

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts portfolio

Additional Estimates, February 2010

Outcome: 5 **Question No:** 164
Program: 5.1
Division/Agency: Screen Australia
Topic: Staff salary bands
Hansard Page ECA: 105 (8/2/10)

Senator TROETH asked:

Senator TROETH—How many staff does Screen Australia employ?

Dr Harley—One hundred and thirty-five full-time equivalents.

Senator TROETH—What is the number of salary bands for those staff?

Dr Harley—Eight.

Senator TROETH—What is the salary range for each salary band?

Dr Harley—I would have to take that on notice.

Answers:

Screen Australia employs 134.4 full time equivalent staff. It has eight salary bands (excluding SES and PEO levels). The ranges for each salary band are as follows:

Bands	Range in \$	
APS/SA1	21,867	40,280
APS/SA2	41,245	45,738
APS/SA3	46,979	52,552
APS/SA4	53,250	56,850
APS/SA5	58,402	63,839
APS/SA6	66,834	75,820
APS/SA Executive1	80,585	92,192
APS/SA Executive2	97,975	114,298

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Additional Estimates, February 2010

Outcome:	5	Question No:	165
Program:	5.1		
Division/Agency:	Screen Australia		
Topic:	Issuing of Producer Offset Certificates		
Hansard Page ECA:	106 (8/2/10)		

Senator TROETH asked:

Senator TROETH—Could you let the committee know if there is a benchmark regarding the timing it takes to get a final certificate for the Producer Offset?

Dr Harley—I know what the time is. It is 10 weeks. That is the average time.

Senator TROETH—Is that the average time?

Dr Harley—Yes.

Senator TROETH—If it is 10 weeks, are there any cases which require a much longer time?

Dr Harley—Eighty to 90 per cent of the final certificates achieve that 10-week turnaround.

Senator TROETH—Is there a reason for the other 10 per cent?

Dr Harley—I could speculate about that or I could take it on notice.

Senator TROETH—If you could take it on notice that would be helpful.

Answer/s:

In the period 1 July 2009 to 31 December 2009 (inclusive), Screen Australia issued 58 final certificates for the producer offset to applicants. Of these, 52 (90%) were issued within 10 weeks of the receipt of a complete application, which is the published timeframe.

The six certificates issued outside of the target timeframe were due to:

- the complexity of the application;
- the inaccuracy of the application's claimed qualifying Australian production expenditure; and/or
- peaks in the number of applications received.

The average timeframe was 7.64 weeks from receipt of a complete application.

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Outcome:	5	Question No:	166
Program:	5.1		
Division/Agency:	Screen Australia		
Topic:	Conflict of Interest Policy		
Hansard Page ECA:	Written Question on Notice		

Senator BIRMINGHAM asked:

1. Was Screen Australia's Conflict of Interest Policy followed in relation the assessment, between 14 April 2009 and 17 November 2009, of proposed feature film *Brothers at War*?
2. Does Screen Australia consider there to have been a conflict of interest at any stage of the *Brothers at War* assessment process, specifically with regard to Scott Meek's involvement given he had been appointed executive producer of another film subject to assessment during this period and which had also sought to employ actor Ryan Kwanten? If so, is Screen Australia satisfied with the management of this conflict of interest?
3. Was any conflict of interest declared by Scott Meek?
4. Has Screen Australia in any way modified its practices as a result of this matter? If so, in what way?

Answer/s:

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. No.
4. No. However, Screen Australia did recently amend its conflict of interest policy to clarify in what circumstances assessors retained by Screen Australia can be independently engaged with Screen Australia funded projects.

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Additional Estimates, February 2010

Outcome:	5	Question No:	167
Program:	5.1		
Division/Agency:	Screen Australia		
Topic:	Producer Offset acquittal		
Hansard Page ECA:	Written Question on Notice		

Senator TROETH asked:

I refer to the e-mail sent out on the afternoon of 18 November 2009 regarding the timing of the Producer Offset acquittal (attached)

1. What prompted this e-mail?
2. Were you made aware of a press conference held by the Shadow Minister for the Arts earlier that day?
3. Had you seen the Shadow Minister's media release or a transcript of his press conference at the time of sending out this e-mail?
4. Did Minister Garrett or any of his staff ask or direct Screen Australia to respond to the Shadow Minister's policy announcement?
5. Did Minister Garrett, or any member of his staff, contact anyone at Screen Australia on 18 November 2009 to discuss the Shadow Minister's policy announcement regarding the Producer Offset?

Answer/s:

1. Screen Australia, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and the Treasury, had been working on developing solutions to the issue of the timing of Producer Offset acquittals since January 2009. The ATO released a letter on 15 October 2009 outlining how the process would operate. Screen Australia then prepared a fact sheet outlining how the procedures would operate, and announced the release of that fact sheet by way of the email in question.
2. The press conference was held at the annual Screen Producers Association of Australia conference, which a number of Screen Australia officers attended. Screen Australia was aware of the press conference.
3. Yes.
4. No.
5. No.