



MEDIA RELEASE

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Positive Budget for the arts and media with a big boost to the screen industry

Last night's Federal Budget will deliver certainty and growth for Australia's cultural industries and for public interest journalism, says the union for media, arts and entertainment workers.

The Budget injects almost \$300 million of extra funding into the arts and related initiatives, building on commitments in the National Cultural Policy that was released earlier this year.

It also provides an extra \$72 million to public broadcasting, along with the certainty of a five-year funding cycle which will deliver annual base operational funding of almost \$1.5 billion to the ABC and SBS.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance particularly welcomes an increase in the screen production location offset to 30% – worth \$112.2 million over four years – which will make Australia more globally competitive in attracting major offshore productions and create jobs and further investment in the screen industry. The increase comes after years of MEAA members campaigning for a higher, permanent location offset, and will provide screen workers with increased security in their employment.

“This is a positive Budget for the arts and media sectors from a government that has listened and acted on the concerns of Australia's cultural workforce,” said MEAA Chief Executive Erin Madeley.

“It sets the tone for a period of renewed engagement with and support of the arts and recognises the important role that the sector plays in our national identity and our economy.

“We acknowledge the almost \$300 million in funding to drive the National Cultural Policy – *Revive* – and look forward to working with the government and the Australia Council on the development of the new bodies to be created, particularly Music Australia and the Centre for Arts and Entertainment Workplaces. We hope these initiatives are the first steps for MEAA members in the sector, including performers and musicians, improving their working lives.

“The new 30% location offset for screen productions will create a more level playing field and greater certainty than the previous fragmented approach of a smaller rebate and a merit-based grants program that has now been exhausted.

“A major outstanding reform for our screen industry is the regulation of SVOD (streaming service on demand) providers, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, and we welcome the governments consultation on this critical measure.

“Revenues from this sector are about \$3 billion per year. It's a mature industry that needs regulating to ensure that Australian content and productions can continue to be made.”

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Ms Madeley said the Budget also locked in certainty for the ABC and SBS with a five-year funding cycle and an additional \$72 million in funding, including continued support to the tune of \$52.4 million over three years for the ABC's Enhanced News Gathering which employs dozens of journalists in regional Australia.

MEAA also notes ongoing support in the Budget for AAP.

"MEAA members fought hard to save AAP because it plays such an important role as an independent source of journalism, and we are pleased that the government also recognises its crucial contribution to our media landscape," Ms Madeley said.

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