

19 March 2015

Additional information from Screen Producers Australia's to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment (Local Content) Bill 2014

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.

As the peak industry and trade body, we consult with a membership of more than 300 production businesses in the preparation of our submissions. This consultation is augmented by ongoing discussions with our elected Council and appointed Policy Working Group representatives. 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.

Screen Producers Australia welcomes this opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Environment and Communication Legislation Committee on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment (Local Content) Bill 2014 (the Bill).

This submission includes additional information requested of Screen Producers Australia during the public hearing in Adelaide on 6 March 2015.

Contact details

For further information about this submission please contact Matthew Hancock, Manager, Strategy and Insights

Question on notice (Page 31 of the Hansard):

CHAIR: I have two questions. Firstly, do you have the capacity to assist us in determining whether the ABC is meeting that requirement? Secondly, do you think that the way that the ABC currently reports and the level of transparency and the matrix that they use to report by are sufficient for you—or me, for that matter, if I train myself to do so—to see whether this was occurring?

Mr Deaner: I would like to see greater transparency. The degree to which we can do that at the moment is by identifying Screen Australia's reporting, by surveying our members directly, because they can tell us where they are investing—and the data that is in our submission comes directly from them—and by hearing what comes out of Senate estimates. We would like that to be not as higgledy-piggledy a process; we would like that to be something the ABC commits to out of this exercise in a much more consistent way that means that everyone has a bit of transparency.

CHAIR: It would be interesting if you could provide some information back to us on what improvements you would like to be able to have an easy line of sight about what is happening in this place. It would be great if you could take that on notice.

Response from Screen Producers Australia:

In response, Screen Producers Australia cites the Broadcasting Financial Results¹ published by Australian Media and Communications Authority as a good example of reporting obligations for commercial free-to-air broadcasters that could be replicated for public broadcasters.

The report provides a snapshot of the aggregated expenditure, revenue, profitability, assets, liability and net assets of the commercial radio and television broadcasting sectors. For example, Figure 1 is an extract of the most recent program expenditure. This type of reporting is a vital tool for industry and government in guiding policy development. It crucially provides a layer of commercial transparency that underpins business confidence in the independent sector.

Screen Producers Australia would ideally like the data to be enhanced across a range of content delivery services, including the ABC, and published more regularly. This would also include more detail in the reports, including the kind of funding (by in-house and external production including licence fees and equity), placement (by channel) and origin (by Australian, New Zealand and international) of programming expenditure and hours.

¹ <http://www.acma.gov.au/theACMA/Library/Industry-library/Broadcasting/broadcasting-financial-results-report>

Figure 1: Australia – Total, 2012/13

	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13
Number of Stations	68	69	69
Revenue			
Advertising Revenue	3,970,819,169	3,813,406,242	3,770,706,769
Other Licence Fee Revenue	37,176,885	21,350,211	5,617,749
Sale of Air Time	4,007,996,054	3,834,756,453	3,776,324,518
Other Revenue	661,099,566	415,603,050	587,884,402
Service Revenue	4,669,095,620	4,250,359,503	4,364,208,920
Expenditure			
Service Expenses	3,861,493,270	4,615,185,508	4,032,084,125
Profitability			
Service Profit/(Loss)	807,602,350	(364,826,005)	332,124,795
Assets			
Current Assets	3,996,138,665	2,490,986,255	2,332,550,964
Non-current Assets	7,512,599,356	10,762,796,998	10,438,598,630
Total Assets	11,508,738,021	13,253,783,253	12,771,149,594
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities	1,125,373,434	1,192,643,732	764,713,209
Non-current Liabilities	1,871,138,265	5,780,521,575	6,348,224,525
Total Liabilities	2,996,511,699	6,973,165,307	7,112,937,734
Net Assets			
Net TV Service Assets/(Liabilities)	8,512,226,322	6,280,617,946	5,658,211,860
Program Expenditure			
Australian Adult Drama	137,177,514	116,664,772	129,384,569
Australian Children's Drama	9,715,171	11,333,010	13,324,841
Australian Children's Other	13,161,434	13,702,240	10,649,680
Australian News and Current Affairs	374,936,544	378,685,552	359,049,044
Australian Documentaries	12,625,965	10,805,672	12,652,465
Australian Sport	354,953,356	344,789,788	434,829,870
Australian Light Entertainment—Variety	176,093,600	280,690,003	206,975,045
Australian Light Entertainment—Other	178,138,289	222,663,490	226,810,788
Australian Other Programming	8,068,364	14,414,397	10,301,772
Total Australian Programs	1,264,870,237	1,393,748,924	1,403,978,074
Overseas Drama	398,026,946	379,546,660	362,998,608
Overseas Other	34,566,651	86,070,567	74,917,656
Total Overseas Programs	432,593,597	465,617,227	437,916,264
Total Programs	1,697,463,834	1,859,366,151	1,841,894,338