



Media Release  
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## Free TV calls for new approach on Australian Content

Free TV Australia today called on the government to urgently reform the Australian content regulatory framework to provide commercial television broadcasters with flexibility to deliver the Australian content that audiences are demanding.

Commenting on Free TV's [submission](#) to the government's options paper, '*Supporting Australian stories on our screens*', Free TV CEO, Bridget Fair said: "The current quota system is like stepping into a time machine straight back to the 1980's. It clearly needs significant reform.

"We have seen fundamental change in the media landscape but there has been no significant change in Australian content regulation for almost 20 years.

"Free TV broadcasters remain strongly committed to Australian content, including news and current affairs, entertainment, sport and drama. In fact, viewing figures tell us that Australian programming is more important than ever before. That's why we spend around \$1.6 billion dollars every year and why 85% of our programming budgets are spent on Australian programming.

"Australians love watching Australian programs on their Free TV services. But the current rules are undermining our ability to invest in the local content that our audiences want to watch, and locking us in to delivering quota mandated programs that are increasingly failing to find an audience.

"Children's quota programming is now attracting average audiences of less than 1000 children and costs continue to rise at a rate that inhibits investment in other Australian content that audiences want to watch."

Free TV's submission urges the government to move towards deregulation of quota obligations other than an overall Australian content target, coupled with robust production support and incentives, to better respond to audience demands. As an alternative, Free TV has proposed a simplified points system for commercial television broadcasters that allows broadcasters greater flexibility in how they meet their regulated obligations.

"We need to get away from a regulatory approach that compels broadcasters to compete with each other, not only in relation to the same type of content, but in the same time-slots, and regardless of whether there is an audience for that content or not.

"The regulatory framework should incentivise broadcasters to provide a more diverse slate of content in response to audience demands.



“A strong production sector needs a healthy and sustainable commercial broadcasting industry. As advertiser funded businesses, we have to be able to deliver the programs that audiences want to watch”, Ms Fair said.

**Download a copy of the submission [here](#)**

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## **ABOUT FREE TV AUSTRALIA**

Free TV Australia is the peak industry body representing 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.