



AUSTRALIA

Media Release

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Free TV calls for action to safeguard Australian content on modern TVs

Free TV Australia today released its submission to the ACCC inquiry into digital platform service app marketplaces. The submission addresses the impact that the rapidly developing marketplaces on connected TVs and related devices are having on the prominence of Australian content and the sustainability of the broadcast sector.

Free TV CEO, Bridget Fair said: "While consumers do have more choice in devices and content than ever before, the importance of Australians having free access to great local content such as entertainment, drama, live sport and trusted news has never been more important.

"While the majority of video viewing is still delivered via the terrestrial free-to-air broadcast network, the importance of content delivered via broadcaster video-on-demand (BVOD) services, has been quickly increasing in recent years. With more and more Australians buying connected TVs and other TV aggregation devices, we need to ensure that the great local content that is available from Australia's free-to-air networks is still prominent on new modern TVs.

"This change in audience means that large TV manufacturers and TV aggregators are fast becoming critical gateways to our audience in ways that could, if left unregulated, put at risk both the sustainability of the free-to-air broadcast sector and the discoverability of Australian content.

"Many TV manufacturers and aggregators are requiring payments either in terms of revenue share, annual payments or contra, for apps to be preinstalled on connected TVs and for apps or content to be featured in recommendation tabs.

"There is a real risk that without prominence regulation, a winner-takes all approach could lead to deals between equipment manufacturers and other global video platform providers that have far greater capacity to enter into preferential deals, at the expense of local content providers.

"This issue has already been recognised in other countries such as the UK, Canada and Germany, all of which have taken action to safeguard the prominence of the content from their local broadcasters.

"This ACCC inquiry is therefore very important and should closely examine the conduct of all app marketplace providers and the impact that this conduct is having on the sustainability of local content.

"We look forward to working with the ACCC on appropriate regulatory solutions to be recommended in their report to the Treasurer due by March 2021", Ms Fair said.



For media enquiries, please contact:

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

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.