

**APDG RESPONSE TO
SUPPORTING AUSTRALIAN STORIES ON OUR SCREENS - OPTIONS PAPER**

My name is Fiona Donovan and I am a Production Designer in the screen industry. I have over 24 years of experience and as many years paying tax. I am the Vice President of the Australian Production Design Guild and as so, make this statement.

The APDG supports Model 3, Option A in regards to the sustainability of the screen industry and prospect of growth and contribution to the Australian economy. Model 3, Option A ensures incentives and obligations are applied equally across all platforms. This model would require all commercial content providers — including streaming services — to invest in new Australian content, and the ABC and SBS would receive funding for children’s programming.

As with most industries there is a pathway to work and becoming a taxpaying member of society. Without the local productions and the quotas – as well as the encouragement of streaming services to have the same quotas, these pathways into the industry would be disrupted and cease. Many exceptional designers that now work on the world stage, such as Owen Paterson, Fiona Crombie and Catherine Martin, would not have had their break without quotas and incentives.

Owen started working on a small children’s television series before working on films. Most of the screen projects he worked on at the start of his career were funded by the 10BA tax break back in the 1970s. Later in his career he worked on many films funded by incentives such as those that were utilised by *The Matrix* trilogy.

Fiona Crombie would not have started in film if it were not for funding via Screen Australia for *Snowtown*. Fiona has gone onto design the Oscar nominated and BAFTA winning *The Favourite*, written by Tony McNamara who also gained his experience working in Australian incentive and quota based drama.

Without incentives *Strictly Ballroom* would not have been made by Catherine Martin. Catherine went on to win an Oscar for both *Moulin Rouge!* and *The Great Gatsby*. These three prominent APDG members are just a few examples of our membership and how through quotas and incentives they have become ambassadors for working with and in Australia allowing Australian stories to be heard. Not just in the creative areas but for many industries. The rest of the world see who we are through entertainment, which is the best form of soft diplomacy and the benefits unquestionably outstrip the initial investment.

I myself started in children’s television and gained much experience on all forms of screen throughout my career. Having also been acknowledged by the ACCTAs with 5 nominations and a win for two Australian dramas *A Place to Call Home* and *Frayed*.

Neither of these would have been made without quotas or ABC funding.

The landscape of our country and the talent of our creatives, are both drawcards for overseas investors in creative and many other areas. To see the nature of who we are as a nation, through entertainment allows the rest of the world understand who they could do business with. What better advertisement for our country as a whole, to the rest of the world?

Without quotas and incentives, the industry will not survive and all the pathways to becoming a designer and practitioner in the screen industry will be disrupted and cease. The only way to work in this industry would be to go overseas. Any income and knowledge base of these highly skilled people would be lost to Australia.

Consider that the majority of countries of our size do not allow market forces to dictate what is shown on screen and encourage through quotas and offsets for the industry to thrive. Canada and France both have a distinct voice on screen as well as working on many shows from other countries in-house. The Canadian government sees the benefit of a thriving screen industry for not just the screen industry, but the myriad of other areas that benefit as well. Please see below for examples of this in Australia in other industries.

Any screen production whether large or small rely greatly on the location businesses where the production is being made. Productions generate income for communities, particularly accommodation, entertainment, food and services in regional areas. For example Camden for the Channel 9 series *Doctor Doctor*, and Foxtel and Channel Seven's *A Place to Call Home*. All shows filmed on the Gold Coast or in Brisbane have a large percentage of crew in accommodation and use local infrastructure such as crane companies, fencing contractors, local hire companies, supermarkets, pubs, restaurants and entertainment.

When I worked on an American film *The Shallows* at the studios on the Gold Coast, we used Gold Coast Cranes and the local Bunnings on a daily basis, spending many thousands of dollars there on any given day. The boost to any area with a big or small production in town should not be overlooked.

The best option for both the industry and Australian economy is an investment in both quotas and incentives. This small investment would have a huge return economically for Australia, through job creation and through the multitude of companies that provide equipment for productions and services for workers. In addition to this, the screen medium has a uniquely global reach through soft diplomacy, employment and entertainment.

Model 3, Option A is the most likely to capture all new platforms and sustain the Australian industry and jobs long term.