

10 July 2017

SPA STATEMENT ON ABC ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR HANSON-YOUNG

Today, our CEO, Matthew Deaner made a statement on ABC's data released on Friday under questioning from Senator Hanson-Young.

"Late Friday, in answering questions submitted by Senator Hanson-Young, the ABC released data for the past four financial years as they relate to budgets, expenditure and programming hours. Save for a modest increase in the budget for documentaries and narrative comedy, this data reflects a decline in all areas over these years." Mr Deaner said.

"Comparing 12/13 to 15/16, the ABC's total content budget is down nearly 9 per cent, the children and drama budgets are down almost 20 per cent. These shrinking budgets inform reductions in hours produced by the ABC over the four years for drama and children's by approximately 20 per cent, documentaries by 35 per cent and narrative comedy by an alarming 55 per cent. Most concerning is the significant fall in hours for factual production, down 85 per cent."

"These sobering numbers show the Government's cuts to the ABC are having an effect on the ABC and in turn, the independent production sector. The 2014 budget continues to bite. We see a peak in production, expenditure and hours in 13/14 and a steep decline following. The Government must recommit funding to the ABC."

"These figures also support the arguments and recommendations made by Kim Dalton earlier in the year. In his essay, Mr Dalton makes a series of recommendations, including a greater commitment from the Government to the ABC and from the ABC to local content and the independent production sector through independent and regional quotas, regulated terms of trade and higher levels of transparency and accountability.

"It is a source of continuing frustration that it is up to the Senate to obtain these figures from the ABC. These same figures are supplied by the commercial television broadcasters to, and reported by, the ACMA under their licence conditions."

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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.