

Near Life Productions Pty Ltd  
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To whom it may concern,

It is with a great deal of passion that I write to express my grave concern over the cuts proposed in the Indigenous Broadcasting Program review.

I have been a writer, script producer and script editor in the Australian television industry for 22 years on some of the most popular and highly regarded series that we have seen in this country (including Blue Heelers, Something in the Air, All Saints, Prisoner and many more), for every network. I am passionate about television, in particular, as a medium, for its ability to reach into the homes of millions of people.

For the last three years or so my work has taken me into the orbit of Indigenous programming and the works of Indigenous media organisations such as Goolarri media and CAAMA. The training grounds these organisations and those like them provide for the community is extraordinary. From such beginnings future quality practitioners sprout. They are centres for excellence, not just for the training they provide, but for the positive voice they encourage, and with that, the extraordinary effect that they have on a quiet and effective reconciliation. It is rare that we have an opportunity to see positive Indigenous representation on our screens. The mainstream media have a lot to answer for in that regard, but the Indigenous media that are being targeted in this review provide white Australia as well as the Indigenous viewer an insight into our country that is all too seldom seen.

I am currently involved as writer, co-creator and Script Producer in a 6 part drama project that is heavy with Indigenous content. We are involved in a partnership with Goolarri media that I believe will be a benchmark for the way in which Indigenous and non Indigenous film makers work together in the future. The organisation, as with others of its kind, is professional, sympathetic, and has enormous integrity. This show is proving to be the most fulfilling, confronting and wonderful experience of my career.

With limited resources already, these media organisations give untold value to Australian communities as a whole – both in training and in content. The thought that Indigenous audiovisual media may no longer be funded is nothing short of a tragedy, and one that makes me livid. For a true integrated voice to one day be realised in this country, sensitive and diverse media must reign. That means that practitioners can, and should, cross pollinate between mainstream broadcasting and Indigenous. Without the training provided, and without the content produced by Indigenous media organisations, that dream will never be realised.

My other concern is that Indigenous radio is under funding threat by virtue of the new guideline to fund only for indigenous population in the area of broadcast. This narrow

minded and damaging view fails to take into account the enormous effect that Indigenous broadcasting has on the total population of the areas in which they broadcast – regardless of race. Surely funding in this area should be based on measured outcomes and not on a head count?

I urge you in the strongest possible terms to reconsider the funding cuts proposed in this review. Far from cutting budgets to the various Indigenous media organisations, I believe that more funding needs to be allocated to this area. Along with SBS, these organisations are crucial to giving voice in our multicultural society – but most importantly, they are giving voice to Australians who are all too often silenced.

The future of our industry as a whole – an industry that is worth millions if not billions of dollars to this country, depends on diverse views, skilled practitioners entering the ranks, and new and bold storytelling. Without these things, our industry withers and dies, and with it, our cultural identity. All of the necessary building blocks of a healthy industry are fostered by Indigenous media organisations.

Please, for the future of our industry and our identity, don't let these voices be silenced yet again by something as simple as a lack of resources.

Sincerely

Kelly Lefever

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