relatively modest requirement to invest in Australian drama.

The halving of the obligation to spend 10% of drama channels' program budgets on Australian drama will cause substantial harm to Foxtel customer's access to Australian stories and will damage the local independent production sector.

The scheme has generated such notable and award-winning titles as *Top of the Lake*, *Hacksaw Ridge*, *Lion*, *Love My Way*, *Wentworth*, *Devil's Playground*, *Deadline Gallipoli*, *Fight Season*, *Mr Inbetween*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *Secret City* and *Tangle*.

We are very concerned that a reduction in the obligation will almost certainly result in less investment in Australian drama, a reduction in local employment and reduced cultural outcomes for Australian viewers of subscription television.

We note that the Government is currently considering measures to ensure popular new streaming services make a proportionate contribution to Australian content through its Media Reform Green Paper process. This is a critical decision for the future

of Australian screen culture and the comparative balancing of regulation across different platforms.

We submit that if the NEDE scheme is to be reviewed, its future should be determined with reference to the final decision of the Green Paper process regarding streaming platform regulation. At that time the scheme should be subject to a thorough review that considers whether it should be extended to cover other genres of Australian programming which are vulnerable to market failure.

We are also concerned that the Bill proposes to cancel the existing requirement to make-up any shortfall in expenditure that occurred before 1 July 2021. Given the generous deregulation included in the Bill, this seems excessive and all previous regulatory obligations should be required to be honoured.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide a submission.

Yours sincerely

COLIN SOUTH

Producer