

SPA STATEMENT ON THE INTEGRITY OF LOCAL CONTENT QUOTAS

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Today, our CEO, Matthew Deaner questioned the willingness of commercial broadcasters to do the right thing when it came to local content compliance.

Late last week the ACMA released the Australian Content Compliance results, which showed continuing use of cheap second-run New Zealand content as substitute for Australian and over a dozen regional broadcasters in breach of their licence conditions.

“To be honest, I’m disappointed, but not surprised; the trend to undermine the system continues. In 2017, over a dozen regional broadcasters didn’t meet their local content obligations. New Zealand content accounted for 25 per cent of Nine Network’s drama, 25 per cent of the Ten Network’s documentaries and the Seven Network broadcast 290 hours of New Zealand content. This makes a mockery of our local content system to the detriment of Australian audiences, Australian producers and the many thousands of Australian workers in the screen industry.” Mr Deaner said.

Mr Deaner noted a solution to the New Zealand content loophole has been proposed, but no action has been taken.

“Late last year a House of Representatives committee proposed a solution to the New Zealand content loophole. We await the Government’s response to that report. But we need timely action because the current situation is farcical and if trends continue, it will become unsustainable for the industry. If there is no change, the Australian government will have a better system for New Zealand producers than the New Zealand government.”

Mr Deaner noted the broader context of the timing of the content compliance results.

“These results come at a time when commercial broadcasters have been handed hundreds of millions in broadcast licence fee reductions, called on the Government to launch a series of measures aimed at strengthening their competitive position to the detriment of all others in the supply chain and the market. Elsewhere, \$140 million has been found for international productions and \$84 million has been cut from the ABC. Most gallingly, the commercial broadcasters want their children’s obligations removed. Collectively, they spent \$6.7 million on children’s drama in 2016-17. SPA stands ready to work with the commercial broadcasters on a mutually acceptable solution to children’s television, but the broadcasters must come to the table.

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About Screen Producers Australia

Screen Producers Australia was formed by the screen industry to represent large and small enterprises across a diverse production slate of feature film, television and interactive content. Our members employ hundreds of producers, thousands of related practitioners and drive more than \$1.7 billion worth of annual production activity from the independent sector. On behalf of these businesses we are focused on delivering a healthy commercial environment through ongoing engagement with elements of the labour force, including directors,



writers, actors and crew, as well as with broadcasters, distributors and government in all its various forms. This coordinated dialogue ensures that our industry is successful, employment levels are strong and the community's expectations of access to high quality Australian content have been met.