



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Government fails the content test in another blow for the screen industry

The failure of the federal government to introduce local content rules for streaming video services will hasten more screen industry job losses in the wake of COVID-19, says the union for performers and crew.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance warns that today's announcement by Communications Minister Paul Fletcher will worsen the crisis in the screen industry and reflects both a lack of comprehension about the sector and a lack of compassion for the tens of thousands of workers who will now operate under rules that dilute how much content is produced for Australian audiences each year.

The only winners will be commercial television owners and global streaming video services like Netflix and Amazon Prime, while the losers will be audiences who want to watch Australian stories on their screens and the 30,000 people who work in the local industry.

"How the Government has missed the boat on regulating streaming services and requiring set levels of Australian content each year defies belief," said MEAA Chief Executive Paul Murphy. "This government seems intent on deregulation rather than creating a playing field that is level for all.

"Streaming services – yielding billions in income each year – will be celebrating that they have again avoided any content rules.

"The new flexibility provided to Australian commercial television networks will also lead to fewer productions across the board. Moving Foxtel and other subscription broadcast television broadcasters to 5% from 10% of program expenditure for each drama channel just reflects a government that is not serious about the provision of quality Australian content for our growing nation.

"The maintenance of the 55% Australian content rule is a statement of business as usual, as it already allows television broadcasters to count reality, sports, news and current affairs towards quota achievement, but is accompanied by weakened sub-quotas. It is likely to mean the demise of children's content on commercial TV, leaving a cash-strapped ABC to pick up the slack.

"Even the 'additional' funding for Screen Australia simply restores the organisation to pre-Abbott (2014) funding levels. The harmonisation of the producer offset is welcome, but it has resulted in a cut of the feature film offset from 40% to 30%."

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