



20 March 2020

AUSTRALIAN SCREEN INDUSTRY BANDS TOGETHER TO SEEK GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

At a time when productions such as *The Voice*, *Clickbait* and *Australia's Got Talent*, along with a number of Australian scripted dramas are shutting down in order to comply with public health warnings, organisations representing Australia's independent producers, directors, writers, casts and crews today wrote to the Government seeking urgent support for the Australian screen industry.

"Screen production is not a job that can be done from home. We are gathering data on the current impact of COVID-19 on the industry via a [survey](#). While this will help to inform our strategy, there are a number of actions that the Government can take now to preserve the industry," said **Matthew Deaner**, CEO of Screen Producers Australia (**SPA**).

The letter asks the Government:

- to recalibrate the support announced in the first round of Government stimulus to ensure it is available to sole traders. This will mean that the support is available to a large number of producers, writers, directors, cast and crew impacted by production shutdowns;
- to support and redeploy agency resources to meet costs associated with current delays and shutdowns of productions; to
- for business investment to enable retention of core staff and ensure sector employment on content development during a downturn in order to ensure the 'pilot light' is kept burning and industry is able to reactivate quickly.

The President of the Australian Writers' Guild (**AWG**), **Shane Brennan**, said it was imperative that the Federal Government acknowledged the importance of the screen industry by including them in any financial support initiatives currently being considered. "We employ thousands of skilled people in many different crafts and trades who will immediately feel the impact of a shutdown. Without a financial lifeline, many of them will be lost to our industry at a time when this country needs its storytellers more than ever before."

"As the community adheres to advice to stay at home, they will be turning to their screens to keep themselves entertained, informed and connected. But unless we put in place mechanisms to support the Australian screen industry, our screens will soon be devoid of new Australian content," said **Diana Burnett**, Executive Director of the Australian Directors' Guild (**ADG**).

"Government investment has leveraged great stories about Australian identity. It is not just the closure or suspension of current productions our industry now confronts. The clock will stop on development of future productions. We need urgent assistance to keep people employed and to ensure our industry is here and ready for recovery when this crisis ends," said **Paul Murphy**, CEO of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (**MEAA**).

For enquiries, please contact:

Georgia Kinninmont
Communications and Publicity Manager
Screen Producers Australia
georgia.kinninmont@screenproducers.org.au | 02 8076 5886

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