

Film Inquiry
Submission No. 58.1



SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

regarding
SCREENSOUND AUSTRALIA
THE NATIONAL SCREEN AND SOUND ARCHIVE

**SUBMISSION TO THE 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**

JULY 2003

SUMMARY

The Federal Government announced in its 2003 Budget that the Australian Film Commission (AFC) and ScreenSound Australia, the National Screen and Sound Archive, would be integrated from 1 July 2003. By integrating the AFC and ScreenSound Australia, the Federal Government has, for the first time, given clear recognition in Commonwealth legislation to the important work of collecting and preserving the nation's heritage of both screen and sound material.

ScreenSound Australia is Australia's national audiovisual archive, playing a key role in documenting and interpreting the Australian experience and actively contributing to the development of the audiovisual industry. ScreenSound Australia collects, stores, preserves and provides access to our national screen and sound culture.

ScreenSound Australia has a strong interest in the future of Australia's film, animation, special effects and electronic games industries. This interest derives from its responsibility in preserving Australia's heritage and making available a record of Australian cultural experiences represented in the audiovisual media.

In keeping with current trends in the use of industry technologies, ScreenSound Australia has recognised the increasing use of digital technologies in the film, special effects, animation and computer games industries. As with more traditional media, the new media is both a vehicle for expressing Australian heritage and a record of that heritage. As a result, ScreenSound Australia is positioning itself to collect and preserve this new media, in addition to the more historic technologies for moving image and recorded sound.

As Australia's audiovisual heritage is a fundamental part of its national record and its national memory, it is vital that Australia continues to contribute strongly in audiovisual media. Supporting the film and new media industries will enable us to do this.

NEW MEDIA AND THE COLLECTION

ScreenSound Australia's collection comprises over 400,000 moving image and recorded sound items and a further 1,000,000 items such as stills, posters, scripts, costumes and artefacts. Collection material is held under direct ownership through acquisition or donation, or "on deposit" where materials are lodged with the Archive and ownership transfers to it after 50 years.

Currently 29 per cent of the audiovisual titles held in ScreenSound Australia's collection are from film (which includes features, newsreels and home movies). This compares with 27 per cent for television, 31 per cent for recorded music, and 13 per cent for radio.

ScreenSound Australia's interest in the future of the Australian film industry, particularly in areas such as documentary, is founded not just on the creation and use of new Australian content, but also in providing an outlet that uses material from the

national collection; most significantly, an outlet that presents Australian culture and heritage in context, and in a way that audiences have demonstrated is both in demand and meaningful.

The widespread use, and convergence, of information technology in the production of audio-visual media has given rise to new forms of content. This is particularly true for the animation, special effects and electronic games industries.

Digital production and storage technologies present challenges in managing a collection, but also open opportunities for faster access and re-use of content. ScreenSound Australia is readying itself for an archiving role in relation to these technologies, such as establishing optimal methods for preserving digital formats. As technology evolves, preservation activities will be adjusted accordingly.

ACQUISITIONS OF NEW MEDIA

The collection of animation, computer games and digital special effects, within Australian production, all fall under the new media sector of our collection development guidelines. These guidelines state that one of the aims of our collecting activities is:

“ to assemble a new media collection which reflects the existing diversity of genres, technological platforms, source types, e.g. government/commercial/independent, as well as geographic and cultural origins.”

As it is a relatively new area of development for our collection, collection priorities for animation, computer games and digital special effects are in the process of being established.

Collecting priorities will be determined according to the three categories of material noted below. Within each category, material produced by government, commercial organisations, performers, participants and fans may be collected:

- on-line material e.g. websites with content related to the audiovisual industries; net broadcasts;
- discrete digital media such as interactive CD-ROMs relevant to the audiovisual industries; and
- audiovisual content which demonstrates strong use of emerging forms of digital tools and media, e.g. animation, special effects.

The proposed acquisition strategies include:

- maintaining partnership with the National Library of Australia's PANDORA project in relation to capturing and storing websites;
- liaising with peak industry bodies;
- developing and maintaining close relationships with leading industry representatives; and

- collecting national award winners (e.g. Australian Effects and Animation Festival).

As this is a relatively new area of interest, computer game and animation titles currently form a small part of the national collection to date (less than one percent). It is anticipated, however, that this will expand with time and in response to industry developments.

In recognition of strong Australian involvement in the digital effects and animation industry, ScreenSound Australia will be pursuing examples of products created by Australian companies or individuals, which either demonstrate high levels of technical/creative innovation or reflect aspects of Australian culture. As an example of this, computer games in the collection include:

- *AFL Live 2003*, the first Australian Football League game to be developed in Australia; and
- *Fallout Tactics: Brotherhood of Steel*, developed in Australia by Micro Forte.

Recently, ScreenSound Australia provided assistance for Australian entries in the International Animation Festival, held in France. As a result, some of the entrants' work was acquired. These include Adam Elliot's trilogy, *Uncle, Brother and Cousin* and Susan Stamp's *The Windmill*. Other recent acquisitions of animated films have been:

- *The Arsonists Riddle*, finalist at the 2002 Tropfest Short Film Festival; and
- *Air*, selected for the Melbourne International Animation Festival 2002.

CONCLUSION

ScreenSound Australia supports further investigation into the opportunities for Australia's film, animation, special effects and electronic games industries.

In the face of the vast amount of overseas content, we must ensure the continued delivery of Australian content to Australian audiences. This is important not just to allow current audiences to have access to programs exploring Australian social, cultural, political and historical issues, but also to ensure that we continue to develop a comprehensive record of today's Australia for future generations.

We must be able to draw into our Archive a record of Australian culture and heritage that adequately reflects Australian society.

As part of this submission, we have included some supporting video material, which represents aspects of our collection. In addition, we would like to invite the Committee to visit ScreenSound Australia for a tour of our exhibitions and technical facilities. This will enable us to better demonstrate our commitment to preserving and making available, Australia's audiovisual heritage.

More information about our role can be found at www.screensound.gov.au.

Monday 7 July 2003

Mr ««GreetingLine»»
Inquiry Secretary
Standing Committee on Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Brien

**Inquiry into the Future Opportunities for Australia's Film, Animation, Special
Effects and Electronic Games Industries**

With respect to the Australian Film Commission's Submission to the above inquiry,
please find attached a supplementary submission for the Committee's consideration.

Please don't hesitate to contact my office on 02 9321 6401 if you or the Committee have
any queries about this supplementary submission.

If members of the Committee wish to avail themselves of the invitation to tour the
exhibitions and technical facilities of ScreenSound Australia in Canberra, please contact
Ms Juliana Payne on 02 9321 6475.

Yours sincerely

KIM DALTON
Chief Executive
Encl/1

Brien, Andrew (REPS)

From: Juliana Payne [j.payne@afc.gov.au]
Sent: Tuesday, 8 July 2003 2:53 PM
To: Brien, Andrew (REPS)
Subject: Supplementary submission

Dear Andrew

Please find attached electronic copies of cover letter and supplementary submission from the AFC.

Originals, along with supporting video material, will follow in the post.

Many thanks for your help.

Juliana Payne
AFC