

8 May 2017

## **SPA Statement on Broadcasters' Content Compliance**

Today, our CEO, Matthew Deaner, called on the Government to close the loophole that allows commercial television broadcasters to acquit Australian content quotas with content from New Zealand. This follows the release today by the ACMA of the annual Compliance with Australian Content Standard and Children's Television Standards.

“The loophole must be closed. Because of a lack of foresight when negotiating a trade deal with New Zealand in the 1980s, broadcasters can broadcast cheap, second-run New Zealand programs and have them qualify as Australian. Having *New Zealand from Above* and *New Zealand on a Plate* qualify as Australian content makes a mockery of the Australian Content Standard. This is one of the reasons why a content review, announced by the Government on the weekend, is long-overdue.”

“The report lays bare the stress the industry is under and unfortunately, the commercial television broadcasters' commitment to Australian drama and Australian children are the first casualties. Since 2013, the broadcasters' expenditure on Australian drama has dropped nearly 30 per cent. At the same time, New Zealand drama is increasingly used as a cheap substitute. In 2016, Channel Nine acquit just over 40 per cent of its first-run drama quota on New Zealand content and Ten acquit 20 per cent of its first-run children's drama quota on New Zealand content.”

“Screen Producers Australia has developed proposals to address this loophole. We will continue to seek a solution to this growing problem.”

Noting the Government's announcement of its intention to replace broadcast licence fees with a spectrum charge, Mr Deaner continued:

“On the weekend the Government announced further measures to provide some welcome relief for the commercial television broadcasters. However, the Government again missed an opportunity to shore up support for the Australian production industry and tie licence fee reductions to increases in commitments to independent production.”

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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.