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STRONG SPENDING BY COMMERCIAL TV NETWORKS ON AUSTRALIAN CONTENT BUT NO CHILDREN'S DRAMA

Screen Producers Australia (**SPA**) notes the release of new figures for spending by Australia's free-to-air commercial broadcasters, published **today** by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (**ACMA**) in a [2022 / 23 Commercial TV Expenditure Report](#).

Of most concern is that despite spending an overall **\$1.91 billion**, Australia's commercial broadcasters spent nothing (**\$0**) on Australian children's drama in 2022-23.

"In the very same week that we are hearing about the threat to free-to-air audiences from losing some sport on their channels, we have confirmation that they are spending very little on Australian drama programs for Australian child audiences," said SPA CEO **Matthew Deaner**.

"Australia's children make up 20% of our population and should have free access to stories that reflect their lives and culture.

"The same social equity arguments being made around free access to sport apply equally to free access to other Australian culture such as drama programs. If sports should be free to watch, so should children's TV dramas.

"Australia's anti-siphoning list amounts to significant industry assistance to commercial free-to-air networks as sporting events are a key revenue driver, yet there is no reciprocal social obligation for important Australian child audiences.

"While spending on Australian sport, light entertainment and news and current affairs is trending upwards, spending on Australian adult drama is declining and has dropped 24% since last year.

"In some good news, it is very welcome that spending on Australian documentaries has increased since 2019-20 and has remained almost on par with spending in this genre this year as for last.

"SPA has raised concerns around children's content several times with the Australian Government ever since the previous Government deregulated regulation for commercial broadcasters in 2019, spending on Australian child audiences has continued to drop.

"These new figures are highly alarming - but not at all surprising. And until there is more balanced regulation of commercial broadcasters and the increasingly dominant streaming platforms, nothing will change for Australian child audiences," said **Mr Deaner**.

Since the regulation was scrapped, overall spending on Australian children's drama has steadily declined from **\$11.6 million** (2018-19) to **\$0** (2022-23).

Similarly, spending on Australian children's other content (i.e. non-drama) has fallen from **\$13.2 million** (2018-19) to **\$743,820.00** (2022-23).

Link to 2022 / 23 Commercial TV Expenditure Report [HERE](#).

Link to media image [HERE](#).

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About Screen Producers Australia:

SPA unites screen businesses to campaign for a healthy commercial environment. For over 60 years we have supported the interests of large and small enterprises from across the nation with a diverse production slate of feature film, television, and immersive content. Our 500+ members employ hundreds of producers, and thousands of related practitioners and drive more than \$1.2 billion worth of annual production activity for the independent production sector.

SPA is a proud Founding Partner of the Make It Australian Campaign & a proud Campaign Associate of the Australian Made Campaign.

