

10 July 2017

## **SPA Releases Screen Production Industry Policy Ledger**

Today, our CEO, Matthew Deaner released the *Screen Production Industry Policy Ledger*. This ledger sets out policy decisions since 2014 and by effect, their impact on the small businesses that drive the industry.

“This ledger sets out in stark relief the series of policy decisions made over the last 3 years that have negatively, or asymmetrically, affected the industry and in particular, the small businesses that drive it.” Mr Deaner said.

“Negative decisions range from the series of egregious funding cuts to the ABC, SBS and Screen Australia that has pulled \$400 million from the industry, to withdrawing regulatory oversight and auditing on local content obligations.”

“The ledger also makes clear the other Government decisions that have had an asymmetrical impact on the industry. The Government decided to benefit certain businesses at one end of the value chain, such as the broadcasters with a series of broadcast licence fee refunds. These windfalls may boost broadcasters’ share prices, but not their commitment to local content, which has declined 20 per cent for drama and documentaries over the past four years.”

“The Government has also moved to benefit certain elements of the local industry, such as services sector and crew with nearly \$70 million in funding for foreign films *Thor*, *Alien* and *Aquaman*. This is welcome but the approach has not been certain or consistent or taken into account the entire production ecosystem and its ongoing sustainability.”

“The status quo also prejudices the industry. A lack of action on the increasing substitution of New Zealand content for Australian content by the broadcasters, co-production treaties with key markets, foreign actor red tape, offset competitiveness, evolving local content obligations and addressing significant structural competition issues in the market, compounds the hurt for the small business and hinders international trade opportunities and our industry’s international competitiveness.”

“What the ledger demonstrates is the Government’s policy approach to the local production industry looks a lot like trickle-down economics. The Government’s agenda to date has been regrettably incomplete and has left out the small businesses that drive the industry.”

“The recent announcement of a content review is a welcome opportunity to rebalance the ledger. If the Government is committed to an efficient market

and effective support mechanisms for Australian content through this review, we need to rebalance this ledger in favour of the small, nimble and agile businesses that allocate and extract most value out of the resources in the market. To ensure a diversity of Australian content, we need a diversity in supply that will ensure against a future dominated by vertically integrated content oligopolies in which Australian audiences will suffer from a lack of a diversity and choice in their programming options.”

“SPA looks forward to working with the Government to rebalance the ledger.”

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**About Screen Producers Australia:**

Screen Producers Australia was formed by the screen industry to represent large and small enterprises across a diverse production slate of feature film, television and interactive content. Our members employ hundreds of producers, thousands of related practitioners and drive more than \$1.7 billion worth of annual production activity from the independent sector.

On behalf of these businesses we are focused on delivering a healthy commercial environment through ongoing engagement with elements of the labour force, including directors, writers, actors and crew, as well as with broadcasters, distributors and government in all its various forms. This coordinated dialogue ensures that our industry is successful, employment levels are strong and the community's expectations of access to high quality Australian content have been met.