

## Australian Content Under Threat

On 29 September the High Court of Australia heard New Zealand Project Blue Sky's appeal to allow New Zealand programs to be included as Australian programs as part of the Australian Content Standard for free-to-air commercial television. Project Blue Sky was appealing an earlier decision of the Full Bench of the Federal Court, which ruled last year that the Australian Broadcasting Authority's (ABA) content rule was valid and should prevail over the Australia/New Zealand trade treaty, Closer Economic Relations (CER) Trade In Services Protocol signed in 1988.

Project Blue Sky, funded by the New Zealand Government and some New Zealand producers wants the ABA to allow New Zealand programs to count towards Australian content requirements.

In a supplementary submission following the hearing, Project Blue Sky has presented a possible formula for modifying the Australian Content Standard. The formula presented to the Court would require Australian commercial television networks to purchase a minimum of 1,971 hours of New Zealand programs each year. Project Blue Sky's submission would also make it possible for networks to screen no more than 1 hour of Australian documentaries each year, compared to the current requirement of 10 hours. Other possible impacts under the proposal presented include making it possible for commercial broadcasters to screen:

- less than 3 hours of Australian children's drama each year (the current requirement is 28 hours)
- 13 hours of Australian children's "P" (pre-school programs) (current requirement 130 hours)
- 8 hours of Australian adult drama (current requirement averages 202 hours).

Networks would be able to meet the remainder of the requirement by screening New Zealand programs.

While the submission is only Project Blue Sky's view of one possible way in which the Standard could be changed and does not represent the Court's view, it is an indication of the massive, potential damage that such changes present to the local content rules.

Project True Blue, a coalition of Australian organisations representing all sections of the film and television production industry was given leave by the High Court to appear as a "friend of the court".

### Annual Hours of Australian Drama Broadcast on Free-to-air Commercial Television

Total Annual Hours Broadcast	8,760
Australian first release drama programs (average hours broadcast annually on 3 networks)	202
Australian drama programs as a percentage of total hours broadcast	2.3%

In addition to presenting a legal case, Project True Blue, which was formed to fight for the retention of the Australian Content Standard, has undertaken a media campaign and provided information to the Australian Government and public sector agencies on the importance and role of the content rules.

Project True Blue believes the Australian Content Standard is an essential part of cultural development policies designed to ensure Australians have the opportunity to watch Australian made programs on Australian television. Even with the Standard, first release Australian drama programs make up, on average, only 2 per cent of total hours broadcast each year.

Because of the way global television markets operate, meeting their obligation to show Australian programs costs television networks much more than buying programs from overseas. If New Zealand programs were treated as

Australian, local television purchasers would not have to bear the production cost of the imported programs, giving them significant appeal.

It is widely recognised that governments may have in place measures which are justified in the interests of preserving the cultural identity of a country. Australian content rules for commercial television were in place at the time the CER protocol was signed.

Changing the rules to allow New Zealand programs to count as Australian would undermine the integrity of the cultural policy basis for local content rules. The intention of the Australian Content Standard, as set out in the *Broadcasting Services Act*, is to encourage the creation and broadcast of programs which are identifiably Australian. In Project True Blue's view the New Zealander's arguments are wrong and if they go ahead it will make a mockery of the Parliament's intention in passing the local content provisions of the *Broadcasting Services Act*.

### Opportunity for Tasmanian Filmmakers



Hobart-based filmmakers got together at the Afterdark Cinema, Salamanca Place, to meet Kate Ingham, Director Industry & Cultural Development and Tim Read, Director Film Development, to discuss industry issues and hear about Film Development's investment guidelines. There were five Tasmanian investment applications to the AFC in 1996-97 compared to 15 in the previous year. "There's no guarantee that an investment application will be successful" said Tim Read, "but if filmmakers don't apply in the first place there's certainly no chance." Copies of the Film Development Branch guidelines and application forms are available from Arts Tasmania, or from the AFC (FREECALL 1800 22 6615) or can be downloaded from the AFC website at <http://www.afc.gov.au>. The AFC is grateful to David Male and Kathryn Symmonds for helping to organise meetings and regular visits from AFC staff will continue to occur in future.

Pictured above (from l to r): Mike Jansen, Sally Harbison, Chris Undy, Marie Fitzgibbon, Jane Brown, Brenton Venables, Stephen Thomas, Graeme Wend-Walker, John McQueenie, Kathryn Symmons.



## Call for ICD Branch Assessors

The Industry & Cultural Development (ICD) branch is seeking to develop a register of people to act as assessors for its Touring Exhibition Fund, New Players Fund and Multimedia Fund.

Assessors should have relevant and substantial practical experience working in the screen culture sector. They must have the ability to assess the likely success of projects and an understanding of the audiences for screen culture projects. Assessors must make judgements on projects' cultural and financial viability, ability to attract funds from other sources within realistic time frames and an understanding of ICD's funding programs and priorities.

Anyone wishing their name to be placed on the register should send a CV detailing relevant experience, contact details and availability stating which fund they would be interested in assessing. Assessors will only be contacted if and when needed.

Guidelines for ICD assessors and guidelines for the different funds are available from Lucy Hall, Industry and Cultural Development on (02) 9321-6444 or via the AFC web site: <http://www.afc.gov.au>.

## AFC Assisted Conferences

A number of conferences funded by the AFC are being held at the end of this year. These conferences are recognised as important opportunities for professional development, providing opportunities for filmmakers to explore cultural, aesthetic and industrial matters.

**Tools of the Trade: skilling up for the future, 16 and 17 October 1997 held at the Sebel Hotel in Sydney.**

Women in Film and Television's second national conference, with a distinguished line-up of over 60 guest speakers. Sessions on how to be successful in this dynamic and ever changing industry included: building successful careers in technical fields; financing 'the project from hell'; women, confidence and working in the industry; women in television management; career opportunities both in Australia and overseas; the value of creative partnerships and strategic alliances; women succeeding in the world of multimedia and a masterclass with Jane Campion.

**SPAA '97 Conference and the AFI Awards, together in Melbourne (13 to 16 November 1997).**

As well as sessions covering many aspects of the industry there will be closed door pitching sessions and "Face to Face": everything you wanted to know but couldn't get close enough

to ask. SPAA provides a valuable opportunity for local filmmakers to meet a range of international guests, who include:

Saul Zaentz, Oscar winning producer of *The English Patient*; Bruce Davey, President of Icon Productions and producer of *Braveheart*. Vibeke Windelov, producer of *Breaking the Waves*; Scott Meek, Zenith Productions, ex-producer of UK series *Hamish Macbeth*; Karen Brown, Dept. Director of Programmes, Channel Four TV; Andrea Wonfor and Jules Burnes, joint managing directors of Granada International productions; and Dawn Airey, Director of Programmes, Channel Five.

**5th International Documentary Conference, 20 to 23 November 1997 in Brisbane.**

Focussing on the new frontiers that confront the industry—new markets, new broadcasting landscapes, new technologies and new policy territories—the conference is an opportunity to exchange ideas, gather information, view the latest documentaries and make crucial contacts for the future. International and local broadcasters, distributors and sales agents eager to find Australian product to suit their programming needs will talk about the types of programs they are seeking at the market strand, which features the "Documart" live pitching sessions.

### FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

*The festivals section of the AFC Marketing branch is no longer able to supply filmmakers with international festival entry forms and regulations. However, we will be listing upcoming festivals and their deadline dates in the AFC News. As well as this information, we will also be listing each festival's fax number. Entry forms and any other relevant information can be obtained direct from the festivals. If you would like to have your film listed as screening at an international festival, please continue to fax the details to the AFC festivals section on (02) 9357 3631.*

**Santa Clarita International Film Festival, USA**  
6 - 13 February 1998  
deadline: 5 January 1998  
fax: 805-257 3131

**Dublin Film Festival, Ireland**  
March 1998  
deadline: 24 November 1997  
fax: 353-1-679 2939  
email: dff@iol.ie

**Fantasporto-Oporto International Film Festival, Portugal**  
20 - 28 February 1998

deadline: 15 December 1997  
fax: 351-2-550 8210

**Tampere Short Film Festival, Finland**  
4 - 8 March 1998  
deadline: 5 January 1998  
fax: 358-3-223 0121  
email: Film.Festival@tt.tampere.fi

**Santa Barbara International Film Festival, USA**  
5 - 15 March 1998  
deadline: 1 December 1997  
fax: 805-962 2524  
email: sbiff@west.net

**Ann Arbor Film Festival, USA**  
17 - 22 March 1998  
deadline: 15 February 1998  
fax: 313-995 5396  
email: vicki@honeyman.org

**New Directors New Films, USA**  
20 March - 7 April 1998  
deadline: 17 January 1998  
fax: 212-875 5636

### FORTHCOMING MARKETS

**MIPCOM**  
Cannes (26-30 Sep, 1997)  
**MIFED**  
Milan ( 19-24 Oct, 1997)  
**South African Film & TV Market**  
Cape Town (4-7 Nov, 1997)  
**MIP-Asia**  
Hong Kong (4-6 Dec, 1997)  
**Media & Film Expo**  
Seoul (8-11 Dec, 1997)  
**NAPTE - TV Market**  
New Orleans (19-22 Jan, 1998)  
**MILIA - multimedia market**  
Cannes (8-11 Feb, 1998)  
**Monte Carlo Television Market**  
Monte Carlo (23-26 Feb, 1998)  
**AFM**  
Santa Monica (26 Feb - 6 Mar, 1998)  
**MIP-TV**  
Cannes (3-8 April, 1998)  
**Cannes International Film Festival**  
Cannes (13-24 May, 1998)

For further details regarding the major international film and television markets please contact Libby Ellis, Marketing Administrator at the AFC on 02 9321 6415.

## Cultural Crossroads Conference

The Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy's 'Cultural Crossroads: Ownership, Access, Identity' Conference will debate the future development of Australia's arts, culture, media and communications industries at the ANA Hotel, Sydney from 24-26 November 1997.

The conference, supported by AFC's Policy program, will bring together policy-makers, industry workers, artists, creators and academics to debate the rapidly changing relationships between public and private and has been structured around four themes:

- the shifting relations between the public and private spheres, including the changing roles of public and private broadcasting and changing patterns of media ownership;
- the relationship between audience development and access policies: finding new audiences, research and audience development; pay television - redefining audiences; and new media and virtual communities;
- globalisation and national cultural sovereignty: international versus national forms of regulation; new media and international public spheres; international media systems; competition and cultural protection;
- legal and cultural intersections: the legal and regulatory challenges of the new media; classification and censorship; balancing the interests of artists, creators, producers, publishers and distributors with consumers; intellectual property rights and the new media; public/private relations in indigenous and western intellectual property regimes.

For further information phone: (07) 3875 5350.

## AWARDS TO AUSTRALIAN FILMS

British Short Film Festival, United Kingdom  
*Call Waiting* - Chris Aronsten - Best Screenplay  
 Chicago International Film Festival, USA  
*Generation* - Ruth Carr - Silver Plaque  
 Columbus International Film & Video Festival, USA  
*Generation* - Ruth Carr - Honourable Mention  
*The Coolbaroo Club* - Roger Scholes - Honourable Mention  
*Gorilla Girls* - Fiona Cochrane - Honourable Mention  
 Hamptons International Film Festival, USA  
*Blood On The Chandelier* - Jeffrey Norris - Student Graduate Award

## AFC Production Report: Two/Out



Richard Green as Jack in Troy Davies and Kriv Stenders' short film *Two/Out*.

*Two/Out*, a new short film produced by Pod Film with production fully funded by the AFC, is an intimate and emotional exploration of friendship in prison. It is based on the play *Jack* by Jim McNeill, a playwright who himself was in and out of gaol throughout most of his life.

Troy Davies, the film's co writer, brought the play to the attention of director, Kriv Stenders five years ago, when both worked as music video directors at Worlds End Film Productions. Since then it has always been their ambition to adapt the one-act play into a short film.

The writing process itself was rigorous and time consuming. Kriv and Troy had to reduce the original hour length play into a more workable 10 minute screenplay.

"We were always attracted to the simple, minimal quality of the play, and its intriguing premise and we knew instinctively that it would translate perfectly into a short film format. We went through numerous drafts trying to translate the play into a film, but length was always a big problem", says director, Kriv Stenders. "Yet once I finally realised that I could shoot the film entirely from one angle, my whole attitude to the script changed. The writing then became a constant process of ruthless distillation, where we would continually break the play down into tight scenes, simple moments, almost kind of like the way a poem is written. It then became fun."

Casting was another revelation. "We had a totally predictable and unrealistic view of prison life from television and movies" says the film's producer Catherine Kerr. "Most

actors during the casting process, although very good in their own right, seemed to never reach the kind of reality we knew we needed, to make the script work."

Quite by accident a real inmate auditioned for the role and this became a crucial turning point for Kriv. He set about with the help of the NSW Department of Corrective Services, casting real prison inmates or ex-inmates who had some acting experience. Kriv eventually found one of the actors, Richard Green, by giving him a screen test in gaol a week before he was to be released. The two main characters Tom and Jack, played by Richard and Tony Ryan, were then brought to life by translating their own prison experiences into the overall texture of the film's script. "They also managed to turn the whole crew's unintentional prejudice about prisoners and gaol life on its end and many of us were left moved by having the pleasure of meeting and working with such courageous characters. They shed an amazing perspective on what happens on the inside", says Catherine.

Ross Emery, the film's cinematographer, shot the film in anamorphic widescreen, using the bleach by-pass process to give the film an overall harder, more dirty look. "Most negative stocks today are so good, so fine grained they almost look too clean, too perfect. We felt the bleach by-pass would give us a texture, a kind of imperfect reality, that would feel and look more like real life, rather than the traditional film drama look we are all so used to seeing", says Ross.

*Two/Out* is scheduled for an early November 1997 completion.

## Film Development Funding Approvals

Project Name	Applicant	Category	(\$)	Writer	Producer	Director
<b>DEVELOPMENT</b>						
<i>In A Savage Land</i>	Bill Bennett Productions Pty Ltd	feature	20,000	Bill Bennett & Jennifer Cluff	Bill Bennett & Jennifer Bennett	Corrie Soeterboek
<i>Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater</i>	Rachel Landers	feature	16,000	Rachel Landers	Sonja Armstrong	Rachel Landers
<i>Treatment, The Cure, The</i>	Wasteland Films Pty Ltd	feature	7,500	Nick Enright	Antonia Barnard	George Ogilvie
<i>Troppo</i>	Olsen Levy Productions Pty Ltd	feature	12,000	Chris Bray	Christine Olsen	
<i>My Journey, My Islam</i>	Zara Films Pty Ltd	documentary	5,000	Kay Rasool		Kay Rasool
<b>PRODUCTION</b>						
<i>Radiance</i>	Eclipse Films Pty Ltd	feature	11,000	Louis Nowra	Ned Lander & Andrew Myer	Rachel Perkins
<i>Choice Funerals</i>	Gherardi Holdings Pty Ltd	documentary	41,500	Jennifer Gherardi	Jennifer Gherardi	Jennifer Gherardi
<i>Exile in Sarajevo</i>	Exile Productions Pty Ltd	documentary	21,000	Tahir Cambis	Tom Zubrycki	Tahir Cambis
<i>loveHotel</i>	Linda Wallace	experimental	30,000	Francesca Da Rimini	Linda Wallace	Linda Wallace
<i>389</i>	Patrick Nolan	short drama	15,500	Patrick Nolan	Moses Obeid	Patrick Nolan
<i>Bloodlock</i>	Kieran Darcy-Smith, Joel Edgerton, Nash Edgerton & Tony Lynch	short drama	27,100	Kieran Darcy-Smith & Joel Edgerton	Kieran Darcy-Smith, Nash Edgerton, Joel Edgerton & Tony Lynch	Kieran Darcy-Smith & Nash Edgerton
<b>CASH FLOW FACILITY</b>						
<i>Dance Me To My Song</i>	Vertigo Productions Pty Ltd	feature	219,800	Rolf de Heer, Heather Rose & Frederick Stahl	Rolf de Heer & David Wolfe-Barry	Rolf de Heer
<i>Journey Between Worlds</i>	Primal Vision Productions Pty Ltd	documentary	35,000	Michael Balson & Mary O'Malley	Larry Gray & Mary O'Malley	Michael Balson

NOTE: Where no producer, director or writer is indicated it is because none is attached to the project.

## AUSTRALIAN FILMS AT OVERSEAS FESTIVALS

October 1997

### A Down Under On Top Film Festival - Denver, USA

*The Christmas Cake* - David Grusovin & Katey Grusovin

*Uncle* - Adam Elliot

*Rust Bucket* - Robert Connolly

*Flying Over Mother* - Michael Rowland

*Nightride* - Martin Murphy

*Dead Heart* - Nick Parsons

*Blackrock* - Steve Vidler

*What I Have Written* - John Hughes

*Life* - Lawrence Johnston

*Kiss Or Kill* - Bill Bennett

*Mabo: Life Of An Island Man* - Trevor Graham

*No Way To Forget* - Richard Frankland

*Breaker Morant* - Bruce Beresford

*The Miniskirted Dynamo* - Rivka Hartman

Raindance Film Festival, UK

*Shooting The Breeze* - Christina Andreef

Chicago Lesbian and Gay International Film Festival, USA

*Violet's Visit* - Richard Turner

*Strung Up* - Cathy Johnstone

Hof Film Festival, Germany

*Road To Nhill* - Sue Brooks

*Kiss Or Kill* - Bill Bennett

*Four Minute Festival* - Adam Blaiklock

Bill Bennett Retrospective:

*A Street to Die* - Bill Bennett

*Backlash* - Bill Bennett

*Jilted* - Bill Bennett

*Malpractice* - Bill Bennett

*Dear Cardholder* - Bill Bennett

*Spider & Rose* - Bill Bennett

Los Angeles International Short Film

### Festival, USA

*Final Cut* - Justin Case

*Freestyle* - David Lowe

*Nightride* - Martin Murphy

Quinzaine Internationale du Film de

Court Metrage D'Evreux, France

*When The Sun Falls* - Georgina Willis

Reel Affirmations International Film

Festival, United States

*Strung Up* - Cathy Johnstone

Hamptons International Film Festival,

USA

*Blood On The Chandelier* - Jeffrey Norris

Cinewomen Film Festival, United

Kingdom

*Little White Lies* - Della Churchill

*Headlock* - Amanda Brotchie

*Once* - Clea Frost

*Till Human Voices Wake Us and We Drown* -

Bree McKilligan

Euro Underground Film Festival, Poland

*Astroturf* - Ian Haig

Manchester International Short Film &

Video Festival, United Kingdom

*Strung Up* - Cathy Johnstone

*Headlock* - Amanda Brotchie

*Once* - Clea Frost

*Till Human Voices Wake Us and We Drown* -

Bree McKilligan

Espinho Animation Film Festival,

Portugal

*His Mother's Voice* - Dennis Tupicoff

Fantastik Film Festival, Sweden

*Cat's Cradle* - Liz Hughes

*Blood On The Chandelier* - Jeffrey Norris

### Turku Lesbian & Gay Film Fest, Finland

*Nobody I Know* - Andrew Porter

International Ethnographic Film

Festival, Brazil

*Taking Pictures* - Les McLaren

Sienna International Short Film

Festival, Italy

*Gorilla Girls* - Fiona Cochrane

ANIMADOC Film Festival, Germany

*His Mother's Voice* - Dennis Tupicoff

Sao Paulo International Film Festival,

Brazil

*House Taken Over* - Liz Hughes

Chicago Underground Film Festival, USA

*Astroturf* - Ian Haig

International Short Film Festival, Chile

*Astroturf* - Ian Haig

*Headlock* - Amanda Brotchie

*The Jungle* - Fin Edquist

*Once* - Clea Frost

*Till Human Voices Wake Us and We Drown* -

Bree McKilligan

*Thump* - Hayley Cloake

Valladolid International Film Festival,

Spain

*Doing Time For Patsy Cline* - Chris Kennedy

*Here I Sit* - Alyson Bell

New York International Video & New

Media Festival, USA

*Astroturf* - Ian Haig

Image & Nation International Film

Festival, Canada

*Strung Up* - Cathy Johnstone

WRO 97, Poland

*Astroturf* - Ian Haig

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