

I write in response to the Supporting Australian Stories on our Screens Options Paper. As both a viewer of local content and a screen sector business owner, I am strongly in support of Model 3 proposed. The current model is unfair to the FTA broadcasters as their market share continues to decline, and does not incentivise investment from the new kids on the blocks, the Streaming services, who have cash to spend. Many of the reasons for this shift are outlined in the Options Paper with appropriate figures substantiating trends, however I would like to add the following:

- There was only passing mention given to the training ground local film and TV content provides for both crew and casts. As an actors' agent of over two decades, I have seen clients build international careers off the back of early credits on local TV and Film production. The knowledge, training, connections and exposure these opportunities offer cannot be underestimated. These opportunities play a pivotal role in developing long standing, rewarding careers.
- Children's TV was traditionally well placed to provide the first career opportunities for young actors. Over the years of representing children and young adults, I have seen a steady decline in these productions and therefore such opportunities. Many of my own former and current clients, along with their co-stars, started off in this way, and many of these actors are now working both internationally and domestically. Scores of young actors have become producers and directors. One notable example is Jeffrey Walker, who started as a child actor and recently directed *Lambs of God*, one of Australia's more successful screen exports of 2019. These individuals have in some cases started their own production companies and are giving the next generation employment in the field. We have lost so many hours of learning in this way, with the diminishment of investment in Children's content and the reduction of hours on set. These shows can also have marvellous financial returns. Recent examples include *Mako Mermaids* and *Dance Academy*, yet this content has been steadily eroded.
- As the parent of teenage children, I value the opportunity for my children to be educated and entertained by watching Australian stories in their own accent, with their own culture.
- With regard the Producer Rebate, I believe strongly that the percentage on offer should now be the same for feature films as that for other content. We are often seeing pointless, tiny theatrical releases for films that would be better placed going straight to SVOD. This dilutes its audience reach and makes for a murky marketing plan. So often Australian films fail because they are marketed without appropriate funds and forethought. The rollout of content needs to speak better to audiences ever changing engagement with content across all demographics.

I believe Model 3 will offer the greatest level of flexibility for Australians to better engage with Australian stories in larger numbers, and for Content producers to be more agile in their practice and more successful in reaching Australian audiences. This model is more likely to incentivise creators to think outside the square, allowing Australian stories to perform better in both the domestic and International marketplace, leading to greater kudos and financial reward for the screen sector.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Poulton