



**SUBMISSION TO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS**

**INQUIRY INTO THE FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUSTRALIA'S FILM,  
ANIMATION, SPECIAL EFFECTS AND ELECTRONIC GAMES INDUSTRIES**

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Brisbane – Film City (BFC) on behalf of its members thanks the Committee for the opportunity to participate in this inquiry. BFC (with members representing the film and television, animation, and visual effects industry sectors) sees this inquiry as timely given the state of the industry; global competitiveness; and current consultation occurring between the creative industries and all levels of Government (Federal, State & Local).

BFC looks forward to the Inquiry's findings, recommendations and most importantly outcomes for all sectors of the industry.

**1. BACKGROUND**

BFC is an incorporated association that has been formed to bring together the many stakeholders in Brisbane and surrounding areas that make up the local film and television industry to work collaboratively to grow film and television production.

It is the collaboration between diverse film industry professionals who are seeking to achieve greater and more sustainable economic outputs for their businesses within the Greater Brisbane region.

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**BRISBANE – FILM CITY**

*Bringing together the many stakeholders that make up the local Film & TV Industry to work collaboratively to grow film and television production in Brisbane.*

The members of BFC comprise a broad range of industry participants whose key objectives include:

- Increase collaboration and communication within local industry;
- Effective marketing of Brisbane through promotion, awareness and lobbying;
- Encourage and develop infrastructure to attract and grow the local industry; and
- Training / skills development.

These objectives and related actions are structured to promote a collaborative effort by all parties concerned as the most effective means of growing the industry.

BFC sets out to address gaps (or rather opportunities) in the industry and to value add to programs already under development with other industry bodies. Its economic development focus has, as its ultimate aim, the growth of the local business through across the board industry growth.

## **2. RESPONSE TO CENTRAL ISSUE**

In its submission the BFC considered it more beneficial to respond to some of the issues raised by the question posed in the Inquiry's Information Paper: *"What needs to be done to preserve and extend Australia's position and distinctive voice in global film and electronic games production?"*

Much discussion in relation to the Committee's Inquiry has been related back to BFC's Strategic Focus Areas outlined as in its Strategic Action Plan as:

- Collaboration and communication
- Branding and promotion
- Infrastructure
- Training

BFC views these focus areas as critical in taking the industry to the next level for growth and future opportunities.

There are however other industry issues identified that would be pertinent to the Committee's Inquiry including:

- Education / Training
  - Lack of opportunities for work experience
  - Oversupply of students
  - Lack of industry-ready skills / experience
  - Keeping up with (& staying ahead of) industry standards
  - Training of cast & crew
  - Creating Australia as a centre of excellence (particularly in areas of animation and visual effects)
  - Limited career paths
  - Lack of industry collaboration and information sharing
  - Creative drain
  - As a means of addressing these issues, there is a need for a comprehensive mentoring program to consolidate and better share industry knowledge and experience.
- Lack of statistics, profile and marketing
  - ABS groups the sectors in analysing data instead of more relevant sector data
  - All sectors need to be profiled and marketed as part of the industry (not just Film and Television)
  - Whole of industry marketing strategy is needed (i.e. Australian Wine Industry)
- Federal decision on TV
  - Both company and individual members of BFC felt strongly that the Federal Tax Offset be extended to include television series and "bundled" MOW's.
  - Given the recent announcement of the Incentive Package by the New Zealand Government (modeled on the Australian Tax Offset) that covers film, television series, and bundling of MOW's Australia needs to review this program urgently to ensure Australia remains competitive in attracting production.
- Co-production Agreements
  - Can be restrictive and inflexible for Australian producers
  - Need to grow more opportunities
- Access to affordable technology
  - Affects considerable percentage of BFC members (post production, visual effects and animation)
  - Major issue in terms of connectivity, delivery, efficiency, and ability to compete globally
  - Must be available to all levels of these sectors – not just the large companies

- Industry Collaboration
  - Need for collaboration between industry, government and private industry
  - Could be advantageous for business opportunities; cross platform responses; joint marketing campaigns; cost & time efficiencies; and export outcomes
  - Commitment to smarter industries
- Access to investment / incentives
  - For project development
  - For business development
  - Need to engage the private sector
  - Queensland needs to be equipped with the marketing and finance infrastructure found in New South Wales and Victoria.

Other areas of opportunity highlighted through BFC consultation include:

- Infrastructure
  - Additional physical infrastructure (studios, broadband, new technologies etc.)
  - Need to encourage development of infrastructure to meet demand
- New Technologies
  - Film producers must be educated about revenues made from the inclusion of interactive components in a production.
  - Television production in particular can benefit from the use of simple interactive technologies (such as SMS, interactive advertising, behind the scenes etc). Productions that attract audiences to download ring tones and logos (e.g. generate income for telecommunication carriers). Producers should negotiate to receive a portion of the income received by the telecommunication carrier. An example of this is the Fat Cow Motel television series to be screened on the ABC.
  - Funding organisations (Federal & State) need to allow for the inclusion of interactive technologies in production budgets and not treating them as separate marketing expenses.
  - The delay of digital television and high cost and limited deployment of set top boxes has not assisted in educating the Australian viewing public.
  - A related issue is the limited opportunities available for interactive components to be introduced into large-scale productions. The limitation is created partly by the delay of digital television combined with the high cost and limited deployment of set top boxes. There is a serious concern that the

take up of any sort of iTV or enhanced TV will be crippled in Australia, unlike in the UK and Europe where good progress is being made. European based producers and financiers are more and more requiring the inclusion of interactive elements in a production and in its budget.

- Australia will miss out on international opportunities for television series production if it does not incorporate interactive technologies into television production methodology.
- There does exist interactive developers capable of competing internationally but because there is void between the two industries opportunities are not being capitalised upon.
- The likely effect of international agreements on development, production, distribution and exhibition of Australian films
  - Need to foster the development of marketable Australian Content
  - Need to develop a export marketing strategy for Australian owned and developed productions (similar to the French Export / Marketing Program announced recently)
  - BFC has made notice of an increase in airing of television commercials produced overseas. This is having a significant impact on the livelihood of locally based technicians. This also impacts negatively on society by causing a loss of cultural identity in daily living.

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