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## **Media Statement 5 November 2009**

### **Free TV broadcasters lead the way on Australian content**

Figures released today by Screen Australia confirm that Australia's commercial free-to-air broadcasters continue to be the major underwriters of Australian content.

Screen Australia's national production survey shows that in 2008-09, as in previous years, the largest contribution to the combined TV drama slate came from the commercial free-to-air broadcasters.

In a great result for viewers, Australian TV drama spend increased to \$294 million, up from \$229 million last year and well above the 5-year average of \$227 million. 614 hours of Australian TV drama were produced, up from 606 hours last year, and again, well above the 5-year average of 581 hours.

The Australian film/TV industry provided the majority of investment for this year's TV drama slate (71 per cent), contributing \$231 million to 42 productions. 2009 has been a bumper year for drama on free-to-air television, with big audiences for such quality productions as *Underbelly*, *Packed to the Rafters*, *City Homicide* and *Rush*.

Commercial free to air broadcasters invest almost \$800 million a year in original Australian programming including drama, children's programs, documentaries, sport, news and current affairs and local content.

Every year commercial free-to-air broadcasters produce more than 500 hours of original Australian drama, including 96 hours of children's drama. They also consistently exceed the 55 per cent local content quota.

Despite an historically challenging year for the television industry, Free TV broadcasters continue to invest in quality Australian content. No other platform has contributed or is likely to contribute in the future to Australian content in this fashion.

The programs produced by Free TV broadcasters are part of the Australian experience and culture and provide valued support for the production industry through employment for writers, directors, production crew, actors, performers and other talent.

In a fragmenting market, now more than ever it is vital that Australia has a strong free-to-air television industry that can deliver the kinds of Australian content that audiences love and value so highly.

-ENDS-

#### **Media enquiries and interviews:**

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