

## Response to Supporting Australian stories on our screens Options Paper (**Options Paper**)

**This response to the Options Paper comes from a group of more than 20 production companies which are substantially involved in producing content for Australian children.**

The companies are large, small and everything in between, produce animation, live action and factual programs for all ages, and are based all over the country. These producers include Emmy winners, BAFTA winners, many, many AFI and AACTA Award winners. Their work has launched and fostered the careers of many of Australia's most successful actors, writers, directors and all types of crew, and provided tens of thousands of jobs. Their programs represent hundreds of millions of dollars in production spend, and even more in export revenue, and are watched in hundreds of countries by hundreds of millions of children. They are the foundation of the Australia Screen Industry, creatively, culturally and economically.

The key driver for all these companies is making high quality content specifically for Australian children.

Content which allows Aussie kids to see themselves reflected on screen in all their diversity, and hear their own voices in a variety of forms. It is essential that future generations of Australian kids are able to continue to see themselves on our screens in this way, and this cannot happen without continued government support of the screen industry by way of regulation and incentive.

While the Options Paper addresses the issue of Australian screen content broadly, the companies making this submission wish to focus specifically on the Options from the perspective of children's television.

Each company has its own point of view and specific comments in regard to the Options put forward, and may set these out in individual submissions, however there are a number of key points that they all broadly agree on.

First, the current system needs to change. It is outdated and does not serve the needs of Australian children, screen industry businesses or free-to air broadcasters.

Reviewing the Options put forward and the Consultation Questions set out in the Options Paper, solely from the perspective of children's television, we submit as follows:

1. Model 3: Significant, is the most preferred model, subject to the various points below. This includes its support for specific funding for children's television being allocated within the ABC and SBS, and the encouragement of promotion and discoverability for children's content across the various services available in Australia.
2. There is overwhelming support for Australian children's content quotas/obligations being applied to all broadcasters, streamers and other service providers on a platform neutral basis.

3. There is also overwhelming support for a replacement of the current P, C and G ratings with a more flexible children's category subject to obligations to make and communicate content for a variety of age ranges across the category.
4. The potential establishment of an Australian Children's Content Fund (**ACCF**) is supported in principle, however the details of how an ACCF would be operated, how it would select programs, and how such programs would be communicated to Australian children, require careful consideration and safeguards, including but not limited to as set out below.
5. If an ACCF is established:
  - a. it should be operated by an independent panel/commissioning body rather than deferred to an existing broadcaster or organisation, to ensure an independent voice and multitude of commissioning 'doors'; and
  - b. programs produced using the ACCF should be broadcast/communicated across all the broadcasters, streamers and other service providers, to ensure Australia children's programming remains available to Australian children across free-to-air and pay television, streamers and other platforms, and there is not just one destination for Australian children's television.
6. An increase in the Producer Offset for children's television, also applicable to the PDV Offset so that they run at the same level, is sought, to offset the lower licence frequently paid by broadcasters, and stimulate high quality production in all areas of Australia children's content.

We further submit that Model 4: Deregulation would in no way support Australian stories on our screens, would immediately cripple the whole of the screen industry, and should not be entertained. We do have an example of what happens when commissioning of content is deregulated. Following certain deregulation of children's content in the UK in 2003, there was a 93% drop in spending by commercial networks in the UK on children's content, which prompted the UK Government to give OFCOM (the UK regulator) power to reinstate children's television quotas (reported *The Telegraph*, 17 April 2017).

We submit that Australian children's television is of immense cultural and economic value.

We agree that change is required to the framework supporting Australian content on our screens in order to reflect the way that Australian children consume content now and will do so into the future. We submit that such change must maintain obligations on broadcasters and service providers to commission and promote content made of Australian children of all ages.

19 June 2020

This submission is made by the following companies and individuals:

### **Ambience Entertainment**



Lead by an innovative creative team Ambience Entertainment is a solely Australian owned award winning producer of quality family entertainment across all genres from children's entertainment, drama and animation across to adult drama and lifestyle programs. Recent global success include the Feature Film *STORM BOY* and Children's Drama Series *DROP DEAD WEIRD*.

### **Bogan Entertainment Solutions**



BES Animation is a multi award winning animation studio based in Melbourne. The company has created and produced multiple television series and feature length movies for the local and international market. BES Animation's original productions are created and produced in Australia and can be seen in over 120 countries around the world. Our broadcast partners include Disney, Cartoon Network, Warner Bros, Channel 7 to name a few. The company currently employs forty five staff. BES Animation's mission statement is to create high quality original properties for children and teens here in Australia that plays to the world.

### **Flying Bark**



Flying Bark Productions is a Sydney based animation studio, working with broadcasters, distributors and co-production partners across the country and the globe. In continuous production for over 50 years (originally as Yoram Gross Studios), the company produces movies and series in both 2D and CG. While focussed on original local IP and co-productions, Flying Bark also works with major studios around the world on their tent-pole productions. In 2020, Flying Bark released the all-Australian movie *100% Wolf* and is in the final stages of a 26-part TV series based on the same property. Production continues on another film in its highly successful *Maya the Bee* franchise as well *Mia & Me*, based on the worldwide hit series. Its international productions range from *Rise of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (with Nickelodeon), *Monkie Boy* (with Lego) and a new show for Marvel Studios. Flying Bark has around 300 employees in Australia and a substantial international export business. It is owned by the Belgian entertainment conglomerate, Studio 100 International.

### **Jenny Lalor**

Jenny Lalor is an entertainment lawyer and executive producer of children's content. She has been working in film and television for over 25 years, including working in the UK at the BBC, Carlton Television and Tiger Aspect (including on *Billy Elliot* and *The Animated Mr Bean*). The many children's series she has worked on include: Emmy Award winning animation series *dirtgirlworld* produced by mememe Productions with DHX Media in Canada for the ABC, BBC (UK) and CBC (Canada); Emmy Award winning animation series *Bluey* produced by Ludo Studio for the ABC; and the highly acclaimed indigenous animation *Little J and Big Cuz* produced by Ned Lander Media for NITV and the ABC.

### **Jonathan M Shiff Productions**



Founded in 1988, Jonathan M. Shiff Productions Pty Limited is one of the world's leading producers of high quality, long-form children's television drama series. The company's impressive catalogue of drama and documentary series, including *Ocean Girl*, *H2O – Just Add Water* and *Mako Mermaids*, has been sold to more than 170 territories worldwide entertaining an audience of millions. The company's series have won BAFTAs, AACTA and AFI Awards and Logies, and the company has acquired a reputation for originating engaging stories, extraordinary production values and award-winning visual artistry. An international market leader, there is a global demand for Jonathan M. Shiff Productions programming, partnering with organisations including ZDF Enterprises in Germany, Nickelodeon and Netflix in the USA and UK, and Network Ten in Australia.

### **Julia Adams**

Julia Adams is an entertainment lawyer and executive producer working across television, film and documentary, with a particular focus on children's content. Julia has been the executive producer of many Australian children's television series including *H2O – Just Add Water*, *Mako Mermaids* and *The Bureau of Magical Things* produced by Jonathan M Shiff Productions, *The Day My Butt Went Psycho* and *Space Chickens in Space* produced by Studio Moshi, and *Balloon Barnyard* and the *Tales of Sanctuary City* film franchise produced by Like a Photon Creative.

### **Kapow Pictures**



Kapow Pictures is a Sydney based animation studio producing 2D and 3D content for children's tv series, short films, feature films, commercials and more. Kapow Pictures work with some of the best designers, animators and writers in Australia. Established since 1997 Kapow Pictures has worked with a number of co-production partners and has an International reputation for producing entertaining content that is both innovative and funny. Currently in

production on a tv series with a US partner for Netflix and in development on a number of projects including a feature length film and 2x animated children's tv series.

### **Kreiworks Entertainment**



At Kreiworks Entertainment we are executive producers with a mission to create high-quality media content that challenges expectations and reflects the diversity of the global audience. In collaboration with 2020 Academy Award-winning company Lion Forge Animation (animated short *Hair Love*), we acquire and develop original IP for production and exploitation throughout the world, as well as localizing animation and live-action shows across Latin America and English speaking countries.

### **Kryptyx Entertainment**



Kryptyx is a Sydney based entertainment company originally founded as a publisher of comics and trading cards syndicating into many export territories. Launching its first original animated YouTube series and companion games on the web back in 2006, today Kryptyx' original IP, productions and international collaborations can be found as short-form and full-length series, in-game play, and at the toy section in major global retail chains. Kryptyx active IP pipeline for 2020-2025 is focused and wrapped directly around the kid's global growth areas of animated series, mobile AR gaming and connected toy play.

### **Like A Photon Creative**



Like A Photon Creative (LAPC) is a multi-award winning and internationally acclaimed production company based in Australia. Founded in 2012 by Kristen Souvlis and Nadine Bates, who have over 20 years combined experience in children's television, publishing and digital entertainment, the LAPC team are passionate about creating forward thinking, ethical content and platforms for audiences worldwide. In 2017, LAPC produced an animated preschool television series, *Balloon Barnyard*, for Disney Junior. Since then, they have undertaken production on a franchise of animated feature films entitled "*Tales from Sanctuary City*", through a landmark theatrical release deal with Universal Content Group. Specialising in multi-verse and multi-platform content, LAPC have proven themselves time and again in the digital arena, having developed a host of online content including the highly successful digital reading app for children, *Kindergo*. Other exciting work to date includes video segments commissioned for *Sesame Street*'s 45th and 47th seasons.

### Ludo Studios



Ludo is an independent three time Emmy®, Logie and AACTA Award winning studio and Screen Producers Australia, Business of the Year in 2019. Ludo creates and produces stories from script to screen under one roof in Brisbane, Australia. Ludo produces the most popular series in ABC TV Australia's history, *Bluey*, and employs over fifty creatives and producers on their original shows.

### Media World Pictures



Established in 1982, Media World Pictures is one of Australia's leading independent film and television production companies. Based in Melbourne, Media World has successfully developed and produced hundreds of hours of award-winning content for the Australian and International market, both for television and the big screen – with major credits in feature film, children's live action series, prime-time drama and since 1994, as recognised specialists in Australian Animation production.

### Mememe Productions



Mememe Productions is an Emmy award winning, multi-platform content creation business, based in the Northern Rivers Region of NSW. Owned and operated by Cate McQuillen and Hewey Eustace, it is a sun run, hands-on, creative TV and multimedia production hot house, committed to creating values led content for families Home to *dirtgirlworld* and *Get Grubby TV*, what they create and produce is seen on TV in 128 countries, by millions of people online every day and has permeated into the hearts and backyards of families across the globe.

### Moody St Kids



Moody Street Kids was established in June 2002 in Melbourne, Australia by Gillian Carr, former GMTV (UK) and has become one of the leading award-winning kids' television producers in Australia. Moody Street Kids specializes in creating, developing and producing original children's animated content. Since 2002, Moody Street Kids has been in production

continuously and produced hundreds of hours of television. We have forged extensive partnerships with co-production partners across the globe, and have established a core production and development team with collaborators in the US, Canada, Brazil, Asia and the UK. Moody Street Kids' children's television series have been broadcast around the world, including Australia, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, South America, China, the UK and in the US (Nickelodeon US, The Hub), amongst many others.

### **Northern Pictures**



Established in 2010, northern pictures has one of the strongest storytelling reputations in Australian television. Producing on average 100 hours of content for global broadcasters each year, our slate includes blue chip natural history programs, social issues series, factual entertainment, theatrical documentaries, children's factual and scripted drama. Our factual team has produced some of Australia's most awarded and recognised documentary content, tackling big subjects such as racism, mental health, domestic violence, disability, misogyny and addiction. Our team prides on creating programs with unique access and cinematic sensibilities, underpinned by strong journalistic values. Northern Pictures Kids and Scripted has built a reputation for entertaining, nature inspired content that excites and engages young audiences in the preschool and kid's space. Northern Pictures Kids has expanded into scripted content with a focus on comedy and adventure. We produce content for Netflix, BBC, SBS, ABC, CBC, Arte, Discovery Channel, National Geographic, Channel 7, Channel 9, BBC America, Love Nature, and many more. Northern Pictures has been recognised as significantly contributing to diversity and representation on and off screen. Our critically acclaimed productions have garnered Rose D'Or and Emmy nominations, Venice Television Awards, Prix Jeunesse Awards, BANFF Rockie Awards, New York Festival Gold Medals and AACTA awards amongst others.

### **Pirate Sized Productions**



Pirate Size Productions develops and produces high quality entertainment for children, young people and families. As a narrative driven studio we pride ourselves on telling innovative stories built around dynamic characters and rich worlds. We are a small, tight-knit team making big waves thanks to our unique combination of skills and talents, which we continue to hone whilst working alongside some of the best broadcasters in the world. Our vision is to tell stories that are bold, adventurous, and that audiences adore. Pirate Size Productions is currently in production on a preschool series for the ABC, and is in development on several projects, including a co-production with Starburns Industries which has received development funding from Screen Australia, and a co-production with Pukeko Pictures, with development funding from the Australian Children's Television Foundation. Pirate Size has in the past also partnered with NBC Universal, Sesame Studios, R U OK?, and Teeny Tiny Stevies for the ABC.

## Pop Family Entertainment



Pop Family Entertainment was established two years ago by industry stalwart, Carmel Travers, who's founded and run several Australian production companies. Pop Family is currently delivering *Alien TV*, a 78 episode high-end hybrid animated series commissioned by Netflix globally and the Nine Network Australia, which is due to premiere in June 2020. The series is breaking new technology barriers-to-entry for television and has been lauded for its creative and animation quality. POP has a rich slate of development projects including the Asian Animation Summit "Best In Show" series, *Escape From Pirate Asylum*, and *Weirdo*, based on Anh Do's best selling books, previously developed as a live-action series, but now in development and financing as a fully animated project.

## Princess Pictures



Princess Pictures has grown over the past sixteen years to become one of Australia's leading independent production companies with a reputation for delivering highly original, high quality projects to the local and international markets. We gravitate toward new ideas, stories that haven't been told or ways of telling stories that make audiences look at the world differently.

## SLR Productions



SLR Productions is one of Australia's leading Emmy and multi award winning children's entertainment companies, specialising in the creation, development and production of world-class media content. SLR Productions is the media company behind children's brands *Alice-Miranda Movies*; *Guess How Much I Love You*; *Space Nova*; *The Skinner Boys – Guardians of the Lost Secrets*; *Lexi & Lottie: Trusty Twin Detectives*; *Captain Flinn & The Pirate Dinosaurs*, *Sam Fox: Extreme Adventures* and *I Got a Rocket*. Established in 2002 by Founder & CEO, Suzanne Ryan, SLR Productions has produced more than 185 hours of children's content sold in more than 160 countries throughout the world. With its highly experienced development, production and executive team, SLR Productions partners with major broadcasters, producers, distributors, publishers and creative both locally and internationally to create hit shows with a truly global reach. SLR Productions passion is to make creative, adventurous, imaginative and exciting programmes for kids!

## Sticky Pictures



Sticky Pictures is a multi-award winning, BAFTA and AACTA nominated, creative driven production company based in Sydney, Australia. Sticky Pictures is well known for its much-loved children's series including *Winston Steinburger and Sir Dudley Ding Dong*, *Me & My Monsters*, *Pearlie*, *Dennis the Menace and Gnasher*, *Bindi's Bootcamp*, *Pirate Express* and the multi-award winning *The Dukes of Bröxstônia*. Sticky Pictures' children's series have sold to more than 100 countries. Their latest series "*Are You Tougher Than Your Ancestors*" premieres in June 2020 on ABC Me and already has strong interest internationally. The company has also achieved local and international success with prime-time comedy series including *Sammy J & Randy in Ricketts Lane* (ABC), *Skit Box's Wham Bam Thank You Ma'am* (ABC, NBCU US), and *Ronny Chieng: International Student* (ABC, Comedy Central US).

## Studio Moshi



Established in 2006, Studio Moshi is a leading full service independent animation production company based in Melbourne (Australia), and sister studio in Dublin (Ireland), specialising in original cartoon Intellectual Property (IP) development for children - we love cartoons AND we make cartoons from the ground up from script to screen in co-production and fee-for-service. We have up to 80 talented and creative individuals like producers, directors, production designers, original character designers, storyboard supervisors & artists, animators, visual FX artists, composers and editors all in-house at Studio Moshi. We are known for original animated series for Australian kids such as well know Australian author Andrew Griffiths' *The Day My Butt Went Psycho TV Series 1 & 2* (Nine Network), and more recently *Space Chickens in Space* (Nine Network, Disney EMEA, Disney Australia) both produced and animated in Australia.

## Tania Chambers



Producer and Executive Producer at Feisty Dame Productions, Tania Chambers produced the action adventure children's series *Itch* in 2019 for ABC Australia, acquired to date by CBBC for UK, BYU Broadcasting for North America, TVNZ for New Zealand and YLE for Finland. Tania Chambers also produced the comedy feature *A Few Less Men* directed by Mark Lamprell and starring Xavier Samuel, Kris Marshall, Kevin Bishop, Ryan Corr, Shane Jacobson, Deborah Mailman, Jeremy Sims, Sacha Horler and Lynette Curran and the comedic thriller *Kill Me Three Times*, directed by Kriv Stenders, starring Simon Pegg, Sullivan Stapleton, Alice Braga, Teresa Palmer, Callan Mulvey, Luke Hemsworth and Bryan

Brown, (selected for the Toronto International Film Festival, Melbourne International Film Festival, Busan International Film Festival and BFI London International Film Festival). Tania produced the award-winning short film *Tango Underpants*, as well as short films *One Fine Day*, *High Tide*, *Dark Whispers* and *A Shared Affair*.

### Viskatoons



### **VISKATOONS**

VISKATOONS is Australia's longest running 2D animation studio. The award winning team creates, incubates, develops and produces high end animated series for the global children's market. After being the main supplier of animation for the Australian Children's Television Foundation for fifteen years Viskatoons produced *Li'l Elvis Jones and the Truckstoppers*, *MonsterChef*, *Suspect Moustache* and over a hundred episodes of *Jar Dwellers SOS*. The company is respected internationally for its quality, originality and reliability

*Note: this submission represents the broad consensus from the above companies, however we note that a number of the companies making this submission may also make individual submissions which address other specific points within the Options Paper, or the points above in more detail or from a different perspective. Other companies will endorse the submissions put forward by Screen Producers Australia or others, in addition to this submission.*