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FREE TV THE LARGEST INVESTOR IN AUSTRALIAN MADE CONTENT....AGAIN

Screen Australia's latest Drama Report released today confirms commercial free-to-air broadcasters are again the largest investors in Australian drama production, contributing more than any other sector in 2015/16.

Newly appointed Free TV CEO Brett Savill said, "Our ongoing commitment to the investment in quality Australian drama is unrivalled and we are rightly proud of it. Not only do we produce a great range of Australian dramas that all Australians can enjoy for free, our industry successfully competes on the world stage, exporting a raft of drama shows including *Home and Away*, *800 Words*, *House Husbands*, *Love Child*, *Offspring* and *Neighbours*."

In 2015, commercial free to air television networks broadcast more than 488 hours of first release Australian drama including children's drama. Eight of the top 10 most watched dramas in 2015/16 were on Free TV and every one of the top 50 programs on Free TV in 2015/16 was Australian made.

"Despite the difficult market conditions that the industry faces, our commitment to producing Australian content has remained steadfast - spend on Australian content accounts for a massive 78% of Free TV broadcasters' total expenditure," Mr Savill said.

"This commitment is reflected in the array of successful new and much-loved Australian dramas that commercial free to air broadcasters are delivering to audiences, including *Molly*, *Secret Daughter*, *Doctor Doctor*, *Hyde and Seek*, *Brock* and *The Wrong Girl*."

The economic and advertising environment remains challenging for the industry and its desire to invest in local drama.

"There is no doubt that our industry and its ability to continue investing in Australian content is under threat," Mr Savill said.

"Australian broadcasters pay the highest licence fees in the world – more than 115 times the fees paid in the US. This punitive regulatory framework is not sustainable and must be urgently addressed.

"No other platform offers our range of quality local programming, to more than 13 million Australians every day, for free. It underlines our social and cultural identity. The ability to maintain our investment is critical," he said.

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