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**Media Release**  
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## **Free TV networks drive record Australian drama investment**

Free TV Australia today welcomed Screen Australia figures that confirm Australian commercial free-to-air broadcasters remain the leading underwriters of Australian drama.

Screen Australia's Drama Report for 2012/13 reveals another record year for local drama investment, with commercial free-to-air broadcasters once again contributing more than any other funding source to the TV drama slate.

**Free TV broadcasters also accounted for 75 per cent of total hours (490 hours) of Australian television drama in the year.**

Viewers are responding: seven of the 10 most-watched Australian dramas in the 2012/13 financial year were on Free TV.

"Commercial TV broadcasters are the linchpin of the Australian production sector," commented Free TV Chairman Harold Mitchell. "No other platform comes close to our investment in original local content."

Viewers are the winners, with Screen Australia's analysis showing significant increases in the number of hours of children's and adult television drama, as well as record levels of expenditure:

- Total Australian TV drama investment increased by 27 per cent to an all-time high of \$372 million; total hours rose 19 per cent to 656 hours.
- As has been the case for many years, the largest proportion of finance for TV drama (and largest from any sector) came from commercial free-to-air networks.

Free TV's diverse Australian drama slate – including shows such as *Packed to the Rafters*, *House Husbands*, *Offspring*, *A Place to Call Home*, *Howzat!* *Kerry Packer's War*, *Puberty Blues*, *Winners and Losers*, *Power Games: The Packer-Murdoch Story*, *Mr & Mrs Murder*, *Home & Away*, *Underbelly: Squizzy* and *Neighbours* – has won local and international acclaim, attracting millions of television viewers and hundreds of thousands more across other platforms.

Screen Australia's figures reflect the record investment of more than \$1.35 billion that commercial free-to-air broadcasters directed to original Australian TV content in 2011/12, spanning drama, children's, documentaries, sport, news and current affairs, light entertainment and reality programs.

"Commercial television broadcasters are proud to be the leading underwriters of Australian programming, committing record investment despite the toughest trading conditions in memory," Mr Mitchell continued.

"It is pleasing to see our support reflected in the latest Screen Australia analysis.

"Free TV networks sustain a vibrant, dynamic industry that employs 15,000 Australians: 7,500 directly and 7,500 indirectly– including writers, directors, production crew, actors, performers and other professionals.

"We are working with the industry to ensure a strong free-to-air commercial television sector that continues to generate the great Australian programs viewers love and value."

**For media enquiries, please contact Free TV Australia on (02) 8968 7100**

#### **About Free TV Australia**

Free TV Australia is the industry body representing all of Australia's commercial free-to-air television licensees and is the public voice of the sector on a wide range of industry issues. Our members include the Nine Network, the Seven Network, Network Ten, Southern Cross Austereo, Prime Television, WIN, NBN and Imparja. Commercial free-to-air television is the most popular source of entertainment and information, reaching 13.5 million Australians every day. Free TV provides nine channels of quality programming across a range of genres, as well as rich online and mobile offerings, free to all Australian viewers. More at [www.freetv.com.au](http://www.freetv.com.au)