



Media Release
15 April 2020

Free TV Welcomes Immediate COVID-19 Relief Package

Free TV has welcomed the urgent relief package announced today by Minister Fletcher which will greatly assist the commercial television broadcast industry to deal with the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.

Free TV CEO, Bridget Fair said “While we are still working through the details of the package, the suspension of content quotas for 2020, waiver of spectrum fees and support for regional journalism are very positive for the immediate pressures being experienced by the industry. However the ongoing requirement to meet the overall 55% Australian content quota remains a concern for the industry in an environment where there is less sport, drama and entertainment programming available due to the suspension or cancellation of many productions.

The COVID-19 crisis is having significant financial and operational impacts on our sector and these will take years to play out. It is therefore pleasing to note that the Minister has flagged that further consideration of content quotas for 2021 will occur later this year as we expect that further relief will be required in future years.

We also welcome the immediate release of the Options Paper and expedited consultation period for long term Australian Content quota settings. We are still working through the detail of the Options Paper and look forward to responding as part of the consultation process in coming weeks.

Free TV would also urge the Government to expedite the process for the ACCC Digital Platforms Code of Conduct. It is clear that negotiations between the parties to date have been deeply unsatisfactory. These platforms derive value from the news and Premium Australian Content generated by commercial broadcasters, but their market power means they do not pay a fair price for it. The Government must step into this process and drive a speedy resolution to the bargaining imbalance between the parties.



As the world cranks into post-isolation reality, commercial television will need an operating environment that provides certainty for the future. We need a new regulatory framework suitable for a world where broadcasters compete with unregulated online content providers and digital platforms that don't have any of the same rules that apply to Free TV broadcasters.

We look forward to working with Minister Fletcher and the Morrison Government to achieve regulatory settings that are suitable for the post COVID world. Free TV broadcasters still account for the lion's share of spending on film and television production in this country. A sustainable commercial television sector is crucial to the health of the broader production sector."

For media enquiries, please contact:

Bridget Fair
Chief Executive Officer
Free TV Australia
M: 0417 260 478
E: bfair@freetv.com.au

Dorothy Kennedy
Communications and Corporate Affairs Consultant
M: 0451 692 989
E: dorothyhayeskennedy@gmail.com

ABOUT FREE TV AUSTRALIA

Free TV Australia is a leading media industry organisation. It represents all of Australia's commercial free-to-air television licensees through advocacy, innovation and strategic advice. The members of Free TV Australia are Seven West Media, Nine Entertainment Co, Network 10, Southern Cross Austereo, Prime Media Group, WIN Network and Imparja Television.