

# National Cultural Policy Submission

## Wide Angle Tasmania

**Submitted:** On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation

**What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you? Feel free to respond to any or all pillars:**

### First Nations

Wide Angle is an independent, not-for-profit organisation, committed to building a vibrant and sustainable Tasmanian screen community.

Wide Angle Tasmania strongly advocates for Tasmania to have a First Nations / Aboriginal Manager of Film and TV, supported with the assistance of a federal initiative, to address the fact that Tasmania has never had a First Nations screen professional dedicated to advancing Tasmanian Aboriginal storytelling for the screen. Tasmania needs to be part of the success that other states have in encouraging and growing First Nations / Aboriginal voices within film and television, leading to greater creative expression and wider social cohesion. Wide Angle Tasmania sees the establishment of a Tasmanian First Nations / Aboriginal Manager of Film and TV as an important contribution to a national First Nations voice.

### A Place for Every Story

When we speak about a place for every story, it needs to be noted that Tasmanian voices are not adequately represented within the national screen output. Although the state is well represented as a backdrop for stories told by interstate storytellers, Tasmanian filmmakers receive a fraction of the opportunities provided by the federal screen agency and free-to-air broadcasters. In a recent commission, one of our national broadcasters selected seven submissions for documentaries to be made by early career filmmakers, none of them from Tasmania. The problem lies not with the national broadcaster, who would have tried to find equal representation across the states, nor with Tasmania's screen agency. It is the consequence of the decade-long inherent disadvantage that the Tasmanian screen industry has been facing.

Due to a historical gap in funding, the ongoing absence of training institutions and the scarcity of local screen production companies and institutional opportunities, Tasmania has been ill equipped to develop screen businesses. Lacking a strong local industry, the

state's educational institutions have not developed screen training activities. This means Tasmania is not well positioned to attract broadcaster opportunities or available federal government film support. An examination of Screen Australia's annual reports for the past years reveals that little federal screen funding is making its way to the Tasmanian screen sector.

To fill the gap and support the nascent screen industry, Wide Angle Tasmania has been developing opportunities for the emerging and established Tasmanian screen sector. The organisation has a successful model of short film production with a demonstrated track-record of creating short films that reflect and shape Tasmanian culture. Currently, Wide Angle Tasmania is acting as an executive producer of 12 short films for the GRIT initiative, told by Tasmanian filmmakers for the Tasmanian community, supported by a grant from the Tasmanian Community Fund.

As a regional island state with many talented creatives, Tasmania needs to be better represented in the national conversation. Tasmanian early career filmmakers need to be better resourced and film production companies need to have a stronger foothold in the state. This, in turn, will enable Tasmania's unique stories to find representation on the national screen.

### **Strong Institutions**

Wide Angle Tasmania is a rare established resource for the Tasmanian screen industries. It is an integrated not for profit association, creating opportunities for Tasmanians to gain skills and experience in screen production. Wide Angle Tasmania has the capacity to be a truly state-wide talent and business incubator. Hobart-based, it has been active in all parts of Tasmania since 2005.

Wide Angle Tasmania has a strategic and innovative mixed business model, one that is focussed on improving outcomes for talented and tenacious Tasmanian screen practitioners – both those who are emerging and those more experienced. Wide Angle Tasmania is a source of employment, advice, mentoring, equipment, and training for local creatives developing skills and projects. Financed by both Federal and state governments between 2005 and 2015, the organisation has been kept in operation through the largess of an anonymous benefactor who has supported the organisation with close to \$1million operational funding over the past 6 years. This is the largest amount an Australian benefactor has contributed to a grassroots Australian screen organisation, and highlights the importance placed by a private entity on the continued viability of the organisation.

Wide Angle Tasmania's benefactor can no longer contribute to the organisation's ongoing operations, and it should not be up to the philanthropic sector to support Tasmania's screen organisation. In a state where the ABC has withdrawn their training of Tasmanian filmmakers, and commercial operators like WIN Television and Southern Cross have reduced their crews to a skeleton staff, Wide Angle Tasmania grows local talent to support the telling of local stories.

Without an alternative source of operational funding, Wide Angle Tasmania will be forced to close. The Tasmanian screen sector stands to lose a unique organization and

one of the state's only remaining pieces of screen business infrastructure. As a local industry body, Wide Angle Tasmania is asking the federal government to support its role as a NFP screen organisation and secure its ongoing viability within the Tasmanian screen eco-culture. Support for Wide Angle Tasmania would make a significant contribution to growing industry capacity in Tasmania by enabling it to continue and expand its activities. It would also show support for regional Australia, by developing local employment and development opportunities for screen sector workers in one of Australia's creatively unique regional states.

### **Reaching the Audience**

Wide Angle Tasmania strongly lends its voice to the national Make It Australian campaign. To ensure that Australia has a national identity which is reflected in film and television, Wide Angle Tasmania believes it is imperative that (a minimum of) 20% of the global streamers' Australian subscriber revenue is invested into new Australian stories for the screen. Furthermore, to ensure that Australian children grow up with their own stories and their own voice, Wide Angle Tasmania believes it is crucial that an Australian children's content quota is applied to the global platforms streaming in Australia and to Australian commercial broadcasters. Wide Angle Tasmania believes that implementing these changes will significantly benefit Australia's culture for decades to come.