



c/o 33a Logan Rd
Woolloongabba Qld 4102
8th September 2006

Peter L. Higgs
Content Strategies
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Dear Peter

The Australian Writers' Guild and the Australian Screen Directors' Association in Queensland welcomes both an internal review of the Pacific Film and Television Commission and the opportunity to tender a response to the PFTC Corporate Plan - in order to review the PFTC's strategies and action plans as to their efficacy and appropriateness. Consultation with Queensland members of the AWG and ASDA has been conducted to garner views for this response.

Page 2 of the 'Review of the PFTC Corporate Plan' (from herein referred to as 'the review document') outlines background points. We contend that since 1997, when Film Queensland merged with Film Events Queensland to become the PFTC, the developmental activities formerly ascribed to FQ, have, since the merger, decreased significantly.

Page 2 of the review document also contends that the PFTC 'provides a range of assistance programs to four levels of industry players'. AWG and ASDA agree that the PFTC provides a range of activities and schemes for experienced practitioners and production companies but disagrees with the contention that the PFTC caters to 'entry level practitioners' and 'emerging practitioners'. Apart for their short film initiatives, the schemes and initiatives the PFTC offers to emerging and entry level practitioners, are minimal. We

also identify that mid-career practitioners (i.e., those practitioners falling between entry level and experienced) are left out of the equation.

There is a need for the PFTC to offer schemes and initiatives that will allow the local key creatives – writers, director and producers – to develop and flourish. As Queensland lacks the infrastructure upon which the NSW and Victorian screen industries were built, whereby the ABC and Crawford Productions (among others) provided hands-on training and developmental opportunities, the onus on the PFTC to provide schemes targeting these practitioners, increases significantly. Without the NSW and Victorian screen industry infrastructure, the PFTC also needs to provide opportunities towards a sustainable industry. It has long been recognised that a locally produced TV drama series would service the development of Queensland's key creatives while creating opportunities towards a sustainable industry.

As regards the criteria that need to be met allowing potential applicants to apply to PFTC schemes, we believe that the PFTC has raised the entry bar to a level whereby only a few practitioners can access their schemes. This situation is in direct contrast to the application criteria offered by both Screen West and the South Australian Film Corporation. While we recognise that the screen industry in Queensland is unique to this state, similarities can be found between the Queensland screen industry and those that exist in Western Australia and South Australia as these states also lack the 'commercial broadcasters and service providers (that) grew around... Sydney and Melbourne' (PFTC website 2005). Broadcasters and service providers afford opportunities. Without such entities, the local community looks to their state screen agency to provide development and production opportunities and, importantly, application criteria that allow them to access their local screen funding schemes.

We have compiled a comparative study (please refer to Attachment PFTC SW SAFC Comparative Study) between the initiatives, schemes and application criteria offered by the PFTC and those by Screen West and the South Australian Film Corporation. From this comparative study, we conclude that

the PFTC has much fewer schemes that service the local screen-making community than ScreenWest and the SAFC – agencies which, like the PFTC, exist outside of the Sydney and Melbourne nexus where greater opportunities exist through broadcasters and service providers. Screen West and the SAFC also support, via their screen culture organization funding initiatives, local branches of our organizations.

As regards the Terms of Reference set out in the review document (page 3), AWG Qld and ASDA Qld also recommend:

In reference to 1. under this heading:

- that the length of tenure of all positions (e.g., Head of Production, Head of Development, CEO) held at the PFTC be reviewed with the objective of bringing them in line with other organisations (e.g NSW Film &TV Office and the AFC). We believe that the personnel employed by screen funding organisations need to have recent experience with the industries for which they set guidelines, initiatives and schemes

- with the aim of representation from screen industry organisations, that the PFTC review the structure of their Board of Directors

- that the PFTC ensure that their assesment procedures are accountable and transparent

In reference to 4. under this heading:

- that the PFTC consider reallocating resources towards:
 - screen culture organisation funding

 - a review of QPIX. Such a review should be conducted with input from AWG Qld and ASDA Qld

 - an initiative that actively promotes Queensland credited writers and directors. Such an initiative would make it a condition of

funding that PFTC funded production companies use local writers and directors. Screen West already adopts this policy

- that the PFTC recognise Briz 31 as a broadcaster enabling potential PFTC applicants to access PFTC schemes

In reference to 5. under this heading:

- that the PFTC initiate schemes and opportunities that allow for a locally produced TV drama series that develops and provides production opportunities for local writers and directors. A TV drama series produced locally and broadcast via Briz 31 (currently undergoing a re-branding process), would create development and employment opportunities towards a sustainable local industry
- that the PFTC widen their application criteria to allow local writers and directors greater access to their schemes and initiatives (refer PFTC SW SAFC comparative study)
- that, apart from their short film initiatives, the PFTC introduce further schemes and initiatives that allow entry level, emerging and mid-career level local writers and directors to develop, including but not limited to, a new screenwriters scheme and attachments to production companies
- that the PFTC be re-branded and re-named so that 'Queensland' is incorporated into their title with the aim that their focus services not only off-shore production, but also the Queensland local screen practitioners
- that the PFTC instigate a program that gathers network intelligence from interstate broadcasters in order that the local writers and directors have access to this information

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any enquiries.

Yours Sincerely,

Sally McKenzie

Australian Writers' Guild Qld Chair

Australian Screen Directors' Association Qld Rep

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