



## GOVT PROPOSAL A WHITE FLAG TO THE STREAMERS

The Australian Directors' Guild is appalled at the reforms proposed in the [Streaming Services Reporting and Investment Scheme](#) put forward by Minister Fletcher this week.

“This ‘white’ paper must look like a white flag to the streamers happily sucking \$2bn out of our economy with still no obligation to give back,” said ADG Executive Director Alaric McAusland. “After a year of government hearings, where very evidently there was not much listening going on, this is a slap in the face for the local production industry and more than a missed opportunity for the Minister - it’s a cop out!”

“The industry (obviously streamers excepted) was united in its call to oblige streamers to commit to spending 20% of what they make here on Australian content. The legislative measures we called for have historically proven to be the only effective measures that ensure Australians continue to see themselves reflected on Australian screens - not ‘graduated’ threshold monitoring with shed-loads of ministerial discretion,” said McAusland.

“This soft approach will only see us marching back to the deregulated wastelands of the 70s where only 1% of drama on our screens was Australian,” said McAusland. “And Fletcher’s deregulatory Christmas gift to the commercial networks in 2020 is already severely damaging our industry with 20/21 data from Screen Australia and ACMA evidencing a 50% decline in drama production by the commercial broadcasters,” said McAusland. “There remains an urgent need to implement repairs and complete the job of reform before our local TV production industry slides further backwards towards a precipice from which it will not return. With the government stating it’s working with our broadcasters *‘on a future regulatory structure that is optimised for the technology changes the sector faces’* we shudder to think what’s on the commercial networks’ and streamers’ Christmas lists this year.”

“Our 20% ask is in line with other forward thinking international jurisdictions similarly being overrun by cheaper US and UK content. The white paper cites other international jurisdictions like Germany with lower local content obligations, but these have the added barrier of language as protection. It’s like comparing apples to bratwurst. 5% would require a measly \$100m local spend, it’s a drop in the ocean compared to the \$37bn the major international streamers reportedly have to spend on new content each year. This tepid and tiered reporting scheme would mean Australian content continuing to dwell in the fringes on these platforms for years to come,” said McAusland.

“Whilst we welcome the stated changes to ABC and SBS funding that bring back indexation, as all the money goes to designated programs it’s not growing these critical public broadcasters. It’s necessary and long overdue repair work but it’s doing nothing to set them up for future opportunities,” said McAusland. “Of particular concern, once again, is that there’s absolutely no consideration in the discussion paper for quotas for Australian kids’ content; there still remains absolutely no obligation for Australian broadcasters to produce and show it. Does the minister really want our kids growing up with American accents?”

The government is seeking submissions on its discussion paper by 24 April 2022, you can have your say [here](#). We’d also encourage you to join the Make it Australian campaign [here](#).