

15/16 Drama Report: Boom year for Australian TV

3 November 2016: Now in its 26th year, the annual Drama Report released today by Screen Australia shows Australian television drama at a record high and a rise in local feature film production.

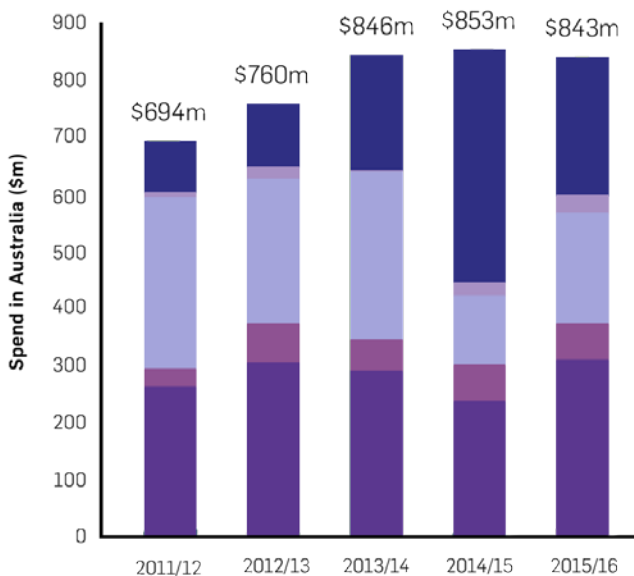
The Drama Report captures Australian and foreign films and TV dramas shot or post-produced in Australia during the financial year. The report provides a snapshot of how much screen content is in active production, with many titles yet to premiere. Australian subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) titles were also included in the analysis.

Overall \$843 million was spent across 118 productions this year compared to \$853 million across 101 productions last year.

“What really stands out for me in this year’s Drama Report is the record expenditure on Australian TV drama,” said Graeme Mason, CEO of Screen Australia. “I’m delighted to see every single network had multiple dramas in production - an unprecedented 58 in total - responding to the Australian audience’s appetite to watch their own stories on screen.”

“It’s encouraging to see feature film production grow. We do tend to see more ebb and flow in this area depending on the number of titles and their individual budgets. Australia continues to make a global name for itself in PDV [post, digital and visual effects], with this year’s Drama Report including work done on everything from *Ghostbusters* to *Game of Thrones*.”

Screen Australia COO Fiona Cameron added, “From a very small base it is fantastic to see the growth in online drama. Screen Australia -supported projects like *The Katering Show* and *Wolf Creek* appearing on iView, Stan and international streaming services are a glimpse into the future. New talent developing local IP and selling to new platforms showcases the innovation of the sector.”



Total Expenditure 2015/16

- Foreign Features
- Foreign TV drama
- Australian Features
- Aus TV drama - Children's
- Aus TV drama - Adult's

AUSTRALIAN TV DRAMA

Not only was it a record year for Australian TV drama titles produced; it was also a record year for total budgets (\$416 million) and for total expenditure which was up 25% to \$376 million. Significantly total hours are up from 518 in 2014/15 to 561 in 2015/16, an encouraging sign for local drama.

The trend towards shorter length, high-cost TV dramas continued. This is reflected in an abundance of short-run shows (mini-series) such as *Barracuda*, *Deep Water* and *The Secret Daughter*. With the exception of ongoing serials *Home and Away* and *Neighbours*, long-form series (comprising 20 or more episodes) are now completely absent. Programs purposed as web series continued to make the leap to television. For example series 4 and 5 of *Starting From Now*, which was funded by Screen Australia for online self-distribution, was picked up by SBS.

Broadcasters remain the leading financial backers for Australian TV drama, however the proportion of government funding has increased slightly, with 91% of titles having received some form of federal government assistance. More than half of titles (53%) received Screen Australia funding, compared to the average of 40% of titles over the four years prior. The Producer Offset administered by Screen Australia contributed \$46 million, up from \$38 million in 2014/15.

AUSTRALIAN FEATURES

The Australian feature slate comprised 29 feature films accounting for expenditure of \$194 million. These included *Hacksaw Ridge*, *Breath*, *Dance Academy: The Movie* and co-production *Nest*.

There was a \$72 million increase in spending for Australian features, but total expenditure fell short of the \$235 million five-year average. Maintaining the trend, most of this year's feature titles (76%) were made for less than \$6 million, with the greatest concentration costing between \$1 million and \$3 million.

Foreign investors contributed the highest proportion of finance to the 2015/16 slate, making up 33% (\$69 million) of total Australian film finance. Government funding increased to \$32 million (16%). This included \$18 million from Screen Australia and \$14 million from state screen agencies, with the remainder made up of funding from organisations such as the Australian Children's Television Foundation and film festivals. Producer Offset returns rose to \$65 million, accounting for 31% of all finance, while Australian film and TV industry contributions increased to \$30 million making up 14% of all finance.

FOREIGN PRODUCTION

Foreign production generated a total spend of \$273 million across 31 titles, including features and TV dramas. This followed an atypical highpoint in 2014/15 of \$431 million (driven by *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales* and two *LEGO*® franchise movies), however this year a greater number of titles countered the anticipated drop in expenditure.

Foreign feature film production - including location shoots for *Alien: Covenant* and *Kong: Skull Island*, and PDV (post, digital and visual effects) activity on *X-Men: Apocalypse* and *Ghostbusters* - accounted for expenditure of \$242 million.

Foreign TV drama experienced a strong year with a \$31 million spend. This was up from \$21 million last year and well above average. Contributing to this result was location shooting for TV dramas including *Hunters* (US), and PDV activity for a number of foreign titles including *Game of Thrones* (series 6).

DEFINITIONS AND NOTES

- **TV drama** is defined according to [ACMA guidelines](#). It comprises scripted programs including series/serials, mini-series and telemovies of all genres, for both adults and children.
- A **mini-series** is a program comprising up to 13 hours total duration.
- Financial figures reflect dollar value as per each year specified, not adjusted for inflation.
- Some figures have been rounded. Refer to the full report for exact figures.
- Unless stated otherwise, 'average' refers to the average of the past five years (2011/12 to 2015/16).
- **Foreign** projects are defined as those under foreign creative control, originated and developed by non-Australians. This includes foreign projects with an Australian production company operating in a service capacity.

FURTHER READING:

- [2015/16 Drama Report](#)
- [Five ways to gauge the health of the screen industry](#)

MEDIA MATERIALS:

- Pre-recorded video grabs from Graeme Mason, CEO Screen Australia, available on request
- [2015/16 Drama Report summary narrated by Miranda Tapsell](#)
- [HD trailers of select titles from the Drama Report](#)
- [High resolution imagery of select titles from the Drama Report](#)

AVAILABLE INTERVIEWEES:

- Graeme Mason, CEO Screen Australia (Gold Coast)
- Fiona Cameron, COO Screen Australia (Sydney)