

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

GROUND BREAKING PERFORMERS RIGHTS AGREEMENT SIGNALS NEW ERA FOR AUSTRALIAN TV DRAMA

12 July 2016: Screen Producers Australia (SPA) and the union representing Australian performers (Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance or MEAA) have reached agreement on a new deal for performers rights that allows broadcasters to maximise the popularity of Australian TV drama, in an environment where access to foreign programs has increased markedly.

Under the new **Actors Television Repeats and Residuals Agreement (ATRR)**, broadcasters will have more flexibility to schedule and promote Australian programs than ever before. Previous ATRRA agreements placed restrictions on the number of times an Australian program could be played or streamed. This meant that foreign programs, purchased without the same restrictions, could be scheduled and streamed many more times than local programs.

Screen Producers Australia CEO Matthew Deaner said, “This is a groundbreaking agreement that will unlock the potential that digital technology offers for the benefit of the Australian production industry, Australian broadcasters, and to the Australian viewer.”

“The impetus for change is that technology has transformed the available content distribution platforms and audience behaviour while the original agreement itself has remained substantially unchanged since 1982.”

“We approached negotiations with the view that there should be something in it for each of the major stakeholders. Performers clearly needed increased fees for increased rights. Networks and investors needed greater flexibility to stream and play programs across multiple platforms to drive up audiences for Australian programs and increase recoupment from their considerable investment. Producers needed the opportunity to derive greater value from their intellectual property by opening up the possibility that programs could be re-licensed” said Deaner.

Almost no adult Australian TV drama programs have been re-licensed to television after the initial license period has expired due to the length of the license period eroding value in the program and because the repeat fees payable to performers under the old ATRRA were far greater than the market could afford to pay.

“I wish to thank the MEAA, and the National Performer’s Committee in particular, for their willingness to accept significant change. I also thank our members on the SPA negotiating committee for their dedication over a long period ,” said Deaner.

“We have come a long way since 1982,” said Mr. Deaner. “What we have in this agreement is a blueprint for the future that will help provide a better market structure for the Australian content industry to continue to thrive and employ more creative Australians and for our programs to increase in popularity.”

The new ATRRA agreement becomes effective as of July 11, 2016. Screen Producers Australia will announce a series of workshops for members to introduce the operational aspects of the new ATRRA agreement, as part of an upcoming national roadshow.

- ends –

For media enquiries and interviews:

Lorelle Yee | 0409 300 251 | lorelle.yee@screenproducers.org.au

About Screen Producers Australia

Screen Producers Australia unites screen businesses to campaign for a healthy commercial environment and supports the interests of businesses large and small in their production of feature films, television programs, interactive content and games across all genres and formats. Members employ writers, directors, cast and crew; they navigate a range of industrial agreements, commercial arrangements and negotiate rights deals with theatrical distributors, television broadcasters and increasingly, online aggregators.

About Actors Television Repeats and Residuals Agreement (ATRRA)

ATRRA allows producers to buy the rights to use an actor's performance. The agreement covers TV plays and repeats, streaming rights, percentage of sales in Australia and overseas, and allows a performer's pay to be calculated.