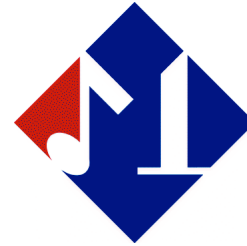


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Australia's representative to the International Music Council



Music Council of Australia

Richard Cohen
Screen Australia
December 15, 2009
By email

Dear Mr Cohen,

Re: International Film Co-production Program

The Music Council of Australia has only recently become aware that the Guidelines for the International Film Co-production Program are being reviewed and that the deadline for making a submission is today. The Music Council has also become aware that there has been some pressure on Screen Australia for the Guidelines to be watered down, a position the Music Council both regrets and opposes.

The International Film Co-production Program was established to enable industries in countries with economies and populations that make recouping production budgets within home territories difficult. It was designed to enable the co-partnering of producers from countries with similar economies and similar industry structures to access most favoured nation benefits, and to foster the creative interchange between parties producing programs with a cultural resonance in one or other of the party countries or in both.

The current Guidelines were established following extensive consultation and have been supported by Government. The Music Council considers that the current Guidelines are fair and balanced, recognize the importance of accessing reciprocal benefits, appropriately reflect the cultural underpinning of the Program, provide an effective mechanism for the financing of film and television programs in an increasingly globalised and competitive international market place and sit comfortably within and are complementary to the Government's matrix of industry support.

The Music Council is aware of the changing nature of the international financing marketplace and the impact the global financial crisis has had on the availability of market

place finance and gap funding. However, the Music Council is not aware of any compelling evidence that would warrant any dilution of the Guidelines.

The terms of reference ask for comment on the manner in which the Program is currently administered. The Music Council is aware that current data demonstrating that fair balance is being achieved across the point scoring elements of the Guidelines, balance across location of production and postproduction and so on are not currently available. Consequently, the Music Council is not able to consider the benefits or otherwise to the Australian music industry that the program has delivered in recent years, as information regarding the number of Australian composers and where the soundtrack is recorded is not accessible. Fair balance over time is a key underpinning of the Program and information against which this principle could be tested should have been available to inform the review.

The Music Council is aware that in recent years consideration has been given to allowing the participation of third party nationals in the positions of writer and director and, of greater concern to the Music Council, allowing postproduction to be undertaken in a third party country, the latter being proposed to give access to lower wages countries. In the absence of a proposed redraft of the Guidelines to consider, the Music Council cannot support a departure from the current Guidelines which have effectively underpinned a consistent slate of production, albeit now temporarily slowed, but not halted, by the global financial crisis. Given that the financial crisis is slowing, the Music Council considers an overhaul of the Guidelines at this point in time to be premature.

Thank you for consideration of this submission.

Yours sincerely

Dr Richard Letts AM
Executive Director