AN INVESTIGATION OF THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURAL POLICY FORMATION:
The States’ Patronage of Film Production in Australia 1970–1988

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the award of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration by Candidate

I, Thomas Vincent O’Donnell, candidate for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, declare as follows:

1. Except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the candidate alone;

2. The work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award;

3. The content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program;

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Thomas Vincent O’Donnell
30 December 2005
Abstract

In Australia, the decades of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s were times of a great nationalist revival and cultural self-discovery. In the visual arts, theatre, popular and classical music, and especially in cinema and television, a distinct Australian voice could be heard that was accepted as culturally valid and nationally relevant.

The renaissance of local production for cinema and television was reliant on the patronage of the state, first the Commonwealth government with the establishment of the Australian Film Development Corporation and the Experimental Film and Television Fund in 1970 and, later, the Australian Film and Television School. Then from 1972 to 1978 each Australian state established a film support agency to extend that patronage and assure the state of a role in the burgeoning film industry.

This thesis relates the stories of the creation and development—and in some cases demise—of those six state film agencies over the period 1970 to 1988. It identifies the influences that directed the creation of each state agency and proposes a qualitative model of the relationships between the influences. It then argues the applicability of the model to the formation of cultural policy in general in a pluralistic democratic society. It also argues that the state film agencies were more influential on national film industry policy than has hither-too been recognised.
Jindyworobaksheesh

By the waters of Babylon
I heard a Public Works official say:
‘A culture that is truly Babylonian
Has been ordered for delivery today.’

By the waters of Babylon
A quiet noise of subsidies in motion.
‘To a bald or mangy surface we apply
Our sovereign art-provoking lotion.’

By the waters of Babylon I heard
That art was for the people; but they meant
That art should sweeten to the people’s mouth
The droppings from the perch of government.

James McAuley

By the waters of Babylon
And on screens from coast to coast,
Aussies on those silver screens could see
Their national reflection financed by decree.

With apologies to James McAuley

---

1 James McAuley, Collected Poems, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1994
Acknowledgements

It is very hard to know where and with whom to start in acknowledgement those who made it possible to undertake and complete this work. To do so requires a comparison of apples, oranges and durians: the evaluation of complexes of content, tastes, topologies and textures.

In the rigorous realm of academic attentiveness, pedantic punctuation, logic and clarity of textual locution, and unflinching bullshit detection, all credit must go to my academic supervisors, Associate Professor Judith Smart and Professor Jack Clancy (retired). In particular, Judy has led me some way down the road to becoming comprehensible in meaning and occasionally stylish in prose. Jack has been unfailing in his belief in the value of the work, and both have paid for lunch at every supervisors’ meeting since I started on a Master’s degree in this area eleven years ago.

There is vital group of people too numerous to name. Some sixty oral history interviews were used as source material. I conducted all but a few of those interviews: most of the rest were drawn from the National Film and Sound Archive. One came courtesy of the late Ian Stocks. Everyone approached to be interviewed agreed and some were quite forthright in their comments. I am grateful for the frankness of all those interviewees and for the assistance of the staff of the National Film and Sound Archive, especially Zsuzsi Szucs. Some of the interviewees also provided documents from their personal collections.

The first three and a half years of this research were supported by an Australian Postgraduate Award and the balance of the time by the savings accumulated during two years on the staff of RMIT University. I am grateful to both institutions for their support.

Family, friends and colleagues have been most supportive. I am certain that they could not be any less pleased than I am that that this work is now complete and a new phase of life may begin. Most important, I hope that these findings will help re-animate the Australian film industry and aid the rediscovery of Australia’s national cultural purpose, both of which, like the moon past full, have waned in the past decade.
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Introduction

The Culture of Cultural Policy

In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, Australia experienced a period of nationalist cultural revival across a wide spectrum of popular art forms and, in particular, pop music, theatre and local production for television and cinema. Pop music and fringe theatre have relatively low economic barriers to entry, but production for television and especially cinema at standards comparable to Europe and North America is expensive and required public patronage. At first the Commonwealth government and then each of the six Australian state governments provided that patronage. The circumstances of the decision to support the local film industry by each of those six states, is at the centre of this dissertation.

In 1969 the Coalition Liberal–Country Party government, led by John Grey Gorton, committed itself to support the film production industry. South Australia, to seek a share of the Commonwealth money, established a state film agency in 1972. The critical and, to some extent, commercial success of the South Australian Film Corporation spurred on the other states. In quick succession, between 1976 and 1978, first Victoria, then Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia followed suit. While they varied in the details of their constitution and breadth of function, they all had one purpose: to raise the profile of their state as a centre of excellence in the production of cinema and television by supporting such production with investments and grants.

Thirty years later, the quest for the industry’s Holy Grail of commercial success and critical merit still motivates the successors to those first film agencies. Today the South Australian Film Corporation alone remains an independent statutory authority; all others have become part of the executive arm of government, in either arts or economic development portfolios—sometimes both.

1 In this thesis, the term ‘film industry’ will be used synonymously with the term ‘film-production industry’.
Each of the six state film agencies was a unique response to essentially the same cultural challenge—the support of the renascent Australian film industry. Putting aside the South Australian Film Corporation, the period over which the other agencies were founded was short; thus long-term political and economic forces, as well as the national issues that shape cultural policy, affected them equally. This allows a clearer identification of the more local and immediate factors influencing their foundation. Among those factors some were active, auto-generative in the specific circumstances of the state, while others, such as a desire not to be left behind in the culture-status rat race, were reactive.

This thesis seeks to identify the factors that shaped the creation of each of these film agencies; it also seeks to chart the relationships, and to model them in a manner that provides insight into the forces behind cultural policy formation. In carrying out the research, the intricate history of each state film agency has been investigated and the ground-work for a broader understanding of the cultural events of the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in the Australian film industry, has been laid. More generally, the modelling offers a way of appreciating the complex interaction of forces applicable to the creation of cultural policy in a pluralist, free-market economy, administered by an elected government, broadly democratic in process.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis is in three parts, comprising ten chapters in total.

Part One is concerned with the relationship between the state and culture and is divided into two chapters. Chapter One traces the emergence of the modern cultural state in western society, and then locates it in the Australian context, while Chapter Two examines the role of production for cinema and, later, television in Australia’s cultural state and the various state interventions in the industry over the first seven decades of the twentieth century.

Part Two contains the substantive research undertaken and consists of six chapters. They examine the creation and development (and in one case, Tasmania, the sale) of each state film agency in the period 1970 to 1988, a little beyond in several cases. The extant and/or accessible records of the various agencies vary widely in quality and scope. In South Australia, the entire records of the corporation were microfilmed in 1984–85, thus preserving in extraordinary detail the working of the corporation from 1972 and government planning
before that date. This research has drawn extensively from those records, which are cited by the name on the microfiche and its number within that title. In Tasmania, after the sale of the corporation, the records were deposited with the Tasmanian State Archives and culled according to standard archival procedures. While the key records have been preserved, there is little of the colour, detail and character of the South Australia records.

In NSW and, in particular, Queensland the full records are not available. The present administration of the NSW Film and Television Office was uninterested in assisting this research. In Queensland there is circumstantial evidence that many records were intentionally destroyed, despite legislative sanction against such action. Nevertheless it has been possible to accumulate from a number of sources sufficient documents to test the oral histories and identify major influences.

In Western Australia, the film agency was an incorporated association. For many years it had no obligation to produce an annual report. Thus this part of the research has relied more on secondary sources and oral histories. However, a number of privately and publicly initiated reports, undertaken over the years and making recommendations about the film industry in Western Australia, have proved valuable. In Victoria, the research relied on published sources and extensive oral histories, as Film Victoria imposed unacceptable conditions of confidentiality on access to the corporation’s records.

Part Three places these histories in a theoretical context and comprises two chapters. Chapter Nine describes and theorises the factors that influence the formation of cultural policy, suggests the dynamics of their relationships then relates them to the histories of the state film agencies that are documented in Part Two. Chapter Ten argues for greater recognition of the contribution of the state agencies to national culture and film-industry policy and practice.

During the era of the state film agencies, a distinct cultural nationalism flourished in Australia, one that was increasingly multicultural in character. It was a time of optimism and achievement in the creative arts as well as professionalisation—some would say bureaucratisation. This thesis is a refraction of Australia’s cultural history during that period through the prism of the film-production industry. It documents a time of growing certainty about Australia’s cultural identity before trade agreements and neo-classical economic thinking began to reduce national culture to just another commodity.
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CHAPTER ONE: LOCATING THE STATE

*Man is superior to government and should remain master over it, not the other way around.*

Ezra Taft Benson\(^1\)

*L’État c’est moi.*

Louis XIV\(^2\)

This thesis is an examination of the creation and negotiation of cultural policy within the culturally pluralistic and mixed economy that is Australia. The policy modelling is, in large part, grounded in an examination of the state film agencies created by each Australian state in the 1970s, in response to political, industrial and cultural pressures to support local film and television production. In doing so, the thesis charts the origins and development of those agencies between the years 1970 and 1988, years that saw huge cultural change in Australia.

The effectiveness of, and responses to, those pressures on sovereign governments is a reflection of the nature of power and influence in the modern liberal democratic state, a form of governance that is the product of more than five centuries of political and philosophical discourse and conflict, of the codification of discourse into law, and of the evolution and interplay of complex political, economic and cultural relationships.

The State and Power

A distinct feature of the organisation of human society over these past five centuries, in Western Europe and in those countries that have drawn on its heritage, has been the rise of the centrally governed nation-state. This is not to say that centralised governments have not

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1 Ezra Taft Benson (Secretary of Agriculture to US president Dwight D. Eisenhower and, later, thirteenth president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, Bookcraft, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1988, p. 680.

2 Louis XIV, *‘I am the State’*, before the Parlement de Paris, 13 April 1655 as reported in J. A. Dulaure, *Histoire civile, physique et morale de Paris*, vol. 6, p. 372, Baudin Frères, Paris, 1825, but, according to the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, probably apocryphal.
previously existed but that there was a gap in scale between the fiefdom or principality, communities owing allegiance to a local overlord, and pan-national empires, such as the Roman Empire, the Ming Dynasty or the Byzantine Empire. Those empires united diverse tribal or ethnic groupings under a single pan-national political entity. That gap between local and imperial governance has been filled by the modern nation-state, though today, in a return to tribalism, many tribal or ethnic groups would consider themselves to be candidates for distinct and sovereign nationhood.

The nature of the power of the nation-state has occupied the minds of philosophers and political theorists as diverse as Hobbes and Locke, Bentham, Marx, Mill, Nietzsche, Weber, Gramsci, and Giddens. Writing in A History of Power from the Beginnings to AD 1760, Michael Mann defined power as the ‘ability to pursue and attain goals’. Mann himself defined four bases of power—economic, ideological, military and political—but he acknowledged that traditional theorists from both the ‘Marxist and Weberian [schools of thought] generally distinguish [only three] distinct kinds of power. These correspond to each of the three fundamental spheres of social life: economic, political and cultural (the last being a matter of ideology in the one tradition and of status groupings in the other). As one would expect, the Marxists hold that economic power is always the dominant sphere but Weberians recognise no necessarily pre-eminent sphere of power.

This thesis uses, as a working approach, the Marxian/Weberian tripartite division of power. That there are other ways of figuring history is acknowledged, for example, the work of Prasenjit Duara. However, the Marxian/Weberian categorisation of power has the advantage of fusing the ideological and the military loci into the political sphere, the first locus as the origins of political ideas, the second as a tool of political will. This examination will be more concerned with the political locus though it must be noted that as the political state evolved, large standing armies and navies became common.

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4 Ibid., p. 6.
5 Ibid.
7 Prasenjit Duara, Rescuing History from the Nation. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1995. Duara critiqued the linear, teleological model of history and termed it ‘Enlightenment History’ and endowed it with a ‘capital H to distinguish it from other modes of figuring the past.
In addition, the tripartite model better accommodates those nation-states, like Australia and New Zealand, whose military forces are more a servant of national ceremony or diplomacy than a means to enforce national will, as they are for the United States of America for example.

In the events investigated in this thesis, it is the ideological and political power centres that are the key instigators of innovation. The thesis supports the view that political or cultural power may be more crucial to shaping certain aspects of our history than economic power.

The Political State

The idea that national sovereignty rested, collectively, in a class of people called citizens may be traced back to the Greek states, especially Athens. The citizens, however, were a privileged group, wealthy, long established and commonly or exclusively male—an aristocracy or meritocracy. Early republican ideas survived into the Christian era, principally in the writings of the Greek and Roman historians and philosophers.

With the spread of Christianity in Europe, however, such ideas were supplanted by the single idea that a supreme being—God—endorsed the authority of kings, and according to them a divine right to rule. Hence, ecclesiastical and monarchical authority came to dominate the governance of states, be they as humble as an Anglo-Saxon fiefdom or as grand as the court of the Holy Roman Emperor. The city-states of Florence, neighbouring Siena, and Venice, whose cultural apogees corresponded to a period of titular, if not actual republicanism, were rare exceptions in more than a millennium of monarchic ascendancy. That ascendancy was challenged in the centuries following the Renaissance, which first bloomed in Italy during the late fourteenth century. But it was the execution of Charles I of England on the penultimate day of January 1649 that signalled the end of the divine right of kings. Kings had been dethroned by parochial wars, by intrigue, or by conquest, but never before, in an ordered society, by an act of judicial and parliamentary authority.

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10 Ibid., pp. 98–112.

That event was the pivotal point of three decades of civil disorder and robust debate in England about the nature of the state and the source and seat of national sovereignty. The bloodless revolution of 1688 that re-established the English monarchy under Charles II, but subjected it to the authority of parliament, shaped the modern parliamentary state.

Throughout Europe, with the exception of Germany, which suffered ‘the disorderly aftermath of the Reformation followed by the dreary, interminable horrors of the Thirty Years War’, intellectual life flourished as never before. In Holland there were Huygens and Descartes speculating about the nature of light, and Van Leeuwenhoek, whose lens the Florentine, Galileo, would fashion into a telescope. A little later, in England, there lived:

The brilliant group of natural philosophers who were to form the Royal Society—Robert Boyle, who used to be described as the father of chemistry, Robert Hooke, the perfector of the microscope, Halley, who predicted the reappearance of a famous comet, and Christopher Wren, the young geometer who…was a professor of astronomy. [And] towering above all these remarkable scientists was Newton, one of the three or four Englishmen whose fame has transcended all national boundaries.

But the political state was being shaped as well as the arts and our knowledge of nature, and prominent in the discourses were philosophers Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, and the poet and political activist, John Milton. Milton (1608–1674) was an avowed republican. He propounded in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, published on 13 February 1649, two weeks after Charles I was executed, that political power resides always in the people, that ‘it is Lawfull, and hath been…through all Ages, for any, who have the Power, to call to account a Tyrant, or wicked KING, and after due conviction, to depose, and put him to death’.

Somewhat on the other side of the debate was Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). On the one hand he argued in *The Elements of Law, Natural & Politic* that men can only create a peaceful society and live in harmony if they willingly submit to the rule of an absolute sovereign. As sovereignty was accepted at the time as residing in the king, Hobbes would seem to have supported Charles I in his continuing joust with parliament. In the same book,

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12 Clark, p. 221.
Hobbes espoused the belief that democracy was the most basic form of civil organisation. Thus the authority of an absolute sovereign was established only when democratic sovereignty, arising from a social contract among men, was willingly conferred on a chosen individual, or an aristocracy, or a parliament. Was Hobbes having it both ways? In fact, he seemed to be seeking a higher order, natural and political, in his writings. Despite this level of abstraction, or perhaps because of it, he antagonised both sides in the constitutional crisis and, fearing for his safety, returned to Paris the year that *Elements* first circulated.  

Hobbes brought together all his theorising in his masterwork, *Leviathan, or the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth*, first published in 1651. It was a broad-ranging commentary on humankind and its passions, a documentation of civil and political organisation, and a codex of religion and nature, of good and evil, of epistemology and ontology. Writing in the introduction to the 1994 Everyman edition of *Leviathan*, Kenneth Minogue remarked:

> It is a curious irony of intellectual history that so pragmatic a people as the British should have produced *Leviathan* as their greatest masterpiece of political philosophy… He [Hobbes] is in so many matters of style and attitude the companion of Descartes, Pascal and La Rouchefoucauld, rather than Bacon or Locke.

Hobbes recognised that power, wherever it resided, was not just the ‘simple capacity’ to act but incorporated the idea of a ‘legitimate capacity’ to act, ‘fundamentally dependent on the consent of those over whom it is exercised’. Hobbes recognised too that the relationship between the state and the individual displayed some of the characteristics of a contract and that the award of sovereignty to the state carried with it an obligation on the state for the protection of the individual. These are themes that Locke would also explore. In codifying the authority of the state, formally embodying sovereignty in the person of a monarch or a meritocracy, Hobbes was ahead of his time. He also anticipated

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15 Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law, Natural & Politic*, University Press, Cambridge, 1928. It was first circulated in manuscript form in 1640 but not published until 1649 or 1650.


19 Hindess, pp. 40–44.
the growth in importance of statute law over common law, the former a concept of legal authority ‘indebted to Roman and continental rather than to English models’.20

Hobbes, Milton and Locke also articulated ideas about the rights of the individual and an individual’s relationship to the state, laying the conceptual basis for the relationship that Smith would call ‘a system of perfect liberty’, that also became the doctrine known by the French phrase laisser-faire. As Hobbes put it:

Every man by nature hath right to all things… to possess, use, and enjoy all things he will and can. …it followeth that all things may rightly also be done by him. And for this cause it is rightly said: Natura dedit omnia omnibus, that Nature hath given all things to all men; insomuch, that jus and utile, right and profit is the same thing.21

A little over a century later, Adam Smith wrote in An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations22 of the need for society to acquire not just new statutes but new conventions and institutions such as ‘market-determined rather than guild-determined wages and free rather than government-constrained enterprises’ with which to manage the nation’s economy in a systematic and scientific manner.23

But it was the industrial revolution, which took off during the late eighteenth century in Britain, that threw out the most profound challenge to political and economic relationships and shaped modern society. In the hills where the textile mills exploited the energy of flowing rivers, the supply of water and its length of fall imposed a limit on industrial expansion. The harnessing of steam power removed this limit and allowed textile mills to be built at the seaports, where the imported raw cotton was unloaded, or on the coalfields, close to this new source of industrial energy. Steam power enabled the mines to go deeper and more coal to be hauled. Now industrial expansion was limited by the availability of capital, labour and human ingenuity and less by nature.

20 Ibid.
These expanding industries created new master–servant relationships. They ordained a central role for the money-wage in the domestic and state economy. The power of the aristocracy, already threatened by the wealthy merchant class, was further weakened by a new class of industrialists and capitalists.

At the core of the continuing political and philosophical discourse was this question of the liberty of individuals to pursue their own self-interest as against the authority of the state to regulate or restrict personal freedom in the interest of some collective good. Perceptively, British parliamentarian Edmund Burke wrote that ‘one of the finest problems in legislation [is] to determine what the State ought to take upon itself to direct by public wisdom, and what it ought leave, with as little interference as possible, to individual exertion’. The proper role for the state is no less a matter of dispute today than it was in Burke’s time.

The narrative of the evolution of the political state is one from which women are entirely missing. These discourses were ‘matters of state’, matters of the public and civic sphere; the sphere of men. They were not of the domestic kind where the interests of women were, perforce, centred; this private sphere was governed by natural laws such as Aristotle might have espoused. All men, at least, knew that. The same natural laws held that not only were the poor always with us, but that they were necessary to the proper conduct of society. Indeed, while ‘Adam Smith rather liked to think of workers enjoying “affluence”’ he also believed that ‘a nation that attained the highest degree of opulence would be one in which the labour was cheap’. Both discourses came under attack in the nineteenth century as the liberal discourse was extended by writers such as John Stuart Mill.

The political state, as it evolved as an institution, has not been without its critics. Even, Adam Smith, while fully supporting the institution of the state in his day, could observe with equanimity that ‘civil government, so far as it is instituted for the security of property is in reality instituted for the defence of the rich against the poor, or of those who have


25 Ibid., p. 51. Robinson cites her source as ‘Wealth of Nations, Vol. I, p.84. The phrase ‘highest degree of opulence’ was not found in the edition cited in this thesis but can be attributed to a lecture by Smith of 1755, as quoted by a friend, Dugald Stewart. The relationship between the wealth of a nation and the level of real wages is discussed in Smith, pp.63–88. Smith does not seem to regard the relationship as causal, linking high wages with high growth rates not aggregate wealth.
some property against those who have none at all’.  

This was the issue at the core of the liberal state, the same concern for the rights of the majority being found in one of its founding documents ‘The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen’.  

A century and a half later, Smith’s ideological antithesis, V. I. Lenin, would tell an audience in Moscow that, when compared to his ideal communist world, the one that would witness the withering away of the state, ‘the state is a machine for the oppression of one class by another, a machine for holding in obedience to one class other subordinate classes’.  

It was ironic then, that Lenin’s successors constructed a huge and oppressive state apparatus. Throughout the twentieth century, the role of the state has extended to social welfare, the fostering of education and other aspects of the cultural state, though in the same century, nation-states fought wars which for the first time demanded the engagement of their entire populations, not just the standing armed forces. But the belief endured that the state could and should be directed to positive ends.

The Economic State

The second of the three fundamental spheres of social life, recognised by both Marxist and Weberian scholars, is the economic. Prior to the seventeenth century, fiscal planning, much less economic theorising, was of a very limited kind. The ruling economic orthodoxy was then much like that enunciated by Mr Micawber in Charles Dickens’ semi-autobiographical novel, David Copperfield (1849–50). The imposition of new taxes on the ruled was the common remedy for deficits incurred by the ruler.

Scholastic writings, commencing with Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) and continuing particularly among the Jesuits, examined questions of the ethics of pricing and profits and the costs incurred in bringing goods to market. However, there is ‘little to suggest [in the writings of Aquinas] an appreciation of the function of prices in the general

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allocation of resources’. In addition, ‘there is no evidence that the Scholastics were market enthusiasts because of a belief in “economic freedom” or because they recognised the function of the competitive price mechanism in the organisation of general economic activity’. Their fundamental concern was to prevent either ‘monopsonistic or monopolistic exploitation’, or both.²⁹

Neither does Hobbes’ omnibus analysis of the human situation, Leviathan, give much attention to matters of state or private finances, though he does allow that:

> for the Oeconomy of a Common-wealth, They that have Authority concerning the Treasure, as Tributes, Impositions, Rents, Fines, or whatsoever publique revenue, to collect, receive, issue, or take the Accounts thereof, are Publique Ministers.³⁰

Thus he expressed his belief that taxation was a proper matter for the state. He argued for flat rates of taxation—‘the debt which a poor man oweth them that defend his life, is the same which a rich man oweth for the defence of his’, ³¹ and for consumption taxes—‘but when the Impositions, are layd upon the things which men consume, every man payeth Equally for what he useth’.³² But he gave little consideration to issues of economic mechanisms.

The economic theorist, Adam Smith (1723–90), was a more radical thinker. Smith is acknowledged universally as the founder of modern economic thought, and its principal expression is contained in his germinal text, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations. Commonly referred to simply as The Wealth of Nations, it was first published in 1776 in London. It was the product of a lifetime of thought and nine years of writing and revision. The Wealth of Nations continued and expanded on the themes of Smith’s earlier publication, The Theory of Moral Sentiment, published in 1759 while he was professor of moral philosophy and dean of the faculty at Glasgow.³³


³⁰ Hobbes, Leviathan, p.142.

³¹ Ibid., p. 206.

³² Ibid., p. 207.

In the view of Cambridge economist, Joan Robinson, however, neither book is devoted to moral sentiment, especially not *The Wealth of Nations*, but to Smith’s hard-headed belief that ‘the way lies ahead through the increasing productivity that follows the division of labour’.\(^{34}\)

Smith would have been familiar with the Scholastics and also with *De Jure Naturae et Gentium Libri Octo* by Samuel, Freiherr von Pufendorf (1632–94),\(^{35}\) from his student days under Francis Hutcheson, who used *De Jure* as a text.\(^{36}\) Pufendorf was the first writer to develop the concept of ‘utility’ in the pricing mechanism and so put supply and demand theory, already recognised by the Scholastics, on a sounder theoretical footing.\(^{37}\) The whole metaphysical concept of utility, however, rested on an argument ‘of impregnable circularity’.\(^{38}\) Pufendorf also ‘insisted that, despite the teaching of Aristotle, there is no such creature as a natural slave; that master-servant relationships can exist only on the basis of an agreement’.\(^{39}\) This was a highly democratic notion for the time, but consistent with Hobbes’ or Locke’s ideas about the contractual nature of the relationship between the individual and the state.

Samuel Hollender argues that Smith’s sources included, at least, Dudley North (*Discourses Upon Trade*, 1691), Joseph Lee (*A Vindification of a Regulated Enclosure*, 1656), Bernard Mandeville (*The Fable of the Bees; or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, 1714), Richard Cantillon (*Essai Sur la Nature du Commerce en Général*, 1755), Sir James Steuart (*An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy*, 1767), and the group who were associated with François Quesnay in Paris in the mid-eighteenth century, known to us now as ‘The Physiocrats’, thought they themselves went by the name, ‘les économistes’.\(^{40}\)

Smith described the proto-industrial British economy as he perceived it and then constructed an overarching view of the mechanics of that economy. He sought the grand vision, as Hobbes had done 125 years earlier, but without Hobbes’ level of abstraction from real and observed economic processes. Smith achieved in *The Wealth of Nations* what Hollander

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\(^{34}\) Robinson, p. 30.

\(^{35}\) Samuel, Freiherr von Pufendorf, *De Jure Naturae et Gentium Libri Octo*, University of Lund, (?), 1672. (Published in English as *Of the Law and Nature of Nations*, 1703)

\(^{36}\) Hollender, p. 33.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., p. 32.

\(^{38}\) Robinson, p. 47. Utility is the quality in commodities that makes people want to buy them, and the fact that individuals want to buy them show that they have utility.


\(^{40}\) Hollender, pp. 33–51.
termed a ‘comprehensiveness—unparalleled at the time—which reflects a transition in economic literature from partisan pamphlet to scientific treatise’.41

So insightful was his work that the economic doctrines that he established at the dawn of the industrial age continue to influence our lives today. Many a modern politician, though s/he may never have read Smith’s works in any detail, nevertheless feels free to appeal to Smith in support of his or her own brand of doctrinaire free marketism. But Smith’s work and influence have endured precisely because he was not doctrinaire. He was a social and economic optimist but not without his own ironic distance. His writings demonstrate what seems to be a mischievous scepticism about human motives. For example:

People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the publick, or in some contrivance to raise prices.42

But then he could warn those same conspirators:

Consumption is the sole end and purpose of production; and the interest of the producer ought to be attended to, only so far as it may be necessary for promoting that of the consumer.43

And for those in academia this observation:

The discipline of colleges and universities is in general contrived, not for the benefit of the students, but for the interest, or more properly speaking, for the ease of the masters.44

In the England of his day, Smith saw an economic system that was largely autonomous and self-regulating and yet to be modified by the impending industrial revolution. In the course of the following century and a half, Smith’s economic architecture was debated, extended, remodelled, redecorated and reinterpreted by succeeding theorists. Principal among them were David Ricardo (1772–1823), Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), John Stuart Mill (1806–73), and Thomas Malthus (1766–1834),45 and the accumulation of their work came...
collectively to be termed *classical economics*, so solid was its construction. It provided a point of departure for the work of Karl Marx (1818–83). Much later their spiritual descendants, academic economists A. C. Pigou and Alfred Marshall, would lecture in classical economic theory to a young John Maynard Keynes. His *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, published in 1936, successfully challenged the orthodoxy of the economic thinking that had underpinned western industrial nations for 160 years.

Smith and his successors’ economic insights were transmogrified into the ideology of the industrial revolution and became known by the phrase *laissez-faire*, a term probably coined by or derived from the Physiocrats in France. The ideology held that state intervention in the economy should be the least necessary for the orderly operation of commercial enterprises. Law and order at home and defence of the realm abroad should be government’s main concern, with the relief of the indigent a matter for cases of dire necessity only, the least possible consistent with Christian duty. The market place was the arbiter of all economic relations and especially wages and prices. Hardliners like David Ricardo (a wealthy stockbroker by profession) believed that it was natural that workers’ wages should be near subsistence levels and that it was futile to attempt to improve workers’ real incomes. Others were less pessimistic. John Stuart Mill’s popularising of the ideology of laissez-faire was part of his larger commitment to the ideas of liberty, equality and democracy, though as H. J. McCloskey argues, ‘by mid-twentieth-century standards, Mill was a qualified egalitarian’.46

Writing in *John Stuart Mill: A Critical Study*, McCloskey continued:

> Although he was a liberal, distrustful of state power, Mill was also a utilitarian, aware of how much the state could achieve. Hence his writings specifically on the province of government contain no unrealistic attempts to minimise the importance of government, nor any attempts to restrict the authority of the state to the single test of preventing “force and fraud”. Rather, he took an ideal utilitarian standpoint that the state should so act that its actions led to a maximising good.47

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The debate over the nature of the economic state, its growth and its proper role, threw up some quaint contradictions. In 1810, the hard-line laissez-faire economist, David Ricardo—in his first essay on economic theory and a little out of character for a disciple of Adam Smith—called for state intervention in the British economy. He argued in a letter to the Morning Chronicle that the Bank of England must curb its lending policies and those of the private banks so as to control inflation and defend the value of Sterling.\(^{48}\) And even John Stuart Mill, so ardent an advocate of liberty as to believe sexual activities between consenting adults are ‘self-regarding’ and hence should be immune from state intervention, ‘expressed uneasiness concerning the laissez-faire attitude towards gaming-house keepers, pimps, brothel owners and, by implication, prostitutes’, as these relationships might prey upon weakness and not be entered into free of undue pressure.\(^{49}\)

Thus the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries saw the emergence and theorising of the modern economic state, initially laissez-faire in character, later to be ameliorated by social welfare concerns, in part conceded by pragmatic capitalism in need of a healthy and skilled workforce, in part driven by Christian humanism and the growth in the power of organised labour, but recognising reciprocal obligations for society’s award of sovereignty to the state.

The Cultural State

The Marxian and Weberian position is that there are three spheres of state power, economic, political and cultural. From the emergence of the great agrarian states onwards, the arts had been the preserve of the wealthy and influential but in the twentieth century culture emerged as a clear sphere of power to rival the political and the economic focus of the modern state. This rested on rising levels of state support for new institutions of culture during the nineteenth century, concerns for equal access to those institutions, and for the betterment of the working class.

The National Gallery in London, for example, was founded on a collection of thirty-eight paintings owned by banker John Julius Angerstein. In April 1824 the House of Commons agreed to pay £57,000 for those works of art ‘intended to form the core of a new national

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\(^{49}\) McCloskey, p. 115.
collection, for the enjoyment and education of all’.\textsuperscript{50} When a purpose-built gallery was constructed, the site, Trafalgar Square, ‘was chosen, as the crossroads of London, where the collection would be accessible to the rich people travelling from West London in their carriages, and on foot to the poor of the East End’.\textsuperscript{51}

Similar sentiments attended the establishment of public libraries. When on 11 February 1856, the Melbourne Public Library (now the State Library of Victoria) opened ‘with a stock of 3846 volumes … its doors were to be open to anyone over the age of 14 who is of respectable appearance and has clean hands’.\textsuperscript{52}

The Mechanics Institutes movement was another important educational and cultural agency, one being founded in Sydney in 1833 and then Melbourne in 1839.\textsuperscript{53}

The first mechanics’ institute was established in Glasgow in 1799 when George Birkbeck, a Professor of Natural Philosophy at Anderson's Institute, offered a series of lectures on scientific topics to the mechanics who constructed his scientific apparatus. At this time the term “mechanic” broadly meant a worker with some mechanical skills such as a craftsman or a machine operative. Mechanics' institutes proved to be popular, spreading rapidly throughout England and Scotland—by 1826 there were more than 100—but the initial concept of education in technical subjects for skilled workers was soon under threat.\textsuperscript{54}

The threat was disunity. Some ‘saw the institutes solely as a means of self-improvement for artisans’, others ‘as a vehicle for political and economic reform’. A conservative rump desired that they ‘entrench prevailing social rank, privilege, laws and property’, but, in the end, pragmatism defeated all three and the institutes settled into programs ‘of elementary classes, popular lectures and social functions’.\textsuperscript{55} This model was imported to Australia and

\textsuperscript{50} National Gallery, \url{http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/about/history/establish/establishment.htm}, sighted 2 June 2005.
\textsuperscript{51} National Gallery, \url{http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/about/history/establish/location.htm}, sighted 2 June 2005.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
spread rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century appealing ‘to all those anxious to release themselves from the disgrace and embarrassment of ignorance’. By 1900 Australia supported 1000 Mechanics’ Institutes with memberships of between 100 and 200 people, providing educational and cultural services to mainly middle class men. For the most part, their growth and that of Schools of Art and Literary Institutes was supported by grants of lands from government, private gifts and public fund-raising.

The popularity of these institutions paralleled and supported rising levels of literacy. Throughout Western Europe, the British Empire and the USA, state-sponsored education progressively became mandatory. ‘By 1900, the adult population of a number of European countries had, almost universally, achieved at least minimal literacy: sizable segments had attained considerable levels of education.’ Literacy, in particular, opened the door to newspapers and novels, alerting the masses to ideas about their present circumstances and future possibilities hitherto restricted to the educated elite. In addition, literacy broadened the economic base of cultural consumption, contributing to the growing economic importance of the cultural state.

Other factors added to the rising importance of the cultural state. For the first time in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, cultural production for the masses by way of music hall entertainment, then the popular press, codified sports and, later, cinema and radio broadcasting became widely and frequently consumed. This growth was to meet the demand for diversion and entertainment as the working week of urban and rural labourers was shortened under organised industrial and union pressure, and leisure time increased.

Increasingly, popular culture was recognised in political circles as a potential channel of influence and manipulation. Thus an engagement with popular culture might assist

59 Ibid., p. xiii.
politicians seeking to build a constituency in the working class who, as they became politically enfranchised, were increasingly powerful.

Two episodes of total war also contributed to the rise of the cultural state. In recognition of the part played by large numbers of ordinary people in both world wars, there emerged a political discourse focussed on the concept of a new social order. Greater emphasis would be placed on arts and culture as a litmus test of the quality of future societies. The arts were to be valued for their intrinsic aesthetic and cultural (and, later, commercial) qualities, rather than as elements of national propaganda, as they had become especially under the policies of the fascist regimes of Germany and Italy, defeated in 1945. In Britain, this was acknowledged in the establishment of the Arts Council of Great Britain, under the chairmanship of the economist John Maynard Keynes. Many European countries and Canada followed suit in the ensuing decade.

With the emergence of these state or quasi-state cultural bureaucracies, an increasing fraction of national economies was committed to public support for the arts and allied cultural production. As expenditure of state funds has long been subject to political and economic hypothesising and debate, the rise in fiscal contributions to what was becoming know as the cultural industries has thus also become a proper matter for public and then academic discussion.

The Cultural State and Social Control

The modern cultural state owes its influence to the economic impact of the consumption of popular culture and state subsidies of forms of cultural production with less mass appeal. Selective state expenditure on arts and cultural production, however, is not new. Some would argue that the relationship between the arts and the state is at least as old as that between the state and taxation. Writing in the prologue to *Arts and Cultures: The History of the 50 Years of the Arts Council of Great Britain*, Andrew Sinclair reminds us of John Ruskin’s

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62 Acknowledgement should also be made of the leadership that Britain established during World War I in the matter of state propaganda and its use in mobilising its civilian population in support of war.

proposition that ‘in western societies … war was the foundation of the arts’. This state-approved-and-financed art celebrated the history of the community, provided inspiration for its ambitions, and confirmed the mythos of the society of which it was part, manifest in material form. As such, it furnished the words, images and sounds for the projection of state propaganda and underpinned the later growth of national identity.

The Roman Empire, for example, was crucially aware that its reputation for military invincibility rested on the arts as much as military sciences. Roman power and authority, projected through the uniforms of its legions, architecture and statuary, theatre and religion and, the widespread use of its coinage (coinage that was technically superior in manufacture to all other among the conquered peoples), helped make possible the efficient subjugation of a huge empire. It made good economic sense for the Romans to display this artistic and technological superiority because it minimised the need for and cost of maintaining a large standing army in foreign, subject lands. And, in an early example of cultural colonisation, it made Roman-ness a desired and imitated quality among the conquered elites, a fashion with economic and political consequences.

Cultural display as a part of the celebration of national identity, as opposed to a ‘don’t mess with me’ message—as it was, in part, for the Romans—became more common in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as forms of governance moved from the authoritarian and monarchic to the democratic and participatory. The move seemed to parallel the decline in importance of the monarchy itself as the embodiment of national identity.

There were exceptions, however. The twentieth century also saw the rise of particularly authoritarian, indeed totalitarian, regimes that made widespread and effective use of arts and culture, not only as projections of national character and power beyond their borders, but as part of the process of inventing or re-igniting nationalism at home.

The two largest of those states ultimately failed to prosper. One, the communist Soviet Union, collapsed under the weight of the economic contradictions of its centrally planned

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64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
economy, contradictions not dissimilar to those that its guiding philosopher, Karl Marx, had expected to find only in the rival economic philosophy of capitalism. The second, Germany, under the rule of the National Socialist Party, was defeated in war by a coalition of capitalist democratic countries and the Soviet Union, after its expansionist policies and those of its allies, Italy and Japan, became a threat to British, European and United States national interests and breached the territorial integrity of its European neighbours.

In each of those totalitarian states, arts and culture were used as powerful vehicles to project national character abroad, as well as tools for the construction of internal consensus. To achieve these outcomes, a significant fraction of the state’s annual expenditure was directed to arts and cultural production, including architecture, generating schools of practice and styles that became specifically identified with the period and the country. It is noteworthy that the arts of both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, in particular during the long reign of Secretary Joseph Stalin in the latter, bear a chilling resemblance to each other drawing as they do on the classical traditions of Rome and Greece as well as social realism. In both cases, the styles and techniques employed in the ‘projection of national character’ for both internal and international consumption were mostly the techniques associated with modern propaganda.\footnote{One might refer, in particular, to the classifications enunciated in J. A. C. Brown, \textit{Techniques of Persuasion, from Propaganda to Brainwashing}, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Eng., 1963.}

The Great War alerted western governments to the power of propaganda. This interest reflected as much a fear of the new communist state, the Soviet Union, as recognition of the efficacy of British propaganda in the war just ended. The interwar decades saw much study of the process of communication, especially by Harold D. Lasswell and the team at the Social Sciences Research Council (US) Advisory Committee on Pressure Groups and Propaganda.\footnote{H. D. Lasswell’s first published work was \textit{Labor Attitudes and Problems} (1924), co-authored with W. E. Atkins. In 1927, he published the book that established his reputation, \textit{Propaganda Techniques in World War I}. He remained productive into old age. In 1979 and 1980 he co-edited, with Daniel Lerner and Hans Speier, four titles for the East-West Center, published by the University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu. In all, he authored or edited more than twenty-one titles on the subject of communications.}

By the last decades of the twentieth century, national governments of all political complexions and in most parts of the world had claimed a central role in the support and, sometimes the direction of national arts and cultural production. Perhaps this was a political recognition of the power of the arts internally as engines of national consensus and externally as projections of national character. Perhaps there was a desire to control, or at least control
the direction of, arts and cultural production, so it might be harnessed to political ambition; perhaps it was a reclaiming of ownership, in the way that Ruskin had proposed that the earliest western arts were state-sponsored for nationalist purposes.

The Expansion of the Cultural State

The period after World War II, indeed the whole second half of the twentieth century, is especially notable for a new emphasis on arts and cultural matters in states all around the world. An early example was the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) which became the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1945. Its guiding light was the British economist John Maynard Keynes, who died in 1946 before the Council was granted its royal charter.

Unlike the classical economists of the previous century and a half or more, Keynes saw no ideological difficulty in directing state resources to the support of arts and cultural production. Some contemporaries though, like US economist John Kenneth Galbraith, were sceptical about the prospects of a sympathetic relationship ever developing between the artist and the economist, at least as individuals. Galbraith opined that the artist ‘makes the economist feel dull, routine, philistine and sadly unappreciated for his earthly concerns’.

The United States of America was slower off the mark than Britain. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), America’s equivalent to the Arts Council of Great Britain, at least by intent, was created when the US Congress passed the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965. The NEA was a legacy of the legislative program of the Kennedy presidency. Of course, the arts in the USA had long enjoyed private philanthropy on a scale unmatched in Europe for several hundred years. Those men and women in the United States, whom the industrial revolution had made rich, seemed to respond to the Athenian Pericles’ edict that they ‘should embellish the city that sheltered


70 Cited by Glenn Withers, ‘Principles of Government Support for the Arts’, S. L. Goldberg and F. B. Smith, with Ann Lane (eds), *Australian Cultural History: Culture and the State in Australia*, Australian Academy of the Humanities and the History of Ideas Unit, Australian National University, Canberra, 1982, p. 53.

71 Note, too, should be made of the artist, theatre and writer programs of the US Works Projects Administration. The purpose was to create jobs for unemployed theatrical people in the Great Depression years of 1935–40 and was an initiative of the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. See ‘The Great Depression and the Arts’, [http://newdeal.feni.org/nchs/teach.htm](http://newdeal.feni.org/nchs/teach.htm), sighted 3 June 2005. Some of its alumni were to run foul of the McCarthy “witch-hunts” in the 1950s.
Athens still enjoys the legacy of Pericles’ program of civic development and, in the USA, patronage of the arts is considered the duty of the rich and powerful whose legacy is, in many instances, a consequence of nineteenth and twentieth-century capitalism.

Canada, in the post-war period, was a country comparable to Australia in terms of population and British Empire loyalties. It established a Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, which reported in 1951 and led to the creation of the Canada Council in 1955.

A Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts was established in NSW in 1942, changing its name to Arts Council of Australia in 1945. It ‘was inaugurated as a federal body’ in 1948, but, unlike the British model, these bodies lacked any certainty of state or Commonwealth government finance. It was 1967 before the Australian government, under Prime Minister Harold Holt, established an Australian Council for the Arts to serve an advisory role to the prime minister and to recommend the allocation of Commonwealth arts funds. That body was made a statutory authority in 1975 by the Whitlam Labor government and is now known as the Australia Council for the Arts.

The Australian Cultural State

Australia, in 1945, was a country of barely seven million inhabitants and largely dependent on the export of its primary production for wealth. It was not well placed to undertake an ambitious cultural agenda like those of Canada or the United Kingdom. While Australian arts and letters were not entirely devoid of government patronage, the Commonwealth’s involvement in arts and cultural production was confined to a number of separate, somewhat disparate strands. Of these, the longest standing was the Commonwealth

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72 Sinclair, p. 2.
75 Alan Brissenden, ‘Culture & the State: The Case of South Australia’, Goldberg and Smith with Lane (eds), Australian Cultural History: Culture and the State in Australia, p.48.
Literary Fund established in 1908, and the Art Advisory Board, which commenced acquiring paintings for the National Collection in 1912. Each predated the Great War and was established during the terms of office of Andrew Fisher’s two pre-war Labor governments. Age alone had endowed these programs with respect, and conservative grant and acquisition policies had ensured their survival. The Commonwealth National Library, the precursor to the National Library of Australia, was formed in 1923 from the parliamentary library and became a separate entity with its own legislation in 1960.

The creation of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust in 1954 marked a break with the past. The prime minister of the immediate post-war decades, R. G. Menzies, wrote of the trust:

The Commonwealth-wide appeal for funds was launched to commemorate the gracious visit to our shores of our Sovereign and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh in 1954, and was met by a happy combination of private persons and institutions on the one hand and by the Commonwealth Government on the other.

Behind this initiative was the hand of economist Dr H. C. (Nugget) Coombs, then governor of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. Coombs is one of the heroes of the Australian cultural revolution of a decade and a half later. The trust was, in part, a means to allow tax deductibility of donations to arts organisations, in particular to theatre companies, and, in part, a responsible agent for the distribution of the Commonwealth’s contributions.

Menzies went on: ‘I look forward to the day when Australian theatrical companies will travel overseas to return the visits of the many great artists who have enriched the life of our people’. It is easy to be put off by the tone of Menzies’s remarks but the Trust opened a bridgehead into the public purse for cultural production. For almost fifteen years, it was the single commitment to the performing arts by the Commonwealth government.

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81 The Elizabethan Theatre Trust: The First Year, The Elizabethan Theatre Trust, Sydney, 1956, p. 3.

82 Ibid.
The endorsement by Prime Minister Menzies of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust was the culmination of years of work by several dedicated individuals. In the mid-1940s, Coombs, then Director-General of Post-war Reconstruction, sought to interest Prime Minister Chifley in arts patronage as part of the program of post-war reconstruction. He enjoyed only limited success with Chifley—plans for a national theatre ‘were approved by federal cabinet, but not accepted by the states before the change of government in 1949’—and none with his successor, Menzies, until the proposal for the trust in 1953.

The establishment of the trust was the result of a fortuitous combination of circumstances, skilfully orchestrated by Coombs himself. In 1948, successful tours by the Old Vic Theatre Company and the Ballet Rambert had reinvigorated calls for a national theatre company. In 1949, the eminent English actor, Tyrone Guthrie, visited Australia, sponsored by the British Council, to explore prospects for a tour of his Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Company. Chifley commissioned Guthrie to survey the Australian theatrical scene and to recommend plans for the further development of the theatre. Guthrie’s report was sceptical about the extent of demand for a national theatre and the level of theatrical literacy among audiences. In addition, he expressed doubt that the quality of Australian actors, directors and writers was sufficient to support a national theatre. Such views, it seems, hardened nationalist sentiment among audiences and practitioners and did nothing to silence calls for a national theatre.

The tour by the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Company went ahead in 1953. It was led not by Guthrie but by Anthony Quayle, ‘whose outgoing style and enthusiasm for things Australian made him an admirable advocate for an indigenous theatre’. Financially and artistically, the tour was a great success.

In his memoir, Trial Balance, Coombs recalls Quayle’s wondering:

85 Ibid., pp. 220–21.
86 Ibid., p. 236.
“Our company”, [Quayle] said, “is making tremendous profits: probably about 40,000 pounds. These profits will not help the Shakespeare Company, they will simply go back to the United Kingdom Treasury. Why isn’t there an Australian organisation with which we could at least share them?”87

Impressed with the potential for profits and Quayle’s urging of ‘an agency, independent of Government, business and other sources of subvention and the theatrical enterprises themselves’, Coombs set to work to build support in the business, government, academic and media communities. He took the proposal for ‘an independent, non-profit organisation’ to Menzies, with the added sweetener that the proposed private trust should memorialise the visit to Australia, promised for the following year, of the newly crowned sovereign, Queen of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, Elizabeth II.88

Menzies, an ardent royalist with a particular regard for the young queen, embraced the idea and thus the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust was born. The first chairman was, appropriately, H. C. Coombs himself. The Trust was instrumental in the establishment of ‘the Australian Opera, the Australian Ballet, two orchestras and seven drama companies. In conjunction with the ABC and the University of NSW, it set up the National Institute of Dramatic Art’, universally referred to as NIDA, and, later, supported the creation of the Australian Council for the Arts.89 The Trust was placed in provisional liquidation in 1991 after a series of poor investments in commercial theatrical ventures led to serious financial losses. It subsequently ceased to play a role in Australian cultural life.90

On other fronts, the commitment of state and especially Commonwealth resources to support of the cultural sector of the economy remained uncommon and piecemeal. In 1967, Menzies’ chosen successor, Harold Holt, established the Commonwealth Assistance to Australian Composers fund, modelled on the Commonwealth Literary Fund.91 Holt then proposed the amalgamation of the various programs of Commonwealth fiscal support for the sector under a new body, the Australian Council for the Arts. It provided a single source of advice on the arts for the Commonwealth government and became the only

87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., pp. 236–38.
89 Rydon and Mackay, p. 89. See also Rowse, pp. 253–81.
90 Ava Hubble, ‘Calming the cries for blood’, Sydney Morning Herald, 4 December 1991, p. 16.
conduit of Commonwealth fiscal assistance. The proposition amounted to a centralisation of cultural power worthy of a Labor administration.

The Australian Council for the Arts

The decision by Prime Minister Harold Holt, announced in parliament on 1 November 1967, to establish the Australian Council for the Arts signalled of an expanded role for the Commonwealth government in arts and cultural production in Australia. Announcing the initiative, Holt told parliament that ‘Government financial assistance for the “theatre Arts—drama, opera and ballet, and film making for television with an educational and cultural emphasis” would be channelled through the new Council for the Arts’.  

Unlike his predecessor, Menzies, Holt did not have a ‘doctrinal dislike for government support for the Arts’. Holt’s father, T. J. Holt, had been ‘an eminent Australian entrepreneur who had been involved inter alia in some of [Dame Nellie] Melba’s concerts and opera seasons’. His son had a particular love of ballet and, at one time, was secretary of the Cinematograph Exhibitors’ Association. However, Holt’s unexpected disappearance on 17 December 1967 while swimming at Cheviot Beach, Portsea, meant that it was the following June before his successor, John Gorton, appointed the Council’s first members. There were ‘two each from NSW and Victoria, one from each of the other states and the Capital Territory’, reflecting a cautious sensitivity to states issues but affirming the federal role of the new Council. The chairman was, again, H. C. Coombs, now the governor of the Reserve Bank, whose contribution to the emergence of the cultural state in Australia must rank alongside his contribution to the economic state. Coombs’ influence and his connection with the English economist, John Maynard Keynes, will be discussed in Chapter Nine.

But British precedents were not the only formative influences on the inception of state intervention in arts and cultural production in Australia. The new world order after World

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93 Coombs, p. 242.
94 Ibid.
96 Rydon & Mackay, p. 90.
War II was to be headed by the United Nations, and one of its first and most active agencies was UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

The importance of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to the evolution of the Australian cultural state should not be overlooked. The organisation has been prolific as a corporate author over the last half century, and a search of the catalogue of the State Library of Victoria yielded 837 titles published by UNESCO, approximately one third being devoted to arts, cultural and communication issues and over one hundred specifically relevant to Australia.

Established in 1946, UNESCO focused the attention of national governments on the importance of arts and culture to national life and, through international exchange programs, on the role of government in promoting world peace and understanding. This emphasis may well have been driven by a desire to undo the perceived misuse of the arts by the fascist regimes defeated in the recently concluded war.

Australia had played an important role in the creation of the United Nations, in the person of the wartime Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs, Herbert Vere Evatt. Evatt led Australia’s delegation to the UN from 1946 to 1948 and chaired the General Assembly in 1948–49. Without doubt, UNESCO’s work would have been well known to Coombs, who had travelled and worked with Evatt in the war years, before resuming the post of Director-General of Post-war Reconstruction on his return in late 1943.97

In 1947, UNESCO published a Report of the Commission on Technical Needs in Press, Radio, Film following the Survey in Twelve War Devastated Countries, a report that highlighted the role of the media as a cultural agency, and followed that with Arts and Letters in 1954, an early and major statement on the place of the arts in society.99

Between 1958 and 1980, around twenty-five UNESCO-sponsored or endorsed conferences dealing specifically with culture-related matters were held in Australia, and several more dealt with related topics. Most were well attended, not just by practitioners, educators and academics but also by journalists, bureaucrats and politicians.

The earliest of these UNESCO seminars seems to have been held in 1958 at Sydney Teachers’ College in the grounds of the University of Sydney; it dealt with the role of ‘Drama in Education’. Earlier still in Sydney was an exhibition of ‘Australian Aboriginal Culture’ arranged by the Australian National Committee for UNESCO in 1953. A crucial seminar, titled ‘Professional Training of Film and Television Scriptwriters, Producers and Directors’, was held at the University of New South Wales in 1968 and its direct influence on future Commonwealth government policy was noted in my Masters thesis ‘Two Models of Government Intervention in the Australian Film Industry’.  

While the more populous states attracted marginally larger numbers of the seminars, there seems to have been a deliberate policy to engage residents of the BAPH states and rural centres in these programs. In 1960, a seminar for Australian composers took place at the University of Adelaide, with a sequel four years later in the same venue.

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100 UNESCO papers and proceedings in the State Library of Victoria, as at 31 Dec. 2000.

101 Vincent O’Donnell, ‘Two Models of Government Intervention in the Australian Film Industry’, MA thesis, RMIT, Melbourne, 1998, p. 34. The keynote speaker at that seminar was English screen writer, Lord Ted Willis, whose hitherto undiscovered influence on Don Dunstan’s plans for a State Film Centre will be discussed in chapter three.

102 The Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s nomenclature for ‘Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart’.
In 1960 also, the role of schools and universities in adult education was discussed at the University of Sydney and from then on such seminars and conferences became more frequent, peaking in the early to mid-1970s, a time of immense cultural reformation in Australia.

After 1980, the frequency of occurrence fell dramatically with just two conferences between 1980 and 1990, one on historical places and the second on the protection of portable heritage, co-incident with the introduction into the Commonwealth parliament of the legislation establishing the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act, 1986.

The Ownership of Patronage

Harold Holt’s decision to establish the Australian Council for the Arts provided an opportunity to explore what an enlarged Commonwealth role in arts and cultural production implied for Commonwealth–state relations. Joan Rydon and Diane Mackay reported that because the arts and culture-related interests of the Commonwealth government had been handled on an *ad hoc* basis for so long, the new ‘appointees to the Australian Council for the Arts stressed that a first priority would be to investigate Commonwealth-state relations in the arts’. This was strategically wise as the Council would be operating, initially at least, in parallel with existing Commonwealth programs, with the Elizabethan Theatre Trust and with the nascent state arts bureaucracies.  

Unsurprisingly, the Council staked out the cultural high ground, ‘declaring that its main concern, as a federal body, was to establish high national standards, [and] believing that this could best be done by a concentration of funds rather than by a thin spread over a wide area’.  

This decision ensured that the Commonwealth government soon became used to seeing arts support grants in terms of millions of dollars, not just as small handouts to individuals. This policy laid the foundations for the now near sacrosanct relationship between the Commonwealth government, the Australia Council and its Major Performing Arts Board, and Australia’s major performing arts companies.

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103 Rydon and Mackay, p. 90. Commonwealth arts interests were consolidated in the Council in 1972, but the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust continued, as it was constituted as a private trust. It was placed in provisional liquidation in March 1991 after a series of shows, including the musicals *Lennon* and *Sugar Babies*, and *Las Vegas on Ice*, failed to return on the investment. See Hubble, ‘Calming the cries for blood’.

104 Rydon and Mackay, p. 91.
A recent manifestation of this relationship was the report, *Securing the Future*, released by the Australia Council and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, in December 1999. It recommended ‘landmark proposals for Commonwealth and State Governments to come together to renew and reinvigorate the major performing arts organisations of Australia’ at a cost of over $60 million.\(^{105}\)

The Council’s ‘high ground’ positioning of 1968 seemed also to be an attempt to stay out of the retail end of arts and cultural grants. It was not, however, successful and the Council was soon making grants of as little as $150 to regional organisations for local arts activities.\(^{106}\) Despite occasional attempts to delegate this kind of funding to state arts agencies, the catholicity of grants policy endured. The Australia Council’s *Annual Report 1999/2000* lists a number of grants under $1,000, one as little as $77 to the Time _Place_ Space Workshop.\(^{107}\)

The major and defining distinction between state and Commonwealth interests in arts patronage soon emerged and it lay in the matter of bricks and mortar. With few exceptions, the construction and maintenance of all cultural venues, from libraries to opera houses, were to be and have remained the responsibility of state or local government, sometimes assisted by one-off Commonwealth grants.\(^{108}\)

By 1984, Rydon and Mackay, writing in *Australian Cultural History*, no. 3, could confidently report that ‘recent years have seen the acceptance of government support for and financial aid to the “arts”. While there may be argument as to the form and extent of such aid the principle is now rarely questioned’.\(^{109}\) Thus, within fifteen years of Holt’s decision, joint Commonwealth/state responsibility for cultural patronage, together with lines of demarcation, had been instituted without any formal negotiation. Such concord was not to be so easily arrived at in the film production industry.

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\(^{106}\) Rydon and Mackay, p. 91.

\(^{107}\) Australia Council, *Annual Report, 1999/2000*, p. 120.

\(^{108}\) Rydon and Mackay, pp. 90, 92. See also Macdonnell, p. 14.

\(^{109}\) Rydon and Mackay, p.87.
The years after November 1967 saw a transformation of the relationship between the Commonwealth government and arts and cultural production in Australia, and the following decade saw further developments in and a rationalisation of the Commonwealth’s relations with the film industry and screen culture programs. In Australian terms, these changes were near revolutionary but, in fact, Australia was no more than catching up with changes in the role that governments were playing in arts and cultural activities in most first-world countries.

At a state level too, innovation was in the air. The NSW government had established a ‘Cultural Grants Advisory Council to advise the Minister for Education on grants to individuals and organisations’ in 1966, and a Ministry of Cultural Activities in 1972.\(^{110}\) Rydon and Mackay also reported that Queensland set up a Cultural Advisory Council in 1970 but, as a policy to create an ‘Advisory Council on Cultural Affairs’ formed part of the National Party’s platform for the 1974 election,\(^{111}\) Rydon and Mackay may be mistaken on the date. In 1972 in Victoria, one of the first initiatives of the new premier and leader of the Liberal Party, Rupert Hamer, was the creation of a Ministry for the Arts and, in the following year, the Victorian Council of the Arts.\(^{112}\)

Arts advisory boards were established in Western Australia in 1970 and in Tasmania in 1975.\(^{113}\) In South Australia, Don Dunstan led the Labor opposition into the crucial 1970 election on a platform that featured a radical commitment to the arts and the establishment of a state-based film corporation.\(^{114}\) The South Australian Film Corporation would be the first such state-based film-production agency and have many imitators.

Australia during the 1960s enjoyed a period of growing economic affluence; its predominantly Anglo population had been leavened by increasing numbers of European migrants. Their Australian-born children were becoming adults and were chafed by the limits of the cultural models inherited from their parents’ home countries and those that

\(^{110}\) Ibid., p. 100.

\(^{111}\) Courier-Mail, 5 November 1974, p.1.

\(^{112}\) Rydon and Mackay, p. 100. See also O’Donnell, ‘Two Models of Government Intervention in the Australian Film Industry’, p. 116.

\(^{113}\) Ibid.

Australia had inherited from Britain or was now adopting from the United States. Many young Anglo-Australians shared the frustration and some like Barry Humphries, Germaine Greer and Clive James left essentially for good.

Commonwealth government scholarships, an initiative of the Menzies Liberal–Country Party coalition government, offered free, merit-based tertiary education for the first time to middle- and working-class children. Increasingly, the Australian media were portraying the world beyond the grey paling fences of suburban Australia as being available to the ambition of ordinary Australians. The ordinary person could begin to dream beyond a marriage, a family and a pension at sixty-five.

There was a creative quickening among the young that a government, made complacent by nearly twenty years of paternalistic rule, could never understand, let alone harness. This quickening spread beyond the boundaries of the existing Australian cultural industries (such as they were) and power-elites. Those juvenescent forces sought their creative outlet in two new cultural industries, or more correctly, one old and one new: the film production industry and rock ‘n’ roll music.

These two cultural forms ideally suited Australia in the 1970s, a society whose mass cultural markets had long been captured by United States exports of cinema and popular music. Creative activity in either form was simultaneously oppositional and mainstream. One could fail with the dignity of having tried, having given it a go. On the other hand, success could be greeted as a demonstration that Australia was as good as the world’s best, held back only by lack of resources, opportunity, conservative elders or luck, but not by a lack of innate ability.

Unlike the music industry, where a group of musicians with moderate talent, application, good luck, and the right smoozing, can make it from garage-band to great-band-of-the-decade, the film industry has a high price of entry. For a renaissance Australian film industry to get started, it would need a patron with deep pockets and much patience: it would need to become part of the government’s cultural agenda, and its values and outcomes must not to be measured in dollars alone.
Commencing in 1969, first the Commonwealth government and then, one by one, the state governments committed themselves to cultural patronage of the film industry, though, in some cases, the commitment employed the rhetoric of business and private enterprise to be nurtured by seed-funding from government. Even today, more than thirty years later, that patronage remains an essential financial element of the Australian film industry, though again it is given with industrial reins attached. Research into how this came about allows an insight into the larger questions of the development and negotiation of cultural policy in Australia, around the spheres of economic, political and cultural power.
CHAPTER TWO: Cinema and State Before 1970

_The important thing for Government is not to do things which individuals are doing already, and to do them a little better or a little worse; but to do those things which at present are not done at all._

*John Maynard Keynes* ¹

A Problem with Federation

The Australian colonies federated on 1 January 1901, after more than a decade of debate, division and compromise, but the terms of federation and the sovereign authority included in the new Commonwealth Constitution were limited. The colonies agreed to cede to the Commonwealth-to-be the very least authority necessary for the defence of the continent and for the orderly conduct of commerce between the new states and with foreign countries; all other residual legal authority, including their individual sovereignty, was jealously preserved. This restricted authority was to hinder the development or management of many aspects of national political, economic and cultural life, not least among them the Australian film-production industry. Doubtless, if radio and television broadcasting had been in existence at the time of Federation, they too would have remained within the jurisdiction of the states and suffered in a similar manner to the film industry or the management of the Murray–Darling Rivers system.

Within a few years of Federation, foreign cinema products—motion picture films—began to flood into Australia from Britain, France and especially the United States of America. Though the birth of the federated nation had been recorded on film, using the recently developed Lumieré Brothers’ Cinematograph, ² the production, distribution and exhibition

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² The contract to produce the cinematograph coverage of the Federation celebrations in Sydney was won by the Melbourne-based Limelight Department of the Salvation Army. See National Film and Sound Archive, *Federation Films*, National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, 2000. The awarding of this contract was, perhaps, the first example of what was to become the ‘Industry 1– Industry 2’ opposition identified by Susan
of motion picture films was regulated by the laws of individual states, as was popular 
entertainment in general. This division of jurisdiction proved both a burden and a boon 
for the industry for much of the century to come.

The Commonwealth’s one and only authority over the motion picture industry lay in its 
customs powers. This situation allowed the introduction of ‘national censorship at the point 
of import during the First World War, at first only for films which might affect national 
security, but in 1917 comprehensively’ so.\(^3\) But it was concern for the social and moral 
impact of the cinema that later captured political attention and directed government 
regulation, state and Commonwealth, toward control of the importation and exhibition of 
films, rather than their production, especially in the inter-war years.

As foreign imports swamped the local film-production industry, it became increasingly 
apparent to film-makers that film production must be seen as a national as well as a state 
concern. The defence of the film industry saw many free traders find common cause with the 
protectionists and agree on patriotic reasons to defend the Australian cinema. But patriotism 
was not as powerful a motive as profits. In 1913, the ‘combine’ emerged. Its distribution 
arm, Australasian Films Ltd, and its exhibition arm, Union Theatres, took over ‘the assets of 
all the major distributors and exhibitors—West, Spencer, Williams, Johnson and Tait, the Tait 
brothers and Pathé’.\(^4\) It ‘quickly became the largest and most powerful film company’ in 
Australia and, recognising that profit came from imported product not local, wound down its 
local production interest.\(^5\)

Australian producers found themselves locked out of many cinemas as Australasian Films 
forced independent exhibitors into exclusive contracts, under threat of withholding future 
supplies of films. In 1914, pioneer director Ray Longford mounted a legal challenge to the 
‘combine’, claiming that their actions had prevented his distributor (and their smaller rival), 
Fraser Films, from distributing his films. Longford lost.

\(^3\) Ina Bertrand and Diane Collins, Government and Film in Australia, Currency Press, Sydney, and 
the Australian Film Institute, Melbourne, 1981, p.17.

\(^4\) Ibid., p. 15.

\(^5\) Ibid.
The presiding judge ‘Mr Justice Pring reminded the jury that “competition is the life of trade” and that any business dealing which was not actually illegal was acceptable practice’.\(^6\) This was a staunch restatement of the principles of *laissez-faire*, of the supremacy of the free market. It affirmed the view that the business of cinema was much like any other business and that film producers should not expect special treatment from governments.

The Royal Commission of 1927–28

Ina Bertrand and Diane Collins’s thorough study, *Government and Film in Australia*, points to the braided streams of influence that led to the Royal Commission into the Moving Picture Industry in Australia of 1927–28. For several reasons it was an inopportune time to hold such an enquiry. ‘Talking pictures’ were revolutionising the cinema experience for audiences, local producers faced capital expenditure to meet the challenge of this new technology, and the Great Depression was soon to undermine cinema revenues. Some of these factors should have been recognisable at the time but, beset with pressures from several sides and lacking a clear policy position of its own on the moving picture industry, the Commonwealth government decided on a royal commission. Labor senator John Grant, who first proposed the royal commission, ‘wanted [the government] to do more than protect Australians from the allegedly damaging celluloid examples of New York gangsters and prairie gun-slingers: he was asking also that the Australian Governments begin consciously to exploit film as a means of moulding national identity’.\(^7\)

A range of disparate voices quickly sought the ears of the royal commissioners. Empire loyalists had seen the growing US dominance of Australian movie screens as weakening the ties to King and Country and led calls for quotas to safeguard the market here for British and Empire films. They were encouraged by events at the Imperial Conference of 1926 in London, where cinema became the subject of a report by the General Economic Sub-Committee. Though something of a sideshow, the sub-committee’s report led to the British *Cinematograph Films Act* of 1927 and similar quota legislation elsewhere in the British Empire.\(^8\)

\(^6\) Ibid., p. 16.

\(^7\) Ibid., p. 27.

States-rights lobbyists, ever suspicious of the prospect of any new Commonwealth power, had been pressing for years for independent powers of censorship for all the states. Such authority had been enacted in NSW (1916), in South Australia (1917) and in Tasmania (1920). This particular anxiety about or, indeed, mistrust of the Commonwealth government, coloured relations between state and Commonwealth film agencies for more than half a century.

In Australia of the 1920s, the moral lobby was in the ascendant. Its concerns were broad, embracing the whole spectrum of human failings, from thirst to lust; six o’clock closing for sobriety, and chastity and fidelity in the fight against venereal diseases were high on their agenda. They particularly identified the cinema as a major seedbed of corruption. There the most blatant examples of the decline in moral values could be found in the behaviour of the ‘valentinos and vamps’ on and off the silver screen. Parts of the moral lobby and the film makers found common cause in the idea that ‘film was no ordinary commodity; that film production was a national industry, in something more than an economic sense; that it reflected and shaped Australian values and identity’. But it was an uneasy liaison.

For the majority of distributors and exhibitors, however, as for the ‘combine’, their industry was just a business, and all that the public wanted was a good night out. ‘We leave it to other enthusiasts to look after [idiosyncratic audiences] while we attend to the great mass’, Stuart F. Doyle, the chief executive of Australasian Films and Union Theatres, told The Filmgoer in Antwerp in 1936.

The Royal Commission into the Moving Picture Industry in Australia of 1927–28 was a grand and expensive affair. It was chaired by Walter Marks, Nationalist member for the seat of Wentworth, and took evidence over almost nine months in all state capitals and in country

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9 Marks et al., pp. 4–8, (p. 1382–86); and Bertrand and Collins, p. 16.
10 Jill Julius Matthew, Good and Mad Women, George Allan & Unwin, Sydney, 1984, pp. 77, 81–2.
12 Bertrand and Collins, pp. 16–18. This moral panic endures and is re-invigorated by each technological advance. Television displaced cinema as the malign influence in the 1950s, only to be displaced itself by video, computer and arcade games and, of course, the Internet.
13 Ibid., p. 23.
14 Quoted in Frank Hill (ed.), The Film Weekly, The Film Weekly Ltd., Sydney, 6 August 1936, p. 3.
centres as outlying as Kalgoorlie and Rockhampton. It heard two hundred and fifty-three witnesses, from government welfare agencies and women’s groups, from churchmen and policemen, as well as cinema distributors and exhibitors and sixteen Australian film producers including Raymond Longford. From more than one thousand pages of evidence, Marks (who had no particular experience or knowledge of the industry) and his colleagues produced a unanimous report of commendable brevity. It was just thirty-one pages in length.

Though the commission was presented with many strong and clear opinions, some of which conflicted one with another, the report contained little that was unexpected and, broadly speaking, supported the status quo. There was, the commission found, ‘no American combine in existence in Australia exercising a stranglehold over the Motion Picture industry’, and Australian independent producers had not suffered disadvantage, but must make films that were ‘pictures of merit’—that is marketable—if they were to be part of the industry.

There was a role for government; a quota for Australian produced films was desirable commencing at 5 per cent and rising to 15 per cent over 3 years, but the films would have to be submitted for approval as quota-eligible. No rubbish was to be foisted on the public simply because it was Australian. In addition, a series of three ‘Awards of Merit’ was recommended. They would be cash awards of £5,000, £2,500 and £1,500 each year for films of quality. Two further awards of £500 each were recommended for ‘the best film scenario written in Australia by a resident Australian citizen’ and for ‘the best film scenario containing Australian sentiment’.

The report also canvassed a range of minor taxation measures and reported proposals for ‘the establishment of Chairs of Cinematography and allied subjects at Universities in Australia and a Commonwealth grant to assist in the foundation of such Chairs’. This last was not a formal recommendation, however. The commission further recommended ‘that no moving picture shall be screened before audiences of aboriginals or natives of the Mandated

\[^{15}\text{Marks et al., pp. v–viii, 1, 2, (pp. 1375–80).}\]
\[^{16}\text{Ibid., pp. 9, 13, (pp. 1387, 1391).}\]
\[^{17}\text{Ibid., p. 13, (p. 1391).}\]
\[^{18}\text{Ibid., pp. 16, 17, (pp. 1394, 95).}\]
\[^{19}\text{Ibid., p. 14, (p. 1392).}\]
\[^{20}\text{Ibid., p. 22, (p. 1400).}\]
\[^{21}\text{Ibid.}\]
Territories unless such film had been passed by the Censorship Board as suitable for such exhibition’. It warned that ‘film exerts a powerful influence over the natives and could by design instil into their minds dangerous and sinister motives’. To this extent at least, the power of the cinema to communicate ideas, and influence opinion and behaviour was recognised though impressionability was defined in terms of race and age. Revealingly the report went on to discuss the similar and various hazards in exposing children to the cinema.

Both the government and opposition in the Commonwealth parliament embraced the report’s recommendations, perhaps because they did not rock anyone’s boat. But such an endorsement was also politically expedient. The implementation of over half the recommendations would require clawing more power for the Commonwealth from the states, an event unlikely to be achieved easily, possibly not at all. Bertrand and Collins assessed the royal commission’s report as ‘marked by a depressing conceptual poverty’. As it was, the only recommendation with which the Commonwealth could immediately proceed was the proposal to create ‘Awards of Merit’, and that project became a fiasco.

The first winner of a Merit Award, as judged by the Censorship Appeals Board, was Fellers (Arthur Higgins & Austin Fay, 1930) but the film was judged worthy only of the third prize of £1,500. That was the sole award made in 1929 and it was made in the face of a campaign by producers to abandon the Awards of Merit altogether, as they ‘would make Australia ridiculous in the eyes of the world’. Ray Longford fulminated in Everyone’s magazine of 21 May 1930 that the awards ‘were for silent films, “which certainly have no market overseas, and have a daily shrinking market locally”’. While the show print of Fellers had a soundtrack composite on the edge of the print, as the new sound technology allowed, it had little synchronised dialogue and then only in the last reel and of poor quality. It was, in effect, a silent film with pre-recorded accompaniment. No further awards were made until 1935, when three prizes were given, and then the whole scheme was quietly abandoned.

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22 Ibid., p. 18, (p. 1396).
23 Ibid., pp. 18, 19, (pp. 1396, 97).
25 Ibid., p. 33. Bertrand and Collins reported that third prize was £1,000 (p. 31). However, Pike and Cooper reported that the prize money was £1,500, and this is the figure given for third prize in the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Andrew Pike and Ross Cooper, Australian Film, 1900–1977, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998, p. 153.
26 Ray Longford, Everyone’s, 21 May 1930, cited in Bertrand and Collins, p. 33.
27 Pike and Cooper, p. 153.
Having presented his report to parliament, Walter Marks was then charged with negotiating the agreement of each state government to pass compliant legislation assigning ‘their control of the motion picture industry to the Commonwealth’. By July 1928, he had all but succeeded; only Queensland stood alone. However, while Marks was absent overseas, the deal unravelled, and ‘rumour circulated that the man who had tried to continue the negotiations during his absence had bungled the job’. Despite much effort on Marks’s part, no uniform agreement between the Commonwealth and the states was reached and so ended immediate prospects of a national approach to the regulation or protection of the film production industry.

The Commonwealth’s interest in the film industry was again limited to censorship. Almost fifteen years passed before the Commonwealth sanctioned first the creation of the short-lived industry-based National Film Council, then the Australian National Film Board, answerable directly to the government and concerned with informational and educational films and, later, the Commonwealth Film Unit. But not until 1967 did the Commonwealth government cautiously recognise the cinema as a site for, and part of, an expression of Australian national culture.

A Challenge to the Australian States

The failure to win the states’ approval for the recommendations of the royal commission did not mean that the issue of local film production was closed. In 1935, addressing the Prahran branch of the Australian Natives’ Association, F. R. Lee, the secretary of the Associated Chamber of Manufacturers, was reported as saying that ‘in view of the marvellous educative force of talking pictures, there should be a stampede to establish the industry in Australia’.

“The community”, Mr Lee went on to say, “should not relax its efforts until the full force of the truth of all developments of this nature was really driven home to those responsible for legislation. In the circumstances, however, it meant six individual fights had to be waged before real protection could be given to this industry.”

28 Bertrand and Collins, p. 34.
29 Ibid., pp. 94–103.
“If the matter”, he concluded, “could be handled by the Commonwealth Government, at one stroke the fight could be won, and the protection needed readily granted.”

He was not alone in making this point; however, the fight was already lost and six individual battles for government regulation or protection of the motion picture industry had to be waged. And so the focus shifted to the states.

In Victoria, an act for the Victorian Censorship of Films had been passed in 1926, appointing the Commonwealth censor to act on behalf of Victoria, a notable endorsement of the need for uniform authority in these matters. A new section of the act imposing ‘a 1,000-foot British weekly exhibitions quota’ had been attached to the bill while it was being debated. By the time of the bill’s passage through parliament, the figure had become 2,000 feet, a running time of 22 minutes and 13 second at sound projection speed. Such a modest quota was of value only to short drama and documentary film producers.

Eight years later, again in Victoria, the Chief Secretary, Ian Macfarlan, introduced the Cinematograph Films (Australian Quota) bill into parliament, but the bill lapsed with the adjournment of parliament for a general election. This 1934 bill had been the subject of much controversy, especially in the second reading and committee stages. The outgoing premier, Sir Stanley Argyle, blamed the difficulties the bill had encountered on the disunity and conflicting interests of the various sectors of the film industry and pressure from British film interests.

At the election of 1934 the Country Party, under the leadership of Albert Arthur Dunstan, won the Treasury benches. Macfarlan, now in Opposition, introduced a similar bill as a

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31 Un-named Victorian correspondent, in Frank Hill (ed.), The Film Weekly, The Film Weekly Ltd., Sydney, 22 August 1935, p. 24. Given the date of the speech, Mr Lee may have known of Frank Thring (Snr) who had commenced educational film production several years earlier at the St Kilda studios of Eftee Production, through the subsidiary company Australian Educational Films Pty Ltd. This company was a partnership with the pioneering cinematographer, Noel Monkman. See Noel Monkman, Quest of the Curly-Tailed Horses, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1962, p. 161–4, and also Appendix 7.

32 Marks et al., p. 25, (p. 1403).

33 Bertrand and Collins, p. 21. Sound projection speed is 90 feet/minute. Such cine footages were reckoned for 35mm film stock and for the purposes of the legislation, Australian films were considered to be British. Two thousand feet was also the maximum length of 35mm film normally spooled on one projection reel.


private member in 1935 and eventually steered it through parliament. Unfortunately, the Cinematograph Films (Australian Quota) Act of 1935 proved impotent, with unrealistic and unenforceable quota requirements.36

In NSW, it fell to another Marks, this time Frederick W. Marks, a Sydney accountant, to conduct an ‘Inquiry into the Film Industry in New South Wales, 1933–34’ for the state government.37 Billed as the ‘Grand Gala Of Gab’ by Everyone’s,38 the enquiry was principally about commercial issues, although the call for an Australian and Empire quota could not be ignored. Marks recommended a quota of 2.5 per cent Australian-produced feature films, rising to 12.5 per cent over five years, and a committee to approve films eligible for the quota.39 The quota failed to revive investment in the production industry, and the government was reluctant to compel distributors to produce film to fill the quota. The legislation was overhauled in 1938, mainly to deal with issues of licensing of cinemas.

This was the end of the states’ interest in Australian cinema production for thirty years. Legislation regulating the construction and licensing of cinemas, the forms of contracts between exhibitors and distributors, and the rights of states to supervene the Commonwealth powers of censorship became the sole matters of the states’ interest in the cinema.40 It was not until the decade of the 1970s that they discovered a new hallmark of state sovereignty and virility, the state-based film agency focussing on investment and production.

The legal authority for New South Wales to gazette a quota remained on the statute books, unenforced41 and unenforceable, until 1982, when the government decided to repeal the act.42


37 Transcript of evidence, ‘Inquiry into the Film Industry in New South Wales, 1933–34’, CGS 1547, (Kingswood 7/6001-02), State Records Authority of New South Wales.

38 Everyone’s, 4 March 1934, as cited in Bertrand and Collins, p. 37.

39 Bertrand and Collins, p. 36.

40 Building safety regulations, consumer protection, town planning and company law were all matters that were in the states’ jurisdiction. Only in the last quarter of the 20th century did the Commonwealth assume oversight of company law. The others remain under the jurisdiction of the states.

41 In 1971, producer Hans Pomeranz and writer Kenneth Cook sought unsuccessfully to use the quota legislation to ensure the distribution and exhibition of their film, Stockade. The (then) NSW Chief Secretary Eric Willis, refused their request but used another part of the act to prevent their screening the film in public halls not licensed for cinema exhibition. See Pike and Cooper, p. 261.

After a meeting with the Film Industry Standing Committee\textsuperscript{43} to discuss the repeal, the NSW premier, Neville Wran, instituted the Commission of Inquiry into the Distribution and Exhibition of Australian Films in New South Wales, chaired by the head of the NSW Film Corporation, Paul H. Riomfalvy.\textsuperscript{44} Ross Jones, writing for the Centre for Independent Studies, blandly observed: ‘The controversial recommendations of this Inquiry, which would have forced foreign distributors in Australia to subsidise the distribution of Australian-made films, were not accepted by the NSW State government’.\textsuperscript{45} And as for the commission’s other recommendations, they, like those of the 1927–28 royal commission, founded in the riptide between Commonwealth and state jurisdictions.\textsuperscript{46}

Other Regulatory Interests of the States

While this chapter is principally concerned with the long history of government regulation and protection of motion picture production, one should note that state laws also regulate the health, public safety and town-planning aspects of cinemas and the contractual relations between distributors and exhibitors. In addition, state and Commonwealth laws bear on industrial health and safety issues and industrial relationships in production, distribution and exhibition, though the effectiveness of these laws has been compromised for many years by the extensive use of freelance workers and sub-contractors, especially in the production sector. Controls have recently been strengthened, however, by the adoption of a uniform national law in several of these areas of regulation, by reform of taxation laws, and by the activity of the union, the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid. The Film Industry Standing Committee was: Actors Equity of Australia, Australian Theatrical and Amusement Employees Association (NSW Branch), Australian Writers Guild, Association of Drama Agents, Australian Screen Directors Association, Film Action Group, Film and Television Production Association of Australia, Producers and Directors Guild of Australia and the South Australian Film Corporation. The Australian Film Commission, Film Victoria and the Queensland Film Corporation were observer members.

\textsuperscript{44} Records of the Commission of Inquiry into the Distribution and Exhibition of Australian Films in New South Wales, CGS 1683 (Kingswood 18/1175-78), State Records Authority of New South Wales.


\textsuperscript{46} The one exception was the collection and publication of industry statistics by the Australian Film Commission. The Commission of Inquiry into the Distribution and Exhibition of Australian Films in New South Wales will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Six.
The Production of Films for Governments

From the earliest days of the last century, Australian governments, both Commonwealth and state, produced film for information dissemination, education and promotion, if not propaganda. The cinematographic record of the Federation celebrations in Sydney is an early instance and these pioneering endeavours are acknowledged in later chapters. By the middle of the twentieth century, these early production units had been disbanded. In some cases, they became educational film production units, as was the case in Queensland, or supplied technical film production services as did the film units in the State Electricity Commission and the Department of Agriculture in Victoria and the Water Board film unit in NSW.

The Commonwealth government established its own Cinema and Photographic Branch in 1921, as part of the Development and Migration Commission and, subsequently, part of the Department of Markets (later still the Department of Commerce). With the outbreak of World War II, the Department of Information established a rival, the Films Branch, to organise the production and distribution of war information and propaganda films. The new Films Branch took over the Cinema and Photographic Branch in December 1939, thus taking ‘the first steps…which would lead eventually to a single Federal Government production house’. 47 In July 1940, the Menzies government set up the National Film Council representing the commercial industry, to ‘assist the Director of the Films Division, in his responsibility “to coordinate Government and commercial film interests and to mobilise the film medium for national ends”’. 48 However, the performance and effectiveness of its three industry-based panels was criticised by some as:

These [panels] were made up of “high-pressure film and commercial salesmen who have reached their present positions, and maintain them, by selling story-films and stars, or soap and sauce, and who are not film propagandists or creative workers in any sense of the words”. It was suggested that … waste was endemic, and that profiteering was rife. 49

47 Bertrand and Collins, p. 94.
48 Ibid., p. 95.
The Australian National Film Board

As the end of the war approached, the National Film Council’s purpose was ended and the states’ interest in the ‘production and distribution of educational and documentary film of the Empire’, which followed the visit of John Grierson in 1940, persisted only in the Documentary Films Committee of New South Wales.\(^{50}\) In 1945, Dr H. C. Coombs, as Director-General of Post-war Reconstruction, proposed a new arrangement to the Commonwealth. Aware that the National Film Council had proved problematic, his ministry, jointly with the Ministry of Information, proposed the establishment of the Australian National Film Board as a single Commonwealth film agency. Its ambitious role would be to:

Promote, assist and co-ordinate the production, distribution and importation of films for the purpose of school and adult education; rehabilitation; social development; international understanding; trade and tourist extension and immigration.\(^{51}\)

The new board, from which commercial interests were excluded, was to co-ordinate production and non-theatrical distribution at state and Commonwealth levels. John Grierson, the ‘father’ of the British documentary film movement, had an elite view of the documentary, but most of the Commonwealth’s post-war film need was for training, promotional and propaganda films.\(^{52}\) These were but a few of the issues the new board had to reconcile, but in due course the production facilities were drawn together as the Commonwealth Film Unit.

Since the royal commission of 1927–28, film production was seen as a commercial issue, as it was in Britain where the industry’s health had been the responsibility of the Board of Trade since the Cinematograph Films Act of 1927.\(^{53}\) Grierson’s influence may have led to some film production being seen as a part of the national cultural agenda rather than just part of the entertainment industry, or for serving training needs in post-war Australia.

\(^{50}\) Ibid. pp. 97–105.


\(^{52}\) Bertrand and Collins, pp. 97–111.

\(^{53}\) Dickinson and Street, pp. 1–4.
The incremental post-war shift in attitude towards seeing the film-production industry as a cultural industry was a harbinger of the widespread reassessment of the place of the arts in Australian society that gathered pace over the 1960s and 70s, a period one might call the Australian Cultural Revolution.

The Coming of Television

One constraint among many for the rebirth of film production in Australia was the lack of experienced production personnel and technicians. Lee Robinson, writing in 1965, pointed out that Sydney had sufficient experienced crew to mount only one feature production at a time—maybe a second crew could be formed by borrowing crew from Melbourne.54 The introduction of television created new jobs and categories of skill in audio-visual production and was to revitalise the film production industry, though it had an adverse impact on cinema audience numbers for some years.

While Australia’s cinema screens had long been surrendered to British and especially United States’ films, early television programming was a mix of imported drama and light entertainment—Dragnet or The Mickey Mouse Club,55 for example—together with local light entertainment, news and discussion programs, almost all produced live-to-air, as the electronic means of recording and editing television programs were still in development. Film recording of live studio performances was possible using a kinescope process—in essence a film camera trained on a precision television monitor—but the process was too expensive for ephemeral program material and the technical quality was, at best, noticeably inferior to live broadcasts.

Thus, while Australian stories were not being told to any great extent in television drama, they were being told in other, often humorous, formats. In December 1957, Graham Kennedy could be enjoyed five nights a week on Channel 9’s In Melbourne Tonight; Ernie Sigley was doing Teenage Mail Bag on Channel 7; while, on ABC-TV, the Children’s TV Club was attempting to replicate the decade-long success of ABC radio’s Children’s Hour

in the new medium.\textsuperscript{56} These early formats owed much to radio; indeed all the initial applicants for Australian television licences had presented themselves as ‘not only a transmitting agency but a producing agency’, in line with existing models of radio services.\textsuperscript{57} This circumstance changed rapidly over the first half decade of television broadcasting and closely mirrored changes in US television production and programming.

Albert Moran explained:

In the United States, Hollywood had taken over from New York and Chicago as the television production capital and more importantly, the filmed series had displaced the live program as the staple of production. With live shows [but with no capacity to link simultaneously with transmitter stations in various population centres] the audience size is limited by the transmitting power of the particular station producing the program; but a filmed program’s audience is potentially limitless.\textsuperscript{58}

These programs were being shot and finished on film, often using multiple cameras, on sound stages and sometimes before live audiences.\textsuperscript{59} As the production costs of filmed US programs were largely met by sales in the home market, the producers were free to sell them to foreign television stations at such prices as the foreign market could afford, not what the program cost to produce. Thus Australian commercial television was able to source quality programs at prices well below the costs of locally producing similar programs, always presuming that local producers were capable of producing sufficient programs to meet the demand and at comparable quality.\textsuperscript{60}

And quality as well as price was relevant. Jones and Bednall noted that:

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., pp. 24, 25.
\textsuperscript{59} In the 1960s, ATN Channel 7, Sydney, equipped one of its studios in Epping with hybrid television/cine-film cameras that enabled both the recording of a program on video in the conventional manner and the economical production of a high quality negative. The cine-film portion of the cameras was switched on moments before the video part went on-line and then switched off after the shot. Author’s recollection of a visit to ATN 7 studios.
\textsuperscript{60} Hector Crawford, \textit{Commercial Television Programmes in Australia}, Hector Crawford, Melbourne, 14 September 1959, pp. 4, 5. (Self published pamphlet, copy in possession of this author.)
In comparison with the highly-polished American product, the Australian programs were felt to leave something to be desired. Pick-A-Box and the Tonight shows were the only ones with any staying power. Ratings for Australian programs slipped in competition with the American product, and by 1959 they were gaining audiences on the average only half the size of their imported rivals.\(^{61}\)

In 1960, Bruce Beresford published an article in the short-lived Observer, asking ‘Why Are Australian Films So Bad?’ He lamented that ‘in 60 years no important Australian film producer has ever tackled a worthwhile theme’.\(^{62}\) Two years earlier, the same magazine had run a series of articles by Sydney journalist and radio personality, Robert (Buzz) Kennedy regretting the absence of Australian films in the cinema and especially on television.\(^{63}\)

Over the preceding years, similar articles had appeared in Meanjin, Overland and like publications, including one by maverick film-maker, Cecil Holmes, ‘Unmade Australian Films’, in Overland no. 9, 1957. These articles reflected a renewed concern in parts of the community for Australian identity and culture, and an anxiety about the effects of the widespread exhibition of foreign, especially Hollywood, films and television programs on morals and identity. Similar concerns can be found among witnesses to the royal commission of 1927–28.

Perceptions of the place of cinema in society had changed since then however. People increasingly saw the cinema as both a popular and a serious cultural medium alongside high culture forms like opera and ballet. Indeed, by the time the Senate Select Committee on the Encouragement of Australian Production for Television convened in 1963 (the Vincent Committee) there were 75 film societies registered with the Federation of Victorian Film Societies alone,\(^{64}\) and film societies abounded on university campuses where the rebirth of European cinema was celebrated and the French and Italian auteur-directors revered.


\(^{62}\) Bruce Beresford, ‘Why Are Australian Films So Bad?’ Observer, 14 May 1960, pp. 18, 19.

\(^{63}\) Robert Kennedy, Observer, 19 April 1958 and 17 May 1958.

\(^{64}\) Bertrand and Collins, p.128.
In 1960, the Postmaster-General, the cabinet member responsible for broadcast policy, directed the Australian Broadcasting Control Board to regulate the screening of imported television advertising. The board introduced regulations requiring that 80 per cent of advertising material screened on Australian television had to be produced in Australia.

This decision is widely credited with producing the pool of skilled technicians necessary for the rebirth of the film industry a decade later. In addition, ‘the Postmaster General had … directed that at the end of a three year period local programs should constitute a minimum of 40 per cent of total transmission time’, augmenting, perhaps unintentionally, the development of the technical skill and the creative confidence on which the renaissance of Australian film production for television and cinema was based. However, it seems that it was the failure of commercial television stations to take these content regulations seriously that provided the final trigger for the Vincent Report.

The Vincent Report

The Senate Select Committee on the Encouragement of Australian Production for Television, chaired by Senator V. S. Vincent, undertook a wide-ranging investigation of the state of the television and film industries. On 16 August 1960, Senator George Hannan first proposed that the Senate should give consideration to the matter that would, more than two years later on 29 November 1962, constitute the terms of reference for the Senate select committee.

The report was as thorough as that published by the royal commission of 1927–28, and, like the royal commission, it had few direct consequences. The headline writers at the Bulletin magazine dubbed it ‘The Committee of Un-Australian Activities?’ and Colin Bednall, Managing Director of General Television Corporation Pty Ltd, (GTV Channel 9, Melbourne), concluded his acerbic response to the report on 30 November 1963 thus:

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66 Bertrand and Collins, p. 131.
67 The exceptions were HSV7 Melbourne and TVW7 Perth. Ibid.
68 Ibid.
It is not what the Senate Committee failed to hear but what it has failed to recommend that probably gives the report its true significance. Despite the close attention given to theorists and obvious malcontents, even this Committee, in its thrashing about, finds itself unable to recommend any embargo on the importation of overseas programs to Australia.

And this must make it impossible for some time to come for any other body seriously to propose such an intrusion on a major source of enjoyment for Australian television viewers.70

In Bednall’s sentiments one might hear an echo of the words and attitudes from 1936 of Stuart F. Doyle, the then chief executive of Australasian Films and Union Theatres.71

The committee’s report revealed an unexpectedly strong commitment to ideas of cultural nationalism, expressed fears that Australia’s identity was in danger of being swept away by the tide of United States-made programs on Australian television, and laid out a blueprint for government action. However, parliament was prorogued for a general election the day after its tabling and the report was not debated until the following autumn. Mel Jaques in Nation described it as ‘a bomb which all vested interests would like to smother’,72 but Overland gave the Vincent report extensive coverage, printing large slabs of it in the autumn edition of 1964.73

Though largely ignored in Canberra, the report became a rallying document for activists, and was widely quoted or cited in later submissions. The report recognised the importance of fair remuneration for dramatists, actors, directors and producers, and argued for necessary synergy between stage production at all levels, and television and cinema drama production. Indeed the Vincent report canvassed almost every measure employed in Australia, after 1970, to provide government support to the film industry.

71 ‘We leave it to other enthusiasts to look after [idiosyncratic audiences] while we attend to the great mass’. Quoted in Frank Hill (ed.), The Film Weekly, 6 August 1936, p. 3.
73 Overland, no. 29, Autumn 1964, special centre insert.
In addition, cinema and television production had to be oriented to export markets as well as to the domestic one if the industry was to be commercially self-sustaining. It recommended that an Australian content quota was not, of itself, sufficient: there should be an Australian drama content quota to prevent stations meeting their content obligations with cheap chat shows.

In the two years prior to the appointment of the select committee, the dynamics of the Australian television industry had begun to change. In addition to six new ABC stations, eighteen commercial stations opened between August 1959 and December 1962, making television available in major population centres from Townsville to Hobart and Perth. In Sydney and Melbourne, the commercial licensees were making large profits so pressure was building for the issue of further commercial licences to share those lucrative markets. A third commercial licence for Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane was issued in 1964–65.

In the earliest years, four commercial licensees, two each in Sydney and Melbourne, and the ABC, could pick and choose from the numerous programs produced in the USA for its domestic market. With the rapid growth in the number of licensees, competition for the same, supply of programs grew and prices rose accordingly on a sellers’ market. Then a pool-buying arrangement was agreed by the commercial stations ‘in an attempt to counter the upsurge in prices after the introduction of the third network in the major capital cities’. ‘However, as ratings are inextricably tied to advertising revenue’, licensees entered ‘into deals outside the pool agreement and the arrangement soon collapsed.’ Competition for new programs was intense. The market that had forced up the price of imported programs had now created the circumstances that favoured the growth of local production and ‘the rise in local independent packagers was sudden and marked’. Moran continued:

In 1962 one drama packager pointed out in evidence to the Vincent Committee that the ABC was the only channel that would buy his programs.

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74 Jones and Bednall, p. 3.
75 Ibid., pp. 13, 15.
76 Moran, p. 30.
78 Ibid.
Yet by 1964–5 the ABCB [Australian Broadcasting Control Board] could report packagers as a permanent part of the local scene.\textsuperscript{80} The scene was set for the production of successful, local television drama driven, in part, by audience ratings, in part by government regulation, and in part by the ambition, technical skills and creative confidence of a rising generation of Australian program-makers who were both culturally nationalistic and commercially able. This story of the period when Australian drama came to rule Australian television screens is amply told in Albert Moran’s \textit{Images and Industry: Television Drama Production in Australia}.\textsuperscript{81}

Film and Television as Cultural Production

The repositioning of local film production from industrial to cultural production was further hastened by the creation of the Australian Council for the Arts in 1967 and the inclusion of a concern for ‘film-making for television with an educational and cultural emphasis’ among its acknowledged responsibilities.\textsuperscript{82} While Prime Minister Harold Holt had apparently limited the brief of the new Australian Council for the Arts to ‘filmmaking for television with an educational and cultural emphasis’, he had also conceded that:

The inclusion of filmmaking for television in the activities to be covered by the new Council is not a substitute for full consideration by the Government of the submissions it has received for the establishment of a Film Corporation to assist the film industry at large. The intention to give further aid to filmmaking for television is part of the Government’s continuing effort to help in increasing the Australian content of television programs in this country. The question of a Film Corporation, or some similar organisation, is a separate proposition which needs further study.\textsuperscript{83}

To further its brief in the area of film, the Council promptly established a Film Committee. In its choice of members, the Council ignored many of the established figures in such film

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 30.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{82} Macdonnell, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
industry as then existed. Instead, it recruited individuals destined, some perhaps by the
fact of being so chosen, to play crucial political roles in mediating the future relationship
between the film industry and government coffers.84

After a scant few months of deliberation, the film committee submitted an interim report,
destined to be its only report. If Royal Commissioner Marks' report in 1928 was admirably
brief at 31 pages, the film committee excelled with a four page document.

Apparently ignoring Holt’s cautious brief, the report declared that:

This Committee holds certain truths to be self-evident. Namely that it is
in the interests of this nation to encourage its local film and television
industry so as to increase the quantity and improve the quality of local
material in our cinemas and on our television screens.85

This committee felt unhampered by precedent or any apparent need for formality. It
professed to remain uncognisant of submissions contrary to its own views. It leapt over
the ‘contradictory submissions from industry groups and interested individuals
concerning the need for quotas, tariffs and taxation concessions’, and consigned them to
the future care of ‘the Tariff Board or some specially constituted body to look into this
matter fully’.86 Strategically this was wise: schisms over these same issues had
confounded the royal commission of 1927–28, and compromised the commission’s
ability then to recommend a firm course of action to the Commonwealth government.87

Instead, the Film Committee said:

84 ‘Film Committee’ is the title as it appears on the cover of the Interim Report, a copy of which is held by the
National Library of Australia, Canberra, Npf+ 791.43 A938. It is sometimes identified as the Film-making
and Television Committee. Members were: from the Australian Council for the Arts—Peter Coleman, MLA
(NSW), Chairman, Barry O. Jones and Virginia J. Erwin; co-opted from the industry were Stanley Hawes,
(Producer-in-Chief, Commonwealth Film Unit (CFU)), Stefan Sargent (film director, CFU), Neil Hutchinson,
(Controller of programs, ABC), Phillip Adams (film producer and advertising executive), Ian Jones (television
director and writer, Crawford Productions). See Bertrand and Collins, Government and Film, p. 185. I have
augmented the details given by them. Note, too, that some authors identify Virginia Erwin as Mrs Dudley
Erwin, Dudley being her husband’s first name. Dudley Erwin was Liberal MP for Ballarat who, in December
1971, ‘deplor[e]d the use of government money to produce a film [Stockade] “with immoral content”
(referring primarily to the brothel scenes’). See Pike and Cooper, Australian Film, p. 261.

86 Ibid.
87 Bertrand and Collins, pp. 25–32.
We recommend that a three-level plan be immediately implemented, made up of:

a) A National Film and Television School.

b) An Australian Film and Television Development Corporation with responsibility for the administration of a film and television fund and an overseas film and television marketing board.

c) An Experimental Film and Television Fund for low budget productions and a television outlet for experimental films and programmes.\(^{88}\)

These recommendations were made public in May 1969 by the chair of the Australian Council for the Arts, Dr H. C. Coombs, at a UNESCO seminar on public support for the performing arts at the Australian National University in Canberra.\(^{89}\) Prime Minister John Gorton promptly accepted the recommendations and made some provisions in the Commonwealth budget of August for their implementation. Coombs attributed Gorton’s swift response to a ‘belief that the Arts were politically important’ and that ‘film and television were the characteristic Art forms of this age’.\(^{90}\)

Despite Gorton’s inclination ‘to exaggerate his indifference to the Arts and to assert his personal preference for the vulgarly popular’,\(^{91}\) he had graduated from Oxford in 1935 with a Master of Arts, majoring in history, economics and political science, and had harboured an ambition to be a writer.\(^{92}\) The influence of Barry O. Jones, a former teacher and ‘Pick-a-Box’ champion, should also be noted. Jones became a lecturer in history at La Trobe University, qualified as a lawyer and, later, was elected a Labor member of the Victorian and, subsequently, the Commonwealth parliaments. Jones was deputy chair of the Australian Council for the Arts, was a member of the Film Committee,\(^{93}\) and had Gorton’s ear.

\(^{88}\) Film Committee, p. 2.


\(^{91}\) Ibid.


The second and third recommendations, the establishment of the Australian Film Development Corporation (AFDC) as it became, and the Experimental Film and Television Fund, were acted upon promptly if cautiously.⁹⁴ The first recommendation, the creation of a National Film and Television School, involving a commitment to capital expenditure as well as recurrent expenditure—a more enduring commitment—was to take some time. The proposal had to survive the ‘de-Gortonisation’ of the coalition government under Gorton’s successor, William McMahon, and the inaction of the lacklustre ‘Minister for the Environment, Aborigines, and the Arts, (and other lost causes)’, Peter Howson.⁹⁵

After the election of the Whitlam Labor government in December 1972, all Commonwealth interests in the arts, except for the ABC and its state orchestras and the National Film Board and its Commonwealth Film Unit, were merged under an enlarged council, renamed the Australia Council; it achieved relative independence as a statutory authority in 1975.⁹⁶ The reformed council had seven new art-form-specific boards and one, the Film and Television Board, later the Film, Radio and Television Board, was to support innovative and developmental film and television production.

While this was an effective rationalisation of the Commonwealth’s support for the arts, it created anomalies in the Commonwealth’s relations with the film industry and screen culture. The National Film Board, the legacy of post-war government policy but nearly always invisible, was merged with the AFDC. Its production wing, the Commonwealth Film Unit, was renamed Film Australia, granted more independence and instructed to report directly to the newly established Department of the Media.⁹⁷

The new Film and Television Board of the Australia Council took on the administration of the Experimental Film and Television Fund jointly with the Australian Film Institute, its existing

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⁹⁴ The EFTVF was funded in 1969 and the AFDC the following year after industry pressure. See Sylvia Lawson, ‘Where’s the wild applause for the film grant?’, Australian, 16 August 1969, p. 16, and John McCallum, ‘Government must set up film fund’, Australian, 20 August 1969, p. 8.

⁹⁵ This jibe, and another, the ‘Minister for Numbats, Nulla-nullahs and Nolans’, was frequently used by Phillip Adams, chair of the Interim Council for the Australian Film and Television School, and former member of the Film Committee. Adams brought the issue of the government’s reluctance to a head by resigning his chairmanship on the ABC national current affairs program This Day Tonight, ABC Television, 17 September 1971. The resignation was reported in the Age, 18 September 1971, p. 1, and the Australian, 18 September 1971, p. 5.


manager, and also instituted a range of new industry development initiatives and screen culture programs. The Tariff Board was directed to examine the issue of industry protection that the Film Committee in 1969 had wisely avoided.

The Tariff Board Report

The Tariff Board report, presented to the Commonwealth government on 13 July 1973, brought an industrial perspective to the earlier nationalist and cultural discourses on film production. The reference to the board was the fourth recommendation of the Film Committee of the Australian Council for the Arts. Much of the evidence presented to the enquiry echoed that given to previous royal commissions and select committees but the moral panic and cultural imperative, evident in the earlier enquiries, were absent, perhaps because those matters were distinctly beyond its brief.

Among the more radical of the Tariff Board’s recommendations was breaking the duopoly of the GUO–Village group and Hoyts on cinema exhibition, with the intention:

To create an exhibition structure that will complement [the Board’s] distribution proposals by giving all commercial films shown in Australia exhibition opportunities commensurate with their box office potential, irrespective of their country of origin or the production or distribution company to which they belong.

This recommendation led to a contest of power between the exhibitors–distributors’ lobby and the Whitlam government, one in which the government was forced to capitulate. Lost too was

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98 The EFTVF was from its inception administered by the Australian Film Institute. The Institute, founded in the 1950s to foster interest in the arts of the cinema had a membership of 100 persons, inducted by invitation, was based in Melbourne. In 1972, the Australia Council, based in Sydney, was given overview of the fund. The division of responsibility was practical as well as pragmatic. It went part-way to satisfy the Melbourne film industry and culture lobby and afforded the ideological and political insulation of arms-length assessment of applications and the administration of grants.

This proved a valuable expedient because the first film produced on a grant from the fund was Or Forever Hold Your Peace (Kit Guyatt and Richard Brennan 1970), an account of the anti-Vietnam Moratorium in Sydney of May 1970. See Ken Berryman, “‘...Allowing young filmmakers to spread their wings’; The Educational Role of the Experimental Film and Television Fund’, MA thesis, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 1985.


100 Ibid., p. 19.
the recommendation for a single buying agency for television programs and an active, indeed aggressive, film distribution role for the proposed Australian Film Authority.\textsuperscript{101}

In due course, the Australian Film Authority was created but named the Australian Film Commission\textsuperscript{102} and the long-delayed Australian Film and Television School was established. In 1976, the incoming Fraser coalition government went further. It consolidated all its film and television interests, except for the Film and Television School and the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, the regulator of commercial broadcasting, under the Australian Film Commission. This circumstance has endured with little change to the time of writing, except for the corporatisation of Film Australia as a wholly Commonwealth-owned private company, and the creation of the Australian Film Finance Corporation in 1987, virtually a new AFDC.

**Industries Assistance Commission Report**

The Industries Assistance Commission (IAC) inherited many of the duties and the staff of the Tariff Board, which it replaced in January 1974.\textsuperscript{103} On 6 October 1974, Prime Minister Whitlam referred a further culture-related matter to the commission: ‘Whether assistance should be accorded the performing arts in Australia and if so what should be the nature and extent of such assistance’.\textsuperscript{104}

Initially the commission was directed to report by 30 June 1976 but the deadline was extended to 30 November of the same year.\textsuperscript{105} By 1976, however, a Coalition government led by Malcolm Fraser occupied the Treasury benches. On 20 May, prior to the first deadline, the commission received a further similar issue to consider:

> Whether, in order to maintain the commercial theatre owning companies in Australian pending the Government's decision on the question of long-term

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., pp. 17, 29.


\textsuperscript{104} Edward Gough Whitlam, ‘The Reference, Appendix A’, Assistance to the Performing Arts, Industries Assistance Commission, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1976, p. 137. Though the ‘performing arts’ embrace music, theatre and dance as well as ballet and opera, it was support for the latter that was prominently at issue in the subsequent debate.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
assistance for the performing arts in Australia, there is a need for short-term assistance for the Australian commercial theatre; And, if so, the nature and extent of such assistance.\textsuperscript{106}

The commission’s response to this referred matter was presented to the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, John Howard, on 8 July. It advised that ‘requests for short term assistance were received from five commercial theatre owning groups including JCW’ [J. C. Williamson Limited]\textsuperscript{107} and concluded ‘that there is no need to accord short term assistance to maintain commercial theatre owning companies pending the Government’s decision on Assistance to the Performing Arts and recommends accordingly’.\textsuperscript{108}

On 8 October commissioners Boyer and Robinson circulated a draft response to the first reference and advertised the opportunity for interested parties to respond to its contents.\textsuperscript{109} The media’s response was immediate: the IAC’s recommendations were the lead story in the major daily papers on Saturday 9 October. ‘Govt. urged to phase out opera, ballet aid’ was the headline in the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}\textsuperscript{110} while ‘Slash grants to arts says IAC’\textsuperscript{111} was the \textit{Australian}’s take on the report. Throughout the following week, newspaper carried responses from an increasingly alarmed arts community fearing the worst and calling for the rejection of the draft report. Dale Turnbull, then president of the Old Tote Theatre Company, and Charles Berg, chairman of the Australian Opera, described the report as ‘a charming piece of eighteenth-century academic thinking’,\textsuperscript{112} while the Premier of NSW, Neville Wran, recognised it as ‘the quintessential work of ockerism’.\textsuperscript{113} By mid-week, however, the report was politically dead, Malcolm Fraser having told the Commonwealth parliament that the government would not be adopting the IAC’s recommendations.\textsuperscript{114} Only Gough Whitlam defended the IAC: ‘It’s quite superficial to say that the IAC is not an appropriate body to investigate claims for assistance by

\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{111} Not credited, ‘Slash grants to arts says IAC’, \textit{Australian}, 8 October 1976, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{113} Not credited, ‘Govt raises opera grant to $350,000’, \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 13 October 1976, p. 9.
an industry like the film industry or the commercial theatre’, he told his interrogators on Wednesday Conference, Mark Day, Les Hollings and Robert Damod.\textsuperscript{115}

To understand the government’s rapid capitulation to criticism of this particular draft report, it is necessary to look more broadly at the relationship between the commission and Australian industry and commerce. The transformation of the Tariff Board into the Industries Assistance Commission was more than just a change of name: it marked a change in ideology from the protectionist policies of the post-war decades into a more exposed, competitive environment, and cosseted industry and commercial interests did not like it at all. ‘It’s war’, Malcolm Collis wrote in the Australian. ‘The powerful employer manufacturing groups have taken on the IAC with a ferocity normally reserved for Labor Governments and recalcitrant unions’.\textsuperscript{116} The Associated Chamber of Manufactures of Australia, the Australian Footwear Manufacturing Association, and the Metal Trades Industry Association were prominent in expressing concern about the advice government was receiving from the IAC.\textsuperscript{117} And ACTU leader Bob Hawke weighed in, saying: ‘I believe the way in which it [the IAC] is operating now constitutes a deliberate breaking of the legislative charter which it has. It hasn’t got a charter to destroy industry.’\textsuperscript{118} In such a political climate, the rejection of IAC advice on one small sector of the economy, the arts and culture industry, could buy a lot of political mileage, especially as notable figures in the ballet and opera establishment were frequently notable also in industry and commerce.

Within the film industry, the concern over government assistance to the performing arts raised few ripples. Certainly the IAC report was never an item on the agenda for the meetings of the South Australian Film Corporation.\textsuperscript{119} However, Cinema Papers warned its readers that:

\begin{quote}
The real danger is that all other criteria for excellence in broadcasting, and the performing arts, will be ignored and the Government will be able to pursue its
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} Not credited, ‘Fraser pledges to continue arts aid’, \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 10 October 1976, p. 3 and ‘IAC report rebuff. PM affirms aid for the arts’, \textit{Courier-Mail}, 14 October, p.2.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Edited transcript, \textit{Wednesday Conference}, published in the \textit{Australian}, 20 October 1976, p. 9.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Malcolm Collis, ‘Suddenly the I.A.C. gets their backs up’, \textit{Australian}, 14 October 1976, p. 9.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Not credited, ‘Criticism of IAC advice ‘absurd, irresponsible’, \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 16 October 1976, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Not credited, ‘Whitlam’s five-point plan to cure economy’, \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 10 October 1976, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Microfilm of the meetings 1 to 108 (1972 to 1984) are in the possession of the author.
\end{itemize}
path of rigorous financial stringency towards the artist, film-makers, broadcasters, and any other kind of apparent elite.\textsuperscript{120}

Only with the publication of \textit{Patronage, Power and the Muse}\textsuperscript{121} in 1986 was the influence and implications of this report felt in the performing arts and beyond.

Socialising the Risk: State Participation in Film Patronage

The patronage of cultural production within the ‘high arts’ sector never became contested ground between the Commonwealth and the states.\textsuperscript{122} Some may think this strange in a federal political climate marked by frequent stoushes over states rights and the (once) annual ritual of the premiers’ conference. On the other hand, patronage of film and television production, especially ‘quality’ cinema and TV miniseries, did become a site of Commonwealth–state and state–state rivalry during the 1970s and later.

In many areas of cultural activity, much can be achieved with little money, but film production is not one of them. For example, even the breakout success in 1996 of \textit{Love and Other Catastrophes} (Emma-Kate Croghan, 1996) depended on the deferment of hundreds of thousands of dollars in wages and fees, just to reach the rough-cut stage of editing. Writing in \textit{More Long Shots: Australian Cinema Successes of the 90s}, Mary Anne Reid reported that it ‘went into production with a [cash] budget of $25,000, which rose to $45,000 by the end of the shoot’.\textsuperscript{123}

All up, \textit{Love and Other Catastrophes} cost $500,000, even then (1996) an exceedingly modest budget for a feature-length film in Australia. This type of deferment financing remains common for most short films and some first features but would be highly unlikely to be employed in piloting a new TV series, be it a panel show, a soap or serial drama.

Film production as a business enterprise is both expensive and commercially risky. The rebirth of the Australian film-production industry in the 1970s was crucially dependent on the


\textsuperscript{122}Rydon, Joan & Diane Mackay, ‘Federalism and the Arts’, in F. B. Smith & S. C. Goldberg with Ann Lane (eds), \textit{Australian Cultural History}, no.3, Australian Academy of the Humanities and the History of Ideas Unit, Australian National University, Canberra, 1984, p. 87.

\textsuperscript{123}Mary Anne Reid, \textit{More Long Shots: Australian Cinema Successes of the 90s}, Australian Film Commission, Sydney, and the Australian Key Centre for Culture and Media Policy, Brisbane, 1999, p. 34.
public purse for the risk capital. This socialisation of entrepreneurial risk in cultural production was new to the Australian political scene and marked a shift in cultural policy, state and Commonwealth, beyond the simple subsidy of the arts. It marked the extension of the role of the state into cultural enterprises that had, until recently, been viewed only in commercial and industrial terms. It was argued almost exclusively on cultural grounds and justified in political terms by pointing to the occasional commercial success and to the social, democratic, nationalistic, even xenophobic, value of ‘telling our own stories’. While these developments were occurring mainly at a Commonwealth level, the centres of film-making remained Sydney and Melbourne. It was there and elsewhere at a state level that renewed political interest in the film industry was stirring.

Between 1972 and 1978, each Australian state government established a film agency as a solution to the cultural challenge to support and develop the Australian film and television production industry, primarily within that state. Having its own film corporation became a badge of modern statehood in Australia, reaffirming sovereignty and cultural status. Each corporation represented a unique solution to the challenge, reflecting both local and national influences. Here were six policy solutions to the one cultural challenge.

The following chapters relate the stories of the state film agencies, the ‘six individual fights’ that F. R. Lee had anticipated in 1935 at that meeting of the Prahran branch of the Australian Natives’ Association. Each was a complex cultural process arriving at a quite individual solution, often emblematic of the individuality of the state and a reminder of the differences between the Australian states. The stories were played out in cinema and television production, as well as educational film production, marginally among exhibition interests, and not at all among the major distributors.

124 In this thesis the term ‘film industry’, as is the practice in Australia, will be used specifically to mean the commercial and industrial activities associated with the production of audio-visual goods for exhibition in the cinema and on television, either via free-to-air or subscription services, or from pre-recorded media such as video cassette or digital video disk, etc. The term will not be used to refer to the distribution or exhibition of audio-visual goods. In the 1970s, the term was used to refer almost exclusively to production for cinema exhibition, television production being a little lower brow.

125 This statement needs a little qualification. First, support for cultural production by the Elizabethan Theatre Trust was, for the largest part, support for established works of theatre, ballet and opera whose box office revenues could not justify their staging on commercial grounds. In another direction, some commentators may argue that the ideology underlying the policies of the Country Party, the junior member of the coalition that had held office since 1949, was to capitalise profits and socialise losses for the agricultural sector, thus the principles of agrarian socialism were simply being applied to cultural production. Certainly, the agricultural sector enjoyed a number of exclusive benefits such as the superphosphate bounty. The lot of farmers in hard times is ameliorated by the declaration of ‘drought area’, thus triggering special government assistance. Arts grants were cultural drought relief.

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CHAPTER THREE: The South Australian Film Corporation

Apart from proving that the film industry can be effectively decentralised, the corporation provides additional proof of what can be achieved when film has the personal backing of the Premier or the Prime Minister.

Phillip Adams.¹

The story of the creation of the South Australian Film Corporation and its formative years is told in ‘Two Models of Government Intervention in the Australian Film Industry’, an unpublished thesis by this author.² That thesis surveys the history of commercial film production in South Australia up to 1970, and then gives close attention to the period from the election of the Dunstan Labor government to the resignation of the corporation’s first chairman and director, Gil Brealey, in 1976. This chapter extends that work to the end of the term of his successor, John Morris, in 1988.

My previous work drew attention to the divergence between the recommendations of the feasibility study, undertaken by P.–E. Consulting Group (Australia) Pty Limited under the leadership of Irving Saulwick, assisted by Phillip Adams,³ and the actual direction undertaken by the Corporation ab initio. As I wrote at the time, ‘the state film centre described in the final draft of the feasibility study and the South Australian Film Corporation that commenced production of Sunday Too Far Away two years later were very different organisations’.⁴ A further influence on the direction taken by the government is also examined here.

² Part of this chapter is a summary of Chapter 4 of Vincent O’Donnell, ‘Two Models of Government Intervention in the Australian Film Industry’, MA thesis RMIT University, 1998. It has been augmented by further research and now covers the corporation’s history from 1970 to 1988 rather than 1970 to 1976.
⁴ O’Donnell, p. 66.
The proposal for a state film centre was a late addition to the Labor Party’s platform for the 1970 election. Aspiring premier Don Dunstan made these commitments in his policy speech:

A Labor Government will establish a State film unit and will work towards the provision of film studios and processing facilities on a site that has provision for varied outdoor location shots. The facilities will be available to independent producers to produce films for export, for television and for cinema.

A special Act will be passed making it possible to close streets and make them available for film shooting with proper safeguards to the members of the public involved. Full co-operation of the administration will be given to film producers who use the facilities.\(^5\)

Clearly, Dunstan’s interest was in a professional, revenue-earning industry, making ‘films for export, for television and for cinema’. Dunstan saw a film production industry as part of a larger cohort of interdependent cultural industries for South Australia, as he explained in an interview in 1996:

I believed that we could do very much more in South Australia: I saw it as a place where we should be able to develop a film industry … I believed that you could do it without vast expenditure, and that we could do something of quality.

So when we [the Labor Party] came back into office in 1970, I’d already made up my mind that we would start a state theatre company, and possibly then extend that to opera and ballet, as later occurred, and I wanted to see that there was consistent employment for people who might be engaged in such ventures, and so I believed that we should look at creating a film industry here, and it would have to have the initiative of the state. In consequence I called in Phillip Adams to have discussion with me about it.\(^6\)


\(^6\) Don Dunstan, unpublished interview, Norwood, South Australia, 18 January 1996. Dunstan wrote in his political memoir, Felicia: The Political Memoirs of Donald Dunstan, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1981, that he contacted Adams on the advice of Peter Ward, his media adviser and confidante (p. 209). Ward, in an interview at his home on 14 December 1997, confirmed his advice to Dunstan, and said that he had met Adams
Phillip Adams was already a prominent figure in the renaissance of the Australian film industry, having been a member of the Film Committee of the Australian Council for the Arts and co-author of the committee’s crucial recommendations adopted by the Gorton government in 1969. He was also a partner in Monahan, Dayman and Adams, the largest, wholly Australian-owned advertising agency, based in Melbourne.

For the task of preparing a detailed feasibility study for Dunstan, Adams recommended a colleague, Irving Saulwick, who was in charge of the business strategy consulting division of P.– E. Consulting Australia Pty Ltd. ‘I had a very good friend in Phillip Adams’, Saulwick recalled, ‘and I had done some other consulting work associated with the film industry; I’d led a study of the Commonwealth Film Unit/Film Australia. Adams knew that, and proposed our name to Don Dunstan’.

The Feasibility Study

Irving Saulwick met with J. S. White, Secretary of the Premier’s Department, and K. C. Taeuber of the Public Service Board in Adelaide on 23 October 1970, and confirmed the discussion by letter on 26 October. The letter included ‘our revised terms of reference for the State Film Centre Feasibility Study’, and detailed the maximum cost of the study as $29,100. He also advised that a fee of $3,500 would be paid to Phillip Adams.

A copy of the full terms of reference appears in Appendix 5, but, even at this early stage, the bigger vision of making ‘films for export, for television and for cinema’ was absent, and the feasibility of building studios, processing facilities and back-lots was under threat. Saulwick recalled that ‘the more Phil [Adams] and I looked at it … the more we were convinced that the

when they were both writing for the Bulletin. Adams, in an interview on 30 July 1998, denied knowing Ward prior to receiving a telephone call from him, inviting him to Adelaide to meet with Dunstan. Brealey, in interview on 26 June 1997, said that Ward became known in South Australian government circles as the ‘Prince’, playing alongside the ‘Grand Duke’ (Dunstan). Ward and Dunstan later fell out in a robust fashion and Ward’s name was never mentioned by Dunstan in three hours of research interviews. See also footnote 35.

7 Australian Council for the Arts, ‘Interim report of the Film Committee’, May 1969. (Copy is held in the National Library of Australia, Canberra. Photocopy in possession of author.)

8 Appointed a director of the company 29 July 1970.

9 Irving Saulwick, unpublished interview, 16 October 1996, St Kilda, Victoria.

10 Saulwick to White, 26 October 1971, in SAFC microfiche: ‘Reports & Studies: P.E. Consulting / Premier’s Dept Re: “S.A. Film Centre Feasb. Study – Original Correspondence”’.

11 Dunstan, Policy Speech for the General Election.
model of a Hollywood style studio wouldn’t work’, and so we sought to present alternative proposals to Dunstan. Indeed Adams reported that he had dismissed the idea of setting up film-processing facilities in Adelaide at that first meeting with Dunstan.

Thus the first progress report strongly recommended against any consideration of state investment in film-processing facilities. Saulwick’s arguments may have made good economic sense but, when Dunstan made a presentation to the Interim Council for a National Film and Television School some time later in 1971 or early 1972, in an attempt to lure the school to Adelaide, his enthusiasm for industry infrastructure was undiminished. Also in relation to the production of ‘films for export, for television and for cinema’, the first report is unambiguous: ‘there is no immediate role for the Centre in regard to feature films’.

However, another part of the report softens the position on feature film production:

It is envisaged that initially a State Film Unit (a film making body) would not be involved in feature film production, although as its skills and experience progressed, this type of film could be produced. Never the less, before this stage is reached the personnel of the unit would find benefit in being allowed to make their own prestige films, perhaps for showing at film festivals. This type may foster the latter extension into film production.

The final report continued that theme but allowed more leeway:

A State Film Centre is advised not to enter the entrepreneurial field of feature film production. As expertise is developed and as the distribution situation hopefully eases, opportunities may arise to produce feature films. The timing of this must be left to the judgment of the Centre itself once it is operating.

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12 Saulwick, 16 October 1996.
16 Ibid., p. G-5.
17 P-E Consulting Group [sic], ‘South Australian Film Centre Feasibility Study’, p. 3, in SAFC microfiche: ‘Reports & Studies: P.E. Consulting/Premier’s Dept in “SA Film Centre Feasibility Study” 5/71’, p. 52. The report was circulated to all ministers during June 1971.
The other key recommendation was that the centre should ‘act the role of producer, not film-maker’.\textsuperscript{18} This was an issue on which, according to Saulwick, ‘it is unlikely that we would compromise’, describing it as ‘quite central to our concept of the Centre’.\textsuperscript{19} The distinction seemed to be between the commissioning of films and the direct employment of the individuals who realised the production. Dunstan accepted the final report of the feasibility study at a specially convened meeting on 23 November 1971. The report specifically recommended against a short to medium-term interest in feature films and established the centre’s essential role as being a film producer not a film-maker.\textsuperscript{20}

The South Australian Film Corporation Act

Legislation was drafted and presented to the South Australian parliament in March the following year to reflect the recommendations of the study but, in the drafting, the need to distinguish between ‘film producer’ and ‘film-maker’ disappeared.\textsuperscript{21} Thus Section 10 of the South Australian Film Corporation Act, which sets out the functions of the corporation, reads as follows:

- to undertake the production of films;
- to provide library and other services and facilities relating to films and their screening;
- to provide information services about films and their availability;
- to offer and arrange courses of instruction for persons who are interested in film projection;
- to store, distribute and sell or otherwise dispose of films; and
- to carry out research into the distribution of films and the effectiveness of films to meet the purposes for which they are made with a view to improving such distribution and effectiveness.

\textsuperscript{18} ‘South Australian Film Centre Feasibility Study Recommended Functions and Organisation’, 10 May 1970, p. 5, in SAFC microfiche: ‘Reports & Studies: P.E. Consulting/Premier’s Dept Re: “SA Film Centre Feasb. Study – Original Correspondence”’.

\textsuperscript{19} Saulwick to Voyzey, 10 November 1971, \textit{ibid}.

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{21} South Australia, House of Assembly, \textit{Parliamentary Debates, SA}, Second session, 40\textsuperscript{th} parliament, 14 March 1972, p. 3824.
During the debate in the House of Assembly, a member of the opposition, Dr David Tonkin, proposed that the bill be amended to replace ‘undertake’ in sub-section (a) with the words ‘arrange for’, thus effectively prohibiting the ‘film-making’ function. In reply, Dunstan argued that the corporation had to be the producer if it was to have the legal authority to control the process of film-making. Dunstan assured Tonkin that the corporation would not engage in ‘film-making’ as such, and the amendment was withdrawn.  

Nevertheless, within six weeks of its first formal meeting, the South Australian Film Corporation decided, with Dunstan’s wholehearted support, that it would be a ‘film-maker’ and that ‘it was imperative for this corporation to move into the field of feature films’.

The Lord Willis of Chislehurst

I argued in ‘Two Models of Government Intervention in the Australian Film Industry’ that Dunstan was subject to a series of influences that kept alight his ambition for South Australia to be the home of ‘facilities [that] will be available to independent producers to produce films for export, for television and for cinema’. A further influence has come to light with the discovery of two documents amongst unrelated marketing files from the mid-1970s in the SAFC’s storage lock-ups in Port Road, Cheltenham, near the corporation’s Hendon studios.

On 27 May 1971, Dunstan posted ‘a copy of the draft final recommendations to be made as part of the “State Film Centre Feasibility Study”’ to ‘The Lord Willis of Chislehurst’, whom he had met the previous Tuesday. Lord Willis, better known to the British and Australian film industries as Ted Willis, was a prominent English screenwriter who visited Australia

22 Parliamentary Debates, SA, 14 March 1972, p. 4133. Dr Tonkin served a term as chairman of the SAFC after he retired from politics and was an enthusiastic supporter of the corporation until his death.


24 Dunstan, Policy Speech for the General Election.


Willis was also the author of ‘Last Bus to Banjo Creek’, a screen play that was discussed by the SAFC board in 1975, but ‘considered to be commercially unattractive’. SAFC meeting, 25, 27 June 1975, in SAFC microfiche, Board: Minutes of Meetings 1–108.
several times, most notably in 1968 for the crucial ‘Professional Training of Film and
Television Scriptwriters, Producers and Directors’, a UNESCO seminar held at the University
of New South Wales and mentioned in the previous chapter.

Lord Willis replied on 25 June 1971, with ‘one or two small points of criticism which I offer
for what they are worth’. First, he suggested that ‘the provision of research facilities to test
the communication effectiveness of the films produced’, was unnecessary, adding that ‘one
finds this out pretty soon after release’. Second, he criticised the recommendation ‘that the
Centre should have a monopoly of film production in the government sector’, but conceded
that in these particular circumstance ‘this is probably right’.

He then moved on to what seems the major concern of his letter, feature films:

I would hope that the target would be the setting-up eventually of film
production facilities organised and run by the Film Centre itself. This really
brings me back to a point I raised a long time ago in a letter to the former
Premier [probably Steele Hall] when, in answer to a query he raised with me, I
said that if South Australia wanted to get its share of film production, feature or
otherwise, it “had to open a shop.” Your document makes no mention of feature
production and I understand it was outside the terms of reference. In any case, it
is something for the future. However, all or nearly all of feature film production
in Australia is based on New South Wales primarily and secondly on Victoria
and this is simply because production facilities exist there.

Lord Willis then reassured Dunstan that this did not mean the ‘putting up of a large studio
block’ but, rather of ‘offer[ing] very favourable terms and conditions to producers’, citing the
recent involvement of the Western Australian government in the production of The Nickel
Queen. Finally, he concluded that if Dunstan would do that then ‘you would have taken a
very important step forward towards the creation of a film industry in South Australia’.

\[27\] UNESCO papers and proceedings in the State Library of Victoria. See also O’Donnell, p. 34.
possession of author but to be returned to the SAFC.
\[29\] Ibid., p. 2.
\[30\] Ibid.
It would seem that Willis’ encouragement, coming at a critical time in the planning for the corporation, might have restored Dunstan’s determination to pursue the grander vision of a film centre rather than the more cautious model the feasibility study had recommended. If so, it was certainly a crucial intervention. As Stuart Jay, assistant director of the corporation from 10 October 1974 and, later, general manager put it: ‘in my view if Phillip had ... if his [and Saulwick’s] report had been accepted by Dunstan, there would have been no film corporation’.  

The Corporation as Commercial Producer

The first few years of the corporation’s life were guided by the mercurial Gil Brealey as chairman and director. The feasibility study and an informal search for the director seemed to proceed in parallel. As early as 6 May 1971, four days before the presentation of the second progress report, copies of three films produced by Gil Brealey at the Commonwealth Film Unit were dispatched from Monahan, Dayman and Adams in Melbourne to Peter Ward, Dunstan’s executive assistant. Adams agreed that he had had Brealey in mind for the job from mid-1971.

The position of chairman/director was advertised in June 1972 as an ‘appointment ... for a period of five years with eligibility for reappointment. The salary would be a minimum of $14,000 per annum, but a higher salary might be negotiated, subject to the applicant’s experience and abilities’. Brealey was duly interviewed and selected, and took up the appointment on Monday 20 November 1972, chairing the first meeting of the corporation two days later.

31 Stuart Jay, unpublished interview, Goolwa, South Australia, 17 January 1996.
34 Draft advertisement, in SAFC microfiche: ‘Reports & Studies: P.E. Consulting/Premier’s Dept Re: “SA Film Centre Feasb. Study–Original Correspondence”’.
35 Phillip Adams’ recollections of these and associated events are set out in a five-page letter to Don Dunstan dated 20 October 1982. Adams urged Dunstan to undo slurs cast on Adams’ contribution to the creation of the SAFC and the appointment of Brealey, contained in Felicia and in Dunstan’s speech at the 1981 AFI Awards. In both cases, Dunstan had minimised Adams’ contribution to the creation of the SAFC, and, in Felicia, had dismissed Adams as ‘a newspaper columnist cum film producer’. Don Dunstan, Felicia, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1981, p. 209. The letter may be found in the Dunstan Archive at Flinders University of South Australia in Adelaide, index: Phillip Adams (copy in this author’s possession).

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The structure of the corporation evolved rapidly with the promotion of John Morris, recruited as producer–educational films, to the newly created position of head of production (21 March 1974) and, earlier, the appointment of Stuart Jay assistant director, effectively the senior administrator of the corporation, over the head of John Bourke, who was formally designated head of administration in a board minute of 1 February 1973.\(^{36}\) Mathew Carroll, Jill Robb, and Malcolm Smith joined the corporation in the first months of 1973.\(^{37}\)

Within three years deficiencies in some aspects of the corporation’s constitution and finances became apparent. At the board meeting of 7 August 1975, a deficit for the previous financial year of $397,000 was reported. A draft memorandum to the premier recommending amendments to the legislation ‘providing that “the Corporation shall consist of at least three members” and separating the role of Chairman and Director’ was discussed and amended.\(^{38}\) The changes had first been suggested by Brealey at the board meeting of 15 January.\(^{39}\) Finalising this matter seems to have been a prelude to Brealey making known his decision to resign as chairman and director of the corporation, which he announced in late 1975.

Brealey had had concerns for the financial structure of the corporation from the beginning. In November 1973, after just one year as director, he told Rod Nicholls of *Lumiere* magazine:

> When I was appointed to the position, I again asked about money, and was told that it was going to be raised through loan funds. One of the main reasons that the corporation had been set up as a statutory body by act of parliament was to enable it to borrow money. So I queried it and was told not to worry. “Everyone borrows millions of dollars” they said to me, “but it isn’t paid back for millions of years”.

> It took me a month after I got here to find out that I did have to worry about it—not the capital, but the interest. And it didn’t take me long as a bachelor of commerce from some years back, to work out that we’d be up for about $200,000 over five years just on interest. Nobody had worked it out.\(^{40}\)

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\(^{36}\) O’Donnell, p. 213. See also SAFC meeting, 11 February 1974.

\(^{37}\) See O’Donnell, Appendix II, for organisational charts.

\(^{38}\) O’Donnell, p. 227. See also SAFC meeting, 7 August 1975.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 224. See also SAFC meeting, 15 January 1975.

Debt financing of feature film production was (and remains) extraordinary for so risky an enterprise. The corporation’s running costs were to be met from a mark-up on sponsored film production, principally for the South Australian government, though other organisations like Commonwealth Industrial Gases (CIG) or the State Bank of South Australia were approached successfully to sponsor films. These two sponsors met the costs respectively of *Gas Welding*, a 16mm film, Super-8 film loop and 35mm slide kit plus teachers’ resource notes, and *Ian Chappell on Cricket* (Vincent O’Donnell 1974).

Financial Cocktails and Headaches

Dunstan believed that the risk capital for feature and television production could be raised from on-market borrowings, from investment from the Australian Film Development Corporation (later the Australian Film Commission, AFC), from film distributors and television stations as equity investors, and from the presale of rights in various markets to those same distributors and television stations and other interests. This cocktail of financial sources demanded highly developed skills in deal-making, a skill the corporation’s staff had quickly to learn.

One crucial problem with on-market borrowings was that lenders found the notion of progressive, interest-only repayment, with the capital to be returned as a lump sum at maturity, a somewhat novel idea for film production. Such arrangements suit investments in mineral exploration where the outlay of capital and first returns may be separated by several, perhaps many years. The corporation, however, had to repay the capital progressively, as well as meet interest payments, so placing considerable pressure on its cash flow.

The problem was clearly acknowledged at the board meeting of August 1975 when the deficit for the previous financial year of $397,000 and the problem of the financial structure of the corporation were confirmed. Outside advice was sought. The minutes of the next meeting recorded that ‘in answer to Mr. Brealey’s question as to whether such a program (the appointment of management consultants) should be deferred until a new Chairman / Director was appointed, the Members agreed that this was not desirable’.\(^41\) The firm P.A. Management Consultants was selected to report on the corporation’s financial position.

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\(^{41}\) O’Donnell, p. 228. Also SAFC meeting of 21 August 1975.
However, for reasons that are not clear, a local firm of chartered accounts, Fell & Starkey, was retained instead to report on the corporation’s finances.\(^\text{42}\) In summarising the current situation, the report noted that the deficits for the years ended 30 June 1973, 1974, and 1975, were respectively $24,743, $60,992, and $397,851,\(^\text{43}\) the last having been kicked along by borrowings for Sunday Too Far Away. Fell & Starkey then anticipated that, given the ‘detailed but unaudited [accounts] for the nine months ended 31st March, 1976 … the accumulated operating deficits will be in the vicinity of $1,000,000’ by 30 June 1976. Further ‘the effect of the current financing structure’ meant that ‘by 1979 the Corporation will be required to borrow $510,000 merely to service its existing loan capital’.\(^\text{44}\) The report concluded that the cost of ‘industry establishment and development is largely responsible for the overall deficit’ as the duties imposed by government had diverted energy from the potentially profitable activities of film-making.\(^\text{45}\)

To remedy the situation, Fell & Starkey recommended ‘an immediate interest free capital injection of $1,000,000’, ‘the equivalent of share capital in a public company … faced with the problem of creating an industry and carrying trading losses in its formative years’. Their ‘projections indicate that profits could then be made by 1979 as the burden of interest would be considerably lightened’ and ‘the responsibility to realise this potential would then lie with the new Corporation’.\(^\text{46}\)

In support of this they observed that ‘management, although being cost conscious has not in all cases been profit conscious’ and recommended ‘that a monthly management reporting system showing profit (loss) per operating department, be instituted. Consideration should also be given to the training and commercial development of senior executives’.\(^\text{47}\) New accounting procedures that provided comprehensive profit and loss reports were introduced from July 1976, ‘replacing the former accounting procedures based on cash-flow requirements’.\(^\text{48}\)


\(^{43}\) Ibid., p. 1.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., p. 5.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., p. 3.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., p. 7.

\(^{47}\) Ibid.

Finally, Fell & Starkey noted too that ‘the ultimate success or otherwise of the Corporation lies not only in careful management of resources, but in the ability to penetrate important overseas markets’, and suggested that current sales strategies should be re-evaluated ‘with available resources being redirected to the promotion and sale of revenue earning feature films’. Given the emphasis that Jill Robb attached to marketing, it is unclear whether this is a criticism of Robb’s marketing work, or of the ‘produce first—market second’ attitude she ascribed to her male colleagues at the corporation.

Assistant Director Stuart Jay reported in the fifth annual report that:

The Consultants concluded that the experience of the Corporation’s operations to date had shown that to create a commercially viable film industry in this State the Corporation needed assistance in financing the establishment of studio plant and equipment and ancillary services, in recruiting and training staff, and in undertaking many other activities which, though essential for the long-term development of the industry were unprofitable in the shorter term.

Most of this developmental expenditure had come from borrowed funds, out of which the corporation also had to pay interest pending development of sufficient revenues from commercially successful feature films. The State Government accepted this proposition and agreed, from 1st July 1976, to pay interest on the Corporation’s loan commitments for an unspecified period. Interest paid under this arrangement in 1979/77 totalled $157,656 on accumulated debenture loans of $2,379,739.

In 1978, Dunstan created a ministry for the arts, separate from the department of the premier and appointed John Bannon, a rising star in the ALP government, as minister. Initially, the interest payment arrangement remained, though the interest bill rose to $245,476 in 1978. Under Bannon, however, an arrangement closer to the recommendations of Fell & Starkey was agreed to whereby the corporation would receive ‘a Government perpetuity of $450 000 per annum calculated as the equivalent cost of equity financing the establishment of the

49 Ibid., pp. 7, 8.
50 Jill C. Robb, unpublished interview, Middle Park, Victoria, 18 February 1998.
52 Dunstan, Felicia, p. 311.
Corporation and the development of the film industry in South Australia’. The equity on which this perpetuity was based was $4 million. However, in the following year, after a change in government, that arrangement was scrapped and the government undertook ‘a recoupment of interest and capital instalment repayments on existing loans only, resulting in a grant reduction of $85 708’.

The goal of profitability remained out of reach. In its tenth year, and the best year to date in financial terms, the corporation achieved an operating profit of $32,860 but faced an interest bill of $473,209. After receiving, ‘in lieu of equity investment, a State Government debt servicing grant of $421,509’ (the grant applied only to the first $4 million of debenture loans), the balance sheet showed a net deficit of $18,840 for the year. The corporation remained dogged by deficits for almost the first two decades of its life.

Television

The second half of the 1970s saw the corporation produce a string of successful films for cinema such as *Storm Boy* (Henri Safran 1976) and especially *Breaker Morant* (Bruce Beresford 1980), some middling performers like *Blue Fin* (Carl Shultz 1978) and *Money Mover* (Bruce Beresford 1979), and an ambitious biopic, *Dawn* (Ken Hannam 1979), that never found an audience despite the legendary status of its subject, Dawn Fraser, the gold medal winning Olympic swimmer with a rebellious streak.

Television had been on the corporation’s mind from the beginning. *Who Killed Jenny Langby* (Don Crombie 1974) was made for television as well as serving as a film-for-discussion in social welfare circles, and two pilot episodes of a children’s series, *Stacey’s Gym* (Don Crombie 1974), were produced. A third novel by Colin Thiele, *Fire in the Stone* (Thiele had written the novels on which *Storm Boy* and *Blue Fin* were based), was considered initially as a six-part serial in co-production with the ABC.
Then, as now, creative and commercial success in the cinema was the hallmark of political and cultural status, and cinema dominated the corporation’s production slate until the 1980s. Even so, with an eye on television and the value of strategic relationships, the corporation worked with Hanna-Barbera, a US-based TV packager, on River Boy, and developed The Valley Divided, a historical series set in the Barossa Valley concerning early German settlers there. 58 In that period also they produced three made-for-television movies for the Australian Channel 9 Network. They were Harvest of Hate (Michael Thornhill 1977), The Plumber (Peter Weir 1979), and Sound of Love (John Power 1977). Each was shot for approximately $150,000 and on shooting schedules of as little as three weeks. 59

The corporation’s shift to television in the 1980s was driven by five factors. First, production for television could be less risky for both the private investor and the producer. In 1980 Jock Blair, recently appointed ‘as executive producer in charge of television projects’, explained to Albert Moran:

> You sell it [a series] to your network, you sell it to your overseas investor, you have all your money up front before you go into production. You know what your profit ratio is on the day of shooting and provided you stay on budget you are OK. 60

So, while it was still necessary to outlay script and project development costs (and these monies might come, in part, from the Australian Film Commission), any commitment to production—as much as 90 per cent of the cost of producing a mini-series—could be made after a pre-sale agreement had been negotiated. For cinema, while a distributor might put up a minimum distribution guarantee, almost the whole cost of the picture was at-risk, and a failure like Dawn, whose budget of $762,391 was the largest to date for the corporation, and the second or third largest for an Australian film behind the $1.28 million budget 61 for The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith (Fred Schepisi 1978), could cripple a producer.

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58 Albert Moran and O'Regan, Tom (eds), An Australian Film Reader, Currency Press, Sydney, 1985, p. 260. The corporation sought, unsuccessfully, a German co-producer for the project.


It is significant too that the benefits to South Australia of TV miniseries could outweigh feature film production. The shooting period tended to be longer—hence more local employment—while other costs, like overseas marketing, were much the same.

The Advent of Division 10BA

A second factor favouring television was the Commonwealth government’s agreement to allow more favourable taxation treatment for investments in cinema and television, a concession that became known as Division 10BA, after the section of the income tax assessment act amended to allow the tax deductions. The corporation itself had raised the prospect in of tax concessions its 1976–77 annual report and three years later, a committee chaired by R. S. Parkes, a member of the Queensland Film Corporation, and made up of representatives all state film agencies and the Australian Film Commission, met to ‘draw up a taxation incentive scheme for presentation to the Federal Government’. The scheme was introduced in 1981 and fuelled an immediate explosion in private finance for cinema and television production. It was particularly attractive to individuals paying 60 per cent personal income tax. In its first configuration—150 per cent deduction, first 50 per cent of earnings tax-free (150/50)—a return of just 10 per cent was all that was required to break even. However, as the gearing ratios were wound back, first to 133/33 then 120/20, the certainty of returns became more important.

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65 Division 10BA worked like this: Investments were geared up 150 percent for tax purposes and returns of up to 50 percent of the investment were free from tax.

High income investors might be liable to pay tax at the (then) top marginal rate of 60 per cent on, say, the last $100,000 of their income; that is a tax bill of $60,000.

If they invested $40,000 in an eligible film, they could deduct $60,000 ($40,000 x 150%) from their income so lowering the exposure to $40,000 and their tax bill to $24,000. Thus they have saved $36,000, ($60,000 minus $24,000) for an investment that has cost $40,000.

If the investment earns $4,000 they will break even as earnings up to 50 per cent of the investment will be tax free. Thus up to $20,000 could be earned from the investment before the income would be subject to tax. The gearing, initially 150/50 percent, was progressively reduced over subsequent years to control the fiscal costs that were unexpectedly large and rather unpredictable. The concession is still available but is geared at 100/0 per cent.
Television production offered that certainty of returns, frequently a certainty of profits, and the corporation could not let the opportunity pass. The Division 10BA concessions became, with modifications, the principal fiscal mechanism for Commonwealth government support for film and television production until 1988 when the Australian Film Finance Corporation was created. The concession remains current today though in a very much diminished form.

The New Studios

The third factor was the move to Hendon, a suburb in Adelaide’s north-west, where an obsolete industrial site was being redeveloped. The move reflected the need to expand the corporation’s facilities and had been under consideration for several years.

The corporation’s first head office was in Edmund Rice House, a heritage building in King William Street in the Adelaide CBD, with the production office at 64 Fullerton Road, Kent Town, on the edge of suburbia, two kilometres east. For the sake of economy, the city office was closed in 1974 and administration, production and distribution consolidated at Fullerton Road and in its coach house. An adjacent cottage was rented as accommodation for medium-term visitors. A one-time cinema and the former rehearsal rooms for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in Norwood, a further two kilometres east, was rented and adapted as a sound stage and, later, sound mixing facilities. The film library was housed in commercial premises in O’Connell Street in North Adelaide.

The move to Hendon remedied the lack of space at the premises in Kent Town and Norwood and allowed consolidation with the film library. The lack of space in Norwood was dramatically illustrated when the corporation undertook the production of its first mini-series, Sara Dane (Gary Conway, Rod Hardy 1981). The limitations of the sound stage were long recognised: it lacked space, especially for props, wardrobe and make-up, had no lighting grid, and was inadequately sound proofed. These limitations could be endured because much feature filming was done on location and it was possible to schedule two films to share the facility on the rare occasions the demand arose. However Sara Dane, a studio-based costume drama, emphasised the need for larger and more flexible studios and additional space for production offices, make-up, wardrobe, props, etc., if the corporation or the local industry was ever to be more than a one-project-at-a-time producer.
The fourth factor influencing the move to television was also a consequence of the move to Hendon. The corporation became a studio proprietor with real estate to manage. If the Queen Street studio was dark for a few weeks at a time then the cost was modest. At Hendon, the floor space given over to studios, production offices, make-up, wardrobe, props, canteen etc. was far greater that for administration and so was a major part of the rental cost. The Hendon studios had to be filled and the most reliable way to do that was to embrace series and mini-series production for television. Fortunately, the fashion for mini-series and the Division 10BA tax concessions came at the right time, and the corporation launched itself into television with gusto for a half decade, culminating in the ambitious Robbery Under Arms (Don Crombie, Ken Hannam 1985), a miniseries and feature film combined, on a budget of $7.3 million.  

Moving On

The fifth contributing factor to the shift was the departure of most of the first cohort of key personnel. Gil Brealey had left in March 1976, but the corporation’s enthusiasm for the feature film had endured in the persons of Matthew Carroll, Jill Robb, John Morris and Malcolm Smith, though Smith was mostly concerned with the corporation’s output of sponsored films. Jill Robb was the next to leave, in March 1977, lured to Melbourne to become the first director of the Victorian Film Corporation. Six months later, it was Malcolm Smith’s turn; he moved to Hobart in September to head the new Tasmanian Film Corporation. Smith had not been directly involved in feature production since Sunday Too Far Away, but Jill Robb, first as Executive Producer, Features and Television, a title she shared with Matthew Carroll, and then as Marketing Manager, had played a role in project development and, in particular, in pre-sales and pre-production marketing.

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66 Murray (ed.), p. 175.
68 Malcolm Smith, recorded interview, ABC Gore Hill studios, 4 December 1995.
69 O’Donnell, p. 129.
70 Smith, 4 December 1995.
71 O’Donnell, pp. 129–33.
Carroll continued as Executive Producer, Features and Television but was increasingly overworked as the corporation sought to capitalise on its success as a producer of popular quality cinema. Carroll has credits as producer on the memorable films from this era of the corporation’s history. He left in 1982 after Freedom (Scott Hicks 1982) to return to Sydney and devote his time to television. He did not produce for cinema until Turtle Beach (Stephen Wallace 1992), a decade later. Neither of these two features attracted the attention of earlier cinema works but Carroll made a mark in television.

The board changed too. From April 1976, there were more members with wider experience of business and the film industry and, from 1978, the opinion of the staff of the corporation was represented by a staff-elected director, the first being Lesley Hammond, an executive producer of sponsored films.

The Odd Couple

The decade from 1976 saw the transformation of the SAFC from a boutique producer into a studio corporation. Through that time, John Morris and Stuart Jay provided the continuity and direction, their contrasting but complementary qualities providing both the creative flair and the administrative firmness that the corporation required.

Morris was born at Kings Cross, Sydney, in 1933 and became enamoured of film at an early age. According to Bob Ellis, Morris joined the Sydney Film Society at fourteen and later dropped out of medicine at the University of Sydney in his fourth year ‘to devote himself to film and the society’. He joined the Commonwealth Film Unit in 1952 as a production assistant and, in 1958, directed Road to the Clouds, ‘a spectacular documentary shot in Cinemascope in the New Guinea highlands’. He spent eighteen months in the UK, before returning to the Commonwealth Film Unit in 1964, where he scripted the innovative From the Tropics to the Snow (Jack Lee, Richard Mason 1964). He rose to become head of production

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75 Ellis, ‘The man behind what was good in Australian cinema’.
before taking (initially) leave of absence to join the South Australian Film Corporation, as producer–educational films,\textsuperscript{76} then head of production and, after Brealey’s retirement, director of the corporation, a title changed to managing director in 1981.

Stuart Jay was an utterly different character. He was born in the NSW rural town of Cooma in 1926, saw service in the Royal Australian Air Force in World War II and, subsequently, in the Royal Australian Army reserve, where he rose to the rank of major.\textsuperscript{77} He was working at Film Australia in 1972 as the executive officer when Brealey asked his assistance, in an honorary capacity, to prepare financial projections for the new South Australian Film Corporation.\textsuperscript{78} Jay was initially offered the position of head of administration at the new corporation but felt that the salary offered was insufficient and declined. The position was filled by John Burke, an accountant and long-time member of the Sydney Film Festival. Subsequently, as the scale of administrative duties of the director grew, Jay was offered the newly created position of assistant director; he took up the appointment on 10 October 1974.\textsuperscript{79}

Jay’s administration of the corporation was exemplary. When I commenced research on the corporation in 1994, the anecdotal advice was that the records of the early years of the corporation had been poorly kept—‘You know what Gil was like’—and, in any case, what records there were had been lost. It was with great excitement that I discovered that the early records had been well kept, even prior to Jay’s arrival and, in 1984, had been microfilmed.\textsuperscript{80}

The skills and talents of Jay and Morris formed a synergy of complementary strengths and weaknesses: Morris, encyclopaedic in his knowledge especially in film, and forensic in his analysis, sometimes opinionated and abrasive but always sure and confident; Jay,

\textsuperscript{76} Minute 73/63, SAFC board meeting, 13 July 1973.


\textsuperscript{78} Jay, 17 January 1996.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{80} This collection of microfilm is the most detailed and accessible record of the workings of a state film agency available in Australia. It is an invaluable historical record for which we must thank Stuart Jay.
meticulous with his administration, pragmatic and flexible in his handling of staff relations and industry politics. They left the corporation in 1986 and 1988 respectively and there followed a period of instability, with numbers of changes of senior staff and a dissipation of political support on both sides of the South Australian parliament.

The Limits of Commerciality

The corporation aimed to be commercially as well as critically and culturally successful and, in 1979, the boundaries of what might be ventured to achieve commercial success were tested by proposals to invest in films by John D. Lamond.

John Lamond fell into the film industry when he was employed by John B. Murray for the road-show tour of *The Naked Bunyip* (1970). He subsequently produced and directed a number of sexploitation films (commencing with the documentary-style *Australia After Dark* (1975) and *The ABC of Love and Sex Australian Style* (1977)) of increasing technical sophistication and budget. The films did well at the box office, and easily returned their small budgets, just $70,000 for the latter. By 1978, Lamond was ready to move into more ambitious territory financially and directorially, producing and directing *Felicity* (1978) on a budget of $200,000.

In 1979 he put investment proposals to the corporation for *Pacific Banana* (1980) and a sequel to *Felicity* titled ‘Felicity in the Garden of Pleasure’. The corporation had previously made equity investments in a number of projects, including *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Peter Weir 1976), *The Irishman* (Don Crombie 1978) and *Weekend of Shadows* (Tom Jeffrey 1978). By 1978 though, the sentiment of the board had shifted, and on 27 June it had ‘agreed that as a general rule money should not be invested in other people’s productions’.

Nevertheless, when John Morris reported Lamond’s *Pacific Banana* proposal to the board on 11 April 1979, the response was, overall, a positive one. The chairman, Jack Lee, was enthusiastic, saying ‘that if the proposition looks as if it would be profitable in terms of script and budget, then it would be a good idea and it might be wise to try to tie him up for his next

82 Ibid., p. 32.
83 Minute 51, SAFC board meeting, 27 June 1978.
couple of films’. Of the other members, ‘Miss Hammond considered that we should be involved’ and ‘Mr. Davies said it sounded fine but queried that we would have more than 50% of total equity with no control’. The meeting ‘resolved that Mr. Morris go ahead with negotiations … regarding investment of $125,000 [in a budget of $225,000] with letters of intent to be exchanged and options obtained on Lamond’s next three pictures’. The minute did not record the opinion of one member, Mrs Enid Peleska.

What had changed in just ten months? There seem to be several factors, one exemplified in a headline in Adelaide’s Advertiser newspaper, ‘Film corp. needs a hit’. The corporation’s previous three films, Blue Fin, Dawn! and Money Movers were all doing poorly at the Australian box office, though The Last Wave (Peter Weir 1977), in which the corporation had an investment, had done reasonably well locally and was showing promise in the USA. In addition, Blue Fin had gone $100,000 over budget and, though Bruce Beresford had been brought in to complete the picture, it remained a disappointment. Adelaide’s afternoon tabloid, the News, had reported its box office performance in a two-page spread: ‘Blue Fin Sinks at the Box Office’.

At the meeting two weeks prior to the receipt of the Lamond proposal, the chairman, Jack Lee, had anticipated that losses for the current financial year would amount to $700,000. Irving Cook had given three reasons for the extent of the loss:

1. we were not making the right sort of pictures
2. we were not selling them correctly
3. people didn’t want to see pictures

William Davies was even more pessimistic, insisting that ‘when Mr. Morris met with the Minister [as the board was directing] that he point bluntly to the fact that our loss could be $1½ million and that we were borrowing money under government guarantee’.

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84 Minutes 109–117, SAFC board meeting, 11 April 1979. Curiously, both John Morris and Irving Cook emphasised Lamond’s ‘honesty’.
86 The board meeting of 7 February 1979 had been told that, based on a net US film rental of $3m, the corporation expected to receive $387,243. It was screening in three cinemas in New York and grossing $14,800 per week. Minute 88, SAFC board meeting, 7 February 1979.
88 Minutes 5 & 19, SAFC board meeting, 28 March 1979.
Davies said the minister must be told that ‘it was impossible for the Corporation to become self-supporting’. 89

At that meeting too, the board was considering two miniseries, Sara Dane and Lancaster and Mrs Miller, for production. They looked like profitable endeavours but the negotiation of each was taking the corporation into new territory with overseas partners and new risks. In fact, the first two hours and twenty minute of the meeting of 11 April were given over to a sometimes heated debate about going into co-production on Lancaster and Mrs Miller, the debate finally resolved by a majority vote in favour. 90

In this climate, it is unsurprising that Lamond’s proposal, requiring a sum little more than the negotiating costs for Lancaster and Mrs Miller, and with the strong likelihood of a worry-free profit, appealed to the board. Minute 30 of the meeting of 9 May recorded that:

The Corporation had agreed to invest $100,000 pari passu with other investors in the film, total budget being $230,000. The contract included the services of the Corporation’s Legal Officer for a fee of $5,000. Mr. Morris gave details of the proposed contract to members who agreed that the terms were excellent.

An advance of $15,000 was being made to Mr. Lamond, this at 12% p.a. interest secured against Mr Lamond’s interest in the profits from “Felicity”. As well as investment recoupment, SAFC would receive an additional 7½% share of producer’s profit. 91

Ominously, minute 31 reported that John Morris ‘had written to the “Australian” correcting the misinformation published recently regarding this film’. 92 The ‘misinformation’ concerned statements that ‘the South Australian Film Corporation is seeking money for its first R-rated movie’ and that the corporation would ‘have major equity in the venture’, 93 neither factually correct.

89 Minute 20, ibid.
90 Minutes 1– 81, SAFC board meeting, 11 April 1979. John Morris had sought a unanimous decision in favour, but the chairman had accepted a majority decision when it was clear that one member, W. C. Davies, held grave reservations about the deal.
91 Minute 30, SAFC board meeting, 9 May 1979.
92 Minute 31, ibid.
93 Uncredited, ‘Sex movie makers in search of cash’, Australian, Sydney, 25 April 1979, p. 3. Peter Farrell of the News had the story the previous day as ‘Sex film may be made here’, p.3. A copy of Morris’s letter is in SAFC microfiche: ‘General: Newspaper clippings, 1 of 3’.
The meeting of 25 July heard that ‘the second draft script had been received but was very poor’. The corporation’s script doctor, Harold Lander, had spent a day with Lamond in Melbourne recently, ‘since which time John Lamond and Alan Hopgood [the writer] were “fleshing it out” and the script was greatly improved … Mr. Morris considered the film would be funny, commercial and “R” rated’.  

The meeting was then informed of a proposal for ‘Felicity and the Garden of Pleasure’ seeking an investment of $100,000, and that ‘Mr. Morris had agreed to the scripting stage of “Felicity and the Garden of Pleasure” to $15,000’. The debate that followed started to chart the boundaries of the authority of the corporation to make films of any type it chose. The issues were these:

First, it was the stated public position of the corporation that ‘the corporation would make any type of film as long as it was well done’.

Second, there was the question of what was a proper use of public funds. A recent debate on the issue in the British House of Commons was reported by William Davies.  

Third, Davies also insisted that ‘this question must be decided irrespective of Members’ personal tastes … and being government-funded we were more vulnerable to public opinion’.

Fourth, there was the degree to which the minister was to be informed, given a statement, attributed by John Morris to the minister, that ‘he preferred sex films to violent films’, possibly alluding to recent adverse public comments about Money Movers. Irving Cook felt that the matter ‘should not be raised again with the Minister … it was enough to inform the Minister that we had an opportunity to invest in a film like “Felicity” and with similar prospects of commercial success’. Finally, Mr Davies said that ‘it was essential that we should know exactly where we are going and that we go into it with a conscious decision’.  

The board then made that ‘conscious decision’ to ‘invest up to $100,000 in “Felicity and the Garden of Pleasure”, subject to the Director’s approval of the script and subject to the budget

95 Minute 40, ibid.
The corporation’s lawyer, John Fitzpatrick, then reported that a completion guarantee could not be obtained on so small a budget. ‘This had been discussed with John Lamond and we had agreed to pay up to 50% of any overage with interest at 15% … subject to other investors putting up the other 50% which would be guaranteed by John Lamond. This was agreed to.’ The minutes were silent on the attitude of members Enid Peleska and also Lesley Hammond. Neither woman seemed to have entered the discussion.

Enid Peleska sent her apologies to the next board meeting, held on 29 August, but her presence was felt. ‘The chairman read a letter from Mrs Peleska (copies of which were handed to members) in which she stated her strong opposition to the Corporation becoming involved in a movie similar to the first “Felicity” film.’

A lot of things had happened since 25 July. As the meeting convened, ‘Mr. Morris distributed a memorandum dated 28 August in which he recommended reversal of the Board’s previous decision to invest in “Felicity II” in view of adverse publicity and the public reaction to reports that the Corporation would invest in this film’. Questions had been asked in parliament on 8 August, the board’s decision was reported in the press on the following two days, and John Morris had been called to a meeting with the minister.

Minute are filtered records. While Morris expected the board to be unanimous in decisions, the debate over Lancaster and Mrs Miller some months earlier had been resolved by a majority decision with William Davies’ dissent being recorded. Thus it is hard to know why Mrs Peleska chose not to have her dissent recorded on 25 July and, apparently, to leak the story to the Hon. Jennifer Adamson MLA, who questioned the minister in parliament.

It seems clear that, despite Minister Hugh Hudson’s preference for sex over violence in cinema, he also preferred political peace over potentially profitable investments in low-brow movies. He had also been caught out in parliament knowing only that the corporation ‘had determined to go ahead with “Pacific Banana” [but] … not aware the corporation was involved in “Felicity [II]”’. The minister did not know about ‘Felicity II’ because of the

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97 Minute 48, ibid.
98 Minute 49, ibid. Overage refers to costs incurred to complete a film not planned for in the budget.
99 Minute 6, SAFC board meeting, 29 August 1979.
100 Minute 5, ibid.
corporation’s decision of 25 July not to further inform him but, by leaving the minister in ignorance, the corporation also left him politically vulnerable.

After a brief discussion about the specific nature of Mrs Peleska’s objection, ‘Mr. Cook seconded Mr. Morris’s motion that SAFC withdraw from “Felicity II” and it was CARRIED unanimously’. At the following meeting, Mrs Peleska confirmed that her objection was to Felicity II not Pacific Banana which was not ‘similar to the first “Felicity” film’. It was clear that a limit had been reached but Stuart Jay suggested that another agenda was being played out: it was an exercise to dramatise to the government the consequences of a totally commercial approach to the business of state-supported film production.

The production of Pacific Banana proceeded and it was released on 5 February 1981 without any credit for the South Australian Film Corporation. Scott Murray reported that the only reference to the SAFC associated with the film is at the beginning of the commercially released video, which states that ‘the SAFC has licensed the use of this motion picture on video’. According to the Movie Marshall website, Pacific Banana took A$404,000 in its first year of release. It is now available on DVD.

External Relations

From the beginning, relations between the corporation, its parliamentary stakeholders, the local film industry and the wider community had been problematic. Overall, the South Australian community had evinced a pride in the corporation, but it had been subject to both parliamentary and industry scrutiny, and sometimes outright attack.

One continuing parliamentary critic was Stan George Evans, LCL Member of the House of Assembly for Fisher in the Adelaide Hills, who on 1 December 1970 questioned the premier, Don Dunstan, on matters concerning ‘the proposed film industry in South Australia’.

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102 Minute 8, SAFC board meeting, 29 August 1979.
103 Minute 4, SAFC board meeting, 3 October 1979.
105 Murray (ed.), p. 80.
Over the following years, Evans proved an indefatigable interrogator of the Labor government over a wide range of issues, and provided a parliamentary conduit for film industry complaints against the corporation. It is more than likely that he was fed information by a small group of disaffected Adelaide film-makers, including Ian Davidson.

Parochialism was and remains a powerful force in state politics in Australia. While working on the feasibility study for the proposed ‘state film centre’, Irving Saulwick recalled some nervousness among interested South Australians that Sydney and Melbourne film-makers would come and take over. To an extent that is what happened, at least initially, this author being one Sydney film-maker employed by the corporation on contracts of varying duration.

As part of a consultative policy, the South Australian Film Advisory Board was established by the South Australian Film Corporation Act to provide advice to the premier generally on matters affecting the film industry. The ninth meeting of the corporation on 3 May 1973 recommended to the premier the following for membership of the advisory board:

- **Education Department:** Mrs E. Sharman
- **Public Service:** Mr Len Amadio
- **A.B.C.** Mr G. Taylor
- **Commercial television:** Mr W. C. Davies
- **Arts:** Mr Ian Black
- **Universities:** Prof. Wal Cherry
- **Business and Finance:** vacant.\(^{109}\)

The corporation left the ‘Business and Finance’ representative to be selected by the premier. The meeting of 13 July heard that their recommendations had been accepted, that Mr F. D. Hay had been selected for the vacant seat and that the premier ‘had contacted the members direct’.\(^ {110}\)

While the advisory board was created by the SAFC legislation, it was not otherwise linked with the corporation. Despite the lack of an organisational link, the corporation decided at

\(^{108}\) Saulwick, 16 October 1996.

\(^{109}\) Minute 73/60, SAFC board meeting, 13 July 1973.

\(^{110}\) Ibid.
its August 1973 meeting to ‘convene the first meeting and inform the advisory board of its responsibilities’. The corporation subsequently appointed John Burke, head of administration, to be the executive officer of the advisory board, and at the same meeting noted that ‘Mr G. Taylor had been elected Chairman and Mr W. L. C. Davies, Deputy Chairman’. William Davies would later serve as a member of the corporation. The degree of liaison was variable, despite the corporation’s stated desire ‘to prevent overlapping and to encourage positive consultation’, and the minutes of the advisory board’s two-monthly meetings were tabled at corporation meetings.

Following Gil Brealey’s departure as director and chairman and the 1976 reforms, the role and purpose of the advisory board was re-examined. John Morris had observed that ‘so far as was known no matter had been referred to [the advisory board] by the Premier’, but ‘attempts had been made by the Corporation to find useful tasks for the board to undertake but with no real success’. Thus the chair of the advisory board, Graham Taylor, attended the corporation’s meeting of 27 May 1976 at the invitation of the members, seemingly their first formal face-to-face meeting since 1973.

Taylor suggested two alternatives for the board:

An Advisory Board could function as “window dressing” purposes and act as a sounding board for Corporation policy. If this was desired the base of the Board should be broadened and this would mean it would become less effective in some respects. The present Board was not properly constituted to function in this fashion.

The second alternatively would be to form a Board that would be much more meaningful and in the long run would prove more constructive.

Taylor of course favoured the second: ‘there was considerable discussion regarding the constitution of the advisory board … various names were suggested’ and areas of advice

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111 Minute 73/75, SAFC board meeting, 10 August 1973.
112 Minute 73/109, SAFC board meeting, 19 December 1973.
113 Minutes of first board meeting, 22 November 1972.
114 Minute 12, SAFC board meeting, 6 May 1976.
115 Minute 35, SAFC board meeting, 27 May 1976.
canvassed.\textsuperscript{116} Thus the advisory board was revitalised and relaunched. Efforts were made to find a role for it but within two years the premier was forced to acknowledge that:

> Events had shown that the S.A. Film Advisory Board did not have practical benefits and was now something of an embarrassment. When the Corporation was set up people demanded that specific interests be represented. He [the premier] felt it was pointless to retain the Advisory Board and would consider amending the Act during the next session of Parliament to abolish the Advisory Board.\textsuperscript{117}

The meeting of the corporation for 2 February 1979 heard that ‘the South Australian Film Corporation Act had now been amended to eliminate the S.A. Film Advisory Board’.\textsuperscript{118}

The South Australian Film Producers Association had been founded in 1976 with the support of the corporation, but its membership comprised the employers and so represented the established businesses, not the industry as a whole. While the advisory board had contributed little but its existence, with its disbandment the corporation lost a semi-official mechanism for the sounding-out of policy and a back-channel for monitoring the industry, a need that grew as the corporation became the major film industry employer in South Australia.

In 1982, the South Australian Film Industry Advisory Committee (SAFIAC) was formed following the election of the Bannon Labor government, ‘its purpose being to bring to [the premier’s] attention matters concerning the film industry and to comment on matters which he may from time to time refer to the Committee’.\textsuperscript{119} This is a near identical brief to its predecessor, the S.A. Film Advisory Board. And, like its predecessor, the ‘SAFIAC is an independent body that reports directly to the Hon. the Premier and Minister for the Arts’, though its chairman, Justin Milne, ‘was invited to use the SAFC’s annual report as a means of recording the work of SAFIAC’.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{116} Minute 37–41, ibid.
\textsuperscript{117} Minute 72, SAFC board meeting, 22 March 1978 (with Premier Don Dunstan in attendance).
\textsuperscript{118} Minute 116, SAFC board meeting, 2 February 1979.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
The members of the Advisory Committee were:

- Mr Len Amadio, Director, Department for the Arts
- Mr Rob George, President, Australian Writers’ Guild (SA Branch)
- Mr Ian Lovell, Director, Industries Development, Department of State Development
- Mr John Morris, Managing Director, South Australian Film Corporation
- Ms Colleen Ross, Secretary, Actors Equity (SA)
- Mr Chris Webster, President, Adelaide Film Freelance Association
- Mr Justin Milne, President, South Australian Film Producers Association

An early success of the South Australian Film Industry Advisory Committee was the creation of the South Australian Film and Television Financing Fund announced by Premier Bannon on 28 May 1985. The fund was to invest in private sector production and be administered by the SAFIAC, not in competition with the SAFC but operating in parallel with it. The fund would have $75,000 available for the balance of the 1985 financial year and $750,000 in the 1985–1986 financial year.

These changes occurred in the context of a ‘review of the SAFC Act, Aims, Objectives, Finances and Organisation’ set in motion by Premier John Bannon when he met with the corporation on 14 May 1984. The government had committed itself to giving ‘the South Australian Film Corporation and the local film industry the backing that their achievements have merited’. In addition to convening an internal working party, the corporation retained Price Waterhouse to examine independently the financial position of the SAFC and place it in the context of other state film agencies and the South Australian economy. Their report, delivered on 8 November 1984, was included in the review document presented to the premier.

121 Ibid.
There are similarities between the Price Waterhouse work and the Fell & Starkey report of 1976, notably in the attention drawn to the lack of establishment capital and the mounting indebtedness required to finance production and infrastructure development. As a result of the review, on 17 June 1985 the government announced that it would fund the basic administrative costs of the corporation and assist with project development and capital works to the extent of $550,000 for 1984–1985 and grant that amount (indexed for inflation) for the following two years, so introducing a triennial base for corporation finances. In addition, the debt of the corporation, amounting to almost $6 million, would be capitalised so relieving the corporation of the annual interest payments.\(^{125}\)

While the support was welcome, the government provided funds for project development only, not production. In future all production finance would have to come from a cocktail of non-South Australian government sources—the AFC, the private sector, presales and co-production arrangements—in a climate where Division 10BA was being wound back and the popularity of the miniseries was on the wane.

The production boom of the mid-1980s, fuelled by Division 10BA investments and television’s appetite, local and overseas, for miniseries, had made the corporation the largest production house in South Australia and its presence overshadowed local producers in their efforts to establish status and reputation.

The review of 1985 was essentially an internal review and criticism of the corporation continued. To meet this mounting criticism the government decided on an external, independent review and commissioned Sydney-based producer Sue Milliken to do it. The reasons for the continued unrest are unclear. The funds provided to the SAFIAC were flowing to independent producers, *Call Me Mr. Brown* and *Coda* having received offers of investment in the first months after the scheme was announced, and more projects followed.\(^{126}\) The corporation’s documentary tender list had reached twenty-five companies in June 1986 and rose to twenty-nine the following year so the private sector was growing. Many companies were busy with corporation and private work, and several individuals were winning significant recognition at overseas festivals.\(^{127}\)


However, key roles in the corporation seemed unavailable to locals. Jock Blair had headed television drama production since 1980, and a limited pool of directors and writers, many domiciled outside South Australia, had worked on drama. The corporation claimed it had achieved a reputation with the Australian commercial networks for quality and reliability, a claim Milliken challenged. This reputation had been achieved by being highly selective with staff—just as the corporation had a selective tender process for sponsored documentary production—and was loath to risk its reputation or chance production overages with less experienced crew, local or not. It was a situation not unlike the corporation’s earliest days, when all senior staff had been recruited from Sydney.

Sue Milliken delivered her report in April 1988 and a copy was leaked to the Advertiser in early July. ‘Shake-up urged for “elitist” SA Film Corp.’ and ‘Call for SA Film Corp’s managing director to resign’ were the headlines on 6 and 7 July. Peter Hayes summarised the report as follows in the Advertiser:

> It says that the SAFC has become “increasingly isolated from the local independent industry” and is now perceived as “elitist without the track record to justify this attitude”. The report accuses the corporation’s board of having “a lack of film expertise” … and criticises the managing director, Mr John Morris.

Milliken recommended that the board be extended to seven to accommodate more film industry-experienced members, local and interstate, and criticised the drama department claiming ‘tenure and film-producing do not sit comfortably together’. She said that ‘SA has long needed a continuing low-budget drama series to sustain employment’ and to provide experience in drama for directors and writers. There was, too, a need to enter ‘into joint ventures with local producers under the SAFC banner’. The report did not call for the resignations of John Morris or Jock Blair, but pointed out the expiry dates of their contracts and said that Morris’s strong personality had effectively muted criticism of the corporation’s policies within the corporation itself.

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128 Peter Hayes, ‘Shake-up urged for “elitist” SA Film Corp.’, Advertiser, 6 July 1988, p. 3, and ‘Call for SA Film Corp’s managing director to resign’, Advertiser, 7 July 1988, p. 6.

129 Hayes, ‘Shake-up urged for “elitist” SA Film Corp.’.

130 Ibid.
The *Advertiser* then gained access to the corporation’s response to the report, arguing successfully to John Morris and Premier Bannon that ‘it seemed unfair … to have access to the Milliken Report, leaked though it was, without seeing the response’. This was reported by Tim Lloyd, the arts editor, as ‘Tense drama set in suburban Hendon’. It was at times tongue-in-cheek, but alleged that deep personal hostility had grown toward the corporation, and especially Morris and Blair. Those expressing this hostility were named as:

SA producers Mario Andreacchio and Wayne Groom and writers John Emery and Yvonne Graves … Rob George, chairman of the SA Film Industry Advisory Committee … writer and producer Terry Jennings and on behalf of many of the industry’s workers, the Australian Theatrical and Amusement employees Association[’s] … secretary Andrew Mack.

In its response to the Milliken report, the corporation canvassed five alternatives ranging from ‘making no change’ to ‘abandoning Government film production facilities in this state’. The recommended option was to create two new organisations, ‘Hendon Studios’ to run the studio complex as a commercial enterprise and produce the miniseries then on the production slate, and ‘Film South Australia’, also based at Hendon, to manage the South Australian Film and Television Financing Fund and the investment portfolio being developed by the SAFIAC.

Subsequently Lloyd signalled some resolution. On 20 August he reported that:

The Film Corporation board met for the first time ever with the SA Film Industry Advisory Committee two weeks ago. It is incredible that the two groups, which represent the two arms of the State Government’s support of the SA film industry, have never sat down and talked to each other.

In addition, ‘on Thursday independent film producers of SA had an unheard-of lunch with the SAFC board’, and ‘on Tuesday the Premier, Mr Bannon, set the SA Film Corporation firmly

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132 Ibid., p. 6.


in the direction of increased consultation with the rest of the industry in this State’. The board of the corporation was expanded, local and interstate film people were recruited to serve on the board (among them Sue Milliken), and the corporation commenced to co-venture projects with Adelaide’s ambitious producers.

Exit

There was, however, a casualty: John Morris. Many of those who sought his resignation were people whose careers he had fostered. Without the counsel of Stuart Jay, the man who had been forthright enough in 1978 to insist that John Morris bring his partner, Ray Peterson, to Adelaide to make a home, Morris found the consular as well as the creative challenges of running the corporation were too much for him alone.

As these events were unfolding in Adelaide, in Sydney, the New South Wales Film and Television Office (NSWFTO) had replaced the New South Wales Film Corporation and had advertised for a chief executive. In a newspaper article in the Sunday Mail, Morris diplomatically explained the reasons for his departure: ‘When I came [to South Australia] I promised myself that I would stay until I felt the SA film industry was established and secure. I believe I have achieved that and, at 55, I am looking for a change and another big challenge.’ But the headline said it all: ‘Why I cannot work for SA’. Christabel Hirst wrote: ‘a lot of unsympathetic and inaccurate media publicity had prompted his move to Sydney’.

After fifteen years building a film industry in South Australian, John Morris seized the opportunity to return to Sydney, first to run the NSWFTO and then, from late January 1990, the Australian Film Finance Corporation, the Commonwealth funded film bank that had been established to replace the fiscal mechanism afforded by Division 10BA as the avenue of Commonwealth support for the Australian film industry. From this position he retired in mid-1997, honoured in the industry. He died in April 2003.

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135 Ibid.
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURAL POLICY FORMATION: The States’ Patronage of Film Production in Australia, 1970–1988

CHAPTER FOUR: The Victorian Film Corporation / Film Victoria

“Picnic At Hanging Rock”... It moved me to such an extent that when I was in Melbourne I felt impelled to visit Hanging Rock.

J. A. Elliott MLA (Qld.)

As with the South Australian Film Corporation, the establishment and early years of the Victorian Film Corporation, now called Film Victoria, were examined in my masters thesis ‘Two Models of Government Intervention in the Australian Film Industry’. Although some of the salient details are reiterated here, this chapter augments and extends the story to the late 1980s.

The ‘Theft’ of Hanging Rock

It was a matter of dismay to Victorian film-makers that Picnic at Hanging Rock (Peter Weir 1976), a film named for a prominent Victorian landmark, carried the name of the South Australian Film Corporation, and that its makers, Pat Lovell, the McElroy brothers, and Peter Weir, were all Sydney-based. Indeed, the ‘theft’ of Hanging Rock had been raised in the Victorian parliament as a source of cultural shame.

There had been close film industry links between Melbourne and Adelaide. Phillip Adams and Irving Saulwick, who prepared the feasibility study for the South Australian government, were Melbourne-based, and the South Australian branch of the Australian Labor Party had links with Cambridge Films in Melbourne, one of whose principals, John Dixon, had directed the TV campaign for the 1965 and 1968 elections.

By the early 1970s, Victoria was home to a number of successful film production companies, including Crawford Productions, the country’s leading producer of television drama. The state also enjoyed a sophisticated public film culture through the numerous film societies and the activities of the State Film Centre, a legacy of the visit of John Grierson in 1940. In addition, both the National Film Theatre and the Australian Film Institute had been founded in Melbourne.

Though the state was governed by a Liberal–Country Party coalition and as recently as 1969 had prosecuted an actor and a theatre director for obscenity over the staging of the play Norm & Ahmed, the new premier, Rupert (Dick) Hamer, was a progressive politician in the mould of South Australia’s Don Dunstan. On election to office in 1972, Hamer had instituted a ministry for the arts, the first such ministry in Australia.

Although the government was potentially supportive of a state film agency, it was the opposition spokesperson on the arts, Barry Jones, who first raised the issue in the Victorian parliament, during the grievance debate on 9 October 1975. Subsequently, on 13 November, Jones moved in the Legislative Assembly: ‘that this house is of the opinion that a Victorian film corporation should be established’ and declared, ‘I believe that we have a satisfactory but not perfect model for Victoria in the South Australian Film Corporation’. State hubris set a limit to the salutation of the achievements of the South Australian Film Corporation.

When Jones moved that motion, it is likely that he already knew that Hamer had commissioned the recently formed Victorian Council of the Arts to report on the state of the film industry. Indeed, the council was concurrently examining issues of ‘dance Education; the making of fine jewellery; historical research and conservation; orchestral requirements in Victoria; and the Australian National Memorial Theatre’. Certainly, Jones and Hamer, though on opposite sides of the chamber, ‘had a very good working relationship and there

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4 Ibid., pp. 111, 112.
5 Ina Bertrand, ‘Victoria, History and Images’, in Brian McFarlane, Geoff Mayer, Ina Bertrand (eds), The Oxford Companion to Australian Film, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1999, p. 517.
7 The speech reads like a rehearsal for the motion of one month later, proposing the formation of the Victorian Film Corporation. The anecdotes and evidence cited are the same. Perhaps Jones was taking the political temperature of such a move. Victorian Parliamentary Debates, vol. 323, 9 October 1975, pp. 7394, 7395.
were a number of politically sensitive issues’ on which they could cooperate.\textsuperscript{10} This was one such occasion, though Hamer, when interviewed, insisted that such collaboration had always been ‘informal’, in pursuit of ‘common objectives’.\textsuperscript{11}

Hamer replied to Jones’ motion on 13 November, saying:

\begin{quote}
I am sure the honourable member, being well informed on this subject, is aware that under Mr Colin Bennett a sub-committee\textsuperscript{12} of the [Victorian] Council [of the Arts] is examining the proposition that Victoria should have a film corporation.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

It is hard to date exactly the commencement of work by the sub-committee. The research methodology employed suggests that work must have commenced by mid-1975\textsuperscript{14}—that is, well before Jones’ speech of 9 October. Given this and Jones’ likely knowledge of the sub-committee, his actions can be seen in three lights:

\begin{enumerate}
\item As a declaration that bipartisan support for the establishment of a film corporation was available;
\item As a means of ensuring that the government was locked in to some action on the committee’s recommendations, recommendations that were likely to support a film corporation;
\item As an attempt to win votes from the film lobby, who were, according to Adams, favourable to Hamer.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{10} Barry Jones, unpublished interview, Commonwealth Offices, Melbourne, 13 December 1994.
\textsuperscript{11} Sir Rupert Hamer, unpublished interview, Old Treasury Building, Melbourne, 11 February 1998.
\textsuperscript{12} Members of the sub-committee were, as chairman Peter Rankin, chief executive of Clemenger Advertising, member of the Victorian Council of the Arts (and, later, first chair of the Victorian Film Corporation), Colin Bennett, film critic for the \textit{Age} and member of the Victorian Council of the Arts, Alan Finney (Roadshow Film Distributors) and David Swift, the Director of the State Film Centre of Victoria. These are the names cited on the cover of the report \textit{Film in Victoria. An Industry Overview 1975}, authored by the sub-committee but, in this reply to Jones, Hamer identified Bennett as chair of the sub-committee. In a later answer to a question on notice (Victorian Parliamentary Debates, vol. 326, p. 1188), Hamer simply named the members.
\textsuperscript{13} Victorian Parliamentary Debates, vol. 325, 13 November 1975, p. 8590.
\textsuperscript{14} The report is undated but the methodology (mail survey, follow up interviews, etc) described for the study suggest that it could not have been done in fewer than about twelve weeks. Bernie Stewart, then deputy director of the ministry, thought twenty weeks. Gil Brealey gave testimony to the committee after the announcement of his resignation from the SAFC (August 1976) but before its act was amended to reconstitute the board. The amendments to the act were assented to on 20 November 1975.
\textsuperscript{15} O’Donnell, pp. 117–18.
There is little doubt that Hamer was alert to the influence of the arts cognoscenti. Phillip Adams recalled that Hamer was ‘beloved of the Left’ and ‘realised that the arts / intelligentsia push were very valuable’ to him politically.\(^\text{16}\)

‘Film in Victoria. An Industry Overview—1975’

As expected, the film sub-committee of the Victorian Council of the Arts recommended the formation of ‘a special State film organisation [to be called the Victorian Film Board]’.\(^\text{17}\) The role of such an organisation would be to:

- Encourage and stimulate the film industry in Victoria
- Provide funds, facilities and counsel to achieve that end
- Undertake film making for the State Government by overseeing script development and production through outside production houses
- Participate in feature film making by entering joint ventures with local or overseas groups.\(^\text{18}\)

The report continued:

> It is also fundamental to our thinking that the State Film Centre remain a separate entity. The South Australian Film Corporation has assumed responsibility for the State’s adult film library and school film library. This is now recognised a having been an error of judgement.\(^\text{19}\)

Gil Brealey from the South Australian Film Corporation had warned, in testimony to the sub-committee, that ‘the State Film Library should be quite separate from a production function’ as the approach to management required of each was different.\(^\text{20}\) Such advice doubtless pleased David Swift, the head of the State Film Centre and a member of the sub-committee, who must have been concerned lest the proposed new organisation subsume his own.

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18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., p. 10.
20 Ibid., p. 34.
Despite the advice, this merger occurred some years later, with the formation of Cinemedia on 1 July 1997.\(^{21}\) The results were adverse to both the State Film Centre and the Victorian Film Corporation, which had, by that time, been renamed Film Victoria.\(^{22}\)

The report went on to propose that the new organisation have a board of management of eight that would include the two senior members of its staff, the executive director and the finance director. There would be, in addition, the ‘Director of the [Ministry of the] Arts’,\(^{23}\) and a representative of the Treasury, in ex officio capacities, and four directors drawn from the industry and having expertise in ‘film-making, distributing, exhibiting, teaching or television production or exhibition’.\(^{24}\) This was to be a working board; ‘there should be no “prominent citizens” as such’ and ‘vested interests should be recognised—and accepted’.\(^{25}\) Thus the report anticipated that the industry members of the board were likely to be applicants for funds from the board, and that there was an important political dimension to claims of conflicts of interest for members. It concluded, however, that ‘to ignore people with vested interests in such a small industry would lead to unimaginative mediocrity’.\(^{26}\)

The committee was wise to anticipate the problem. The first adverse publicity for the new organisation would focus exactly on that issue. After the first annual report of the corporation was released in August 1977, the *Age* headlined its story ‘Board men given most film grants’.\(^{27}\) Indeed, of total commitments of $951,637 reported, $526,500 had gone to projects associated with sitting board members.

Colin Bennett, a member of the original sub-committee and film critic for the *Age*, was left to defend the ‘vested interest’ provisions of the report that he had co-authored, but nevertheless led criticism of the operation of the new Victorian Film Corporation. ‘I never imagined it [those provisions] might be taken as a licence to hand over 55 per cent of its finance for features to its own members’, he wrote in his regular newspaper column.\(^{28}\)


\(^{22}\) The merger was reversed by the incoming Labor government in 1999.

\(^{23}\) Now known as Arts Victoria, a division of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

\(^{24}\) Victorian Council for [sic] the Arts, p. 10.

\(^{25}\) Ibid, p. 11.

\(^{26}\) Ibid.

\(^{27}\) ‘Board men given most film grants’, *Age*, 25 August 1977, p. 2.

\(^{28}\) Colin Bennett, ‘Film fund system is a charade’, *Age*, 27 August 1977, p. 19.
By that time, Bennett, who seemed to feel that he had been passed over for appointment to the board of the new corporation, had also resigned from the Victorian Council of the Arts. In a letter of resignation to L. A. Reason, chair of the council, Bennett wrote: ‘now that the Victorian Film Corporation is established and I am not associated with that body, I feel my value to the Council is limited’.  

Influences

Agitation for the establishment of a film corporation had begun at least four years earlier. Film-maker and teacher, Nigel Buesst, raised the prospects of Victoria following South Australia’s example with the newly elected Premier Hamer in an interview in the latter part of 1972. Mr Hamer at that time would not be drawn, answering simply that ‘they [South Australia] haven’t got it off the ground as far as I am aware’. Screen writer Cliff Green, who had written the screen play for Picnic at Hanging Rock, remembers several delegations to Hamer during that period but does not recall whether he was there as an individual or as vice president of the Australian Writers’ Guild, though he acknowledged that ‘I was at least a de facto representative of the Guild’. Several industry organisations including Crawford Productions and the Producers and Directors Guild of Australia (Victorian Division) were keenly interested in drawing the Victorian government into support for the industry.

Crawford Productions, founded by brother and sister Hector and Dorothy Crawford, had started life as a radio production house and had moved into television in the late 1950s with simple studio-based productions such as Consider Your Verdict, itself derived from their radio production of the same name. By the 1970s, Crawfords (as it was commonly known) had

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29 Bennett to Reason in Victorian Council of the Arts—General Correspondence, pt. 1, 52/5/3, Arts Victoria.
30 Nigel Buesst, ‘The Hamer arts ministry’, Lumièere, October 1972, p. 19. Gil Brealey was appointed director and chairman of the South Australian Film Corporation one month after this interview was published.
32 The Producers and Directors Guild of Australia (PDGA) was incorporated as a public company limited by guarantee on 4 June 1970 in Melbourne. It changed its name to Melbourne Directors Guild Limited on 28 October 1980, thence re-incorporated under Victorian Incorporated Associations Act 1981, as the Melbourne Screen & Theatre Guild (22 April 1986) and changed its name to the Producers & Directors Guild of Victoria on 4 October 1994. (Unpublished records in the possession of the Guild.)
34 Crawfords had close links with Dr Eric Westbrook, head of the Ministry of the Arts. Westbrook had, while director of the National Gallery of Victoria, moonlighted as an actor in radio editions of Consider Your Verdict. Dr Eric Westbrook, recorded interview, Castlemaine, Victoria, 27 February 1998.
grown to be the largest private television production house in Australia, with a slate of popular titles. Though the production values were limited by the financial returns from the Australian market, its police dramas were top-rating shows and Crawfords was the place-to-be for ambitious young drama directors.

Crawfords seemed always to be in perilous financial circumstances; certainly the company lacked the capital resources to develop modern studio facilities. They made do with an old three-storey warehouse on the banks of the Yarra River in the industrial suburb of Abbotsford, and therefore good studio facilities were central to Hector Crawford’s thinking. Risk capital, too, was an important issue to the company. Traditional investment sources would not risk money on script development, so that, if Crawfords were to develop higher quality television series, risk capital was required as, inevitably, some script development projects would come to nothing, at least in the short term.35

The Producers and Directors Guild of Australia—Victorian Division was vexed that the Australian Film Development Corporation had been established in Sydney as members felt Melbourne had a claim to be recognised as the centre of quality Australian cinema. The Guild itself had produced the portmanteau feature film, *Libido* (John B. Murray, Tim Burstall, Fred Schepisi, David Baker 1973), a film that had been critically well received and advanced the careers of all those who worked on it.36 Two years earlier, a leading figure in the Guild, John B. Murray, had produced and directed *The Naked Bunyip* (John B. Murray 1971), an examination of sexual mores in Australia. The film provoked hilarity, controversy and much publicity when the censors sought to cut sections and Murray, much to the annoyance of the ridiculed censors, replaced the scenes deemed offensive with animated sequences of a bunyip that mimicked the banned footage.

In addition, Melbourne was the home to film makers such as Giorgio Mangiamele, Brian Davies, Nigel Buesst, Brian Kavanagh and Tim Burstall, who worked in narrative cinema, and Arthur and Corinne Cantrill, pioneers of experimental cinema in Australia. Melbourne interests were little mollified by the presence of the administrative office of the Experimental Film and Television Fund at the Australian Film Institute in Melbourne because the fund,

35 Hector Crawford set out some of the issues of concern in ‘Commercial Television Programmes in Australia’ dated 14 September 1959 and ‘Statement to the Tariff Board Inquiry into Motion Picture films and Television Programmes’ dated 3 October 1972, copies in possession of author.

though important to the development of an industry, was small beer, being directed at new film-makers, and grants were limited to a maximum of $7,000 per project.\textsuperscript{37}

Strongly influencing the political climate, too, was what writer Cliff Green described as ‘a cultural–academic–critical lobby’. \textsuperscript{38} The film critic for the \textit{Age}, Colin Bennett, and the director of the Australian Film Institute and the Melbourne Film Festival, the Hungarian-born Erwin Rado,\textsuperscript{39} were among public figures supporting some government engagement in the film-production industry. This group also included literary figures like Stephen Murray-Smith, the editor of \textit{Overland}, a left-leaning literary journal that had championed the need for an Australian film and television industry since 1956,\textsuperscript{40} and academics such as Jack Clancy and John C. Murray, both pioneers of screen studies in Melbourne, and Brian Robinson, who had established Australia’s first film school at the Swinburne Technical College in Hawthorn. Despite strong industry representation, the new Australian Film and Television School was established in Sydney, rather than at Melbourne’s Swinburne College. Phillip Adams, for one, had campaigned strongly in favour of Swinburne.\textsuperscript{41}

For the many that wished to see greater state government involvement in the film industry, the creation of the South Australian Film Corporation gave that involvement a manifest form, a model for imitation and improvement.

The Victorian Film Corporation

In March 1976, Hamer’s Liberal–National coalition government faced the electorate and again retained office.\textsuperscript{42} The governor’s speech for the opening of the forty-seventh parliament committed the new government to ‘legislate for the formation of a State film corporation to encourage and support films and television production in Victoria’.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{37} Ken Berryman, “‘...Allowing young filmmakers to spread their wings’: The Educational Role of the Experimental Film and Television Fund”, MA thesis, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 1985.

\textsuperscript{38} Green, 27 June 1998.

\textsuperscript{39} Andrew Markus, ‘Erwin Rado: the man behind the Melbourne Film Festival’, \textit{Australian Jewish News}, 20 July 2001, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{40} Gerry Grant (Joe Joseph), ‘TV and US’, \textit{Overland}, no. 7, Autumn–Winter 1956 (also dated July 1956), pp. 7, 8.

\textsuperscript{41} Adams, 30 July 1998.


\textsuperscript{43} Victorian Parliamentary Debates, vol. 326, 13 April 1976, p. 3.
The bill to ‘constitute a Victorian Film Corporation’ was introduced into the Legislative Assembly on 11 May 1976. It received a second reading on 13 May 1976 (when Hamer spoke to the bill) and subsequently on 1 June, when it passed through the remaining stages. Royal assent was received on 8 June 1976 and the names of the members of the corporation were announced on 3 August.

The members were Graham Bourke (Village-Roadshow, distributors and exhibitors), Nigel Dick (Victorian Broadcasting Network, television), Cliff Green (screen writer), Natalie Miller (Sharmill Films, a small distributor of European films), John McLachlan (program manager, ATV channel 0), Fred A. Schepisi (film director and partner in Film House, a prominent production company), and, as the independent chairman, Peter Rankin (Clemengers, a prominent advertising agency). Rankin had chaired the sub-committee of the Victorian Council of the Arts, which prepared the overview of the industry. Absent from the board was any representation from the film culture lobby, such as film critic, Colin Bennett, who had used his column in the Age to promote a state commitment to the film industry, or the long-standing director of the Melbourne Film Festival and the Australian Film Institute, Erwin Rado.

The board met for the first time on 11 August 1976, with an initial investment fund of $1,000,000, two and a half times the initial annual borrowing authority of the South Australian Film Corporation. Eric Westbrook reported that he had told Hamer that film-making was an expensive business and the corporation had to do its job well or not at all.

Almost seven years had elapsed since Prime Minister Gorton had committed Commonwealth government support to the Australian film-production industry: Pike and Cooper list ninety-eight Australian films as having been released in those years. The renaissance of the film production industry was well advanced—Victoria had some catching up to do.

44 Ibid., 11 May 1976, p. 750.
45 Sun News Pictorial, 4 August 1976, p. 17.
46 Now Network 10, at the time ATV channel 0, owned by Sir Reg Ansett.
47 Erwin Rado did serve as a board member in the mid-1980s, not long before his death.
48 Victorian Film Corporation, Annual Report 1976/77, Melbourne, September 1977, p. 2. This was also the initial investment capital of the Australian Film Development Corporation in 1970.
50 Pike and Cooper, Australian Film 1900–1977.
Though the chairman, Peter Rankin, wrote in the corporation’s first annual report that ‘the appointment of the Chief Executive we believed would be the most important decision of our first year’, the urgency to become an active player in the industry meant that investment decisions had to proceed without delay. So the board itself, with the part-time support of an assistant research officer from the Ministry for the Arts, Andrew Knight, undertook its own project assessments and administration. This placed the board at the centre of all decision-making, a practice that was part of the organisation’s culture until well into the 1980s.

By July 1977 the corporation had committed $951,637 to production investments and $32,700 to script development. The initial slate of ten films included several that would become key works of Australian cinema: The Getting of Wisdom (Bruce Beresford 1977), The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith (Fred Schepisi 1978) and Mad Max (George Miller 1979). Among the six script development investments were My Brilliant Career (Gill Armstrong 1979) and Dimboola (John Duigan 1979). The corporation also committed $85,031 to four documentary projects and $119,000 to Young Ramsay, a medical drama from Crawford Productions. The grand total was $1,118,368.

The appointment of an executive officer took many months. Dr Eric Westbrook, the Director of the Ministry for the Arts and (informally) an ex-officio member of the board, recalled that there was a diversity of views about the qualities required in an executive director. ‘There was intense disagreement—mind you, there was intense disagreement about everything—I mean, meetings were riotous ... they couldn’t agree on anything.’ But in time agreement was reached and the first executive officer of the corporation, Jill Robb, took up her appointment on 13 April 1977. The Victorian Film Corporation was able to declare that it had sought ‘a chief executive with the highest possible skills who shared our philosophies’

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52 Andrew Knight credits his experience with the corporation as confirming his ambition to become a writer. Wading through the flood of applications, he decided that he could do at least as well as most applicants. Andrew Knight, recorded interview, Port Melbourne, 24 July 1998. Knight’s recent credits include ABC television’s Sea Change.
53 Annual Report 1976–77, p. 7, shows an investment of $50,000 in Mad Max; however, it seems that the production did not take up the offer as Kennedy–Miller claimed that there was no government money in the production. Michael Thornhill suggested that the reason the offer was not taken up was that the producers, Kennedy–Miller, may not have been able to provide scripts and budgets for Mad Max to the satisfaction of the board of the VFC. Michael Thornhill, recorded interview, Redfern, 5 February 2005.
54 Westbrook, 27 February 1998.
and ‘was unanimous in its choice of Mrs Jill Robb, the ... Marketing Manager of the South Australian Film Corporation’. Of her first days, Jill Robb recalled:

When I first arrived we had no premises and we had no staff, except Andrew [Knight]... we were the “odd couple”, we had a wonderful time. So my first job really was to set up some sort of administration and fight to get out of the Ministry for the Arts, where I had a corner office next to Bernie Stewart, and get an individual profile [for the corporation], and stop ... because we were a statutory authority ... and stop being treated as a section of the ministry.

In addition, Robb brought to the corporation a clear awareness of the importance of the market to both feature film and television production, learned during her visits to Cannes in 1975 and 1976. In Adelaide, she had been critical of ‘the “produce first, market second” approach’ of the South Australian Film Corporation and, as early as February 1975, argued ‘that someone from marketing should accompany production personnel to briefing meetings with government departments, as marketing could make a worthwhile contribution to early discussions regarding production of films’. Doubtless, such commercial nous made Robb an attractive candidate for the position of executive director.

As an agency of the Victorian government, reporting to the Ministry for the Arts, the Victorian Film Corporation act set a small precedent. The corporation’s executive officer was appointed by the board, not the minister, hence the officer’s first loyalty was to the corporation. This precedent was important and became another feature of the corporation’s culture. As it was embodied in the legislation it would empower a later executive officer to deal directly with the Victorian treasury and circumvent the influence of the Ministry for the Arts, which, for a time, seemed adverse to the corporation’s interests.

56 Ibid. At the time Robb accepted the appointment, she was, according to the minutes of the meeting of the board of the SAFC of 15 December 1976, ‘Executive Producer, Features and Television’. Presumably, her formal title at the time of application for the job was Marketing Manager.

57 Apparently on secondment, as his name is not among the staff listed on the first annual report.

58 Jill Robb, unpublished interview, Middle Park, 7 July 1998. At that time she speaks of, the VFC was housed with the ministry at 168 Exhibition Street, Melbourne. Bernie Stewart was Deputy Director, something of a grey eminence behind the more colourful directors, Eric Westbrook and his successor, Paul Clarkson. Ministry staff, however, called him the ‘Black Prince’.

59 SAFC board meeting, 4 February 1975, in SAFC microfiche: ‘Board: Minutes of Meetings 1–108’.

60 Bernie Stewart, former Deputy Director, Ministry for the Arts, recorded interview, Melbourne, 1 July 1998.
There was also a popular belief, expressed in writing by John Harrison, the second chairman of the corporation, in 1983, that ‘until now, the corporation, both as the Victorian Film Corporation and as Film Victoria, has not had a formal policy—preferring to consider policy matters as they arose’. 61 This is not quite correct. From the beginning the corporation was clear on its objectives—a statement of policy was published in Cinema Papers in January 1977 62—even though the specific forms of assistance to the Victorian film industry, and their administration, evolved in response to need and over time.

The first chairman of the corporation, Peter Rankin, set out those objectives in the corporation’s first annual report:

The agreed objectives which define the parameters within which we operate are:

1. Scope.
   To energetically pursue a policy of encouraging the production in this state of films with high standards of quality. It is recognised that high quality material cannot always be produced without financial risk. Thus economic viability and aesthetic significance will be considered conjointly and also in isolation, so that projects supported will fall into three categories, viz:

   i) Those that have apparent economic viability as well as aesthetic significance.
   ii) Those that have apparent economic viability, and not necessarily, in the opinion of the corporation aesthetic significance.
   iii) Those that in the opinion of the corporation have little or no apparent economic viability but do have undoubted aesthetic significance.

2. Facilities.
   To encourage the provision of adequate and up-to-date equipment and facilities for film makers in this state.

62 Uncredited, ‘The corporations are coming’, Cinema Papers, Issue 11, January 1977, pp. 236, 278. The comments reported were very similar to statements in the first annual report.
3. Production Assistance.
To assist film makers in a variety of ways, including financial aid ranging from grants to investments, and facilitation aid including technical resources and community facilities.

To provide services and advice to government departments proposing to use the film medium for promotional or educational purposes.  

When questioned about these goals in the light of his 1983 statement, John Harrison said that the board was aware of these initial policy statements but that, as time passed, the demands and needs of the industry had changed, and the board found it increasingly desirable to evaluate each project or proposal on its own merits rather than trying to measure it against a rigid framework.  

Thus, in November 1983, the corporation published a new statement of policy after wide consultation with the industry, a policy that was more process-orientated than goal-driven.

Jill Robb remained chief executive for a little over two years, vacating the position on 29 June 1979 to establish Syme International Productions at the invitation of Ranald McDonald. It seems that Phillip Adams had judged that Robb had been at the corporation long enough and was probably getting bored. He had telephoned McDonald, then managing director of the Age newspaper, whose business interests included AAV, the largest audio-visual facilities house in Victoria, and suggested that McDonald create a job for her.

Ross Dimsey

Ross Dimsey became director of the Victorian Film Corporation in December 1979. He came from an altogether different background from Jill Robb and had once traded under the business name of ‘Celluloid Brickie’, suggesting a certain workmanlike, if not rough-and-

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63 Rankin, Annual Report 1976–77, p. 2. See also ‘The corporations are coming’.
66 Robb, 7 July 1998.
68 Personal recollection of the author.
ready, approach to cultural production. John B. Murray had been sounded out for the position at the end of July by Tim Burstall, but had declined.  

Dimsey, originally qualified as a pharmacist, was drawn into film-making while working in the United Kingdom. On returning to Melbourne, he worked mainly with the production house Bilcock & Copping on documentary and commercials, and was assistant director on Stork (Tim Burstall 1971), Libido (1973), Alvin Rides Again (David Bilcock & Robin Copping 1974) and End Play (Tim Burstall 1976). He had also written scripts for two sexploitation film produced by Anthony I. Ginnane—the first, Fantasm (Richard Bruce [Richard Franklin] 1976) under his own name, and the second, Fantasm Comes Again (Eric Ram [Colin Eggleston] 1977), as Robert Derrière—before directing the successful family film, Blue Fire Lady (1977).  

A little over a year earlier, John Harrison had replaced Peter Rankin as chairman, Rankin’s term of appointment having concluded. Under Harrison and Dimsey’s leadership, the corporation completed one important initiative and negotiated a second of considerable vision, perhaps audacity. Completed was the Starch Factory Studio, a project that saw the conversion of an industrial site in Port Melbourne with substantial brick and stone buildings into residential apartments, a sound stage and production offices. These latter facilities were renovated by a developer in consultation with the corporation. They were urgently needed for feature film production, as the only sound-proofed studios in Melbourne were those owned by the television stations. The corporation took a long-term lease on the studio and office sites, and the facility was officially opened by the Minister for the Arts, Norman Lacy, on 29 June 1980, but not before Roadgames (Richard Franklin 1980) had used them for interiors.  

The second venture concerned the amalgamation of the principal film interests of the Victorian government into a new entity, Film Victoria. These interests were the corporation itself, the State Film Centre (an extensive film library that was a cornerstone of screen culture in Victoria), and the Audio-Visual Resources Branch of the Victorian Education Department. Other government film production units such as those of the

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69 Telegram, Burstall to Murray, 30 July 1979, and reply of 31 July 1979, copies courtesy of John B. Murray.


72 Harrison, Fourth Annual Report, p. 3.
Department of Agriculture or the State Electricity Commission were excluded from amalgamation plans, but authority over them was contained in section 15 of the proposed Film Victoria Act. The act would require that ‘a government department or public statutory authority which desires to produce or have produced a film or sound recording shall give notice of the fact to the Corporation’ and empowered the corporation to ‘approve or refuse to approve the production of the film or sound recording’.  

The source of the proposal was not the Victorian Film Corporation, according to John Harrison. He reported that the board’s response to the proposal had been quite cool, as wider responsibility would be a distraction and new appointments to the board would dilute the control of the film practitioners: he believed the proposal originated in the Ministry for the Arts, either with the new director, Paul Clarkson, or the new minister, Norman Lacy, a junior minister to whom Hamer had handed the arts portfolio so as to direct his own time to solving economic problems confronting the state. It may be that one or two ‘new brooms’ were sweeping through the ministry in unison.

Despite ‘nearly two years of preparation and consultation’, the amalgamation had a number of opponents, especially in screen culture and education circles. The State Film Centre was the longest established of the organisations with the largest number of staff, so had ‘elder’ status, but was expected to defer to the junior partner. In addition, Dimsey’s involvement in the sexploitation film, Fantasm, was cited as making him unsuitable to head an organisation that would, in part, be responsible for making films for children. Nevertheless, the coalition government, now led by Lindsay Thompson, proceeded with the legislation.

The Film Victoria Act was proclaimed on 10 March 1982, the first practical effect being the change of name and the enlargement of the board, which ‘shall consist of a Chairman and ten other members’. The appointment of additional board members went ahead to reflect the new character of the organisation. Nigel Dick and Tim Burstall retired and Dr Patricia Edgar, Dr Graham Whitehead and Dr Ian Allen were appointed as nominees of the Education Department, together with Ken Green, Secretary of the Premier’s Department, and John

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73 Section 15(1) and (2), Film Victoria Act, F. D. Atkinson Government Printer, Melbourne 1981, p. 8.
74 Harrison, 8 March 2005.
76 Clause 3 and 5 (1), A Bill to establish a Body Corporate by the Name of Film Victoria, to abolish the Victorian Film Corporation, to repeal the Victorian Film Corporation Act 1976 and certain other enactments and for other purposes, F. D. Atkinson, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1981, p. 3.
Strapp from regional television. Sarah Guest was re-appointed though she is not specifically mentioned in that year’s chairman’s report.\textsuperscript{77}

Also during the year Messrs Tony Staley, Robert Ward, Phillip Adams and Brian Robertson were appointed as full members, and Messrs Bill Marshall, Ian Jones, Ian Crawford and Leon Hill (previously a full member) were appointed as deputy members.\textsuperscript{78}

It was, however, a change of government that ultimately determined the future of the amalgamated Film Victoria. On 8 April 1982, for the first time in almost twenty-eight years, Victoria elected a Labor government,\textsuperscript{79} and the new Minister for the Arts, Race Mathews, indicated in an address to the corporation ‘that it was the new Government’s view that the Audio-Visual Resources Branch of the Education Department and the State Film Centre should remain autonomous’.\textsuperscript{80}

This redirection of Film Victoria’s policy confirms the influence of the teachers’ union on Labor’s arts and cultural policy, or at least the specifics of the amalgamation.\textsuperscript{81} While it was a disappointment to Dimsey and Harrison and those on the board and in the Education Department who had negotiated the amalgamation, more urgent problems faced the industry and demanded immediate attention.

The flood of investment that the initial Division 10BA tax concessions\textsuperscript{82} had brought into the industry had ebbed, among the problems being the requirement that the productions earn income within twelve months. Some films had been rushed to completion with adverse effects on quality and others failed to be released for public exhibition and were traded between

\textsuperscript{77} Harrison, \textit{Sixth Annual Report}, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid. Of these Staley and Ward were previous board members.
\textsuperscript{80} Harrison, \textit{Sixth Annual Report}, p. 3. The author was present at Film Victoria for the announcement.
\textsuperscript{81} From 1979 to 1990 the VTU, VSTA and TTUV (previously the TTAV) ran campaigns on a co-operative basis and influenced the state elections in 1982 and again in 1985. The 1982 election saw the formation of the John Cain Labor Government. This was a curious coincidence given that the VTU was largely responsible for the election of the John Cain (Senior) Labor Government in 1945. See ‘Australian Education Union, Victoria, History’ http://www.aeuvic.asn.au/about/1059104646_31459.html, sighted 16 February 2005.
related companies. Investors had become more wary, and some had opted for other tax-gearing schemes like one promoted by John Picton-Warlow’s United American and Australasian Pty Ltd in Perth and two other companies. It was a tax deferment scheme devised under Section 51(1) of the tax act that offered gearings up to 375 per cent, but put most of its funds into overseas films like *Arthur* (Steve Gordon 1981), *Superman III* (Richard Lester 1983), and *Thornbirds* (Daryl Duke 1983). A world economic recession had made money hard to find for highly speculative ventures like film production. The *Sydney Morning Herald*, in noting that thirty films had been entered in the 1982 Australian Film Institute Awards, pessimistically speculated that ‘only five or six local films will be made this year [1982–83]’. Its specialist writer, Harry Robinson, was only slightly less pessimistic. ‘In 1981–82 we made 36 feature films. In 1982–83 we might make a dozen. The sky fell overnight.’

For Film Victoria, an immediate response was legislative amendments that were introduced into parliament in November. According to the minister, Race Mathews, the amendment to enable ‘Film Victoria to produce films and promote schemes for funding them’—that is to act as a producer in its own right, authority it previously did not have. He believed that these changes would allow the corporation to aid inexperienced but talented film-makers who yet lacked the skills to raise funds and manage large projects themselves.

In addition, the industry through the Film Action Group, coordinated by Tom Jeffery in Sydney, was lobbying the Commonwealth government to lift the one-year qualifying period for financial returns. The lobbying was successful and those changes, and the outlawing of the 51(1) schemes from 30 December 1982, revived investor interest in Australian production and Division 10BA schemes. The industry revived, driven by the new interest in miniseries for television, which were less risky investments than cinema production. The revival also instituted a new role for state film agencies, that of investors’ representative, in essence an expert manager standing between the investor and the producer as agent for the investor, but with understanding of the problems producers face.

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Ross Dimsey saw out his three-year appointment and his departure coincided with the reorganisation of the board in December 1982 to reflect the government’s no-amalgamation policy. John Harrison was re-appointed as chairman, along with members Phillip Adams, Sarah Guest and Robert Ward, ‘while Brian Robertson was appointed as an alternate member’. In addition:

New appointees to the Board who took up their duties in January 1983 are:
Mr John Clarke, Mr William [Bill] Marshall, Mr Erwin Rado, Ms Judi Stack and Mr Christopher Warner. Alternate members, as well as Mr Robinson are: Mr Colin Bennett, Mrs Elizabeth Connor, Mr Ian Crawford, Mr Cliff Green and Mrs Natalie Miller.

This was a board of a very different complexion from all previous ones, politically less conservative and more broadly culturally informed. John Clarke, originally from New Zealand, was a writer and satirist, better known by his stage name Fred Dagg. Erwin Rado was the founding director of the Melbourne Film Festival and the Australian Film Institute, while Judi Stack, the director of Open Channel, Melbourne’s access video production and resource centre, and Chris Warner, an independent producer, both in their early thirties, were young film-makers and administrators to be watched. The next few years were tumultuous times in the whole Australian film industry, and Film Victoria took great advantage of the opportunities presented.

Terence McMahon

To replace Ross Dimsey, Film Victoria selected Terence McMahon, a former ABC television journalist who had become an independent producer and director of sponsored documentary films. His appointment was announced on 9 March 1983, and he immediately set about a wide consultation with the industry, leading to the publication in November of a new policy statement, Film Victoria Policy, augmented with eighteen items to indicate to both staff and

89 Ibid.
90 Open Channel had been born out of the Melbourne Access Video and Media Centre, created by the Film and Television Board of the Australia Council in 1974. Judi Stack had proved an excellent administrator and negotiator in the process of rebirth of the organisation. She is now a senior manager at the Seven Network.
91 ‘Director leads Film Victoria’, Age, 10 March 1983, p. 10.
the industry how the policy would be implemented. Two important innovations were the establishment of a staff-based committee of management, and the yielding by the board of its absolute control of expenditure.

Item 6, of ‘Policy Implementation’ read:

The director has a delegation of $15 000 and all applications up to that sum will be considered by a Committee of Management of staff to consist of Director, Administrator and Projects Manager. Synopses and reports to be supplied to the Board at each meeting. Committee of Management to seek assistance if necessary. If a project exceeds $15 000, or if the total sum requested over a number of applications exceeds $25 000, then it will be considered by the Board. Only in the case of applications for more than $50 000 will Board members be asked to read scripts.

For amounts from $15 000 to $50 000 synopses and assessments by staff will be supplied. Scripts will be available if required by a Board member. With amounts of more than $50 000 the Board will interview applicants if it wishes.

After almost two years of operation, four sections of the policy, including this item, were amended. The first sentence was replaced by these two, which read:

The Director has a delegation of $30,000 and all applications up to this sum will be considered by a Committee of Management of staff to consist of not less that five of the following: Director, Deputy Director, Project Manager, Administration Manager, Management Accountant and Film Victoria Project Officer. The inclusion of non Project Division staff will be at the discretion of the Director.

92 Film Victoria Policy, F. D. Atkinson, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1983.

93 Ibid, p. 6. The figure of $25,000 was a compromise, according to a discussion paper on the future operation of the Committee of Management, written by McMahon in October 1985. In it he says that ‘the Board was almost evenly divided at the time of the policy review. In fact, the motion was carried by one vote. Terence McMahon, ‘Memo: Committee of Management’, dated 7 October 1985, in the possession of the author.

94 Amendment slip circulated with policy document after late 1985.
Policy Implementation item 6 was important in several ways. First, it recognised that the project staff, most drawn from the industry, some with considerable experience in production and direction, represented a valuable resource for the board. Second, it favoured creative risk-taking as applicants could sell their project directly to the decision-makers—the staff—rather than having the staff report the applicants’ proposals in written recommendations to the board. Third, it enabled the corporation to make rapid decision on small projects, most commonly script development proposals, and respond within a week, crucial to fostering a film-maker-friendly reputation.

Most important, the change prevented the accumulation of a backlog of applications and enabled the efficient expenditure of the budget because, ‘in September 1983 the Treasurer increased the Corporation’s works and services allocation from $1.2 million to $2.6 million, allowing $2.1 million for the Projects Division and $500,000 for the Documentary Division’.

Suddenly, there was a lot more money to invest.

John Harrison continued:

> With income from other sources, such as returns on previous investments, Film Victoria’s Projects Division had $3.6 million to allocate during 1983/84, and the Documentary Division, with contributions from Government Departments, had some $856,500 to commit to Government films.

> The Corporation’s administrative budget was increased from $356,000 to $554,000 and five extra staff positions were created, bringing Film Victoria’s staff complement to eighteen. This increase involved a reorganisation and the creation of the Production Liaison Division under Deputy Director John Kearney.

The increase in funding was a direct result of the relationship that McMahon had built with Treasury officials, in particular Colin Richardson, Chief Economist in the Department of Management and Budget (the Victorian treasury), and Jim Brumby, a journalist on the personal staff of the Labor Treasurer, Rob Jolly. While Film Victoria was technically a portfolio agency of the Ministry for the Arts, its status as a statutory authority enabled

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96 Ibid.
McMahon to bend protocol and go directly to the Department of Management and Budget to argue his case for more funds, rather than directing all communications through the ministry. It was a relationship of which the then director of the ministry, Paul Clarkson, did not approve.\(^\text{97}\) However, it got the money that mattered.

**The Boom Years**

John Harrison opened the *Eighth Annual Report* thus:

The year 1983/84 witnessed a dramatic turnaround in the fortunes of Film Victoria—and the Victorian film and television production industry. During 1982/83 Film Victoria was an investor in $3.25 million of film and television production which had attracted funds under Division 10BA of the Income Tax Assessment Act. During 1983/84 Film Victoria invested in some $29.95 million of production which was successful in raising funds under Division 10 BA. The Corporation’s investment in these projects was, on the average, less than 7\% of the gross budgets.\(^\text{98}\)

The argument made to the Department of Management and Budget had been an economic one, not a cultural one, and was well timed. The rising 10BA tide was one that no state film agency could afford to miss. The following year the economic performance of the sector improved further, the aggregate budgets of productions in which the corporation had an interest totalled $41 million, and exceeded 20 per cent of all Division 10BA-financed investment for the year.

The *Ninth Annual Report* further stressed the impact on the state’s economy, claiming that 530 full-time, year-long jobs had been created in 1983–84 and anticipated that the figure for 1984–85 would be higher again.\(^\text{99}\)

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\(^{97}\) Personal recollection of the author who was head of the Documentary Division 1982–87.

\(^{98}\) Harrison, *Eighth Annual Report*, p. 3.

Production Liaison Division

Apart from actual investment in productions, principally but not exclusively financed by Division 10BA schemes, there were two other important aspects of the investment work of Film Victoria, which the Production Liaison Division was established in February 1984 to manage. 100

One was the development of the Standard Exempt Offer Document, a form of prospectus that attracted ‘a class exemption approved by the National Companies and Securities Commission in March 1983’, 101 to which board member, Bill Marshall, a lawyer prominent in film financing, made a substantial contribution. The value of this framework document lay in the savings it afforded productions on small and medium budgets. As most productions were undertaken by a company formed for the purpose, each production required a separate prospectus if it was to invite the general public to invest. The writing of a prospectus from scratch, and negotiating its approval by the National Companies and Securities Commission, was a lengthy and costly process. But if the production met the criteria of the Standard Exempt Offer Document, then Film Victoria, as a delegate of the state’s Commissioner for Corporate Affairs, could expedite the issue of a prospectus ‘in a short time and at very little cost’. 102 It was a strategy that became very popular and, in the year ended 30 June 1986, forty-seven such prospectuses were issued. 103

The second activity, and one that earned income for Film Victoria, was the role of Investors’ Representative. The creation of the role was intended to give confidence to investors that their interests would be represented and defended as against the interests of the producers. It was a service that several of the state film agencies offered and, by June 1986, Film Victoria had filled this role on twenty-three productions.

100 Harrison, Eighth Annual Report, p. 4.
102 Harrison, Ninth Annual Report, p. 3.
The Decline of Division 10BA

The Division 10BA bubble was soon to burst. Taxation revenues foregone under the scheme rose from $60 million in 1982–83 to $155 million in 1984–85.\(^{104}\) As most of the investments were made in the last weeks of the financial year—frequently in the last hours—the cost to the Commonwealth was difficult to forecast, making national fiscal management ever more complex.\(^{105}\) In an attempt to rein in revenue costs, the initial 150 per cent gearing ratio on eligible investments, together with an exemption from tax on the first 50 per cent of net earnings that dated from 1981, was reduced to 133 per cent and 33 per cent respectively in August 1983, and a special production fund, administered by the AFC, was set up to cover the expected shortfall in investment capital.

Clearly, from the figure quoted for Film Victoria, these changes had little immediate impact as production activity lags investment decision by months at least. Thus production activity remained high in 1985–86, with Film Victoria having investment in $39 million worth of productions that year.\(^{106}\)

In September 1985 the gearing ratio and the net income shelter provisions were dropped to 120 per cent and 20 per cent respectively, despite a recommendation from a tax summit a month earlier that the provisions should be dispensed with entirely. The AFC had opposed the recommendation but it was clear that new arrangements between the industry and the Commonwealth government needed to be negotiated. This was further demonstrated when the top marginal rate of personal income tax was reduced from 60 per cent to 49 per cent making Division 10BA investments even less attractive to the personal investor.\(^{107}\)

In July 1988, the Australian Film Finance Corporation, a film bank, took over as the principal source of Commonwealth government backing for the Australian film production industry, leaving the AFC with its developmental and cultural role. For the state film agencies, this was not crucial. State budgets were not large enough to drive production decisions though they were sufficient to support production and stimulate innovation.


\(^{105}\) The author was executive producer at Film Victoria from 1982 to 1987. On a number of occasions investors’ funds were deposited in Western Australian banks after banks on the east coast had closed on 30 June.


\(^{107}\) Bertrand, ‘Finance’, in McFarlane, Mayer and Bertrand (eds), p. 158.
The Guard Changes

The Tenth Annual Report reflected these growing uncertainties but still was able to report that the corporation was an investor in a slate of feature and miniseries with budgets amounting to $39 million, in contrast to the $2,104,582 slate of four feature films and a thirteen part television series in its first year, a decade earlier. The Chairman noted that:

Those films funded in 1976/77 spent 97% of their budgets on “on screen” items. By 1985/86 the percentage spent on “on screen” items was closer to 87%. The finance and legal charges of the industry increased disproportionately with other costs.  

He cautioned that ‘while the industry is on the verge of becoming an established business, it is still very fragile and the Corporation has some concerns for the future’. And ‘the 1986/87 year could be a fairly lean period for the industry, not only in Victoria but Australia wide’.  

The report also noted the appointment of a lawyer, Greg Smith, as director of Film Victoria. Smith had replaced John Kearney as deputy director after Kearney left in July 1985. He then became acting director on the departure of Terence McMahon in November 1985. The appointment of someone from outside the industry—Smith had been a lawyer working in the housing and construction industry—marked a shift in expectations of the role of director, indicative of the professionalisation, if not the bureaucratisation, of state film agencies. In the case of Film Victoria, a process of politicisation was also underway.

Board member Gavin Anderson had been appointed to the position of deputy chairman of Film Victoria in November 1984, a position unfilled since Nigel Dick’s departure in 1981. Anderson was an investment advisor with close connections to the Labor Party. While it is recognised that appointments to boards of government agencies always have a political element to them—the contrast in membership of Film Victoria’s board before and after the election of the Cain Labor government in 1982 is a very good example—the appointment of Anderson, and ensuing events, is an extreme and unfortunate example of the hazards of political patronage.

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108 Harrison, Tenth Annual Report, p. 2.
109 Ibid., pp. 2, 3.
Harrison’s tenure as chairman had been extended by the Labor government, though he was a Liberal appointee, to a third term of three years, in deference to the regard in which he was held by the film industry, but his replacement thereafter as chairman was inevitable given the length of his appointment.

Anderson succeeded Harrison in December 1986 but his chairmanship proved hard for the professional staff of the organisation as well as the board. Within a year of his appointment, all but one of the senior staff had left the organisation. During the following years the turnover of staff was extensive and with them went the corporate memory of the organisation. ‘In 1989 alone 16 staff members, of a total staff complement of 18, left Film Victoria.’

Anderson was not re-appointed in December 1989, a decision that the minister privately signalled, in an attempt to forestall escalating expressions of dissatisfaction. This dissatisfaction was felt in the wider community: subsequently Anderson felt compelled to step down as chair of Melbourne’s annual Moomba Day celebrations. Then, in September 1993, he was gaoled for six years on six counts of theft from a quadriplegic man whose money he was entrusted to manage, and is now banned for life by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission from practice as a securities representative.

In July 1997, Film Victoria merged with the State Film Centre to form the Cinemedia Corporation. It was a shotgun wedding to save the State Film Centre, which was threatened with closure. The merged organisation was attractive to the Liberal–National coalition government, elected in 1992, as it could be characterised as a flagship agency. Cinemedia would stand at the forefront of new media developments, in the newly created ‘Department of State Development, Division of Multimedia, under the world’s first Minister for Multimedia, Alan Stockdale’.

110 Public Bodies Review Committee, Report on Film Victoria, Parliament of Victoria, Melbourne, 1991, p. 71. This review of Film Victoria has not been examined in any detail as it falls outside the period of the study.
111 Caroline Baum & Phillipa Hawker, ‘Dry eyes at exit of Film Vic boss’, Sunday Herald, 22 October 1989, p. 4. The author was informed of this as a committee member of the Producers & Directors Guild of Victoria.
115 Hooks, Smithies and Griffin, p. 7.
The union was troubled. The ‘Film Victoria’ role in Cinemedia became marginalised; the new board had other interests, the new Australian Centre for the Moving Image at Federation Square principal among them. Protests grew within the industry and, though Cinemedia established an internal enquiry into its own performance, and received confidential submissions damning the merger, little changed.116

Independent Again

The election of 19 October 1999 unexpectedly returned the Labor Party to the Treasury benches, and renewed calls to annul the Cinemedia marriage. In October 2000, the Victorian Film and Television Industry Task Force, established by the incoming government, recommended the re-establishment of Film Victoria as an independent agency within the arts portfolio. The government announced the re-birth of Film Victoria as an independent agency at a press conference on 22 March 2001, also deciding to ‘extend the Department of State and Regional Development’s strategic industry program to the film and television industries’.117

At the time of writing, Film Victoria is, administratively, a portfolio agency of Arts Victoria, reporting to the Minister for the Arts, within the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

116 The author attended several of the meetings as a representative of the Producers & Directors Guild of Victoria.
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CHAPTER FIVE: The Queensland Film Corporation

The film [Greenhide] is purely a Queensland production, that is, only Queensland materials have been used in the making of this film play.

Figaro, 1926

“Final Cut”…had the distinction of being the first all-Queensland production by a Queensland company with a Queensland crew, script by a Queensland writer and a majority investment by the Queensland Film Corporation.

Allen Callaghan, 1980

Use gloves.

Malcolm Smith, 1999

The Power of Words

‘Could’ is a cruel word. It promises everything and delivers nothing. The word was frequently used in reporting the birth and early years of the Queensland Film Corporation, a time of almost messianic belief in the prospect for a Hollywood on the Gold Coast. ‘Could’s’ first cousin ‘is likely’ also makes many appearances, as in the 1979 Courier-Mail headline ‘A $5 million film studio complex is likely for the Gold Coast, the State Film Corporation believes’. Although a decade would pass before the studios became a reality, the rhetoric surrounding the establishment and the operation of the Queensland Film Corporation was ever buoyant, ever weaving firm futures from the most flimsy of immediate threads.


2 Allen Callaghan, Queensland Film Corporation: Third Annual Report, Queensland Film Corporation, Brisbane, 1980, p. 2. In fact, the director of the film, Ross Dimsey, was a Victorian but his appointment was a last-minute decision at the suggestion of John Daniell of the AFC. (Conversation with Ross Dimsey, Brisbane, 5 July 1999.) The writer of Final Cut, Jonathan Dawson, was originally considered to direct.

3 Malcolm Smith (former head of the Tasmanian Film Corporation), offering personal advice on handling research on the QFC, telephone conversation, Sydney–Melbourne, 24 June 1999.

4 Des Partridge, ‘A $5 million film studio complex is likely for the Gold Coast, the State Film Corporation believes’ Courier Mail, 3 July 1979, p. 9.
The same article reported that the ‘retiring chairman of the two-year-old Film Corporation (Mr. Syd Schubert) said ... Queensland appeared to be the only State with major film activity planned for the next three years’. Surely these were words for local consumption only because, in the following three years, sixty Australian feature films were produced, only two of which resulted from any plans of the Queensland Film Corporation.\(^5\)

**Precursors and the Burne Dynasty**

Television broadcasting commenced in Brisbane in 1959\(^6\) and employment in television created a pool of people with craft skills in production and creative ambition for authorship. With the emergence of the South Australian Film Corporation in 1972, the formation of similar agencies in all states of Australia had become almost inevitable.

After Charles and Elsa Chauvel moved to Sydney in the early 1930s, the Burne family, owners of Kinetone Productions, Kinetone Laboratories and Race Films, came to dominate commercial film production in Brisbane. By the mid-1960s, they had been joined by a new generation of competitors such as Cameracraft Film Productions, Jumbuck Productions (a subsidiary of Channel Seven), and Martin–Williams Films Pty Ltd, a partnership of cinematographer Vic Martin and television journalist, Mike Williams, later a driving force behind the formation of the Queensland Film Corporation.\(^7\)

Patriarch Al Burne had left the employ of the Queensland government in 1929\(^8\) and government interest in film production lapsed for a time, perhaps inhibited by the cost of sound production and by the depression. However, in the late 1940s, ‘the State Education Department ... set up a film library in a cluster of surplus American army huts at Kelvin Grove.

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\(^5\) These figures are drawn from Scott Murray (ed.), *Australian Film 1978–1994*, Oxford University Press in association with the Australian Film Commission and *Cinema Papers*, Melbourne, 1995, pp. 27–117.

\(^6\) Brisbane Television Ltd (BTQ) and Queensland Television Ltd (QTQ) received their licences on 1 December 1958. QTQ commenced operations on 16 August 1959 and BTQ on 1 November 1959. Australian Broadcasting Control Board, Report and Recommendations to the Postmaster-General on Applications for a Licence for a Commercial Television Service in the Brisbane Area, in the Adelaide Area and in the Perth Area, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra, 1964, pp. 6, 7.

\(^7\) Mike Williams, unpublished interview, West End, Brisbane, 10 July 1999, and recollections of the author.

A film unit which made 16mm films and 35mm film strips and slide sets was added later. During the 1950s and 1960s, various state departments, including the Department of Agriculture (again), the Department of Lands and Irrigation, and the Department of Public Instruction, were active in film-making.

In the 1970s however, the government’s use of film for promotion and propaganda purposes rose sharply. The Queensland State Public Relations Bureau released nine films in 1972 alone, and the name ‘Joh Bjelke-Petersen’ is associated with 101 titles held by ScreenSound. At least twenty-four of these titles appear to be government-initiated productions for television, including Christmas messages and the Premier’s TV Reports, colloquially and collectively referred to as the ‘Joh Show’.

This period coincides with the appointment of a former ABC television journalist, Allen Callaghan, as ‘Government News and Information Officer’ and the subsequent employment of a state cinematographer, Brian Benson. Benson frequently accompanied Bjelke-Petersen around the state and shot footage for the Joh Shows for Callaghan. For example, ‘on a Torres Strait trip [Benson] made a television film which finished with the Premier being interviewed about the border problem [with New Guinea]. The Premier’s interviewer, of course, was his press secretary, Allen Callaghan, although this was not stated by the TV channel that broadcast the program’. Callaghan’s influence expanded the government’s use of film. He pioneered what is now called the video news release and, as will be argued, was crucial to the creation of the Queensland Film Corporation, as well as to its disgrace and subsequent closure. Appendix 7 explores aspects of the Queensland film industry from 1930 to 1970 in more detail.

11 Ibid., sighted 26 October 1999. ScreenSound is again known as the National Film and Sound Archive.
13 Townsend, p. 307. Townsend reports that Callaghan ‘preferred to be called the Premier’s Media Adviser or Public Relations Consultant—later he was officially known as the Premier’s Press Secretary, a normally designated position in the public service.’
14 Lunn, p. 112.
Johannes Bjelke-Petersen was the least likely of state premiers to establish a film corporation or support a cultural enterprise. Despite being an avowed, perhaps devout, Lutheran, he seemed so indifferent to anything but materialist values. Indeed, in the early post-war years, as the newly elected member for the formerly Labor-held seat of Nanango, Bjelke-Petersen railed against the expenditure of scarce foreign exchange on the importation of cinema films for entertainment. ‘Very necessary farm machinery’, he said, ‘is severely restricted while such things as films receive priority and are treated as if they were a necessity. What a warped outlook on the part of those responsible!’

At that particular time, Bjelke-Petersen was expanding his land-clearing business but could not import the big bulldozers he wanted for the job. It is an early example of Bjelke-Petersen’s conflation of the interests of the state with his personal interests.

Throughout his life, Bjelke-Petersen maintained an austere, Calvinist outlook and took little interests in the creative arts, even after becoming premier in August 1968. Journalist and author Hugh Lunn reported:

Traditionally, the walls of the state leader’s office contained paintings from the Queensland Art Gallery which were changed regularly. Bjelke-Petersen soon made it clear he had little knowledge of or interest in art and preferred to have paintings chosen for him. Later he stopped borrowing from the gallery at all.

In the 1970s, Queensland was mercilessly lampooned in the interstate press as a backward, cultural wasteland as this cartoon illustrates.

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15 Quoted in ibid., p. 52. Flo Bjelke-Petersen may have been less hostile. The March / April 1972 edition of Lumiere reported on page 15 that ‘a film described by the Minister for Labour and the Arts, Mr Herbert, as the best film he had seen on the Great Barrier Reef, was screened at Parliament House by the Mrs Bjelke-Petersen Welfare Committee’. The film, The Living Wall, was produced by Brisbane commercial photographers L & D Keen for Brisbane businessman Frank Sharpe, a consultant to Bell Helicopters Australia Pty Ltd. Doubtless, Bell aircraft were used in the production of the film and featured prominently.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., p.70.

Nevertheless, during the terms of successive Bjelke-Petersen governments the vast Southbank arts complex—the Cultural Centre development—was commenced and the Queensland Film Corporation established.

Queensland’s Cultural Revolution

Sir Leo Hielscher, in 1999 chair of the Treasury Corporation, was under-treasurer to Sir Gordon Chalk, leader of the Liberal Party in Queensland and treasurer, in the 1970s. Hielscher acknowledged that ‘back in ’73 … ’74 we didn’t have much, we were a cultural desert’.19 But there was a growing need for a new art gallery at least, the existing building being in an advanced state of decay, and the library needed rehousing also. In addition, modern theatre accommodation in the city area was very limited, the largest live theatre being the 80-year-old Her Majesty’s Theatre, seating 1387.20

Hielscher reported telling Chalk that, as the state economy was on a roll, ‘Queenslanders deserve to be more than being hewers of coal and carters of coal’, doubtless referring to the

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profitable Bowen Basin mining developments.21 Thus, the Cultural Centre proposal entered the political platform of the National–Liberal coalition for the 1974 election.22 Hielscher said that he was able to put the finances together without affecting the state budget and so the development started, reflecting and reinforcing, perhaps even symbolising the changing political and cultural climate in Brisbane.23 Hielscher agreed that this changed attitude to cultural endeavours favoured the creation of the film corporation,24 but what he and most individuals interviewed for this thesis had forgotten was that the commitment to investigate the creation of a film corporation was made almost in the same breath as the commitment to the cultural centre, and ahead of all states except South Australia.

The National Party of Australia—Queensland, for that is what the Queensland Country Party became in April 1974, favoured an active role for government in the arts and the film industry. As part of the re-branding of the party, the youthful party secretary, Mike Evans, himself an amateur opera singer,25 published a booklet entitled The National Party of Australia—Queensland: What it Means and What it Stands for. The policies on mass media and on the arts are combined, the final dot point being that ‘government assistance should be provided for the establishment of cultural centres, the development of recognised Australian artistic talent, and the promotion of an Australian film industry’.26

As an official publication, this booklet would have needed the endorsement of the party’s state council, but is unlikely that council members wrote it. Evans is the probable author of this forward-looking policy item and his modernising influence may also be found in support for the formation of the Queensland Film Corporation.

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23 The Cultural centre development was probably funded by a restructuring of the Queensland export coal royalty. This change led to an increase in the state’s revenue from that source, from less than $1m in 1973 to $25m in 1976. Stuart, ‘Resource Development Policy’, p. 68.
The coalition policy for the Queensland election of December 1974 was launched by the premier at the Southport Returned Services League Club on the evening of 4 November. It read in part:

**Film and Culture:** An investigation into the formation of a film unit as the first step to a film industry in Queensland and establishment of an Advisory Council on Cultural Affairs.\(^{27}\)

Bjelke-Petersen expanded on the policy to reporters after the speech:

We believe that amateur and professional film-makers should receive State Government support for their worthy projects by way of equipment or through repayable loans or through grants.\(^{28}\)

Whilst the ‘investigation’ became policy with the re-election of the National–Liberal coalition government, nothing happened until the next election loomed. During those two years the Australian Film Commission and the Victorian Film Corporation came into existence, an Interim Film Commission was set up by the NSW Labor government, and Gil Brealey was commissioned to report on the Department of Film Production in Tasmania. Queensland had missed its opportunity to lead.

Of course, it is simply possible that the bureaucratic resources required for planning the construction of the cultural complex and the establishment of the ‘Advisory Council on Cultural Affairs’ prevented priority being given to an ‘investigation into the formation of a film unit’. In addition, the revival of a state film censorship board earlier in 1974 may have had priority. What ever the reason, as the election year of 1977 approached, the pace of comparable developments interstate, as well as pressure from the local industry, compelled the Queensland government to fulfil its election promise.

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\(^{27}\) *Courier-Mail*, 5 November 1974, p. 1.

\(^{28}\) Ibid., p. 10.
According to Damien Murphy, writing in the *Age* of 21 April 1986, ‘in 1976, actor and unashamed Queensland chauvinist Ray Barrett rang the Premier’s media secretary Allen Callaghan wanting to know what the Bjelke-Petersen Government was doing for the film industry’. Helen Yeates, in *Queensland Images in Film and Television*, has sourced this quotation to a report in the *Courier-Mail* of 17 October 1976 by Nan Gorey Wood, and suggested that the issue was a continuing concern for Barrett.

Barrett tells a different story. He says he was invited to a lunch-time meeting at the Breakfast Creek Hotel, instigated by Mike Williams, a prominent Brisbane film producer, to push the government towards honouring its 1974 election promise. Subsequently they met with Callaghan, Bjelke-Petersen and Syd Schubert, the coordinator-general (though Barrett identified Schubert as the ‘Attorney-General’).

This discussion led to a headline in the *Courier-Mail* that Barrett recalled as ‘Joh promises to get behind Queensland film industry’, but that is a bit long-winded for a *Courier-Mail* headline, indeed any headline. Barrett does not give any dates for the meetings but, circumstantially, the headline seems to tie in with the Peter Trundle article of 13 October 1976, under the headline ‘State aid for films’. This then, would place the Breakfast Creek Hotel meeting on about Monday 11 October 1976. This article is the first to mention Bjelke-Petersen’s proposal that Barrett become an adviser to the corporation. Trundle went on to report that ‘a State-backed film corporation will be formed soon to encourage production of films in Queensland’. Four days later, Nan Gorey Wood, writing in the *Sunday Mail*, reported the remarks attributed to Ray Barrett. That article was the source used by Damien Murphy in the *Age* ten years later.

Producer Anthony Buckley, too, is attributed an influence. He reported having an audience with Bjelke-Petersen while he was in Brisbane raising funds for *The Irishman* (Don Crombie

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31 Helen Yeates, ‘The Queensland Film Corporation’, in Dawson and Molloy (eds), p. 78.
34 Ibid.
35 Gorey Wood, ‘He brings hope’.
1978), following the success of his first feature, Caddie (Don Crombie 1977). Phillip Warner, the son of the member of the Legislative Assembly for Toowoomba South, is also said to have ‘talked to the Premier about setting up this body’. Warner went on to a career as a production designer and worked on Final Cut (Ross Dimsey 1980).

Allen Callaghan, as the instigator of the Joh Show, would not have been slow to see potential in the proposal. Besides, such ideas were already National Party policy. Of all the extra-parliamentary figures, however, the most influential was probably the secretary of the National Party, Mike Evans. According to Mike Williams, Evans attended least one industry meeting, possibly the one at the Breakfast Creek Hotel, mentioned by Ray Barrett—certainly someone at that meeting was able to set up a meeting with Callaghan and the premier on short notice. Williams certainly believes that Evans was ‘probably the single most influential political person involved’ at the time. Significantly too, it was Mike Evans, not the premier, who on 30 January 1977 announced the government’s firm commitment to the establishment of a film corporation. However, Evans could assume a public profile that Callaghan, as a public servant, could not, so Evan’s media profile may overstate his influence.

The Trundle article of 13 October 1976 was notable for another thing. Like other articles on the subject in the Courier-Mail in 1976, it contained no direct quotes from Joh Bjelke-Petersen. It would seem then that the source for this article, perhaps all these articles, was not the premier himself but either Evans or Callaghan or, possibly, Robert Sparkes (later Sir Robert), the president of the National Party. These three were the only ones with the authority and credibility to speak to the media in the name of the premier.

Bjelke-Petersen himself may have been quite cool about the establishment of the corporation. It does not rate a mention in Don’t You Worry About That, Bjelke-Petersen’s autobiographical memoir, or in the hagiographic biography by Derek Townsend, Jigsaw:  

36 Williams, 10 July 1999.  
38 Murray, p. 59.  
39 Williams, 10 July 1999.  
40 Ibid., also Mike Williams in an e-mail to author, 20 January 2000, when invited to comment on the opening three paragraphs of this section.  
The Biography of Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, Statesman not Politician. Ray Barrett remarked in his own autobiography that ‘Joh Bjelke-Petersen had no interest in films or understanding of what was involved in making them’. In any event, Barrett never became the corporation’s adviser, something for which he later became grateful.

Nothing immediate seems to have resulted from the cabinet submission, which as Trundle reported on 13 October, ‘Mr Bjelke-Petersen is preparing ... probably for next Monday’. However, this submission may have led to the interdepartmental committee referred to by the founding chairman, Syd Schubert, in the first annual report of the corporation. Nevertheless, the waxing political commitment to the corporation was making it increasingly difficult for Bjelke-Petersen to say no if ever he had chosen to do so.

The point-of-no-return for the government came at the end of January 1977. January is normally a quiet month for news but that year the holiday season had been marred by news of the Granville train disaster in Sydney, on 18 January. But for most, that story had become history by 30 January 1977 when the Sunday Mail blazed forth this headline:

QUEENSLAND PLANS
HUGE FILM VENTURE

The article was written by John Bragg and, unlike previous articles, used attributed quotes, paragraph after paragraph, in this case from Mike Evans. He named the five-person advisory committee, whose task was ‘to accept submissions from interested parties, including the public, and thus lay the ground work for the setting up of the corporation’.

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43 Townsend.
44 Barrett with Corris, p. 198.
45 Trundle, ‘State aid for films’.
47 Bragg.
48 I wondered whether John Bragg might be a pseudonym used by Peter Trundle. Mike Williams, former board member of the QFC and Marion Demozay (formerly Smith), then a journalist with the Sunday Mail, confirmed that John Bragg was a journalist with the paper. Associate Professor Jonathan Dawson said that Bragg had been a scriptwriter on Homicide (Crawford Production) before returning to Brisbane.
49 Bragg.
The members were:

Ron Archer  General Manager Channel 0 (representing the TV industry).
Frank Moore  South Queensland Broadcasting (media).
Mike Williams  Martin Williams Productions [actually Martin–Williams Films] managing director (production).
Brian Benson  State government cameraman (the government).
Terry Jackman  Birch, Carroll and Coyle, but soon to join Hoyts Theatres as General Manager (distribution).\(^50\)

When introducing the Queensland Film Industry Development Bill into the Legislative Assembly the following September, Bjelke-Petersen said that this advisory committee had been chaired by the head of the premier’s department, Syd Schubert.\(^51\)

In the Sunday Mail article Evans rehearsed the increasingly familiar themes of ‘the best locations and the most favourable climatic conditions for feature films’, as well an art–industry and local–national discourses. As in earlier times, these were interpreted in a uniquely Queensland manner, ‘where a politically motivated, regional chauvinism flourish[ed], and national initiatives [were] often seen as threatening to local pride and rights’.\(^52\) Evans concluded by insisting that, in time, Queensland would become ‘Australia’s Hollywood’.\(^53\)

A Larger Agenda

The 1974 election had been a considerable victory for the National–Liberal coalition. A pro-government swing of 16.5 per cent had all but wiped out the Labor opposition and made Bjelke-Petersen’s hold on the premiership unassailable.\(^54\) The rebranded National Party was
now intent on eroding the Liberal Party’s urban vote, with government in its own right and the end of the coalition with the Liberals, the objective.\textsuperscript{55}

Writing in 1978, Hugh Lunn saw the decision to create the corporation as confirmation that Bjelke-Petersen was ‘an innovator in terms of aggressive political technique’. He continued, ‘in 1977, having been recommended that Queensland should follow South Australia’s lead, Bjelke-Petersen launched a film corporation to help finance Queensland-made films’.\textsuperscript{56}

However, it is likely that Lunn accords to the premier credit for the innovation of others. Though Sir Leo Hielscher gives the Liberal leader, Sir Gordon Chalk, credit for the carriage of the cultural centre proposal into policy, National Party state secretary, Mike Evans and president Robert Sparkes (later Sir Robert) must have realised that the real winners would be the Nationals.\textsuperscript{57} The inclusion of policies in the 1974 platform that favoured cultural projects and promised an ‘Advisory Council on Cultural Affairs’, may be seen as part of a process of shedding the old hayseed image of the Country Party and positioning the newly minted National Party to make it attractive to non-Labor urban voters.

One must also remember that the Whitlam federal government, elected just two years earlier, had pushed cultural issues up the national agenda. Though it would have been politically hazardous for Bjelke-Petersen to acknowledge any influence of the ‘socialists’ in Canberra, party strategists may have considered it prudent to cover Canberra’s king with a local joker.

A Crucial Year

In other ways, the year 1976 was crucial to the story of the Queensland Film Corporation. Judith Hart and Associates, of whom more shall be heard later, opened a project management business in Brisbane.\textsuperscript{58} But it was not this event that made 1976 an annus horribilis for the National-led coalition government. First, three of reformist Police Commissioner Ray Whitrod’s corruption-buster ‘good cops’ were found, in the Southport court, to have perjured

\textsuperscript{56} Lunn, Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, p. 256.
\textsuperscript{57} Williams, 10 July 1999.
\textsuperscript{58} Sally Loane, ‘The fall of Princess Pushy’, National Times on Sunday, 31 August 1986, p. 13.
themselves to cover up legal defects in arrest warrants. Then, a further three detectives, Jack Herbert, Arthur McIntyre and Reginald Freier, were arrested on charges of corruption. Next, Brisbane television aired pictures of a young woman being hit over the head by a police inspector as students walked from St Lucia to the city to protest over Commonwealth student allowances. When Whitrod ordered an inquiry, Premier Bjelke-Petersen, backed by Cabinet, over-ruled him. Soon after, Bjelke-Petersen dismissed Police Minister Hodges, who had backed Whitrod, and appointed another National, Tom Newbery, to replace him. Whitrod himself would remain only until November, before making a sulphurous departure.

But the path to the corrupt 1980s was laid with the police raid on a hippy colony known as Cedar Bay, north of Cooktown, in August. Sworn allegations soon emerged on ABC television’s *This Day Tonight* that the police had engaged in arson and destruction of food, property and dwellings during the raid. Even the Young Nationals called for an inquiry but, again, further investigation was ruled out by Bjelke-Petersen. He declared ‘the government will believe the police’. This attitude gave further licence to behaviour, in secret and in public, that in the years ahead would diverge more and more from accepted ethical and legal norms of police practice and public life.

This period of public turmoil corresponded with a resurgence of political interest in the proposed film corporation. In part, the renewed interest was a response to industry pressure but it could also be seen as a political expedient to distract public attention or to demonstrate fulfilled election promises as the state general election of 1977 approached.

The Queensland Film Corporation

It seems that the long-awaited submission proposing the creation of the Queensland Film Corporation (QFC) went to Cabinet on 26 April 1977. This cautious qualification is made because the page one story about the proposal appeared in the *Courier-Mail* on the morning of

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59 Whitton, p. 33.
60 Ibid., pp. 29–34.
62 Ibid.
63 ‘Young Nationals in police inquiry call’, *Courier-Mail*, 1 October 1976, p. 3.
64 Whitton, p. 36, see also Lunn *Johannes Bjelke-Petersen*, pp. 236–54.
26 April, before the weekly Cabinet meeting took place, not the following day as would a report of a Cabinet decision. Thus the story was, like so many others on the subject, including those by the Courier-Mail’s political reporter, Peter Trundle, told in anticipation of the event.

The first lines on page one, centre, read:

“I’ll be happy to go to a shooting” ... Cabinet submission today.

JOH ACTS ON FILMS
Loans likely;
Share profits.
The State Government is expected to move soon to encourage the production of more films in Queensland. The Premier (Mr Bjelke-Petersen) said yesterday that he hoped to take a submission to Cabinet today. ⁶⁵

There are several possible explanations for this publicity prior to the Cabinet decision. If one accepts the hypothesis that there was some coolness on the part of the premier or members of Cabinet then this advance publicity might ensure a favourable decision. If this were so, then it suggests an unexpected degree of manipulation of the processes of representative government by extra-parliamentary influences but it is hard to envisage Joh Bjelke-Petersen being railroaded into a decision that he actively opposed rather than one in which he was simply uninterested.

But there are other possibilities: one is competition for headlines. The Courier-Mail was (and remains) the sole morning paper in Brisbane. If the Courier-Mail had the story of the Cabinet submission on the afternoon of 25 April then they had to run it on the morning of the 26 April or lose the headline to its stable-mate but competitor, the afternoon Telegraph, and to radio and television news. These media competitors had first bite of morning stories such as Cabinet decisions. Also, the story was one that Peter Trundle of the Courier-Mail had followed for some time, while the Telegraph had shown no interest. ⁶⁶

Curiously, there was no follow-up story in the Courier-Mail. It was left to the Australian to report, on 27 April, that ‘the Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen said yesterday that Cabinet had

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⁶⁶ Copies of the Telegraph for October 1976, January, April and October 1977, months of relevant events or publicity, were checked. There was no parallel coverage in the Telegraph of the proposed film corporation, in fact, no coverage at all. The Courier-Mail received favoured political treatment for its coverage of the film corporation saga.
decided to form a [nine man] film corporation chaired by the Co-ordinator General Mr S. Schubert’, the head of the premier’s department. The names of Diane Cilento and Ray Barrett, ‘internationally known Queenslanders’, were again mentioned as likely to be ‘invited to act as advisers to the corporation’ but, it should be noted, not as members.67

The First Annual Report of the corporation provided no insight into these matters. It only specified that the state government’s decision was made in April 1977, that the decision was based on the report of an interdepartmental committee appointed in December 1976, and that, subsequently, an ‘Interim Committee’ assisted the coordinator-general, who ‘was entrusted with the task of drafting the legislation necessary for establishing the Corporation’.68 No mention is made of either Barrett or Cilento.

What is visible from the press coverage and what is mandated as history by the First Annual Report do not mesh well. The ‘interdepartmental committee’ is new and the appointment of an ‘Interim Committee’ was publicly announced on 30 January.69 There may well have been an ‘interdepartmental’ committee that advised on the appointment of the ‘Interim Committee’ and evaluate its recommendations. Remarks made by Bjelke-Petersen in introducing the bill to the Legislative Assembly on 20 September add nothing to the history of the corporation save that ‘over the past 18 months the State Government has been approached by a number of companies and individuals wishing to produce feature films in Queensland’.70 Bjelke-Petersen also touched on the now familiar, indeed eternal, themes of state film corporations: ‘Queensland’s excellent weather is an important consideration while the geography and patterns of development provide a wide variety of locations in close proximity to each other’.71

The first chairman of the corporation, Syd Schubert, continued:

Subsequently ... the legislation was prepared, approved and introduced into Parliament in September 1977. Following its passage through the Legislative Assembly, the Bill received Royal Assent on 3rd October, 1977.

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67 Australian 27 April 1977, p. 3.
69 Bragg.
71 Ibid., p. 730.
This Legislation, known as the *Queensland Film Industry Development Act 1977*, was proclaimed on 15th October 1977, and the same day, the Corporation was established with the appointment of its members.\(^{72}\)

The members of the ten-member board were:

- Mr S. Schubert, (Chairman) Co-ordinator-General;
- Mr J. V. Bensted, (Deputy Chairman) Director of Industrial Development;
- Mr L. A. Hielscher, Under Treasurer;
- Mr M. G. Williams, Managing Director, Martin–Williams Films Pty Ltd, (representing the production side of the industry);
- Mr P. T. Jackman, Managing Director, Hoyt’s [sic] Theatres Ltd. (Australia), (representing the distribution and exhibition side of the industry);
- Mr R. G. Archer, General Manager, Universal Telecasters Qld Ltd, (representing television interests);
- Mr F. T. Moore, Director, 4IP, (representing the business community);
- Mr R. S. Parkes, Senior Partner, Yarwood Vane and Co., (representing the business community);
- Mr H. S. Williams, Chairman, Bush Pilots Airways Ltd, (representing the provincial areas of the State);
- Hon. C. R. Porter, (Member of the Legislative Assembly).\(^{73}\)

The origins of the membership of the board are easy to recognise. Moore, Archer, Jackman and (Mike) Williams were on the Interim Committee. Schubert was coordinator-general, the most senior public servant in the premier’s department, as was Hielscher in treasury, and Bensted’s appointment clearly positioned the corporation as having an economic focus. Parkes and (Syd) Williams balanced city and country (Williams was from Townsville) and Porter monitored the whole for the parliament, in effect, the government. Significantly, there is no membership drawn from the new Cultural Advisory Council, nor did it enjoy observer status. It seems that this film corporation was to be about business not culture.


\(^{73}\) Ibid.
Hielscher reported that this was a quite typical composition for the board of a government authority. The act was administered by the premier’s department, hence the coordinator-general chaired the board. Hielscher’s role was to ensure the corporation had the resources necessary to achieve the government’s desired outcomes.\textsuperscript{74} These ex-officio members were entitled to appoint a proxy each and, after three years, Hielscher appointed H. R. Smerdon, a senior member of his staff, as his delegate.\textsuperscript{75} The Hon. C. R. Porter stood down when he was appointed Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs, and was replaced by Mr I. J. Gibbs from 9 February 1978. A number of members of the Legislative Assembly would serve on the board, the last being R. E. Borbidge (1983–87).\textsuperscript{76} R. E. (Rob) Borbidge later became premier of Queensland when the National–Liberal coalition was returned to the government benches in 1996.

**Queensland Film Industry Development Act 1977** (QFIDA), section nine, defined five functions for the corporation:

(a) to encourage the development of the film industry in the State;

(b) to continuously review the state of development of the film industry in the State;

(c) to advise the Minister on matters concerned with the development of the film industry in the State;

(d) to administer financial and other assistance provided by the Government of the State to the film industry; and

(e) to co-ordinate the provision of all forms of assistance whether made available by the Government of the State or otherwise.\textsuperscript{77}

While the act was straightforward, it is informative to compare the specific functions with those in the enabling acts of the South Australian, Victorian and New South Wales Film Corporations all of which were now in operation, though in the case of NSW, by only a few months.

\textsuperscript{74} Hielscher, 9 July 1999.


\textsuperscript{77} *Queensland Film Industry Development Act 1977*, No. 45 Government Printer, Brisbane, 1977, p. 4.
Comparisons with Interstate Models

The South Australian Film Corporation is directly instructed, by its act,

(a) to undertake the production of films;\textsuperscript{78}

For the NSW Film Corporation, its first function is:

(a) to make, promote, distribute and exhibit films and, in particular,
to have the sole responsibility for the making, promotion,
distribution and exhibition of short film and documentary films
for or on behalf of any department of the Government or any
statutory body representing the Crown.\textsuperscript{79}

In the Victorian Film Corporation legislation, the equivalent paragraph reads:

13. (2) The Corporation shall have power to do all things necessary to be
done for or in connexion [sic] with encouraging promoting
facilitating and assisting in the establishment carrying on
expansion and development of the production, exhibition, and
distribution of films, television programs, and other works for the
entertainment, instruction, and information of the public...\textsuperscript{80}

All three acts imply a close association with the processes of production, distribution and
exhibition of films. The South Australian act continues:

(b) to provide library and other services and facilities relating to
films and their screening;

and

(f) to store, distribute and sell or otherwise dispose of film.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{78} South Australian Film Corporation Act 1972, Government Printer, South Australia, 1972, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{79} New South Wales Film Corporation Act no. 55, Government Printer, New South Wales, 1977, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{80} Victorian Film Corporation Act no. 8864, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1976, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{81} SAFC Act, p. 5.
While there are differences in the wording and the emphasis of the ‘functions of the corporation’ section of the three acts, a common thread is apparent: be engaged with the industry and individuals you are there to encourage. The South Australian legislation even goes so far as to direct the corporation ‘to offer and arrange courses of instruction for persons who are interested in film projection’. Such an injunction perhaps harkens back to the South Australian branch of the Australian Labor Party’s interest in such training in the 1950s.

By comparison, the Queensland legislation is less directly engaged with the creators and consumers of the products of the industry. Certainly, it includes instructions such as ‘to encourage’ and ‘to advise the Minister’ but, overall, the ‘functions’ clauses define roles of monitoring, metering, administration and co-ordination at arm’s length. Interestingly, paragraph (e) empowers the corporation to co-ordinate private-sector support for the film industry. Such authority would prove valuable in a climate of taxation-incentive-driven, private-sector investment in film for which the corporation became a prominent advocate. In South Australia, an amendment to the act was required in 1979 to enable the SAFC ‘to promote and participate in any scheme for the financing of film production’, when the Commonwealth government introduced the Division 10B and, later, the 10BA tax-gearing arrangements.

The distancing of the corporation from the industry was also evident in the structure of the board. Of the ten members, only four, Mike Williams, Jackman, Archer and Moore, were professionally engaged in the media industries and, of those four, only one, Williams, was a working film-maker, while Jackman was in cinema distribution. A further three members were senior public servants, another a member of parliament, and the remaining two members were senior business figures, one from Townsville.

In NSW, all three members of the initial board were from the entertainment or media industries; in South Australia, two of the three-member board were film people and the third a public servant with long connections with film libraries. In Victoria, all but the chairman of the seven-member board were from some part of the film or television industries, one a

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82 Ibid.
84 Schubert, First Annual Report.
writer, another a director, and the chair was from advertising. If the board of the QFC was to be actively engaged in project assessment, it would not be short of opinion but it would be hampered by a lack of experience.

The Queensland act also lacked any directions as to a cultural role for the corporation, unless this could be found in a liberal interpretation of the direction ‘to encourage the development of the film industry in the State’. But then, ‘film industry’ was defined as ‘those businesses or activities concerned with the production, distribution or exhibition of films’, leaving exhibition the sole venue for any cultural programs.

By comparison, the VFC was directed ‘to promote the appreciation of films’ and the NSWFC was enjoined ‘to encourage ... the proper keeping of films in archives in Australia’. Interestingly, the SAFC was directed ‘to carry out research into the distribution of films and the effectiveness of films to meet the purposes for which they are made with a view to improving such distribution and effectiveness’. The SAFC never acted on this direction and the position of research executive on the corporation’s organisational chart had disappeared by March 1973.

Cultural issues were notable for their absence from the parliamentary debate on the Queensland bill too. Only two speakers in the Initiation in Committee debate engaged with the idea. They were both Liberals. Charles Porter (Member for Toowong), who identified himself to parliament as a ‘practising professional playwright’ and was to serve on the QFC board, recognised that ‘making movies’ was an ‘area of the arts’ but warned of the hazards of ‘going too far too fast and unwisely’. He cited the increase in expenditure by the Australian Arts Council [sic] from $1.6m in 1968–69 to $20m in 1974–75 to support his warning and asked: ‘How much worth while for the arts was really produced?’ The other, David Byrne (Member for Belmont), commenced by quoting Friedrich Schiller’s Letters upon the

86 Queensland Film Industry Development Act, p. 2.
87 VFC Act.
88 NSWFC Act.
89 SAFC Act.
90 O’Donnell, pp. 95, 202, 203.
91 I have not been able to track down any published plays but in 1981 he published a political autobiography, The Gut Feeling, Boolarong Publications, Ascot, Queensland 1981.
92 The Australian Council for the Arts from 1967 to 1972, thereafter the Australia Council.
Aesthetic Education of Man and concluded his remarks by imploring members ‘not to forget that our society has a culture of its own and a mind of its own and that its art forms must have an expression of their own’.94

It is ironic then, that in 1984 and 1985 when the QFC did commit funds to support a cultural project—the curatorship and tour of the Haig collection of historic photographs of Queensland—the Auditor-General found that such use of funds was in breach of Section 9 of the act.95 But there was more to that enterprise than cultural sponsorship, as we shall see. In the second reading of the bill, the single original contribution came from ALP member Keith Wright (Rockhampton), who called for a ‘State film industry’ rather than a ‘film industry in the state’.96

One aspect of the Queensland Film Industry Development Act was unique among the similar acts of the time. Section 3 read in part:

3. Duration. (1) This Act shall remain in force for a period of ten years from the commencement thereof and no longer.97

This was the ‘sunset clause’ that, in 1987, was allowed to euthanase the disgraced and disabled corporation. That such a clause was drafted as part of the act when no other state had thought it necessary to do so is, I believe, further confirmation that the corporation did not have the wholehearted support or confidence of the Cabinet, nor perhaps of Bjelke-Petersen himself. However, during the second reading of the bill, Mr Gibbs (Albert) explained that the clause demonstrated the government’s commitment to private enterprise, requiring the government ‘to look at the situation in 10 years’ time to see whether it is self-sufficient or whether we should further assist private enterprise’.98 But, as Helen Yeates reported, ‘in the heady days of 1977, failure and defeatism were far from the minds of the instigators of the Queensland Film Corporation’.99

95 Tony Koch, ‘Two breaches of Film Act–audit report’, Courier-Mail, 8 January 1986, p. 3.
98 Ivan Gibbs, Journals of the Parliament of Queensland, p 837. One should note that, when the Film Victoria Act supplanted the Victorian Film Corporation Act (as amended) in 1981, Section 23 of the new act required that the corporation submit ‘for review by the Public Bodies Review Committee on 1 July 1990’. Film Victoria Act 1981, p. 14. The review duly recommended the continuation of the organisation.
99 Yeates, p. 80.
The First Annual Report 1977–1978 of the Queensland Film Corporation was a sober, sensible-looking document, owing much to the traditional style and design of government white papers. It suited the conservative character of the first chairman of the corporation, Syd (later Sir Sydney) Schubert who, in addition to being coordinator-general, was a good friend and, one must surmise, obedient servant of Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

The report was quick to identify some limits to achievement that became familiar themes in future years, the most common being ‘an inadequate flow of investment opportunities’. By June 1978, ‘in fact, a firm commitment (of $200,000) has been given for only one project while another $186,000 investment is currently under consideration’. The first was ‘The Ridge and the River’, a project that never went into production, and the second, though un-named, was probably ‘Friday the 13th’, which was released as Touch and Go (Peter Maxwell 1980). Indeed, the only expenditures from an initial government pot of $600,000 had been $10,468.49 on administration, $28,735.15 on an interstate and overseas marketing campaign and $10,000 as a loan to Earthfilm Productions Pty Ltd, to complete a pilot of a children’s environment-oriented TV series, Earth Patrol. It was disappointing progress for the eight months that had elapsed since the inaugural meeting of the board on 2 November 1977.

Given earlier remarks about the expertise available for project assessment, it is interesting to note the project criteria considered important by the board:

Two factors have been of basic importance: firstly the number of local employment opportunities created and secondly, the percentage of the film shot in Queensland. Additionally, the escalating cost of film production and the limited funds available to the Corporation, have necessitated a detailed scrutiny of the commercial viability of large budget projects.

The assessment of a film’s likely success (or failure) at the box-office is a highly subjective exercise. Nevertheless, there are a number of factors

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101 Mike Williams, e-mail correspondence with author, 9 December 1999.
which provide a guide to the commercial viability of a film. These factors include the type of audience to which the film is targetted [sic], the international appeal of the film, the suitability of the casting and track-record of the production team. Assistance is also dependent upon the presentation of a realistic budget and a suitable marketing plan. Finally, a high level of private sector (that is, non-government) funding is expected.103

The review concluded that ‘film production can be a profitable venture given selective investment strategies’, a confident statement but one based on little evidence or experience.104

The Second Annual Report 1978–1979, in a similar format to its predecessor, is a far more optimistic document, although the year is described as one ‘which has seen a virtual production drought in the Australian Film industry’.105 This opening line in the report is either based on poor industry intelligence, or intended to deceive. Scott Murray reports twelve titles for 1978 and twenty-two for 1979106. Many, if not all, of those thirty-four titles would have been in production in the fiscal year 1978–79. During that year, the corporation received sixty-seven applications for financial assistance, ‘eighteen were for production funding, the remainder being applications for assistance with script-development, other pre-production requirements, workshops, study fellowships and equipment’.107 A wider scope of industry engagements was now opening up to the corporation and it reported its 1978–79 activities under eight categories:

5.1 Applications for Assistance
5.2 Production Assistance
5.3 Pre-Production Assistance
5.4 Logistical Support
5.5 Training of Industry Personnel
5.6 Marketing
5.7 Television Industry Development
5.8 Industry Co-ordination and Co-operation108

103 Ibid., p. 1.
104 Ibid.
106 Murray (ed.), p. iii.
108 Ibid., pp. 2, 3.
The scale of government engagement necessary to develop a film industry was becoming apparent to the board and, though their eyes were mainly directed towards feature film investment, $64,500 was committed to ‘preparation of treatments, script-development, production budgeting and location surveys’ on ten projects confident that five ‘may be ready for production within the next twelve months’. ¹⁰⁹

On the production investment slate, ‘The Ridge and the River’ was mentioned as ‘delayed due to short-falls in private investment’, a commitment of $186,000 was made to ‘Friday the 13th’, which was released as Touch and Go, and an offer of $95,000 in a budget approaching $600,000 was made to Buddies (Arch Nicholson 1983). ¹¹⁰ Buddies, written and produced by John Dingwall and set on the opal fields of central-western Queensland, in time proved to be the corporation’s most successful feature investment, though many would rate the short drama Stations (Jackie McKimmie 1983) more highly in critical terms. ¹¹¹

In July 1978, Anthony (Tony) Buckley was appointed as ‘Executive Consultant’ on a part-time basis. Buckley had been on the board of the Australian Film Commission; his duties at the corporation were to include the provision of advice on applications for financial assistance and the monitoring of investments. ¹¹²

Two items significant to future of the corporation were mentioned in the Second Annual Report. They were the need for custom-made studio facilities and the legislative change that transferred the administration of the Queensland Film Industry Development Act from ‘the Honourable the Premier to the Honourable the Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation’. ¹¹³ The key effect was to replace the coordinator-general, with the coordinator of Culture, National Parks and Recreation, or his delegate, as chair of the corporation. Waiting in the wings was the premier’s recently retired media advisor, now deputy coordinator, Department of Culture, National Parks and Recreation, Allen Callaghan. But first...

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 2.
¹¹⁰ Ibid. ‘The Ridge and the River’ was revived as a project in 2005 by one of its writers, John Beaton.
¹¹¹ Williams, 10 July 1999.
¹¹² Schubert, Second Annual Report, p. 3.
¹¹³ Ibid., p. 1.
Princess Pushy

It was a cruel nickname but Judith Hart had earned it. In the years since her return to Brisbane, the city of her birth, Hart had installed herself at the centre of patriotic, conservative Brisbane society. A measure of her political standing was her appointment as the executive director of the Queensland Day committee, which conducted this recently created event of key social and political importance.

In 1976, she had opened her own project management business, Judith Hart and Associates, to market her considerable organisational and management skills. ‘Friends say that she [is] a brilliant organiser of parties and occasions with an eye for detail.’ In 1979, ‘she first made contact with the cultural arm of the Queensland public service’ and undoubtedly met Allen Callaghan, whose position in the Department of Culture, National Parks and Recreation had been created for him, not without controversy, when he retired as press secretary to the premier earlier that year.

In 1981, Bjelke-Petersen declared 6 June to be Queensland Day. It was on that day in 1859 that Queen Victoria had signed the Letters Patent, establishing Queensland as a sovereign colony of the Crown rather than the Morton Bay district of the colony of New South Wales. It was Independence Day.

In 1982, Judith Hart and Associates won the contract to manage the Queensland Day committee’s affairs, though the administrative staff continued to be employees of the Premier's Department. She applied herself with energy and enthusiasm to the task and was efficient and successful. She was equally firm in her denials that her husband had been, in any way, responsible for her winning the contract, for in 1980, she had married Allen Callaghan.

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114 12 October 1950.
115 Loane. Judith Hart suffered from an occasionally severe but chronic asthmatic condition but was nevertheless a very successful events producer.
116 Ibid.
117 Uncredited, ‘Mr and Mrs X: The story so far’, Sunday Mail, 12 January 1986, p. 3.
118 Loane.
The Mechanic

‘I am just the mechanic in the pits. I make sure the machine is well oiled, that it is ready to go, that no breakdowns will occur.’ That was one metaphor that Allen Callaghan used to describe his relationship as press secretary with Premier Bjelke-Petersen. On other occasions, he used the simile of the vizier rekhmire, the eyes and ears of the Egyptian pharaoh. A former ABC journalist remembers a less benign Callaghan, citing two incidents:

I was reporting for ‘This Day Tonight’ in Brisbane, but used do the occasional piece for [ABC radio’s] AM. I had covered some flooding in the north of the state for AM and was sitting at my desk about 8.30 when the ’phone rang and it was Allen Callaghan. “Gee”, he said, “That was a terrific report, the Chief’ll be really happy. You’ve got to come over and have tea with the Chief. We’ll fix you up”. I declined the invitation.

Some time later, I had done another piece that was critical of the government and again the ’phone rang and it was Callaghan. This time I was left in no doubts that my career prospects would be more favourable if I moved interstate.

Callaghan joined Bjelke-Petersen’s personal staff in May 1971 having been the ABC’s Queensland government roundsman. It was a fortuitous appointment. Months earlier Bjelke-Petersen had survived, by sheer cunning, an attempt by his party to replace him as premier. He needed to consolidate his status in the eyes of the public as well as improve relations with his parliamentary colleagues. In the thirty-one-year-old Allen Callaghan, Bjelke-Petersen found a loyal and intelligent ally, knowledgeable in the ways of the media, quick-witted and with a talent for seizing any political opportunity.

Callaghan was Queensland-born and had risen from an impoverished family background by hard work and so shared some life experience with his new chief. The new role provided Callaghan with opportunities for professional advancement and a freedom to

119 Allen Callaghan quoted in Lunn, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, p. 96.
121 Conversation in Treasury Gardens, Melbourne, 29 November 1999, at a Film Victoria barbecue. The source asked not to be named. The source is well known to this author and did work for the This Day Tonight in Brisbane in the mid 1970s, and subsequently moved to Melbourne and left the ABC.
122 Lunn, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, p. 88.
innovate that he would never enjoy in the ABC. In a paradoxical way, the ABC would have been too conservative in terms of form and too radical in terms of content for Callaghan. In all likelihood, he would have enjoyed only a brief career in ABC current affairs. Above all, Callaghan was comfortable in the back room, while ‘the Chief’, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, strode the stage.

Twenty-nine years difference in age separated the two, and what seems to have emerged in the early years was a paternal relationship in which Bjelke-Petersen, the elder, quickly learned the techniques of handling the media from the younger Callaghan. They formed a team of complementary strengths. Once Bjelke-Petersen had mastered all that Callaghan could teach—he came to love giving press conferences and once quipped that he had to feed the chooks [the media] every afternoon at 3pm—the character of the relationship changed.

Bjelke-Petersen recalled:

Towards the end, it became a bit more difficult, where I’d have to rely on my own resources for a lot of my openings.

He wasn’t happy, he seemed to be up against a brick wall ... I think there was a problem there with the media in relation to acceptance of stuff he was putting out.

He seemed to be getting a bit tired of it.

In his eight years of service with Bjelke-Petersen, Callaghan achieved a revolution in government–media relations in Queensland. Bjelke-Petersen acknowledged his achievement in a rather backhanded way:

Some people have said Allen made me accessible to the media. That is not true—I had always been accessible to the media. What Allen Callaghan did do was to make the media more accessible to me and so help me promote myself.


124 Wright, ‘Allen didn’t “make” me’.

125 Bjelke-Petersen, Don’t You Worry About That, p. 104, 105.
Callaghan could do this because he knew the processes of news-gathering intimately. He provided news to match the various papers, just in time for the daily editorial conferences; he knew when the different city media had final deadlines and was skilful at planting his stories. The *Sunday Mail*’s page one story of 30 January 1977, mentioned earlier, was but one example of his exploitation of a slow news day to great effect.\(^{126}\)

In 1989, G. E. (Tony) Fitzgerald in his report of the *Commission of Inquiry into Possible Illegal Activities and Associated Police Misconduct* (also known as the Fitzgerald Inquiry or Report), commented, perhaps with Callaghan in mind:

> It is legitimate and necessary for Government Ministers, departments and instrumentalities to employ staff to help ensure the public is kept well informed.

> Media units can also be used, however, to control and manipulate the information obtained by the media and disseminated to the public.

> Although most Government-generated publicity will unavoidably and necessarily be politically advantageous, there is no legitimate justification for taxpayers’ money to be spent on politically motivated propaganda.

> The only justification for press secretaries and media units is that they lead to a community better informed about Government and departmental activities. If they fail to do this then their existence is a misuse of public funds, and likely to help misconduct to flourish.\(^{127}\)

In early 1979, rumours began to circulate that Callaghan was planning to retire.\(^{128}\) After more than eight years as ‘the second most powerful man in Queensland’ and, perhaps sensing that others, including Sir Edward (Top-level Ted) Lyons, were increasingly influential with Bjelke-Petersen, Callaghan resigned.\(^{129}\) His decision may also have reflected his view that the National Party had, in terms of electoral success, reached its peak.\(^{130}\)

\(^{126}\) Bragg.


\(^{129}\) Whitton, pp. 52, 58–9, also Phil Dickie, *The Road to Fitzgerald and Beyond*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1989, p. 224.

\(^{130}\) Strong.
It was a harmonious departure, though Bjelke-Petersen recalled that Callaghan tried to convince him to resign at the same time. ‘When Allen left, he begged me to leave too. He said to me, “You can’t go higher than you are now”, and he phoned Florence [Bjelke-Petersen] to try to get her to talk me into leaving with him.’

Perhaps a desire for dynastic closure was motivating the filial Callaghan.

The New Chairman

Callaghan moved to the newly created post of deputy coordinator and promotions officer in the Department of Culture, National Parks and Recreation. Bjelke-Petersen explained that, ‘after he left my staff, I found him a senior government job’. John Walsh, another press secretary, enjoyed similar preferment after ‘five or six years’ of service. Such practices led Tony Fitzgerald later to remark that, ‘Callaghan was one of a number of former ministerial press secretaries who were appointed to senior positions in the public service’.

This move made Callaghan the second-most powerful person in the Department of Culture, National Parks and Recreation rather than the whole of Queensland but he could now achieve what seems to have been a long-held ambition: to become the chairman of the Queensland Film Corporation. When on 1 July 1979 responsibility for the corporation was transferred from Premier and Cabinet to Culture, National Parks and Recreation, the chairmanship became one of the duties of the coordinator of the department or his delegate. Allen Callaghan now became that delegate. This was an event confidently anticipated by the Courier-Mail in May of that year, and later more widely canvassed. Callaghan’s impact on the Queensland Film Corporation was immediate and unmistakable.

He began as he intended to proceed, with a splash in the press.

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131 Bjelke-Petersen, Don’t You Worry About That, p. 103.
132 Ibid., p.106.
133 Ibid.
134 Fitzgerald, p. 118.
137 Des Partridge, $5m film studio for Gold Coast’ Courier-Mail, 3 July 1979, p. 9; Debbie McDonald, “‘Take-off’ for Q’land movie-making industry”, Telegraph, 13 July 1979, p. 14, (Gold Coast, p. 2.)
Des Partridge in the Courier-Mail had the first headline: ‘$5m studio for Gold Coast’ on 3 July, though this article in fact quoted retiring chairman Syd Schubert at length.\(^{138}\) The Telegraph followed ten days later with ‘“Take-off” for Q’land movie-making industry’ and a generously-sized photograph of the new chairman.\(^{139}\) But then the momentum caught on interstate. The Australian carried an interview with Allen Callaghan on 25 July,\(^{140}\) in which he reiterated the familiar themes of diversity of landscape and hence locations and the 287 days of sunshine that some unspecified part of Queensland—by implication Brisbane—received each year. The Sydney Daily Mirror picked up the publicity ball on 29 August\(^ {141} \) and TV Week ran on with it on 1 September.\(^ {142} \)

While this was the popular press at play, more serious print media was paying attention too. On 18 September, Sandra Hall in the Bulletin went to press with ‘It looks like it’s all “go” in the land of Joh’.\(^ {143} \) She followed up with ‘Queensland takes the plunge’ on 18 December,\(^ {144} \) after a visit to the location of Touch and Go on the Sunshine Coast. At whose expense this visit was made was not disclosed in the article. Earlier, in the National Times of 24 November, Adrian McGregor was ‘Sorting out the sharks, the experts and the film makers’ with Allen Callaghan as his guide.\(^ {145} \)

Despite the variety of publications and authors, there is a sameness to these articles: that sameness is the unwaveringly confident voice of Allen Callaghan, new chairman and master salesman. To be fair, Hall and McGregor maintained some ironic distance from their subject, a goal, if ever sought that eluded other writers. Certainly, the profile of Queensland as a film location was rising rapidly, its image materialising in the ‘handsome publicity brochures [that] have illustrations of directors lolling about in the sun smoking cigars while dreaming, presumably, of a dish of Queensland mud crab pictured a few pages on’.\(^ {146} \)

\(^ {138} \) Partridge, ‘$5m film studio for Gold Coast’.
\(^ {139} \) McDonald, ‘“Take-off” for Q’land movie-making industry’.
\(^ {142} \) Uncredited, ‘$5m movie, TV plan’, TV Week, 1 September 1979 (press clipping only–no page number).
\(^ {143} \) Sandra Hall, ‘It looks like it’s all “go” in the land of Joh’, Bulletin, 18 September 1979, p. 48.
\(^ {144} \) Sandra Hall, ‘Queensland takes the plunge’, Bulletin, 18 December 1979, p. 65.
\(^ {145} \) Adrian McGregor, ‘Sorting out the sharks, the experts and the film makers’, National Times, 24 November 1979, p. 17.
\(^ {146} \) Hall, ‘Queensland takes the plunge’.
Curiously, this image springs from the public’s mythology about film-making not the industry’s own mythology. One must wonder how the images were read by the industry or, indeed, whether they were ever intended to influence the industry beyond the initial stage of instigating curiosity or disdain.

Apart from the brochures and press coverage, the most visible impact of the new chairman was seen in the corporation’s annual reports. The Third Annual Report was published by the corporation in late 1980. It was a complete break with the nineteen-fifties, public service style of the previous reports and began a tradition of showy artwork that would endure until 1986. It was produced by the Brisbane office of Ogilvy and Mather, a national, diversified advertising agency and, reputedly, the priciest agency in Brisbane.\(^\text{147}\) The initiatives and expenditure reported signalled that the corporation was rising from the torpor of the initial years.

There are two further aspects of the Third Annual Report worthy of particular note. The first was recognition of the initiative shown by the corporation in the creation of the Division 10BA tax scheme. A member of the corporation, R. S. Parkes, was chosen to chair a committee comprising members of other state film corporations and the Australian Film Commission, ‘to draw up a taxation incentive scheme for presentation to the Federal Government’\(^\text{148}\). This scheme had a profound impact on the film industry in the 1980s and drew on Queensland’s experience with taxation incentive in the development of the mining industry. Despite Dermody and Jacka’s contention that ‘the smaller [government] bodies had little influence on national film policy’,\(^\text{149}\) here is one example of the considerable influence of a state film corporation on national film policy.

The second aspect was a small instance of the deliberate rewriting of history. The report says that ‘the Corporation deliberately concentrated on script development in the two years after its inception in 1977 to lay the foundations for a successful industry’\(^\text{150}\). This rather overstates the position described in previous reports.

\(^{147}\) Williams, 10 July 1999.


The *First Annual Report* laments the ‘inadequate flow of investment opportunities’ but concludes that the ‘paucity of acceptable scripts is an industry-wide problem, in that it is being experienced by the Australian Film Commission and other State Corporations’. The *Second Annual Report* reiterated the ‘concern about the quality of scripts being submitted in the previous year’ and identified this as the reason ‘to assist with pre-production’, pre-production being defined to ‘encompass the preparation of treatments, script development, production budgeting and location surveys’.Whilst the value of a good script is recognised, a specific policy to invest in script development—strategically a good idea—is nowhere in evidence in those years. The *Third Annual Report* elevated happenstance and expediency to foresight and planning—sophistry indeed.

On the other hand, the *Third Annual Report* maintained the party line on open-ended government subsidy for the industry. Quite bluntly it says that ‘a film industry that can survive only on Government subsidies is a luxury we believe Queensland and the nation as a whole cannot afford indefinitely’.

Sometimes, the corporation’s annual reports are stratospherically optimistic. Take the opening sentence of the chairman’s report in the *Fourth Annual Report*: ‘The past twelve months saw the Queensland film industry come of age’. Fortunately, the balance of the report displays less hubris and paints a reasonably accurate picture of the Australian film industry’s rapid expansion with the influx of taxation-driven investments and the evolving roles of the state film corporations.

**Expansion**

The early 1980s was a time of expansion and of professionalisation of the corporation, and indeed the whole of the Australian film industry. The raising of finance had become subject to corporations law, and the opening up of tax-gearing under Division 10BA of

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the Income Tax (Assessments) Act in October 1980\textsuperscript{155} brought a flood of lawyers and accountants into the industry. The times also placed increasing demands on the chair of the Queensland Film Corporation, Allen Callaghan, and the secretary, Debra Cole.\textsuperscript{156}

In a manner of speaking, the chairman was unpaid; that is, the chair received no sitting fee as did the non-ex-officio members of the board. Callaghan’s only special emolument was the reimbursement of expenses incurred in the course of his duties, a generous perquisite whose limits were at the discretion of the chairman himself. Nevertheless, the idea that the chairman was \textit{unpaid} persisted in newspaper and magazine articles, though Brian Williams, who worked with Callaghan in the corporation for six years, could not recall Callaghan ever making anything of the matter.\textsuperscript{157} The unpaid status of the job may have been one factor that contributed to what became a culture of entitlement. In due course, in fact, in short course, the culture of entitlement led to fraud.

In early 1980, the corporation advertised for a full-time executive officer, ‘following the resignation of its part-time Executive Consultant, Tony [Anthony] Buckley, to concentrate on film production’.\textsuperscript{158} Brian K. Williams ‘Executive Director of the Western Australian Film Council—that State’s equivalent of the QFC’, was appointed as executive officer of the Queensland Film Corporation.\textsuperscript{159} Williams says that he was ‘head-hunted’ for the job by Callaghan, Cole and J. A. Elliott, at the inter-corporations meeting in Hobart.\textsuperscript{160}

The appointment of Williams as executive director was noted in the \textit{Third Annual Report}, but in the \textit{Fourth Annual Report} he is referred to as ‘consultant on film investment and development’ in one place and ‘Executive Director’ in another. The difference is not academic as the question of responsibility for administrative malfeasances could arise, as it did in 1986.

\textsuperscript{156} The first secretary, A. W. Krimmer, seemingly chose to stay with Premier & Cabinet.
\textsuperscript{157} Brian Williams, interview, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, 11 February 2000.
\textsuperscript{158} Callaghan, \textit{Third Annual Report}, p. 6. Tony Buckley at that time had produced \textit{Caddie} and \textit{The Irishman}.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{160} Williams, 11 February 2000. J. A. Elliott had replaced I. J. Gibbs, from 1 November 1979, as the Legislative Assembly’s representative on the board of the QFC. He served until 23 December 1980 when he was replaced by J. H. Warner. Callaghan, \textit{Third Annual Report}.
This confusion of nomenclature also applied to Debra Cole, in one place described as ‘Secretary and Liaison Officer’, at another as ‘consultant for administration’\textsuperscript{161} and, in the Third Annual Report, as the ‘one member of staff—the Secretary’.\textsuperscript{162} The appointment of these members of staff as ‘consultants’ under individual contracts was later explained as affording the corporation flexibility but it also circumvented obligations for long-service leave and other employee entitlements.\textsuperscript{163}

Financial Growth

Following Callaghan’s appointment everything went up. ‘Administration’ and ‘Marketing’ costs went from $23,505.45 to $62,223.57 and $23,785.77 to $86,329.08 respectively, and ‘Pre-production and Production Assistance’ shot up from $89,200 to $647,966.00. Administration costs increased rapidly too, doubling in that third year (1979–80 to 1980–81) to $130,631 and peaking in 1985–86 at $354,120, or 29 per cent of total expenditure. A comparable figure at Film Victoria for administrative costs was 21 percent.\textsuperscript{164}

The cautious expenditure of the first two years meant that Callaghan inherited a cashed-up corporation in 1979–80. Despite the additional spending, the massive carry-over of $1,000,796.36 from 1978–79, augmented by a further $300,000 from state revenue meant the corporation ended the 1979–80 year with $365,229.86 in the bank.\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{161} Callaghan, Fourth Annual Report, pp. 1, 7.

\textsuperscript{162} Callaghan, Third Annual Report, p. 6. This is the position that Helen Sweeney came to occupy from 21 June 1982 after Cole left to work in the film industry as a production secretary. See Allen Callaghan, Queensland Film Corporation, Fifth Annual Report, 1981–1982, pp. 1, 9.

\textsuperscript{163} This manner of appointment was a common practice in the film industry, terms and conditions of employment for free-lance workers being notoriously subject to market forces and individual leverage. Personal experience of the author in the period 1969–94.

\textsuperscript{164} Author’s calculation. At the time I was Executive Producer at Film Victoria and the data was derived from the running costs and funds administered by the Government Documentary Division of Film Victoria.

\textsuperscript{165} Callaghan, Third Annual Report, p. 8.
Income, principally from consolidated revenue, rose sharply, reaching $1 million in 1981–82 and peaking at $1.1 million in 1985–86. Other income included returns from investments.

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167 Ibid.
Certainly, much of the early rise is associated with the employment of two senior members of staff and the period was one of significant inflation, but the rises are steep and the contributing factors not at all apparent from the available documents.

While the corporation had yet to find its Picnic at Hanging Rock, after five years it was investing across a range of projects and dealing with well-established producers, as well as the up-and-coming of the industry. It was promoting Queensland as a location, and maintaining a high public profile, nationally and overseas. Surely critical and commercial success was close at hand.

Too Much of a Good Thing

The events of 1985–87 involving the Queensland Film Corporation can be seen as the turning point in the twenty-year reign of Johannes Bjelke-Petersen as premier of Queensland and the end of the ascendancy of the National Party. The collapse in support between 1986 and 1989 was extraordinary for an electorate previously tolerant of a dictatorial government as long as the government appeared to put Queensland first.168

It was the very smallest carelessness that brought down the houses of cards, gaoled three of those culpable, left one conscientious accountant dead, and damaged the reputation of several decent film-makers. There was no one moment when things went wrong: in retrospect, one sees events that evidence an unravelling of accountability and public duty by some individuals, occurrence that were covertly sanctioned, hence courting political disaster if ever revealed.

On 9 June 1985, the page-one lead in the Sunday Mail was ‘Games ace up Sally’s sleeve’, a story about Mayor Sally-Anne Atkinson’s sure-fire plan to host the 1992 Olympic Games. Below was a highly speculative story on ‘Fine Cotton: the Movie’, a proposed caper-movie based on the illegal ring-in of a horse at Brisbane’s Eagle Farm racetrack some years earlier. But on the back page, nested in Marion Smith’s ‘Exit Lines’ column, there lay a smoking gun. Smith mused over the retrospective generosity of the Queensland Day committee towards an un-named individual for expenses incurred overseas earlier in the year.169 Three weeks later,


Smith was elated. A letter from the chair of the Queensland Day committee, Sir David Longland, was published in the Sunday Mail, defending the un-named person’s reputation but, in doing so, outing her—Judith Anne Callaghan. These allegations caught the eye of Ross Goodhew, an accountant in the Department of the Auditor-General.

And then there was the odd case of the auditor-general’s signature on the Queensland Film Corporation’s 1985–86 annual report. The signature was that of P. N. (Pat) Craven, who had retired in October of the previous year. The Minister for the Arts, National Parks and Sport (and the Queensland Film Corporation), the Hon. P. R. McKechnie, told parliament that the mistake had been made by Ogilvy and Mather, the ‘printing company’ that had produced every glossy annual reports since Allen Callaghan had become chair of the corporation.

Then there was also the payment on 3 September 1984, by Ogilvy and Mather's Brisbane office, of $5,000 into a bank account at the National Bank on the corner of Queen and Creek Streets, Brisbane. That account, ‘in the name of “The Director, Queensland Film Corporation” was overdrawn by $2,508.13’ at the time. Ogilvy and Mather invoiced the corporation for $5,000 at the end of the month, but Minister McKechnie refused to answer questions on notice about the deposit or the invoice. And there were black hole bank accounts elsewhere… but only one person knew about them for the time being.

The Queensland Day Committee

The Queensland Day committee (QDC) was ‘formed by State Cabinet [minute 32456] on March 17, 1980’, and was responsible to the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

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170 Sir David Longland, ‘Letter to the editor’, Sunday Mail, 30 June 1986, p. 19. Also e-mail of 19 August 1999 from Marion Smith (now Marion Demozay), and conversation with her in Brisbane, 15 June 2000.


172 The report must have been withdrawn promptly and reprinted, as the copy in the possession of this author has the correct signature, that of V. C. (Vince) Doyle.


177 Ibid.
Callaghan (nee Hart) provided her services to the committee, first as secretary and later as executive officer, through her consultancy company, Judith Hart and Associates. She was paid ‘about $943 per fortnight to do the job’. A contract of service like this was a common arrangement with significant tax benefits, especially in the matter of deductible expenses.\textsuperscript{178}

Like other patriotic bodies, the committee sought sponsorship for projects that extended beyond the annual events of Queensland Day and that recognised Queensland’s achievements on many fronts. One such project was an exhibition of photographs drawn from the Haig Collection in the state’s John Oxley Library and called ‘Queensland through the eye of an early camera’.\textsuperscript{179} In seeking funds to tour this exhibition, Judith Callaghan turned to Queensland Day committee member and chair of the Queensland Film Corporation, her husband Allen Callaghan.

Over a period of eighteen months commencing in May 1984, $40,000 was paid to the QDC for various purposes said to be associated with the Haig Collection. Though the auditor-general was of the opinion that the payment fell outside the purposes of the QFC as defined by Section 9 of its act,\textsuperscript{180} and had been made without the corporation’s approval, this issue could have been resolved with a reprimand but for one thing: Judith Callaghan had paid the QFC’s cheques into ‘secret pass book accounts accessed solely by Judith as signatory’.\textsuperscript{181}

The auditor-general later reported:

In August 1985, an audit verification request arising from the audit of the Department of Arts, National Parks and Sport revealed that certain sponsorship payments to the Queensland Day Committee from the funds of the Queensland Film Corporation had not been brought to account through the official accounts of the Premier’s Department.\textsuperscript{182}

\textsuperscript{178} Ibid. Note that a similar arrangement applied to Williams and Sweeney at the QFC.
\textsuperscript{180} Tony Koch, ‘Two breaches of Film Act–audit report’.
\textsuperscript{181} Goodhew, ‘Ex-auditor tells how he tracked down Callaghans’.
She had opened the first of these accounts named ‘Queensland Day Dinner’ at the Commonwealth Bank at Mineral House in Brisbane on 25 May 1981 to receive subscriptions for the annual Queensland Day dinners, and claimed that she had done so ‘after discussing it with Mr Donald Marsden, an Under Secretary of the Premier’s Department’. When questioned, Mr Marsden did not recall the conversation.

Hendricus (Hank) Coblens

Auditor Ross Goodhew, alerted by the ‘Exit Lines’ article, had identified the ‘transfers of money totalling $40,000 from the QFC to the QDC purely on the basis of letters of request from the QDC director (Judith Callaghan) to the QFC director (Allen Callaghan) and approved by the latter’, and asked another auditor, Hank Coblens, to ‘check the QDC’s books and confirm whether or not those monies were deposited into the Premier’s Department accounts’.

As Coblen’s informal audit proceeded, it became clear that there were ‘two unofficial bank accounts named “Queensland Day Dinner” and “Queensland Day Sponsorship”, of which the committee’s chair, Sir David Longland knew nothing, and whose transactions were poorly documented, the only records being a cash book with erratic entries of deposits and disbursements.

Coblens took his findings to Goodhew, who took the issue up with his superiors, Pat Nolan and Auditor-General V. C. (Vince) Doyle, who in turn ‘resolved that Hank should act officially as the auditor of the QDC’. Coblens, however, had serious reservations about proceeding with the audit. On 13 August, after a discussion with Judith Callaghan, he had noted that the ‘committee apparently perceive itself as an independent body’. Two days later (15 August), he wrote to the assistant auditor-general, charting the history of the

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183 Ibid.  
184 Uncredited, ‘Mrs X illness fatal in three years: doctor’ and Regina v. Judith Anne Callaghan.  
185 Goodhew, ‘Ex-auditor tells how he tracked down Callaghans’.  
186 Ibid.  
187 Ibid.  
Queensland Day committee and setting out a series of issues that pertained specifically to its legal situation. He concluded the memo:

> Based on the foregoing I believe that until there is a clarification of the legal basis for a full audit to be performed on the Committee that if an audit by me is required that detailed instructions be documented in order that I can ensure that my actions, in such a sensitive situation are totally in conformity with the directions from my senior officers.\(^{189}\)

Though he had no concerns about the technical aspects of the work, Coblens was right to be politically cautious. Ross Goodhew was later questioned by Mr Horton, counsel for Coblens’ wife, Mary Cecelia Coblens:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Horton:} & \quad \text{Were you aware of jokes or otherwise or suggestions that the Premier’s Department was a fairly sensitive department to audit?} \\
\text{Goodhew:} & \quad \text{Well, I would say it was no joke. I think every one knew it was a sensitive department to audit.}^{190}
\end{align*}
\]

Seemingly, Coblens got the requested letter of instruction. Coroner Fitzpatrick heard that on 4 October at about 8.30am, Coblens met with another officer of the auditor-general’s department and had the letter of instruction from Vince Doyle taken from him and was very unhappy about the loss.\(^{191}\)

Two days earlier, 2 October, Coblens had marshalled his evidence that certain transactions in the accounts of the QDC were irregular and told Goodhew that he planned to present his findings to Judith Callaghan the following morning.\(^{192}\) At the meeting Callaghan protested her innocence and later claimed that she gave Coblens a series of files to inspect, files that would provide the documentation to demonstrate that no malfeasance had occurred. Later the

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\(^{190}\) Evidence of Ross Goodhew, ibid., p. 90.

\(^{191}\) Evidence of Kevin Charles Solomon, ibid., p. 91.

\(^{192}\) Evidence of Ross Goodhew, ibid., p. 91.
same day, it is believed that Coblens met with Allen Callaghan.\textsuperscript{193} Certainly his wife, Mary, reported that he arrived home ‘three quarters of an hour late’ and was ‘very angry’.\textsuperscript{194}

Coblens left early for work the following morning, Friday, to meet with another colleague, Tony Doherty, to whom he relinquished Doyle’s letter of instruction. A few minutes later, at about 8.45, Coblens telephoned yet another colleague, Barri Rollason, who was on a special audit of the Queensland Dairymen’s State Council with a third auditor, Pat Gallagher. The call was of sufficient concern to Rollason that he called Vince Doyle, the auditor-general, who alerted Pat Nolan, Coblens’ immediate superior, and also called Tony Doherty.

Coblens left his office at about 9.40 that morning and, after a series of telephone calls failed to locate him, Rollason, accompanied by a Julie Ann Keating and Coblens’ wife, drove to the Coblens’ home in Tingalpa, using Doyle’s car. The trip was fruitless, Coblens was not there nor was his white Mazda sedan, but Coroner Fitzpatrick heard that Coblens called his wife at Tingalpa about 1.30pm.

The following morning, Coblens was found in Clay Gully Road, Victoria Point, in Brisbane’s outer south-east, with ‘both legs protruding out of the off-side open door of the sedan’.\textsuperscript{195} A .308 Parker-Hale ‘Midland’ rifle with a shattered stock lay on the ground, a discharged cartridge in the chamber. He had bought the gun the previous day at the A-Mart in Underwood, on Bankcard.\textsuperscript{196} The blood stained note read:

Dear Mary, Sorry but I made a blunder. I’m too disgusted with myself. It’s no ones fault but my own. Don’t blame the people at work. It’s really I who am flawed. I love you. Hank.\textsuperscript{197}

The Minister for Justice, Neville Harper, accepted police advice that the death was a suicide and so ‘by a statutory procedure an inquest was dispensed [with]’.\textsuperscript{198} However, media and bureaucratic pressure caused the minister to reconsider and he ordered an inquest that opened

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{193} E-mail from Marion Demozay (nee Smith, former author of ‘Exit Lines’, \textit{Sunday Mail}), 19 August 1999. \\
\textsuperscript{194} Evidence of Mary Cecelia Coblens, ‘Transcript of coronial inquiry, file no. 2535/85’, p. 31. \\
\textsuperscript{195} Evidence of Detective Tutt, \textit{ibid}. \\
\textsuperscript{196} Evidence of Alex Torzsa, \textit{ibid}. \\
\textsuperscript{197} Text of a note (exhibit 7), \textit{ibid}. \\
\end{flushright}
in March 1986, Coroner P. M. Fitzpatrick SM presiding. Fitzpatrick found that the ‘cause of his death was a gunshot wound to the head… that was self inflicted’. Fitzpatrick went on to say that ‘there is an abundance of admissible evidence that the deceased was a man possessed of an extremely high and finely tuned sense of self pride in his work and ability’.

While noting that Coblens had been engaged on ‘a sensitive audit at the Queensland Day Committee’, after hearing evidence from Rollason, Gallagher and, in particular, Doherty, his honour concluded:

That an auditing mistake by him [Coblens] at the Queensland Dairymans [sic] State Council 1983/84 failed to disclose an alleged serious defalcation and this weighed heavily upon him and, in his state of sensitiveness and quest for perfection of his duty sadly brought about a conviction in his mind that he could not live with the situation and its consequences as he saw them.

A coroner must draw conclusions from the evidence before the court and is prohibited from going beyond the scope of the inquest or accepting opinions as evidence, except in certain circumstances. Detective Tutt’s speculation about the penultimate minutes of Coblens’ life was one such exception. On at least one occasion, Fitzgerald had directed a witness, saying that to proceed with the line of evidence could be ‘prejudicial to any pending charges that are before the court’. In context these remarks seem to refer to Bevan Lloyd Whip of the Queensland Dairymen’s State Council, who had been bailed the previous September on charges of fraud amounting to $505,000.

In an addendum to his finding, Fitzpatrick explained his reasons for suppressing media coverage on the morning of the first day of the inquest. Mr Horton, for Mary Coblens, had sought the order ‘in the family interest of privacy and confidentiality’ and the coroner had agreed, much to the annoyance of the media. Ms O’Reilly, for the media, argued that ‘it is imperative that evidence connecting a woman already charged with a dishonest offence with some dealing with the deceased’ be known.

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200 Ibid.
201 Ibid.
The coroner continued:

M/s O’Reilly submitted that the public interest to know (in advance of any trial or examination of witnesses) the connection if any between a Mrs Callaghan and the deceased as being virtually the paramount consideration before me. Unfortunately she has not heard all the evidence thus far [he was speaking at the beginning of the afternoon sitting on the first day of the inquest] and that evidence shows that another person, a man has been charged before the Courts of the land with another offence of considerable magnitude and which has a far more direct connection with this Inquest that [sic] does the one about which the applicants here are concerned.\(^{204}\)

The use of the term ‘considerable magnitude’ would again seem to point to Bevan Lloyd Whip and his alleged fraud of the Queensland Dairymen’s State Council, not Allen Callaghan, who was also facing charges. In any event, neither Callaghan, Allen or Judith, was called to give evidence and so the coroner heard little of what transpired in the meeting of 3 October with Judith Callaghan and nothing of the allegation circulating in the auditor-general’s office that Coblens ‘had committed suicide after being threatened by Allen Callaghan re his pursuit of some discrepancies in the QDC paperwork’.\(^{205}\)

Judith Anne Callaghan

Despite the turmoil of June to October 1985, Judith Callaghan continued as the executive officer of the Queensland Day committee. As the Queensland government refused to name her, the Brisbane press delighted in referring to her only as Mrs X.

On 3 December, the audit of the Queensland Day Committee was formally reported to the premier’s department. The head of the department, the coordinator-general, sought the advice of the solicitor-general and the following day placed matters in the hands of the Queensland police. Doubtless he would have discussed the report with the premier, but it was not until 19 December that Bjelke-Petersen, still refusing to name her, dismissed Judith

\(^{204}\) Ibid., p. 2.
\(^{205}\) Demozay, 19 August 1999.
Callaghan. The day before she was sacked she ‘was admitted to a Brisbane hospital with a virus infection’, and on the day of the sacking Allen Callaghan went on leave; the couple disappeared from view. Subsequently, Judith left hospital with a medical certificate that ‘will prevent a police interview until 1 February’ 1986.\footnote{Uncredited, ‘Mr and Mrs X: The story so far’.}

On 2 and 3 February Judith Callaghan was interviewed by Detective Sergeants Moczynski and Loxton of the fraud squad in the presence of her solicitor Mr Nolan. Ironically, she was not formally charged until 6 June, Queensland Day, and was indicted on 8 August:

\begin{quote}
That between the first day of April 1984 and the first day of September 1985 at Brisbane in the State of Queensland you dishonestly applied to your own use property namely $44,529.88.\footnote{Transcript of Regina v. Judith Anne Callaghan, p. 1.}
\end{quote}

She faced the Brisbane District Court on Friday 22 August 1986 before Judge Fred McGuire. She had been scheduled to face court on Monday of that week but, on considering the weighty evidence, changed her plea to guilty just before the case was to open.

The Crown Prosecutor, Mr David Bullock, detailed the Crown’s case and spoke for three and a half hours, saying that ‘she had shown no remorse for her illegal use of more than $40,000 of funds’\footnote{Uncredited, ‘Mrs X illness fatal in three years: doctor’.} Early in his presentation, Mr Bullock dealt with one substantial piece of evidence that might be led in her favour.

On 7 October 1985, Mr Leonard Dudman, an auditor-general of the Department of Auditor-General, was appointed to take over the audit of Mr Coblens having passed away \textit{sic}. And on several occasions after 7 October 1985, Mr Dudman has conversations with the prisoner which we’ll come to shortly.

Mr Dudman says that on 23 October 1985, he went to the Queensland Day Committee office in the Treasury Building where he spoke to the prisoner. He discussed with her how far Mr Coblens had proceeded with the audit and the prisoner told Mr Dudman that there were records missing, in the form of Queensland Day Committee files. These files had been taken by Mr Coblens and she later provided some written details of these missing files to Mr Dudman.
The prisoner later elaborated on this to police. She said – in effect – the Haig Collection file and other files including one she called the Transaction file which related to sponsorship accounts – not the Dinner Account – the Sponsorship Account. She said it had been taken by Mr Coblens. She said she gave the documents to Mr Coblens as he was leaving on Thursday evening, 3 Oct. 1985. She said that she didn’t come in to work the next day, 4 Oct. 1985, but when she did, on the following Monday morning, there was a note in Mr Coblen’s writing on her desk saying that he had taken the information that he required. Mr Coblens died, apparently, on Friday 4 October 1985.

Detective Loxton showed the Haig Collection file to the prisoner during [the interview of 2, 3 February] and she said that that was one file she’d given to Mr Coblens. The importance of this is ... is this: that the only record the prisoner says that she had of the Sponsorship account, this account that was opened in August 1984, of the transactions involved ... the only record of that was in a transaction file which she gave to Mr Coblens... the deceased Mr Coblens.

There was then a search made, and also a Mr Nolan who was the superior of Mr Coblens... says that, I quote, “I can’t find anything of this nature. The search has been made and nothing like this has been located”.209

In fact, Coblens was scrupulous in detail to the last. Nolan told coroner Fitzpatrick that later on 4 October he had received ‘four cases of information, notebooks relating to past audits, some information relating to the Premier’s Department audit, further information relating to the audit of the Queensland Day Committee which were referred to the auditor to complete the audit Hank Coblens had begun’.210

Dr Barry Berlind was one of seven doctors who testified on Callaghan’s debilitated health.211 He told the court that the prisoner ‘was a “brittle asthmatic” and said that people with her condition had a 100 percent death rate in two to three years’. ‘She had 50 percent lung capacity in 1979 and less now the court was told. The three year life expectancy estimate was based on the progression of the illness, which had worsened.’212

210 Evidence of P. B. Nolan, Coronial inquiry file no. 2535/85.
211 Loane, ‘The fall of Princess Pushy’.
212 Uncredited, ‘Mrs X illness fatal in three years: doctor’.
The defence, presented by Robert Mulholland, was not that misappropriation had not occurred but that the scale of misappropriation was exaggerated. Mulholland attempted to demonstrate that the minister had approved one payment of $20,000 by the QFC, and that Judith Callaghan had had approval to open the two ‘secret’ accounts. Judge McGuire, however, remained sceptical. The following Wednesday 27 August McGuire handed down a sentence of thirty months with a non-parole period of three months. The judge said that Callaghan ‘had to be given credit for pleading guilty to the charge, for showing remorse and for offering to make restitution’, which she had partly done. He ordered her to make restitution of the balance ‘of $26,601.67 … in default nine months’.213

Callaghan was released after three months, in deference to her medical condition and Judge McGuire’s recommendation on parole. Contrary to the pessimistic medical prognosis, Judith Anne Hart, having separated from Allen Callaghan, continues to live and work in Brisbane, most recently as Health Promotions Coordinator for Drug-Arm Queensland (Drug Awareness Rehabilitation and Management).214

The National Party did not suffer at the state election of 1 November that year. They won 49 seats to the Liberal’s 10 seats and Labor’s 30 seats. Now the National Party–Queensland no longer needed to form a coalition with the Liberals.215 The dream had been realised.

Allen Lindsay Callaghan (Part I)

During 1986 charges were also laid against three officers of the Department of Arts, National Parks and Sport. They were Helen Diane Sweeney, who had replaced Debra Cole as secretary of the film corporation, William Charles Sharry, whose unrelated fraud was revealed by the detailed audit of the department, and Allan Callaghan, under-secretary of the department, chair of the Queensland Film Corporation and husband of Judith.


The specifics of the allegations against Allen Callaghan vary over time and with the source. In reporting the sentencing of Judith Callaghan on 27 August 1986, the Courier-Mail also reported that:

Allen Callaghan is scheduled to appear in the Brisbane Magistrates Court on December 15 on 15 charges of false pretences, 106 counts of falsifying documents and making false entries in the books of the Queensland Film Corporation, and one charge of misappropriating $17,362, the property of the Queensland Film Corporation.  

The Queensland Film Corporation annual report for the year ending 30 June 1986 gave different financial details:

Criminal charges have been preferred against the former Chairman and the former Secretary of the Queensland Film Corporation in respect of certain expenditures of the Film Industry Development Fund which have been alleged to have been unlawfully incurred. Final determination of amounts to be the subject of the charges is contingent upon the outcome of current police investigations.

The charges laid were—
former Chairman—125 charges of which four will, if proven, substantiate a deficiency of $95,379.24 in the Fund, such being accrued over a period encompassing seven financial years.
former Secretary—32 charges of which one will, if proven, substantiate a deficiency of $8,334.39 in the Fund, such being accrued over a period encompassing four financial years.

Expenditure of $3,064.66 incurred by the former Chairman per medium of the American Express Card remain [sic] unsubstantiated and unrecouped. Recovery action is pending.  

The state moved far more slowly to clarify the charges against Allen Callaghan than it had in the case of Judith. Certainly the alleged charges were more numerous and involved.

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216 Uncredited, ‘Sheer self-indulgence: Judge’.
transactions within Australian and overseas, covering a period of six years, but there seems to have been a reluctance on the part of the government to face the inevitable.

Initially, the alleged malfeasances fell into four classes: First, the transfer of funds ($40,000) from the Queensland Film Corporation to the Queensland Day committee, without the approval of the board and contrary to Section 9 of the Act, funds that were, in part, subsequently fraudulently applied to the Callaghans’ own use.

Second, a relationship with Ogilvy and Mather Pty Ltd of Brisbane in which Ogilvy and Mather advanced $17,589.57 in thirteen amounts to Callaghan, and ‘in each instance the [company] had rendered false accounts to the corporation, which Callaghan had falsely authorised as genuine expenditure’.  

Third, a similar relationship with Ken Newton Media Consultants Pty Ltd of the Gold Coast involving ‘$6,700.00 in three amounts’.

Finally, charging to the corporation expenses of a personal nature. These ‘included bills for the hire of a Rolls Royce and four other cars for his daughter’s wedding’, and ‘64 restaurant bills totalling $8,860.11, purportedly for journalists, Art Gallery trustees, Queensland Museum Board members and other business figures. In all cases, the people for whom the meals were bought were not present at them’. These expenses and the purchase of gifts were sometime charged to the corporation’s American Express card.

The police investigation of these lattermost charges led to curious scenes in many offices of state film corporations and the Australian Film Commission. Phillip Adams was fond of recollecting his interrogation by police bearing a list of dates for restaurant meals and gifts that Adams had allegedly received from Callaghan.

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218 ‘Callaghan jailed for four years: trembling wife weeps as sentence passed’, Courier-Mail, 29 April 1987, p. 3, also transcript, Regina v. Allen Lindsay Callaghan, Brisbane District Court, 22 April 1987.

219 Regina v. Allen Lindsay Callaghan.

220 Ibid.

Allen Callaghan’s name had been in the press, thinly disguised as ‘Mr. X’, since the first allegations about the payment of Judith’s travel expenses were made in the Sunday Mail in June 1985.222 ALP leader, Neville Warburton, used their names in a flood of rhetorical questions to Bjelke-Petersen over Christmas 1985, outside the protection of parliamentary privilege, and on 12 January 1986, the Sunday Mail ran the headline ‘Mr & Mrs X: The story so far’, illustrated with photographs of Allen and Judith Callaghan.223

When parliament resumed on 18 February, Joh Bjelke-Petersen could no longer ignore the issue. At 11.17 am he presented a ministerial statement in the face of a rowdy Opposition. Amid interwoven threats and insults to the Labor Party, he said:

Let me set the record straight. Last year the auditor carrying out an audit of the Queensland Film Corporation came across a number of payments made by the Queensland Film Corporation which, in the view of the auditor, required further audit inquires. These inquiries, in August 1985, concerned the recipient body of the funds [Queensland Day Committee]. Subsequently the Auditor-General decided that his investigations should be extended to other payments made in selected areas of the Department of The Arts, National Parks and Sport [sic].

On 7 February 1986, the Auditor-General called on me and handed copies of his report to me and to the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts.

The Auditor-General informed me that he had conducted an interview with Mr Allen Callaghan, the Under Secretary of the Department of The Arts, National Parks and Sport, on Wednesday, 29 January 1986. On Friday 31 January 1986, the Auditor-General had delivered to Mr Callaghan a letter requesting certain explanations and information, which was required to be provided to the office of the Auditor-General by 12 noon on Wednesday, 5 February.

Mr Callaghan submitted his resignation as from 3 February 1986.224

222 Smith, ‘Exit Lines’.
223 ‘Mr and Mrs X: The story so far’.
The premier did not need to table Callaghan’s letter of resignation—it had been reproduced on page one of the *Courier-Mail* on 5 February—but he did resist calls to table the auditor-general’s report, citing advice received:

Through the Commissioner of Police [Sir Terry Lewis],\(^{225}\) from the officer in charge of the police investigation. That advice, provided by Detective Inspector D. T. Plint, stated inter alia—

> “Without presuming to advise on a course of conduct as far as the tabling of the document is concerned when Parliament resumes I would submit with respect that such a course would seriously inhibit sensitive police enquiries…”\(^{226}\)

The premier, however, did table the opinion of the solicitor-general that ‘the acceptance of [Callaghan’s] resignation in no way reduced the power of the Auditor-General to pursue matters or question Mr Callaghan, nor did the acceptance of the resignation assist Mr Callaghan to evade his obligation under the law’.\(^{227}\)

In the last weeks of sittings in 1985, the government had used the rules of sub judice to silence parliamentary discussion of issues to do with the Queensland Day Committee. Now it was using the euphemisms ‘recipient body of the funds’ or ‘committee established under the auspices of my department’ instead, and the leader of the Opposition, N. G. Warburton, objected. He sought leave to ‘move a motion without notice’ to ‘permit immediate debate on a motion of dissent’ from the Speaker’s ruling, but was defeated ‘Ayes, 30; Noes 49’.\(^{228}\)

That afternoon, P. R. McKechnie, the ‘Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts’, used another ministerial statement to elaborate on the premier’s statement, and ‘to set the record straight on matters that are not sub judice and do not impinge upon current police investigation’.\(^{229}\) These related to the behaviour of the Opposition, especially Nev.

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\(^{225}\) Lewis had been knighted in the New Years honours’ list. *Courier-Mail*, 1 January 1986, p. 1.

\(^{226}\) Bjelke-Petersen, ‘Ministerial Statement’, p. 3502.

\(^{227}\) Ibid. p. 3503.


Warburton, an incorrect signature on the 1984–85 annual report of the Queensland Film Corporation, alleged discrepancies in corporation expenses in earlier annual reports, video legislation, and the minister’s own attendance at a conference in Auckland and his subsequent travels to ‘become familiar with New Zealand tourism’ at the request of the chairman of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation.  

However, the following day, the government lost control of the debate. Leader of the Opposition, Mr Warburton, speaking to a Matter of Public Interest, namely ‘Financial Administration by Queensland Government’, insisted that ‘the matters to which I will refer can in no way be construed as being in breach of the sub judice ruling made in this house yesterday on matter relating to charges connected with the Queensland Day Committee’. He went on to ask questions about the overdrawn bank account at the National Australia Bank in the name of ‘The Director, Queensland Film Corporation’ about which the board knew nothing, and deposits into that account; about the purchase of an antique in Bahrain by Allen Callaghan during a trip on which he was accompanied by Minister McKechnie; and about monies received by Martin–Williams Films, one of whose principals, Mike Williams, was a member of the board of the Queensland Film Corporation.

McKechnie defended the government by again attacking Warburton’s conduct and declared that he had ‘mentioned to the Leader of the Opposition here this morning that I thought it unwise, as far as the police were concerned, for him to continue questioning any financial matters regarding the Queensland Film Corporation’. He then refused to discuss the bank account issue, declared that he did not purchase an antique in Bahrain ‘nor, to best of my knowledge did Mick Borzi receive one’ and, most surprising, claimed that ‘the Leader of the Opposition even goes to the extent that his private secretary rang up some of my staff asking them whether or not they had any questions they would like him [Warburton] to ask [me]. There is talk about leaks in the public service—’

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230 Ibid.
233 Ibid., pp. 3611, 3612. Allegedly, the gift was for the Queensland’s Bahrain representative, Mick Borzi.
234 P. R. McKechnie, ibid., p. 3613.
235 Ibid., p. 3614.
Indeed, some one, somewhere, was leaking like a sieve. Details such as the ‘National Australia Bank account in the name of “The Director, Queensland Film Corporation”’ or the cost of the antique could have only come from the inside. Two weeks earlier, Tony Koch, had written in the *Courier-Mail*:

No move Callaghan made, no appointment, career promotion or overseas trip, was ever undertaken that was not leaked to the media by [a] disgruntled public servant or political opponents seeking to make life harder for him. This continued to his resignation yesterday when a constant flow of information and supporting documents found their way to either the office of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Warburton, or *The Courier-Mail*.236

On 19 February, Mr Warburton also received curt answers to some questions on notice, but the exchange had the effect of putting on the public record the relationship between the Queensland Film Corporation and Ogilvy & Mather, and seeding suspicion about board member Mike Williams.

Next day McKechnie had to respond to the morning’s page-one lead story in the *Courier-Mail*, ‘Callaghan alleges fraud in Film Corp’, by political reporter Peter Morley.237 The allegations centred on a ‘National Australia Bank account in the name of “The Director, Queensland Film Corporation”’ and trust accounts used to handle private investors’ monies, and implicated Brian Williams, the executive director of the corporation. The letter had been received by McKechnie on 10 February and passed on to the auditor-general the same day, but the *Courier-Mail* claimed to have received it only the previous day, 19 February. McKechnie responded in parliament, quoting the auditor-general’s response, and concluded with veiled allegations of a conspiracy:

Mr Morley claimed in today’s *Courier-Mail* that he had received a copy of the letter. Mr Morley, on 5 February this year, also detailed the content of Mr Callaghan’s resignation—another Government document. These facts lead to a very interesting circle: Callaghan, Morley and the Opposition Labor Party. I leave the House to draw its own conclusions.238

237 Peter Morley, ‘Callaghan alleges fraud in Film Corp’, *Courier-Mail*, 20 February 1986, pp. 1, 2.
McKechnie made no mention of Brian Williams but was direct in his defence of Mike Williams. After detailing the financial dealings between Martin–Williams Films and the corporation, McKechnie declared ‘there is no conflict of interest in the conduct of Mr [Mike] Williams in Queensland’.  

Later in the day, McKechnie refused to countenance, let alone answer, any further question relating to the Queensland Film Corporation. But Premier Bjelke-Petersen afforded an insight into the government’s understanding of the role of the Opposition. In replying to Mr Warburton’s personal explanation that he had not been ‘creating a trial by media—of in fact conducting a kangaroo court [by asking questions in parliament]’, Bjelke-Petersen said the Opposition should be silent ‘during the period when it is sub judice or should be sub judice—one case is and the other one is at a very delicate point’.

By the end of the week Callaghan had vehemently denied being Morley’s and the Opposition’s source; the Courier-Mail had denied involvement in conspiracy; three Labor members had been suspended from parliament (Deputy Leader Burns for five days); and the leader of the Liberal Party, Sir William Knox, had declared that ‘the National Party in State Parliament has “stooped to an intolerable low” yesterday [20 February] when it gagged a debate on a censure motion’ in which ‘the Opposition Leader was branded a liar and censured without allowing him the opportunity to debate the censure motion’.  

But behind the scenes, police were moving as fast as possible to lay charges against Allen Callaghan so as to gag the parliament altogether, or so the Opposition claimed. Callaghan was summonsed on 28 February. On 11 March, he was remanded in the Brisbane Magistrates Court, having been charged with misappropriation of $17,362. No plea was entered. The parliament and the media now fell silent on the Callaghan case.

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239 Ibid., p. 3669.
241 Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, ibid.
243 Editorial, ibid., p.4.
245 ‘Collusion in Callaghan case—claim’, Sunday Mail, 2 March 1986, p. 3.
A week later, on 18 March, the resignation of the secretary of the Queensland Film Corporation, Helen Sweeney dominated page-one of the Courier-Mail.\textsuperscript{246} The following day coroner Fitzpatrick handed down his finding on the death of Hank Coblens. On 20 March, Callaghan was quoted in the Courier-Mail as saying he had urged that the corporation should be disbanded back in 1984.\textsuperscript{247} It was a story that would not go away, full of people who would not be silent.

In the following months Seven National News–Brisbane ran a two part exposé, ‘Film Scam Exposed’, that added nothing new but further damaged Mike Williams’ reputation (7, 8 April); then Allen Callaghan was charged (9 April); Helen Diane Sweeney was interviewed by police about her own fraud of the Queensland Film Corporation and subsequently charged (23 April); then there was the trial and conviction of Judith Callaghan (22 & 27 August); on 30 August, Marcia Callaghan, Allen’s former wife, spoke to the Courier-Mail, that reported ‘Ex-wife tells of family distress’,\textsuperscript{248} and on the same day the Queensland government decided not to appeal the leniency of Judith Callaghan’s sentence.\textsuperscript{249}

Allen Lindsay Callaghan (Part II)

The indictment against Allen Callaghan on 22 April in the Brisbane District Court was more severe than those against Judith Callaghan or Helen Sweeney. It alleged:

That between the 23\textsuperscript{rd} day of October 1979 and the 30\textsuperscript{th} day of October 1985 at Brisbane in the State of Queensland you being an employee of Her Majesty dishonestly applied to your own use property namely $43,574.06 belonging to Her Majesty being the amount of a general deficiency in respect of the $43,574.06.\textsuperscript{250}

It implied that he had, almost from the time of his appointment to the Queensland Film Corporation, set about a considered plan to defraud the Queensland government and betray

\footnotesize{
246 ‘Senior officer resigns from Film Corp’, Courier-Mail, 19 March 1986, p. 1.
247 ‘Callaghan: I urged film body be disbanded’ Courier-Mail, 20 March 1986, p. 3.
}
trust. In the months that had elapsed much seems to have changed. Whereas he had faced ‘125 charges of which four, if proven, substantiate a deficiency of $95,379.24’ and had been questioned about further expenditure of $3,064.39 on American Express that remains ‘unsubstantiated and unrecouped’\(^{251}\) Callaghan now faced a single charge, albeit for the still significant amount of $43,574.06, almost the same amount as his wife’s fraud.

Court documents revealed that the Crown made a decision on 27 February 1987 to prosecute on one charge only and go \textit{nolle prosequi} on another eighty-six. I could not discover the grounds for this decision nor discover details of the other eighty-six charges, as the documents have not become public documents.

The investigation of the alleged complex and wide-ranging fraud had already consumed considerable police resources and time. There was little electoral imperative now to finalise the matter as the election of the previous November had reduced both the Labor Opposition and the junior coalition party, the Liberals, to a rump in the Legislative Assembly.\(^{252}\) However, a powerful political imperative remained because the matter touched nominally respectable government and private institutions in Queensland and interstate, as well as Commonwealth institutions, and reached out towards Joh Bjelke-Petersen himself.

There may well had been some plea bargaining: a not guilty plea to 125 charges would occupy the court for months as each charge was tested, and many businesses and individuals would be named irrespective of their guilt and headlines would fly. And, of course, cross examination might reveal hitherto secret matters, embarrassing to some politicians and businessmen alike. Pleading guilty would save much time, many resources and possible embarrassments, might win a little favour from the court—perhaps others—and result in a more lenient sentence.

In any event, Callaghan pleaded guilty when he faced court in April 1987. The Crown Prosecutor, David Bullock, detailed the charges, introducing a ‘chronological list firstly of claims the prisoner made, the dates of those claims and the amounts of those claims’, exhibit 1, and ‘a further schedule setting out the claims and payments under various headings’ exhibit 2.\(^{253}\) He then embarked on a detailed biography of the defendant,

\(^{251}\) Wilcox, \textit{Annual Report, Year ended 30 June 1986}, p. 6.

\(^{252}\) \url{http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Parlib/Parl_Information/Elections/Results.htm}

certainly the most thorough on the public record, before presenting testimonials from numerous prominent figures including Brisbane’s lord mayor, Sally-Anne Atkinson, and the president of the National Party—Queensland, Sir Robert Sparkes. Commenting on one letter His Honour, Judge McCracken, remarked ‘the author is to be congratulated on a well constructed letter that doesn’t tell one anything’.  

Robert Mulholland QC spoke for the defendant (in fact the defence and prosecution lawyers were the same as for Judith Callaghan, except that Mulholland had a junior, D. K. Boddice, who would later appear for Helen Sweeney), arguing not innocence but mitigating circumstances—the adverse effects of his long hours and travel on his first marriage leading to its break-down, the responsibility for up to three mortgages, at one time costing $3,500 per month, maintenance for his two youngest children, medical bills for his first wife and for Judith, his present wife, who was a severe asthmatic. He said that his client ‘accepted full responsibility for the offences and wished to blame no one else’. Mulholland’s remarks added to the perception, supported by the testimonials, of a dedicated, hard-working public servant, one who had gone off the rails in extraordinary circumstances and under unusual financial pressures. Judge McCracken concluded that sentencing ‘was a matter that called for careful consideration’ and remanded Callaghan ‘to a date to be fixed, possibly next week, and extended bail’.  

Callaghan was sentenced the following Tuesday, 28 April. Judge McCracken said that ‘his conduct in his six years stint as film corporation chairman had shown a persistent dishonesty of purpose’, and that:

The offence called for a significant penalty which reflected the community’s strong disapproval of his conduct, and one which also was seen as a punishment to him and a deterrent to others. He jailed Callaghan for four years with hard labor [sic], and did not recommend early parole. 

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254 Judge McCracken, Regina v. Allen Lindsay Callaghan, 22 April 1987, p. 34.
255 Robert Mulholland, ibid., and Courier-Mail, 23 April 1987, p. 2.
256 Judge McCracken, Regina v. Allen Lindsay Callaghan.
257 ‘Callaghan jailed for four years: trembling wife weeps as sentence passed’, Courier-Mail, 29 April 1987, p. 3.
This, for the time at least, ‘formally ended a career which saw Callaghan rise from a junior postal clerk to the position of press secretary to the Premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, and Arts, National Parks and Sport Department under secretary’.  

Allen Lindsay Callaghan: Epilogue

Callaghan served only two years of the sentence before being released on parole for a further two years. He subsequently worked for the RSPCA in Queensland, thought not without controversy. In February 1996 the National–Liberal coalition was returned to the Treasury benches with Rob Borbidge as premier. Five months later, a ‘sweeping arts shake-up’ was announced by Arts minister and Liberal Party leader, Joan Sheldon. The shake-up included Allen Lindsay Callaghan’s appointment to the board of the State Library.

The rehabilitation of 5 July was short lived. Monday’s Courier-Mail claimed ‘Callaghan library job “illegal”’ citing the Libraries and Archives Act that disqualifies ‘a person convicted of an indictable offence … [from] appointment to a board’. By the following Friday, 12 July, Callaghan had yielded to the pressure and withdrew his acceptance of the appointment. He cited the ‘relentless campaign against him’ as the reason, and thanked the minister, Joan Sheldon, for the ‘considerate and generous gesture on your part’.

Tony Koch had observed ten years earlier that ‘no move Callaghan made, no appointment, career promotion or overseas trip, was ever undertaken that was not leaked to the media by [a] disgruntled public servant or political opponents seeking to make life harder for him’. Truly ‘things are done differently in Queensland’: enmity, like a fire in a Bowen Basin coal seam, burns deeper and longer in Queensland.

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258 Ibid.
259 The ALP won 45 seats in the 1995 election to the Nationals’ 29 and Liberals’ 14. One independent candidate was also elected. The Court of Disputed Returns ordered a new election in the seat of Mundingburra. The seat, previously won by the ALP was won by the Liberal Party at the new election held on 3 February 1996. The ALP Government resigned on 19 February 1996 and a National/Liberal Government was sworn in.
263 Koch, ‘The life and times of an image maker’.
When Helen Sweeney resigned on 18 March 1986, she cited inability to work with other staff. Former board member Mike Williams suggested that she got in just ahead of being sacked.\(^{265}\) In the circumstances, as Allen Callaghan had resigned six weeks earlier, her remarks must have applied to Brian Williams, though she might have meant D. G. Young, who had replaced J. V. Bensted, the Director of Industrial Development as deputy chairman in December 1981, and who now had been appointed acting chairman.

An article in the *Courier-Mail* two days later was more specific. Quoting Callaghan, it said that Sweeney was ‘among a series of people who have found themselves unable or unwilling to work with the corporation’s executive director, Mr Brian Williams’.\(^{266}\) Certainly the *Courier-Mail*, as well as the Opposition saw her resignation as further proof of deep disorder in the corporation, and they each ensured that every nuance of the story would be reported in the press or be the subject of fruitless questioning in the Queensland parliament.\(^{267}\)

Sweeney, 37, faced the Brisbane District Court on 1 May 1987 before Judge McGuire, who had presided over Judith Callaghan’s trial. The charge, to which Sweeney pleaded guilty, was ‘that between 20 October 1982 and 31 January 1986, she dishonestly applied $10,915.97 belonging to the Queensland Film Corporation’.\(^{268}\)

Helen Sweeney had been caught up in the tide of events within the corporation but, in her closeness to the chairman, how willingly is hard to determine. Among her duties was the preparation of expense claims for the chairman’s approval. The court heard that ‘early after her appointment, she approached the Chairman for advice’ on how to handle her own claims, and especially if she had ‘had difficulty remembering but that it was a legitimate expense’. Sweeney said that in that interview Callaghan had told her to ‘put down any name to have the expense approved’.\(^{269}\) Thus, as Crown Prosecutor Tony Costanzo told the court, Sweeney

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\(^{265}\) Mike Williams, ‘Details of the BTQ [Channel 7] Story’, notes prepared to brief solicitor, April 1987.

\(^{266}\) ‘Callaghan: I urged the film body be disbanded’.

\(^{267}\) ‘Senior officer resigns from Film Corp’. *The Journals of the Parliament of Queensland* over the next months report numerous questions without notice, especially from Labor leader, Nev. Warburton.

\(^{268}\) Regina v. Helen Diane Sweeney, Brisbane District Court, 1 May 1986, p. 1.

accumulated 108 claims at 31 restaurants, including 71 falsified expense vouchers,\textsuperscript{270} for amounts ranging from $13.70 to $289.00.\textsuperscript{271} As was the case with Callaghan, most named in the vouchers were yet to enjoy a lunch with Sweeney.

Crown Prosecutor Costanzo explained the expenses accounting system as follows:

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3.png}
\caption{Processing of expense claims: Queensland Film Corporation.\textsuperscript{272}}
\end{figure}

A feature of the administration of expense claims was that Allen Callaghan had a dual role. As chair of the Queensland Film Corporation, he approved the claims, including his own, and, as under secretary of the Department of The Arts, National Parks and Sport, he had formal oversight of the claims, though the actual function was discharged by staff of the department. In addition, there was the oversight of the board of the corporation, but that was hampered as board approval was only sought retrospectively: the claims were reported only as a schedule, often after the claims had been paid. Mike Williams recalled that questions were raised about the amounts of expenses, especially by him and Ron Archer, but without any suspicion of corruption, they approved the expenses because fellow members approved.\textsuperscript{273}

Judge McGuire, who had previously treated Judith Callaghan leniently in view of her medical condition, was less generous to Sweeney, despite her being a diabetic and the sole

\textsuperscript{270} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{271} ‘Film Corporation secretary gets 18 months’, Telegraph (Brisbane), 5 May 1987, p. 1; also Judge McGuire’s judgement, Regina v. Helen Diane Sweeney.
\textsuperscript{272} Regina v. Helen Diane Sweeney, pp. 5, 6.
\textsuperscript{273} Williams, 10 July 1999.
parent of an eight-year-old daughter. He regarded her breech of trust, ‘especially where
the public purse is concerned’, more seriously than her lack of material gain from the
fraud. He noted her guilty plea and that full restoration had been made. ‘Let the lesson at
last be learned by all who control public moneys’, he said, and sentenced her to eighteen
months, with a non-parole period of six months.274

The final edition of Brisbane’s Telegraph that fifth of May ran a banner across the
top of page one with a large photograph of Sweeney:

MRS X FINALE
SECRETARY JAILED
FOR 18 MONTHS275

For the tabloid Telegraph, a paper that had ignored much of the saga, it was a fine
headline, one that the Courier-Mail could not equal. But it was not the finale, not just
yet, for Queensland’s National–Liberal coalition government, or for Sir Joh Bjelke-
Petersen. The bell would toll for them the following Saturday night, at 8.30pm, with
the broadcast of The Moonlight State on ABC television. Bjelke-Petersen was deposed
by his own party on 1 December the same year and the National Party lost office on
2 December 1989. It was a rout for the Nationals, the Labor Party winning 58 seats to
27 for the Nationals and 8 for the Liberal Party.276

A Tale of Two Williams

Fraud may sometimes seen to be a victimless crime, especially if practised against the public
purse, but these frauds did, to various extents, affect the careers of several individuals on the
margins of the crimes, especially board member Mike Williams and executive director of the
corporation Brian Williams.

274 ‘Film corporation secretary jailed 18 months over funds’, Courier-Mail. 6 May, 1987, pp. 1, 2.
275 Telegraph. 5 May 1987, p. 1.
sighted 28 June 2005.
Each has been generous with assistance to the research for this dissertation, having provided documents and undertaking many hours of oral history recordings. These interviews, while infrequently cited here, enabled the history of the Queensland Film Corporation to be contextualised within the professional and political climate of the times.

Mike Williams was probably the most important film industry figure to influence the creation of the corporation. Certainly he was the most persistent and, with his successful production company Martin–Williams Films as a strategic base, was well positioned to carry the campaign. As a long-time resident of Brisbane, his loyalties and motives seemed beyond doubt. Those same factors made him particularly vulnerable to political attack and media exploitation. Opposition leader, Nev. Warburton, had no compunction about insinuating, under parliamentary privilege, that Williams had exploited his position on the board for personal gain. The minister, P. R. McKechnie, to his credit, defended Williams in parliament in a straightforward manner, scoring little political advantage for his trouble.

The same could not be said of *Seven National News—Brisbane*, which took the information contained in various parliamentary interchanges, especially that of 20 February 1986 and the subsequent newspaper publicity, and selectively recycled it as their own research in a two-part special investigation titled ‘Film Scam Exposed’.

While Williams was not directly accused of fraud by the program, a simple semiotic reading of the text carried that implication. For example, a still photo of Williams cuts to the figure $224,500; Williams, on camera talking about being the only film-maker on the board, is covered by a voice-over that says ‘Only one of the four Williams films has ever been made’. The editing and narration are the stuff of a commercial current affairs hatchet job, and Williams contemplated legal action against BTQ Channel 7 after the broadcast. In addition, Williams was the only person in the reports to defend the corporation, so the distinction between his role as board member and as film producer is blurred. It is surprising that Williams, himself a former television journalist, agreed to appear on the program—he said

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279 Paul Smith, ‘Film Scam Exposed’, *Seven National News—Brisbane*, 7 & 8 April, 1986. A transcript is in possession of author.

280 Ibid.

281 Ibid.
that he wanted to defend himself by reiterating what was on the public record. However—perhaps predictably—all that was cut from the interview.  

Martin–Williams Films, in which cinematographer Vic Martin was a partner with Williams, was one of the first of a new generation of film companies when it opened in Brisbane in 1960. Williams himself became a member of the Film, Radio & Television Board of the Australia Council and served on the advisory committee for the Australian Film & Television School, but after the scandal of the Queensland Film Corporation and its closure in 1987, and especially, after being called as a witness before Frank Costigan’s royal commission, which exposed the ‘Bottom of the Harbour’ schemes, Williams’s career slumped and he experienced an extended period of unemployment and low self-esteem. He is now studio manager for a media-monitoring service in Brisbane, and his son is a prominent and successful cinematographer.

Brian Williams also came from a television background, and a fuller biographical account may be found in the Chapter Eight. He was recruited—head hunted was his term—during a biannual ‘Inter-Corporations Meeting’—a meeting of state film corporations and the Australian Film Commission—held in Hobart on 13 February 1980, which he attended representing the Western Australian Film Council. Allen Callaghan, Deborah Cole and J. A. Elliott MLA attended, representing the Queensland Film Corporation.

Strolling back to the hotel one evening after dinner, in company with the Queensland contingent, Williams was asked, ‘Have you ever thought of coming to Queensland?’ He was directed to watch the Australian newspaper for an advertisement and apply. As this was a government position, there had to be a formal selection process. Williams and his wife were flown to Brisbane for the interview and for an opportunity to look around Brisbane and

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282 Mike Williams, 10 July 1999.
284 Mike Williams, ‘How the QFC Works’, briefing paper apparently prepared for P. R. McKechnie, key elements forming part of McKechnie’s statement to parliament on 20 February. Also Williams, 10 July 1999.
285 Ibid.
286 ‘Agenda’, General: Intercorporation Mtg 12.2.80, microfiche, South Australian Film Corporation, 1 of 1.
the hinterlands. His ensuing selection and appointment were reported in the third annual report of the corporation, the first by the new chairman, Allen Callaghan.289

Brian Williams joined the corporation on a two-year contract. The formal title of the position, ‘Executive Director’, was a little misleading, he says. He was not directing the organisation as a whole but was responsible for examining proposals, farming them out to external assessors and reporting to the board on the results of project assessments. In addition, he was to seek projects that were right for Queensland, attract productions to Queensland, and develop the crew and the location directories. The latter task gave him ample scope to travel around Queensland and become familiar with locations of potential utility in production. Day-to-day administration and book-keeping was done by Deborah Cole and then by Helen Sweeney, who replaced Cole as secretary and liaison officer, and who reported to the chairman, not the executive director.290

Williams described the time he spent with the Queensland Film Corporation from 1980 as ‘probably the most difficult five years of my entire life’, getting more difficult from 1982. ‘My agenda was the development of an industry’, Williams said, but he concluded that ‘the development of [a film] industry was a secondary consideration’ for Callaghan: his first priority was ‘to win medals and get a knighthood within the National Party coterie and establishment’.291

There is no doubt that the influence that he [Callaghan] had over the public service areas and a lot of the old National Party bulwarks in business was quite evident. It may well have been that the impression intended of extreme influence … broad influence … may have been turned on for my benefit at times … that’s possible. But I do know that … that … certainly when I first went over there he had twenty-four hour access to the premier, and vice versa.

Things changed rapidly from 1980 on. Without a doubt, in 1980 when I first went over there, there was a feeling of omnipotence… of invulnerable … of immediate access to the highest power in the land should anyone make waves or question [anything]. And as time went on, by about August, September,

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291 Ibid.
October 1982, there was a bit of a stand-off between the chairman and myself over the principles of representation in the city, and simply it was this: there were three films being shot almost at the same time. There was The Settlement [Howard Rubie 1984]—Robert Bruning [producer], there was Paul Barron’s Bush Christmas [Henri Safran 1983], and the other one was John Dingwell’s Buddies [Arch Nicholson 1983].

Williams saw this bubble of activity as demanding resources that were not available locally: Queensland would become just a location and the local benefit was limited. But Callaghan liked all the colour and movement that such production work created, without too much concern for strategic outcomes. Another point of friction was a proposed visit to Buddies on location at Emerald on central Queensland. Callaghan proposed that he, Williams and Sweeney go by train to Emerald, as he [Callaghan] loved trains.

Williams refused saying the journey meant:

“…leaving a statutory body for two weeks or thereabouts … and there isn’t even an answering machine. For God’s sake, you can’t do it.”

“Anyway”, he said, “You’re going”.

I said “No, I’m not”. And we had a bit of a barney.

While such conflicts were not regular, from late 1982 Williams increasingly felt that something was amiss: ‘allocations [of funds] didn’t fit the bill of what we were doing’, but it was well nigh impossible to challenge the chairman.

Nobody, honestly … No, forget the word “honestly” … Nobody in their right mind would take the part of anyone else in an argument but the reigning status quo. Therefore, when I asked questions at board meetings and so on, about anything to do with the corporation or what we should do or what we shouldn’t do… and where did this amount of money go… this kind of thing, there was never any question that the establishment was doing the right

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292 Ibid.
293 Ibid.
thing. Nobody, even if they may have felt it inside, would question the integrity of the chairman and all that he stood for. Because to do so would be to sign your own mort carte. Knowing at that stage the influence of the man, to question him would be to risk a demise, one way or another.  

Brian Williams had a two-year contract yet, despite the discord, it was renewed in 1982 and again in 1984. ‘He [Callaghan] tried everything in the book to get me off the corporation and out of the state. Everything! But he could not fire me because if he took the risk of firing me … I was out of his control and I could have blown the whistle.’ Certainly, an auditor had shared concerns with Williams long before allegations of irregularities surfaced in the press in mid-1985. That particular auditor had been reined in by his superior, who told him, ‘if the suspicion is unfounded we’ll be in a lot of trouble from Joh and the rest of the guys’. But there was another reason to resist the chairman’s pressure: ‘If I’d pulled the plug and taken the direction that he’d wanted me to take … anything that happened beforehand would someway [have] been laid at my door’.  

A little of that vilification happened in February 1986 when Callaghan claimed in the Courier Mail that nobody could work with Williams. 

One Sunday in late 1985, a newspaper headline caught Williams’ eye: 

What I can recall is Sunday the 13th December 1985 taking a weekend off and going down to the Gold Coast … And I walked down from the little apartment I’d hired … for three days actually … to the paper shop and picked up the paper and there, right across the front page was this huge headline … QFC chairman charged … or something along those lines.  

The date was 15 December and the Sunday Mail read: ‘Fraud squad probes funds “irregularities”’. It was the first of six increasingly specific headlines leading up to ‘Warburton asks: Is Auditor looking at film corporation’ on 23 December in the Courier Mail, and page-three stories on 26, 27 & 28 December. By that time the story had lost momentum, with the government stone-walling and no new revelations from the Opposition. 

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294 Ibid.  
295 Ibid.  
296 Ibid.  
The leaks were, however, high-quality and accurate intelligence. The two most likely sources were the auditor-general’s office or the Queensland Film Corporation, with Minister McKechnie or the premier’s office a long equal third. My interview with Williams on 11 February 2000 proceeded thus:

O’Donnell: Someone was leaking documents to [the Labor Party].
Williams: Well, it wasn’t me.
O’Donnell: That was my next question.
Williams: No it wasn’t [me].
O’Donnell: Someone has suggested that of all the parties involved…
Williams: I’d have the greatest…
O’Donnell: You’d have the greatest access and, perhaps, the greatest reason; in that you had… you were seeing things happening that were probably ethically offensive to you, that you were… you found yourself in a position of being unable to change those things directly…
Williams: That's true too.
O’Donnell: But that you would wish to see them changed.
Williams: That’s true too, but I can swear on any number of bibles that you like, I never leaked anything to the press because I didn’t see … Unless I could prove something… and in any case, it wasn’t my place to talk to the press. 299

Williams has two other strong recollections of those months. The first is relief that the story was now in the press and would go somewhere. It did. With Allen Callaghan’s resignation in February 1986, the deputy chairman, D. G. Young, became acting chair and, for the first time, Williams assumed the normal responsibilities of an executive director.

The second thing that I recall very clearly is a meeting of the board with the blessing of the minister saying, “OK mate, you’re it until the end of the term”. And I recall walking into the office of the QFC on

299 Brian Williams, 11 February 2000.
that Monday morning following [the meeting]. Everybody had gone.
I mean, I was it and it was the most incredible feeling that I knew at
that second absolutely nothing was going to happen unless I did it. A
very strange empty feeling but one hell of a challenge.300

It was clear to the whole board that at the very least the organisation needed a new
name, if not a complete make-over. These rescue and restructure activities occupied
much of Williams’ time throughout 1986 and 1987. He left the corporation when the
legislation expired and the reshaped duties of the corporation were transferred to an
office within the Ministry of the Arts, National Parks and Sport, and managed for a
time by a cleanskin Victorian arts administrator, Michael Mitchner.

The Gold Coast Studio

It is too easy to dismiss the Queensland Film Corporation for its lack of cinematic
achievement. There may have been no Picnic at Hanging Rock or even a Man from
Snowy River (George Miller 1982), but two achievements of the corporation reshaped
the Australian film industry.

One was the conceptualisation of the Division 10B/10BA tax-gearing scheme that fuelled
the expansion of the film industry for much of the 1980s, and its negotiation with the
Commonwealth government. It was the work of R. S. (Ron) Parkes, a board member and
senior partner in the Brisbane accountancy firm, Yarwood Vane and Company, and based
on the tax-gearing arrangement available to mining and afforestation interests in
Queensland. Parkes chaired the inter-corporations subcommittee that drew up the scheme
and sold it in Canberra. Its effect on the whole structure of the film and television
production industry was profound, and endures today.

The second was the creation of the Gold Coast Studios, initially with the financial backing
of one of the most colourful international film industry figures of the 1980s, Dino De
Laurentis. The corporation had identified the value of studios to the local film industry in

300 Ibid.
its first years of operation\textsuperscript{301} but the combination of industry credibility, time, tactics and money to achieve it did not eventuate until the late 1980s.\textsuperscript{302}

The studios, subsequently operated by Village-Roadshow, established Queensland as a key centre for off-shore production, notably for Hollywood companies. The studios’ existence was central to the creation of a film industry in Queensland, one centred on the business of film making, with employment, the provision of services and the delivery of popular entertainment to cinemas and television screens, the world over. Other states have been playing catch-up since the studios opened.

Finis

The corporation ceased to exist on 14 October 1987, exactly ten years after its creation. It was replaced by the Queensland Film Development Office under ministerial control.

As befitting an organisation with a focus on the business of a cultural industry, the Final Annual Report of the Queensland Film Corporation for the period ended 14\textsuperscript{th} October 1987, concluded with a ‘Summary of Accounting Policy’ and ‘Notes to and forming parts of the Financial Statements’.\textsuperscript{303}

The board members continued their various professional practices, several with new knighthoods. Brian Williams returned to Perth, Mike Williams faced Frank Costigan’s royal commission, Allen Callaghan served half his sentence in gaol and Australian film-making in Queensland struggled on, searching for a cultural voice. On the corporate and commercial side however, the decade had seen much growth in the industry laying the infrastructure to service millions of dollars in off-shore production in the decades ahead.

\textsuperscript{301} Schubert, Second Annual Report.

\textsuperscript{302} That story will have to wait telling in another place.

\textsuperscript{303} Wilcox, Final Annual Report of the Queensland Film Corporation, p. 5, 6.
CHAPTER SIX: The New South Wales Film Corporation

The New South Wales Film Corporation, because Sydney is the film centre of the country, can afford to be, and is, in many respects, a national body. They do not require everything they back to be made in New South Wales. They have taken quite a reasonable approach that says you’ll probably have to use x number of Sydney technicians, x number of Sydney actors, x amount of film processing in Sydney anyway even if you’re making the film in Perth.

Paul Barron

The voters of New South Wales went to the polls on 1 May 1976 and elected the first Labor government since 1965. The leader of the Australian Labor Party, Neville Wran, had made a commitment to establish a state film corporation during the election campaign, a commitment he confirmed on 14 May. The announcement pleased various sectors of the industry including the Australian Film and Television School which welcomed it as ‘another source of employment for the School’s first full-time graduates in 1978’. However, it was graduates of the earlier interim program who directed two of the corporation’s first and most successful films, My Brilliant Career (Gillian Armstrong 1979) and Newsfront (Phillip Noyce 1978).

NSW was catching up with developments elsewhere in Australia: three days before the election, a bill to ‘constitute a Victorian Film Corporation’ was introduced into the Victorian parliament. The South Australia Film Corporation had been in business for almost half a decade and Queensland—though little had yet happened—committed itself to investigate the establishment of a film corporation in December 1974.

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In late 1974, too, the previous NSW government investigated the establishment of a film agency. The minutes of the South Australian Film Corporation for its meeting of 4 and 6 December 1974 record that a ‘Mr. O. J. Boardman, during a visit to Adelaide for a Theatre Design Symposium, had discussed with Messrs Brealey and Morris the organisation and operation of the Corporation. The N.S.W. Government is considering establishing its own film corporation.’ Oswald John (Jack) Boardman was an officer with the NSW Ministry of Cultural Activities. Mr Boardman could not recall whether his visit to the corporation was at the initiative of the head of the department, C. G. (Gordon) Meckiff, or the responsible minister, the Hon G. F. Freudenstein MLA, but he remembered being asked to visit the corporation while in Adelaide.

The specific sources of influence that put a film agency on the ALP’s political agenda have proved hard to identify. Michael Thornhill, a prominent proponent of government support for the industry, denied that he had any direct hand and suggested Joan Long, who produced *The Picture Show Man* (John Power 1977), as a likely influence. *The Picture Show Man* was the first feature film after World War II to attract the fiscal support of the NSW government, and the announcement of that investment of $120,000 coincided with the appointment of the members of the Interim NSW Film Commission. As Sydney had been a centre of agitation for Commonwealth support for the film industry, other likely influences include the industry-related unions, the Film and Television Producers Association of Australia, the Australian Film Council and, possibly, one or more of non-industry unions that had backed the Mass Communication Conference of 1969 and 1971.

The Sydney chapter of the Producers and Directors Guild of Australia was politically very active at the time and one prominent member, Tom Jeffrey, was acknowledged by parliamentarian George Petersen during the second reading of the NSW Film Corporation Bill. Apparently Petersen had visited the set of *The Removalist* (Tom Jeffrey 1975).

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6 Telephone conversation with Oswald John (Jack) Boardman, 56 Gilda Drive, Narara, NSW, 19 April 2005. During World War II, he had been a prisoner of the Japanese in Singapore and became notable as the piano player in concert parties in Changi.
9 The author was an Australian Union of Students delegate to the conference on 25 November 1969.
He remarked to the house that Mr Jeffrey ‘was interested in what a Labor Government would do when it came to office. I am sure that people like Mr Jeffries [sic] will be extremely pleased with what is embedded in this legislation’.10

Given the cultural climate and interstate rivalries, the lack of a state film agency in NSW would have become politically untenable, irrespective of who held government. Unfortunately some of those who could have thrown more light on its origins have died in the past few years, including Joan Long and Paul H. Riomfalvy, the former chair of the NSW Film Corporation, and a confidant of Premier Neville Wran.

The Interim NSW Film Commission

Rather than commissioning a feasibility study or a survey of the state of the industry, Premier Wran promptly established an Interim Film Commission to:

(i) advise the Government on the establishment of a New South Wales Film Corporation.

(ii) advise the Government on the promotion of the film industry until such time as this task is assumed by the Corporation.11

Paul H. Riomfalvy, Damien Stapleton and Michael Thornhill12 were appointed as members, effective from 16 August 1976, though not sanctioned by the state’s governor, A. R. Cutler, and the Executive Council until 29 September.13 The haste to act may have been in part driven by the announcement of the membership of the Victorian Film Corporation on 3 August 1976 in NSW papers.14

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12 Michael Thornhill said that he was approached to serve on a commission with Paul Riomfalvy and Uri Wendt, the secretary of Actors’ Equity, as the other members. His poor opinion of Wendt caused him to refuse. Stapleton was mustered to replace Wendt and he then agreed to serve. Michael Thornhill, 5 February 2005.
13 ‘Minute Paper for the Executive Council’, in Riomfalvy, Stapleton and Thornhill, Appendix A.
14 Sun News Pictorial, 4 August 1976, p. 17.
The NSW film industry was keenly aware of earlier government inaction. The previous premier, Eric Willis, had, as chief secretary in the Askin Liberal government in 1971, refused to enforce legislation for an exhibition quota on Australian films, still on the statute book as the Cinematograph Films Act 1935, but last set in 1939. By failing to enforce the act, Willis hindered the exhibition of the Australian feature film Stockade (Hans Pomeranz 1971).

The Interim Commission promptly advertised that ‘interested parties are invited to submit written proposals on or before Friday 15th October’. It later reported that it had consulted with twenty-seven organisations, including the newly formed Victorian Film Corporation, and twenty-six individuals, including John McQuaid and Ken Watts of the Australian Film Commission and John Burke, John Morris and Stewart Jay of the South Australian Film Corporation. The commissioners were ‘pleased to report that all three bodies welcome our appearance on the scene, and there is no parochialism whatsoever’. They conveyed their recommendations to the premier on 27 January 1977, emphasising that ‘we have every reason to believe that instead of in-fighting and jealousy, we will all work together extremely well’.

The Interim Commission was provided with a budget of $500,000. Of this, according to Premier Wran, the government invested $120,000 in The Picture Show Man (John Power 1977), $100,000 in Newsfront (Phillip Noyce 1978) and $175,000 in ‘123 Palmer Street’, a project that did not go ahead. Most of these funds had not been drawn down by 30 June 1977 and the financial accounts of the film corporation show that $275,000 in capital funds and $23,000 for operating expenses were transferred to the corporation from the Interim Film Commission on the corporation’s first day of operation, 1 July 1977. However, later balance sheets declared a sum of $445,697 to be ‘Assets Transferred from Interim Film Commission’. Presumably this

17 Riomfalvy, Stapleton and Thornhill, Appendix C.
18 Riomfalvy, Stapleton and Thornhill, p. 4.
larger figure included the capitalised value of rights to *The Picture Show Man* and *Newsfront*, once they had proved their potential in the marketplace.\(^{22}\)

**Legislative Echos**

At 5.02 pm on 7 June 1977, New South Wales Premier Neville Wran moved:

> That leave be given to bring in a bill for an Act to constitute the New South Wales Film Corporation, to define its functions and powers, and to amend the Crown Employees Appeal Board Act, 1944, and the New South Wales Film Council Act, 1974.\(^{23}\)

Peter Coleman, Liberal member for Fuller replied as leader of the opposition. Almost a decade earlier, he had chaired the Film Committee of the Australian Council for the Arts, the committee that recommended the Commonwealth government’s support of the Australian film industry. Coleman welcomed the bill but drew the Assembly’s attention to the Cinematographic Films Act\(^{24}\) introduced by the conservative Stevens–Bruxner government in 1935 to support the Australian film industry.\(^{25}\) During the second reading of the bill on the following day, Coleman elaborated, discussing section 13A (1) of the act that made it:

> Lawful for the Colonial Treasurer … to enter into an agreement with any person carrying on … the business of a producer in New South Wales …[to] execute a guarantee under the Government Guarantees Act, 1934–1937 in favour of any bank in respect of the overdraft account with the bank of such person…\(^{26}\)

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\(^{24}\) The original title was the *Cinematographic Films (Australian Quota) Act*. Ina Bertrand and Diane Collins, *Government and Film in Australia*, Currency Press, Sydney, and the Australian Film Institute, Melbourne, 1981, pp. 58–9. The act was amended in 1937 and 1938, and the words ‘Australian Quota’ were dropped from the title. See also Landa, *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 7011.


The ‘Colonial Treasurer’ had helped finance Forty Thousand Horsemen (Charles Chauvel 1940) with a guarantee of £16,000, but the bill as a whole, with provisions for licensing and quotas, had failed to support the film production industry, though the act and subsequent amending legislation had brought a degree of order to cinema distribution and exhibition by the early 1940s.

Coleman was realistic though about the personal and political risks of intervention in the business of feature film production: ‘Mistakes will be made and the people concerned will be subject to criticism when they reject a suggestion which is eventually funded from some other source and is a success.’

The member for Drummoyne, Michael Maher, reminded the house that the Cinematograph Film (Australian Quota) Act of 1935 remained on the statute books though ‘it has become a dead letter and has apparently not been enforced since World War II’. He saw the 1935 legislation as ‘being complementary to the bill under consideration today’, and providing ‘a mechanism for encouraging the distribution and exhibition of Australian-made films’.

Wilfred George Petersen, ALP Member for Illawarra, raised the issue of the New South Wales Film Council, which had achieved independence as a statutory authority in 1974 under the previous Coalition government, though it had operated as a film library for more than thirty years. He reminded the ‘honourable member for Fuller’ that he [Coleman] had ‘predicted that the establishment of the New South Wales film council [sic] would lead to a cultural renaissance’ but that it had remained ‘what it was—a film library’. Doubtless, Petersen insisted, this was because its industry support budget was a minuscule $40,000 per annum.

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27 Pike and Cooper, p. 192.
28 Coleman, Parliamentary Debates, p. 6939.
30 Petersen, Parliamentary Debates, p. 6941. The New South Wales Film Council, like the State Film Centre of Victoria, could trace its origins to the influence of British documentary pioneer, John Grierson, who had visited Australia in 1938 at the behest of the Imperial Relations Trust ‘to study the question of production and distribution of educational and documentary film of the Empire’. The Trust made inaugural grants of £300 to the New South Wales Documentary Films Committee and the University of Melbourne Extension Board, and £200 to the Canberra Films Council, to found film-lending collections in those cities. (Bertrand and Collins, pp. 97–8)

The New South Wales Film Council had grown from those origins to manage an extensive film library but, with the creation of the New South Wales Film Corporation and the transfer to that organisation of the council’s responsibility for the coordination of production of films for government use, its purpose was diminished. The council was disbanded by the New South Wales Film Council (Dissolution) Bill passed later
Edward John Hatton, member for the South Coast, raised nationalist issues, remarking that ‘a healthy Australian film industry run by Australians and projecting the Australian way of life can do much to stimulate better economic activity and pride in our community’, while Richard (Dick) Healey, member for Davidson and former ABC staffer, raised an issue that remains contentious today—that of statutory deposit legislation ensuring the preservation of at least that much of the nation’s cinema production as would be funded, in whole or in part, by public money. Healey undertook to move a suitable amendment to the bill when it entered the committee stage.

Speaking in reply, Wran gave particular attention to Healey’s remarks. He assured the house:

That I shall view the suggestion of the honourable member for Davidson favourably and I shall ask the corporation to undertake an inquiry into the practicability of establishing our own film archive or as part of the exiting New South Wales Archives, and as a subsidiary question as to whether something can be done on a national basis.

As the debate proceeded, the member for Ashfield, Paul Whelan, after proclaiming the pre-eminence of the industry in NSW, made this plea against parochialism:

Recently I was heartened by an announcement that the Victorian film commission will produce a film by a New South Wales author Mr Thomas Keneally, entitled “The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith”. A grant of $150,000 has been made for that purpose, and the film will be made on location in New South Wales and Queensland. People in Victoria are not so narrow-minded as to restrict the film industry to that State. The industry is Australia-wide.

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33 Wran, Parliamentary Debates, p. 6957. Enquiries to the National Film and Sound Archive and the NSW Records Office and a close reading of the annual reports of the NSW Film Corporation suggest that this undertaking was never acted upon.
34 Whelan, Parliamentary Debates, p. 6951.
He need not have feared: from the very beginning, the New South Wales Film Corporation saw itself as a film agency for the whole of Australia, perhaps the true Australian Film Commission. And the industrial realities of the industry—the concentration of processing and post-production facilities in Sydney—meant that much of their investment money would come back to Sydney in any case.

The New South Wales Film Corporation

The New South Wales Film Corporation commenced operation on 1 July 1977. Paul Riomfalvy was appointed chairman and Damien Stapleton and Michael Thornhill were appointed ‘corporate directors’. They were joined by Jenny Woods as General Manager (Production) and Lloyd Hart, a lawyer who had ‘specialised in film law since 1971, in particular the taxation, corporation and copyright aspects’, as General Manager (Business Affairs).³⁵

Riomfalvy was born in Budapest in 1924 and had worked with the Hungarian State Film Studio from 1942, until migrating to Australia in 1949. He studied law for two years at the University of Sydney but it seems his heart was in theatre: he founded the Phillip Street Theatre in 1953 with Morris West and William Orr. Subsequently he worked in various management and production capacities with most of the big names in theatre and music promotion—J. C. Williamson Theatres, Aztec Services, the Tivoli, Old Tote Theatre Company, Harry Miller, Michael Edgley and Paradine Paterson.³⁶

It is possible that Riomfalvy met Wran at university. Though Wran graduated in law in 1948, he had an interest in student theatre, and both are likely to have been involved in the Sydney University Dramatic Society. Otherwise they may have met when Wran was practising in industrial relations law, as Riomfalvy had been elected to the Executive Council of the Theatre Proprietors’ and Entrepreneurs’ Association in 1961 and become its vice president in 1974. Certainly by 1976 Wran was ready to invest considerable confidence in Riomfalvy and to allow him great independence in the management of the new state film corporation.³⁷

³⁵ The New South Wales Film Corporation, New South Wales Film Corporation, Sydney, 1978, centre spread (pages not numbered).
³⁶ Riomfalvy, Stapleton and Thornhill, Appendix B.
³⁷ Ibid.
Not all in parliament shared Wran’s confidence. On 24 November 1983, D. D. Freeman MLC repeated an allegation that ‘this Mr Riomfalvy, prior to his selection to head the corporation, was a senior employee of the illegal gambling casino in the Telford Arcade, Bondi Junction’. Paul Landa, for the government, repeated the answer he gave to similar allegations made in 1981, containing a categorical denial by Riomfalvy.\(^{38}\)

Damien Stapleton, born in 1946 in Burwood, came from a much less colourful background. A bank clerk, salesman, storeman and stagehand, he had ventured into small business as a music promoter and bookshop proprietor, before joining the Australian Theatrical and Amusement Employees Association as an organiser. There he rose to become federal secretary in 1975 and an executive member of the New South Wales Labor Council.\(^{39}\)

By contrast, Thornhill’s background was less conventional. Born in Sydney in 1941, he was four when his mother died. His father re-married and, in 1950, moved to Hobart. In 1956, after an argument with his father, Thornhill moved to Melbourne, working first on the railways and then:

\[
\text{[He] landed a job as an assistant projectionist at one of Hoyts’ Melbourne cinemas. This job suited him well. Although no film buff, he had always enjoyed going to the cinema and while his future was very uncertain, he was determined to work in the movies somehow.}\] \(^{40}\)

He was laid off and moved to Sydney, drifting from film job to film job, mostly as an assistant editor on the fringe of the small film-production industry.\(^{41}\) Through the Worker Education Association (WEA) Film Study Group, he met Frank Moorhouse and Ken Quinnell and, in the mid-1960s, co-edited with Quinnell ‘a tough minded film magazine, \textit{Sydney Cinema Journal}; five issues were printed using a secondhand offset printer they’d acquired’.\(^{42}\)


\(^{39}\) Riomfalvy, Stapleton and Thornhill, Appendix B.

\(^{40}\) David Stratton, \textit{The Last New Wave}, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1980, p. 83.

\(^{41}\) Martha Ansara, ‘Interview with Michael Thornhill’, 22 December 2003, National Film and Sound Archive, Cover Title No: 595393, Access Copy AOK005408 (2).

\(^{42}\) Stratton, p. 84.
Thornhill wrote film criticism for the Sydney Morning Herald and the Australian, and was the pseudonymous ‘A young film critic’, author of ‘The Australian film?’ for the Current Affairs Bulletin. In 1969, he tutored for the WEA and, in 1971, commenced teaching a course in film at the University of New South Wales. By this time he had directed several documentaries for the Commonwealth Film Unit and had collaborated with Ken Quinnell on a screenplay for The American Poet’s Visit, a film based on a Frank Moorhouse short story. Subsequently he directed the film, which was photographed by Russell Boyd whom he had met in Melbourne. Thornhill and Quinnell filmed two further Moorhouse stories, Girl from the Family of Man and, in 1971, with a grant of $5,000 from the Experimental Film and Television Fund, The Machine Gun.

By the time he was appointed to the Interim Film Commission, Thornhill had produced and directed his first feature, Between Wars (1974), produced Summer of Secrets (Jim Sharman 1976) and was about to go into preproduction on The F. J. Holden (Michael Thornhill 1977).

Jenny Woods had worked for advertising agency J. Walter Thompson (Aust.) Pty Ltd and then on six Australian feature films ‘in the escalating roles of production-co-ordinator [sic], production manager, and associate producer’. She ‘joined the Interim Film Commission in January 1977 as Senior Project Officer’. This group was later joined by David Roe, who ‘has attended every Cannes Film Festival since 1973’ variously as ‘Director of the Perth International Film Festival (1972–73), Chairman of the Perth International Film Festival (1973–76) [or] Executive Director of the Australian Film Institute (1973–78)’ or privately.

In June 1980, Thornhill declined re-appointment at the expiry of his three-year term and Jenny Woods replaced him. Lloyd Hart resigned from the corporation in 1981 to focus on his legal practice, leaving Riomfalvy, Stapleton and Woods to guide the corporation through much of its eleven-year history as a statutory authority of the NSW government.


44 Stratton, p. 86, also Ken Berryman, “....Allowing young filmmakers to spread their wings”: The Educational Role of the Experimental Film and Television Fund’, MA thesis, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 1985, and Pike and Cooper, pp. 280–82.

45 Stratton, p. 86.

46 The New South Wales Film Corporation, centre spread.


48 The New South Wales Film Corporation, centre spread.

49 Woods had acted as a director when Thornhill had taken leave of absence to direct films, in particular, The Journalist (Michael Thornhill 1979), a film that was part financed by the corporation. The financial relationship led to questions in the NSW parliament from Bruce McDonald, member for Kirribilli, on
The corporation’s philosophy firmed rapidly in its first year and was articulated in the first annual report of the corporation.

The Directors of the Corporation believe that the film industry should, eventually, be commercially viable. While acknowledging that the Corporation is dealing with taxpayers’ finds derived from the Consolidated Revenue, the Directors ensure that the Corporation functions and operates along private sector corporate lines. The Directors see the Corporation as a business-like pragmatic organisation, and not as a grant-giving body.

The Corporation invests in those projects which it believes, in a high-risk industry, demonstrate prospects of commercial viability. There are no limits of a parochial nature placed upon producers. Providing the films are artistically presented and acted substantially by Australian residents, the Corporation does not feel bound to act within the confines of New South Wales.50

The policy statement then classified the corporation’s investment position as either ‘major’ or ‘minor’, the minor position being ‘end money’, that is the investment that completes the budget, and ‘usually in the vicinity of $100,000. This ‘end money’ position did not last. The second annual report advised that ‘the Corporation has now moved away from a position of providing “end” money by way of minor investment as a general practice to a policy of providing “front-end” or development money for projects’.51 The ‘end money’ idea was one briefly adopted by the SAFC but quickly dropped as unpredictable, costly and allowing little influence over a project’s realisation.

If the corporation took a major position, then its investment would ‘comprise more than one half of the budget of the film or exceed the investment of each other single investor by one half”. In this case, the corporation would provide or arrange the completion guarantee and

50 Riomfalvy, ‘The Corporation’s Policies’, The New South Wales Film Corporation Annual Report 1977/78, the pages are not numbered.
administer the project jointly with the production company, ‘analysing regular production and budget reports, receiving and dispersing the proceeds of the film on behalf of the investors’.  

The corporation also emphasised ‘securing private sector investment in the film production industry’ and ‘is actively seeking overseas equity investment for Australian productions, mindful of its policy that the creative control should remain in Australian hands’. Further it declared its belief ‘that every film project has different financial and creative components’; hence it would treat ‘each film project on a one-off basis’. ‘It follows that the Corporation has no fixed rule for investment other than there should not be more than two public sector bodies investing in any one film project.’

Cinema Papers reported that ‘at the time of the NSWFC’s formation several members of the NSWFC stated that members of its board could not in any way be associated with films that received NSWFC funds’ unlike the Victorian Film Corporation. In the same article, Paul Riomfalvy, the chairman, indicated that this was an informal, interim position and ‘it was Michael [Thornhill] who suggested that for the first twelve months of our operation, until we settled down and had constructed guidelines and policies, he would not apply for funding from the Corporation’. In fact, it was more than two years later that the corporation invested in The Journalist (Michael Thornhill 1979).

The Australian Films Office

Nothing the New South Wales Film Corporation did so confirmed its self-defined role as an agency for the whole Australian film industry as establishing the Australian Films Office Incorporated (AFO) in Los Angeles.

Phillip McCarthy, writing in the National Times, said the decision followed Michael Thornhill’s attendance at ‘a conference of the major US exhibitor organisation, the National Association of Theatre Owners’ in October 1977. Thornhill recognised the pressing need to expand the overseas market for Australian films if the ever-increasing budgets were to be recouped at the box office:

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52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
It is imperative that we sell all Australian films in the U.S., particularly, and throughout Britain and Europe, if we are to see some profits from films and for investors, and if the industry is to continue to develop at a rapid pace.\(^{55}\)

Ironically, the same conference was attended by Alan Wardrop, the marketing director of the Australian Film Commission, and each was independently convinced of the necessity of a presence in Los Angeles. Thus the AFC’s New York agent, Jim Henry, was relocated to Los Angeles and the NSW Film Corporation opened an office there, the two decisions being announced within days of each other.\(^{56}\)

The decision to open an office in Los Angeles was formally announced to the other state film agencies and the AFC at a meeting on 20 March 1978 in Adelaide. It was not warmly received. The minutes of that meeting record that:

Other delegates generally felt that the establishment of an office with this title [Australian Films Office] would lead to confusions with the Australian Film Commission. Mr Morris said that although he was sure that the N.S.W. Film Corporation and the A.F.C. would confer to avoid this, the industry was likely to suffer unless there was very close co-operation and liaison between the two offices.\(^{57}\)

Gil Brealey, attending the meeting as chairman of the Tasmanian Film Corporation, ‘applauded the initiative of the N.S.W. Film Corporation’, though Ken Watts, chairman of the AFC, ‘felt there was more to be discussed than just the name’.\(^{58}\) Brealey subsequently asked that the minutes record that he too had concerns about the name and prospects for confusion with the AFC.\(^{59}\) At the same meeting, John Morris ‘asked the delegates to consider the

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\(^{56}\) Phillip McCarthy, ‘Federal–State rivalry reaches to selling films to Americans’, *National Times*, 24 June 1978, p. 35

\(^{57}\) Minutes of meeting of Australian Film Commission and State Film Organisations, held at Management House, Unley, South Australia on Monday 20 March 1978 at 10 am, p. 2, in SAFC microfiche: ‘General : Intercorporation Meeting 8/78 (J. Morris’s file)’, SAFC, 1 of 3. In the first draft of the minutes the opening phrase of this quotation was ‘There was a universal feeling…”

\(^{58}\) Ibid.

possibility of leasing a cinema in New York to show Australian films’ and asked that it be an item on the agenda for the next meeting.60

The opening of the Australian Films Office Inc. also reflected a difference in style between the NSW Film Corporation and its Commonwealth counterpart. The AFC was burdened with the dignity of being the nation’s film industry flag-carrier and the consequent need to respect diplomatic niceties. The NSW Film Corporation, on the other hand, could be something of the larrkin, a role Riomfalvy and Thornhill, at least, would have enjoyed. While US citizens staffed the Los Angeles office, a circumstance that endured for the life of the office, the directors were always the directors of the NSW Film Corporation—Riomfalvy, Stapleton and Thornhill, then Jenny Woods, and later still, Riomfalvy, Bert Evans and Gerald Gleeson.61

The first president of the Australian Films Office Inc., Samuel W. Gelfman, was ‘a former middle-level Hollywood executive’, according to McCarthy,62 or ‘an American film executive and producer … [with] down-the-line production as well as distribution experience’, according to the corporation’s first annual report.63 He was largely unknown in Australia.

But it was not Gelfman’s Hollywood credentials that caught the attention of Sydney’s tabloid press; it was his $132,000, two-year contract. The story pushed the death of Robert Gordon Menzies off the front page.64 While the corporation insisted that the fee was reasonable for Hollywood, it made Gelfman the most highly paid public servant on the state pay role, his salary exceeding that of the NSW premier ($60,110) and rivalling that of the prime minister, which, in June 1978, was $80,142.65

60 Minutes of meeting of Australian Film Commission and State Film Organisations, p. 4.
62 McCarthy, ‘Federal–State rivalry reaches to selling films to Americans’.
64 Steve Gibbs, ‘State’s super salesman, $70,000 a year film job, He’s no 1 on the NSW payroll’, Daily Mirror, 17 May 1987, pp. 1, 5.
On 7 June 1978, Paul Riomfalvy forwarded to the premier, a document titled: ‘Report to the Premier by the Chairman of [the] New South Wales Film Corporation’. While the report was not endorsed ‘Confidential’ the bluntness of the language suggests that it was not intended for wide circulation, let alone publication.

Riomfalvy noted the success of Australian films at the Cannes Film Festival in May that year and declared that:

We have arrived at the crossroads; now we have to decide whether we will take advantage of the worldwide acceptance of Australian films and go heavily in for foreign investment and foreign markets, or just carry on as we did between 1970 and 1977 and produce motion pictures for the local market. The decision is not in our hands, it is up to Governments to decide whether they are prepared to supply the necessary funds which are essential to promote the industry as such and promote individual motion pictures.66

He then emphasised the corporation’s competitive advantage: ‘it is very unlikely that the Australian Film Commission or other State Film Corporations would be able to follow our commercial practice’ being bound ‘to established Treasury methods and regulations’. In contrast, though the New South Wales Film Corporation was a statutory authority:

We do not philosophically consider ourselves as a Statutory Body but as an unlisted public company where the Government is the one and only shareholder … and hopefully in the future [we] will function rather as a public company on a fully commercial basis.67

While one must admire the confidence that the corporation could one day function on a ‘fully commercial basis’, the relationship Riomfalvy described would also bind the sole shareholder to continue to capitalise the it in the expectation that, eventually, the government would recover the capital invested and receive a dividend at least large enough to defray the

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67 Ibid.
opportunity cost of that investment, plus a premium for the risk. No financial projections seem to have been undertaken—certainly there are none cited in this document—to determine the level of turn-over necessary to sustain the current operational costs and return a dividend, let alone repay capital to its ‘one and only shareholder’.

At the core of the report, Riomfalvy sets the corporation’s agenda for at least the following two years:

I have learned that the following three matters are absolutely vital to the industry and I suggest that our Corporation should give a lead to the other public sector bodies.

1. To break into the North American market;
2. Attract foreign investment; and
3. To put an end to the parochial attitude of our motion pictures being “ockerish”, featuring bushrangers, aboriginals, but produce films for the global market especially for the 14–30 age group who represent 75 per cent of cinema audiences.  

Riomfalvy noted the recent media controversy over the Australian Films Office Inc. and assured the premier that ‘everything has settled down and Gelfman is in business’. However, he warned, ‘I expect [an] even more turbulent reaction to our moves to obtain substantial overseas investments in our motion picture industry’.  

Riomfalvy did not believe, even with tax incentives, that ‘individuals will rush to invest in Australian films’, because ‘it is not in the blood of the Australian investor, unlike the Americans, some Western Europeans, and lately the Arabs’, hence the need actively, perhaps unconventionally, to seek overseas finance.

I expect two groups to oppose this move, they are strange bedfellows indeed—the Treasury and the militant sections of Trade Unions and Guilds. The Treasury will object by its very nature of being against expansion, especially as this plan will need funds spent on unorthodox

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68 Ibid., pp. 2, 3.
69 Ibid., pp. 3, 4.
items like extensive overseas travel, ( called “junkets” by the uninformed) heavy media advertising, promotion and entertainment on a lavish scale as referred to later in this report. The militants of the Theatrical Employees’ Union, Actors’ Equity, Directors’ and Producers’ [sic] Guild, and of course the Writers’ Guild will see it as the emergence of the ugly face of the multi-nationals trying to sneak in and destroy the essence of Australiana in the Australian motion picture industry.\textsuperscript{70}

Riomfalvy then detailed ‘The US Connection’, ‘The British Connection’ and ‘The Arab Connection’, and foreshadowed a loan of ‘between one and two million dollars US’ to the corporation for a period of three years by Morgan Guarantee Trust. He concluded:

\begin{quote}
The Arabs are thrilled to find an organisation such as the New South Wales Film Corporation which will match their investment dollar-for-dollar and not offer “expertise” only, leaving capital supply to them as everybody else seems to do.\textsuperscript{71}
\end{quote}

And then:

\begin{quote}
What we are planning to do is unorthodox in Government terms but quite normal as a business venture in North American or Western European terms. If it works out, we may well achieve far-reaching results which will be hailed as long remembered by the industry and the people of Australia. On the other hand, if it does not work out as planned, we could be considered as dreamers, if not fools—But that’s show business!\textsuperscript{72}
\end{quote}

I have not had access to files that may contain the premier’s response. Considering that Riomfalvy was proposing to finance, in part, the corporation’s investment portfolio with Saudi money—‘petro-dollars’—less then three years after ‘The Loans Affair’,\textsuperscript{73} Wran’s likely response would have been, at least, cautious.

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., p. 5. The Directors’ and Producers’ Guild was actually the Producers & Directors Guild of Australia and had a Sydney and a Melbourne chapter.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p. 14.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{73} ‘The Loans Affair’, refers to dealings between the then Commonwealth Minister for Minerals and Energy, Rex Connor and Tirath Khemlani, a Pakistani commodities broker, to raise money for government infrastructure programs. The ensuing scandal contributed to the dismissal of the Whitlam government in 1975.
What is clear is that the corporation did not undertake large-scale overseas fund-raising operations, certainly not on the scale foreshadowed, accompanied by lavish entertainments, but the interest remained actively on the corporation’s agenda. The use of ‘loans raised through the borrowing allocation provided by the Government’ ceased after 1 July 1986, after which ‘the Corporation was funded through the Consolidated Fund’ to meet operating costs and to service debt costs. In effect, the changes brought the corporation’s finances under greater ministerial scrutiny, one of the many issues that vexed the corporation’s chairman.

The Australian Films Office II

An early project of the Australian Films Office Inc. was a season of Australian films in New York. The idea may have sprung from a suggestion to John Morris by Michael Flint at the SAFC that a New York cinema be leased to show only Australian films as a commercial and promotional venture. Morris presented a paper titled ‘Australian Showcase Cinema—New York’ to the meeting of state and Commonwealth film agencies held in Perth on 18 August 1978, prior to the Australian Film Institute awards on 19 August. Morris’s proposal had been for a permanent showcase cinema in either London or New York, but ‘it had been decided that this would not be worthwhile’.

The choice of New York for this week-long festival was recognition that, while the US film production industry is on the west coast, New York remained financially influential, and New York film critics set the agenda for influential film criticism nationwide. For the AFC, the infiltration of the New York film scene by the NSW Film Corporation, a scene that they had so recently abandoned in favour of Hollywood, must have been like salt to an open wound.

The rivalry between the NSW Film Corporation and the Australian Film Commission was viewed with concern by the industry. After the 1978 Australian Film Festival organised by the AFO and held in the Lincoln Centre in New York, the AFC’s Jim Henry was quoted in the Hollywood Reporter as having ‘serious misgivings’ about the festival.

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76 Minute no. 16, SAFC Board meeting, 27 June 1978, SAFC microfiche: Board: Minutes of Meetings 1–108.
I think it probably did more harm than good because of the 11 new films entered, of which eight are represented by my office, six of them remain unsold for U.S. distribution. The danger of exposing unsold films to the New York critics is not a healthy thing to do. I feel it is now going to be very difficult to sell some or all of those films because of some negative responses they received.\footnote{John Austin, ‘Australians divided on value of N.Y. Fest in selling Films’, \textit{Hollywood Reporter}, 15 December 1978, telex transcript of article, SAFC microfiche: General: N.S.W. Film Corporation—General. Interestingly, the paper proposed a joint venture with British and Canadian cinema production interests.}

Asked by Michael Thornhill to comment, John Morris, director of the South Australian Film Corporation simply replied:

\begin{quote}
The only comment I wish to make is to say how deeply I regret the rift that exists between the New South Wales Film Corporation and the Australian Film Commission. The more it is allowed to continue, [and] the more people and organisations that are polarised, the more damaging it is likely to be now to the entire Australian film industry.

For all our sakes, for the sake of whatever future is possible in our fragile (to put it mildly) industry, I urge you and your Corporation to do whatever can be done to heal the rift.\footnote{John Morris to Michael Thornhill, 15 January 1979, in SAFC microfiche: General: N.S.W. Film Corporation—General, 1 of 3.}
\end{quote}

Morris’s concern seems to have been widely felt. On 22 February 1979, the first item on the agenda for the afternoon session of the ‘Meeting between the Government Film Funding Bodies’ was ‘The public image of the industry and film funding bodies’.\footnote{Lloyd Hart, Agenda, ‘Meeting between the Government Film Funding Bodies, 22 February 1979’, in SAFC microfiche: General: N.S.W. Film Corporation—General, 1 of 3.} Ken Watts, chairman of the AFC, spoke to that item saying that there had been ‘no emphasis on the cultural and economic spin-offs’ and that it would be necessary ‘to see if the prime minister could make a statement to the effect that the film industry was of prime importance for reasons other than how much it returned to investors’.\footnote{‘Minutes of meeting held between the Government Film Funding Organisations at the Sebel Town House on 22 February, 1979’, p. 4, in SAFC microfiche: General: Intercorporation Meeting 23/8/79, 1 of 1.}
But more revealing of industry concerns were telegrams from ‘Ms Pat Lovell, Mr. Tony Buckley and the Director of the F.F.T.P.A. [sic], Mr. James Mitchell, addressed to the Chairman of the various public bodies and stating they were not in favour of the New South Wales Film Corporation marketing the four films in which the Corporation was a major investor independently of the A.F.C. at the Cannes Film Festival’. 81 It seems too that the AFC had read about the corporation’s plans for Cannes in a newspaper because ‘Mr. Riomfalvy apologised to Mr. Watts saying that he should have personally notified him of the Corporation’s intentions’. 82

Despite these criticisms, the corporation’s Third Annual Report announced a broadening of its overseas representation with the appointment of Mr Wilf Beaver to be based at NSW House in London. ‘Mr Beaver, a London resident for more than 20 years, speaks French and Italian and is very helpful with European Contracts, especially during the Cannes Film Festival.’ 83 Why this was flagged as news is unclear as Beaver was one of three ‘Overseas Consultants and Representatives’ listed in the Second Annual Report 1978/79, with offices at the NSW Government Centre. The other new representatives announced were Horst von Hartlieb in Weisbaden, West Germany, and G. de Boissiere S.A.R.L. in Boulogne (Paris). 84 The same report foreshadowed a broadening of US representation to pay even more attention to New York. 85

The Australian Films Office was regularly hailed by the corporation as ‘one of the most important marketing events during the rebirth of the Australian film industry’, 86 but it also provided a handle for the political critics of the corporation to seize, especially the Liberal opposition in NSW. The corporation itself was partly to blame for their interest: the annual reports were of limited use in analysing the organisation’s performance—after 1979/80 the reports did not even list the investments—and Paul Riomfalvy affected a lofty theatrical style and dismissive attitude to answer criticism.

81 Presumably FFTPA was a typographic error and meant the Film & Television Producers’ Association of Australia, (FTPAA) of which James Mitchell was director at the time. Ibid.
82 Ibid., p. 5.
83 Riomfalvy, Third Annual Report 1979/80, p. 3.
85 Ibid. After the Australian Film Week in New York, in November and December 1978, the AFO had concentrated its efforts in Los Angeles. Richard Schickel had give the films screened in New York a good write-up in ‘Up from Down Under’, Time, 4 December 1978.
86 Riomfalvy, Third Annual Report 1979/80, p. 3.
Financial information became increasingly scarce. The annual reports for the years ended 30 June 1979 and 1980 reported income from the Los Angeles office in a separate line, but this detail disappeared the following year. From 1981, the reports coyly declared in the ‘notes to and forming part of the financial statements’ that ‘these statements incorporate data from the accounts of the Australian Films Office Inc. located in Los Angeles. The accounts of this office are audited by Philip J. Hacker CPA of Los Angeles’. Thus the costs and benefits of this office, the most controversial of the corporation’s projects, were (and remain) difficult to assess.

Consequently, questioning the premier on the floor of the New South Wales parliament provided one of very few avenues for the public or the opposition to gain information about the Australian Films Office Inc. or the corporation as a whole. And on at least one occasion the government itself used the forum of parliament to deflect an attack by a frequent critic of the AFO, Peter Collins, member for Willoughby. On 17 October, during the second reading of the Appropriations Bill 1984, in a wide ranging speech on arts-related matters, Collins declared that ‘the Australian Films Office is an unwarranted and unnecessary duplication of resources, for such resources are already provided by the Australian Film Commission in Los Angeles’. He called for an end to ‘this sinecure which provides jobs for the favoured few in the New South Wales film sub-culture in Los Angeles’. Opposition leader, Nick Greiner, then chipped in ‘Jobs for the Premier’s mates’.

Two weeks later, the recently elected ALP member for Marrickville, Dr Andrew Refshauge, asked a question-without-notice of the premier in his capacity as minister for the arts. Predictably, Premier Wran was well prepared and answered in considerable detail. The public then learned that the operating cost of the AFO in Los Angeles for the year ended 30 June 1984 was $314,000. This was offset by a Commonwealth government Export Development Grant of $200,000. Income generated by the office ‘for the New South Wales Film Corporation for the private sector’ in the same year was $344,000, so, according to Wran, ‘the $314,000 annual cost is therefore well covered—more than covered—by the export grant and

89 Nicholas Greiner, Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Assembly, NSW Parliament, vol 182, 17 October 1984, p. 2016. Wran and Riomfalvy were very close friends.
the income produced for the film industry’. By comparison, the ‘General & Administrative’ cost of the corporation’s Sydney office, including ‘directors’ remunerations and special allowance … fees for services rendered … [and] audit costs’ was $442,764.

While this is an adequate reply politically speaking, the ‘total returns to the New South Wales Film Corporation’ for that year were reported as $918,379: it would seem then that the Los Angles office generated 37.5 per cent of revenues, whilst consuming 41.5 per cent of the operating costs and fulfilling no functions beyond sales and marketing. As the Seventh Annual Report also reported an expense for ‘Promotion of the Industry Internationally’ of $441,639 without any further categorisation, this cost/revenue analysis may be wildly awry. The true costs of the Los Angeles office may have been much larger.

The crucial aspect of Wran’s answer is that the details he gave were not disclosed in the annual report. It was this lack of disclosure that fuelled the opposition’s and, in particular, Peter Collins’s interest. Other interested parties were the ALP-controlled Public Accounts Committee, of which Collins was a member until 14 August 1984, and the Auditor-General, whose annual reports revealed that, by 1988, the cost of the Los Angeles office had risen to $512,999, up by 60 per cent in just 4 years. On the other hand, revenues from the office peaked at $1.3 million in 1986–87, but fell back to $402,301 in 1987–88, but only a fraction of those revenues would be payable to the corporation, the rest to producers.

The standard for content and detail of annual reports was specified for government authorities in NSW by the passage of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 and by the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984, but many aspect of the NSW Film Corporation’s finances, especially those associated with the Los Angles office and the annual odyssey to Cannes, remained poorly reported.

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94 Auditor-General’s Report for 1988, D. West, Government Printer, New South Wales, 1988, p. 190. Though the title has change, the report is legally and functionally similar to that cited immediately above.
Sam Gelfman left the AFO during the 1980–81 financial year, his departure being unmentioned in the annual report, save for the listing of his replacement Robert Lewis’s name in the statement of office holders of the corporation.\textsuperscript{95} Gelfman’s contract apparently had been extended beyond its initial two-year term, because he was still listed as president of the AFO on 30 June 1980, twenty-six months after his controversial appointment.

The AFO became less prominent in the annual reports of the 1980s—indeed there is no section labelled Australian Films Office after 1978: its details are captioned ‘International Affiliation’ (1979–80), ‘Overseas Marketing’ (from 1980–81), then ‘Sales & marketing’ (after 1984–85). While not denying its value, the corporation was no longer flaunting its presence.

The \textit{Seventh Annual Report} advised that ‘the Corporation has decided that the AFO’s services in this area [the selling of film rights to overseas market] should be made available to all Australian film-makers, whether or not [the corporation] is involved in their films’: this service to be charged on a commission basis.\textsuperscript{96} Again, the report does not make it clear how this is different in substance from the policy articulated in 1978 ‘that all Australian film-makers may use the services of the Australian Films Office Inc. whether or not the Corporation has an investment in their motion picture. There are no overhead costs charged to the individual film; only direct costs’.\textsuperscript{97} This re-iteration came at the time when the press and parliamentarians were aggressively questioning the costs and benefits of the Los Angeles office. The same annual report announced the appointment of Brian Wallace ‘as its representative for the Far East based in Tokyo’. ‘This involves no extra expense to the Corporation as the Government has agreed to Mr Wallace performing this role as an extension of his duties as Commissioner for New South Wales in Japan.’\textsuperscript{98}

In the \textit{Ninth Annual Report}, the chairman celebrated, a little prematurely perhaps, the first decade of the corporation, and reported that ‘in January 1986 informal talks were held between the Chief Executive of the Australian Film Commission and the Chairman of the

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\textsuperscript{97} Riomfalvy, ‘Marketing’, \textit{First Annual Report 1977/78}, pages are unnumbered.

\footnotesize
NSW Film Corporation concerning the future of overseas marketing and sales for Australian films’. These talks followed an earlier decision of the AFC that ‘direct selling of Australian film product … could be more effectively undertaken by international film distributors and/or sales agents’. Thus, the corporation’s Los Angeles office was renamed ‘Australian Films International Inc.’ and ‘will make its services available to any producer of Australian films for world-wide sales’. The company would continue to be headed by Robert Lewis. Lewis remained president of the AFI Inc. until the office was closed by the dissolution of the New South Wales Film Corporation in 1988.

The Public Accounts Committee

The expenditure of the NSW Film Corporation was of particular interest to the parliament’s Public Accounts Committee (PAC). It first took an interest in response to the auditor-general’s report for 1982–83, which drew attention to the growing net deficit of the corporation and the amount spent on overseas promotion. At that time the committee was chaired by Bob Carr, with John Aquilina as vice-chair and Peter Collins, Colin Fisher and John Murray as members.99

In November 1983, the Hon. W. L. Lange raised questions about the corporation’s overseas expenditure in the Legislative Council, ‘questioning whether funds were well spent on “that sort of jet setting”’.100 When the PAC sought details from the corporation, the chairman declared ‘our efforts in the field of industry promotion revolve very little around parties’. Four months later, Lange’s comments were reported by Stephen Rice, under the headline ‘Films body criticised for “rort” in Los Angeles’, in the Sydney Morning Herald, of 3 March 1984.101 The timing is interesting: Lange’s remarks may have been old news but the government was to face the electors on 24 March.

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101 Ibid.
In addition, the premier was under attack over the Morgan Ryan affair. Indeed Wran had alleged a vendetta by the Fairfax newspapers, especially by the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Riomfalvy, while refusing to be drawn on the question of the corporation becoming an election issue, did allow that ‘in years when there is no election nobody bothers to question the Corp’. The corporation was not an election issue and the Wran Labor government was returned to the Treasury benches. However, the 1982–83 observations of the auditor-general were amplified in the 1983–84 report:

> The founding capital of the Corporation (provided by State Government sources) has been largely used up, in reality, by recent years’ deficiencies. At current levels of funding and operation, it seems that the Corporation will soon be dependent on floating new loans to pay interest on existing borrowings.

The corporation provided further information to the PAC on 18 July 1984 and, subsequently, the PAC called a public hearing on the NSW Film Corporation for 19 November. At that hearing the chairman, financial controller, corporate solicitor and the marketing and sales executive gave testimony.

The Corporation explained its unique characteristics determined by the film industry’s needs and the necessity to modify the usual requirements of statutory authorities. It was a timely and constructive opportunity for the Corporation to explain the workings of the Australian film industry and particularly the market requirements necessitating its overseas representation. The completely different role of the Australian Film Commission overseas was pointed out to the Committee.

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Further to the Attendance, the Corporation submitted a comprehensive and highly detailed submission on various issues to the Public Accounts Committee dated 19 December 1984.  

The chairman wrote an exuberant letter to the premier to introduce the Eighth Annual Report 1984–1985. After lamenting ‘the never-ending 10BA soap-opera’ and that ‘there is no vote in the arts’, he thanked the premier for his continued support and committed the corporation to a brave Churchillian future: ‘So let us brace ourselves to our duty, and so bear ourselves that, if “the Australian film industry” lasts for a thousand years, men will say “This was their finest hour”’. This was his final letter presenting the annual report to Neville Wran as premier and minister for the arts. Wran retired on 4 July 1986, and subsequent annual reports had an altogether more sober tone.

The PAC was mollified by the presentation and the further submission but decided to ‘continue to monitor the performance of the Film Corporation and will consider the course of its inquiry in the light of the 1984–85 Auditor-General’s report’. That report added a further concern about the management of the corporation:

The Corporation has for the first time a contingent liability emerging of $1.65m in 1985–86 and $2.70m in 1986–87 to cover distribution advance guarantees given by covenant to private investors in six films in which the Corporation has an investment.

The hazard of these contingent liabilities was similar to that associated with a ‘guarantee against loss’ a funding mechanism that had been used by the Australia Council in the 1970s but largely abandoned—any guarantee was a forward commitment, possibly for several years, of an indefinite amount, whereas the council itself was funded only from year to year. For the

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106 Ibid., p. 12.
107 Ibid., p. 1.
110 Report of the Auditor-General under the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, for the year ended 30 June 1985, Part II, Statutory Authorities, D. West, Government Printer New South Wales, 1985, p. 282. NSW Film Corporation annual reports say that the number of films was four.
corporation, entering distribution guarantees was a necessary strategy to sweeten the deal for the private investors, as the Division 10BA gearing was wound back.\textsuperscript{111} In fact, that particular contingent liability maturing in 1986–87 cost the corporation marginally less—$2,605,000, rather than $2.70 million—as a result of modest sales before the guarantee matured.\textsuperscript{112}

In the first quarter of 1987, the PAC held further public hearings at which members of the corporation appeared. It published its finding as the \textit{Report on the Film Corporation of New South Wales—Thirty-First Report} in June 1987. In the PAC’s own words:

\begin{quote}
The Report on the Film Corporation concluded that after a decade of operation the objectives and operations of the Corporation required review and redefinition. The Report also recommended changes in the corporate structure to enable clearer lines of responsibility and accountability and more stringent financial controls over funds administered by the Corporation.

The Committee investigated individual projects which received script development funding from the Corporation. The Report expressed concern at the large sums channelled into projects which eventually collapsed.

During the course of the Inquiry a decision was taken that the General Manager of the Corporation would no longer be a director of the Corporation. A prominent business person was appointed to fill this vacancy.\textsuperscript{113}
\end{quote}

The committee also drew attention to the transfer of funds ‘into non-interest bearing accounts … as part of a “year end spend-up” to enhance funding allocations for the next fiscal year’ and ‘estimated that interest lost as a result of transfers would have equalled A$45,000 for the year ended February 1987’.\textsuperscript{114} No mention of these hearings is made in the corporation annual reports for 1986–87, but it and subsequent reports are more sober in tone than the \textit{Eighth Annual Report}. Perhaps the corporation’s finest hour had indeed passed.

\textsuperscript{111} The need for ‘sweeteners’ is discussed in the \textit{Seventh Annual Report}, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Variety}, 17 June 1987, p. 43.
The corporation’s accumulated deficit, which reached $10.2 m by 30 June 1988, provided the political justification for the repeal of the NSW Film Corporation Act, though Peter Collins said that its inability to explain the licensing of many film titles to a Panamanian distributor, Pepper Distribution, was the larger concern for him. The corporation’s functions, with the exception of Australian Films International in Los Angeles, which was closed, were re-assigned to the Ministry for the Arts, under the close ministerial scrutiny that the PAC had earlier noted as lacking. The act that gave effect to these changes, the Films Act no. 18 1988, was one of the first pieces of legislation brought in by the Liberal–National coalition government that was elected in early 1988.

The Commission of Inquiry into the Distribution and Exhibition of Australian Films in New South Wales

Another example of the New South Wales Film Corporation’s sense of mission for the Australian film industry as a whole can be found in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Distribution and Exhibition of Australian Films in New South Wales. The terms of reference of the inquiry were ‘established on 23 December 1982 under the New South Wales Film Corporation Act, 1976, as amended’:

To inquire and report upon what action the New South Wales Government might take to ensure an appropriate proportion of film distributed and exhibited in New South Wales are Australian films.

The inquiry was triggered by the NSW government’s decision, in September 1982 to repeal the Cinematographic Films Act 1935, which empowered the government to set an exhibition quota in NSW cinemas for Australian feature films. The proposal caused the Film Industry Standing Committee, a group broadly representative of the industry, to seek a meeting

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117 Ibid., p. 2.
118 The Film Industry Standing Committee (FISC) ‘represents, among others, the following organisations: Actors Equity of Australia, Australian Theatrical and Amusement Employees Association (N.S.W. Branch) Australian Writers Guild, Association of Drama Agents, Australian Screen Directors Association, Film Action Group, Film and Television Producers Association of Australia, Producers and Directors Guild of Australia and the
with the premier. The meeting led to the suspension of the act for two years and amendments to the film corporation’s own act to enable the government to set up the inquiry.

The commission of inquiry first met on 23 December 1982 and over the succeeding ten months met twenty-five times, considered twenty-eight written submissions and invited a further thirty-five individuals or organisations to make written or oral submissions.

‘In total, therefore, the Commission of Inquiry considered twenty-eight (28) written submissions, received forty (40) oral submissions and considered the Chairman’s report on numerous overseas precedents.’

The members of the commission were, in addition to the corporation’s chairman, Paul Riomfalvy, industry activist and former chair of the Australian Film and Television School, Tom Jeffrey; the NSW divisional secretary of Actors Equity of Australia, Janette Paramore; solicitor and past member of the executive of the Sydney Film Festival, Brian Wallace; and the managing director of the Greater Union Organisation Pty Ltd, David Williams. The Greater Union Organisation was a large distributor and exhibitor with significant overseas ownership but it had ‘under the enlightened stewardship of David Williams, backed a great many Australian films during the 70s [and 80s]’, among them the NSW Film Corporation’s My Brilliant Career and Patricia Lovell’s Picnic at Hanging Rock (Peter Weir 1975).

The commission drew up a list of ‘Matters of Significance to the Distribution and Exhibition of Australian Films in New South Wales’, which they would deal with in their recommendations:

- the operation of a quota system;
- a box office levy;
- the withholding tax;
- the position of Australian short films;

South Australian Film Corporation. The Australian Film Commission, New South Wales Film Corporation, Film Victoria and Queensland Film Corporation are observer members to FISC’. Ibid., p. 6.

Ibid., p. 7. The Chairman visited Great Britain, France, Spain and Canada and met with thirty-five individuals or organisations with interests relevant to the inquiry. See Appendix III.


• subsidized \textit{sic} cinema (also known as alternate cinema);
• television and other film markets;
• the lack of involvement of members of the Motion Picture Distributors Association (MPDA) in distribution of Australian product;
• the problems faced in marketing of Australian product;
• the collection of statistics pertaining to the Australian industry;
• the current downturn in Australian theatrical exhibition;
• the cost of operation of exhibition outlets;
• the problem of release patterns to certain independent exhibitors;
• the lack of communication between all sectors of the industry;
• the need for a body before which disputes between parties might be amicably resolved;
• the role of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation;
• the overseas experience.\footnote{122}

The commission was, in fact, revisiting the territory of the 1928 Commonwealth royal commission and similar inquiries and legislative initiatives in NSW and Victoria in the 1930s, with a few contemporary issues thrown in.

The commission made ten principal recommendations, the crucial ones being ‘that a tax of 10 per cent should be placed on a distributor’s gross revenue with a tax concession to that distributor based on the amount of Australian product handled by the distributor in the tax year’, and that a quota for the exhibition of short films be introduced ‘based on the following principle’:\footnote{123} ‘With every non-Australian feature film, one or more Australian short films shall be exhibited.’\footnote{124}

Further recommendations touched on the needs of alternate cinema exhibition and distribution (no action required as the Australian Film Institute, the Sydney Filmmakers Coop, and PIFT in Perth were meeting the need); increases in Australian content regulation for television and subscription television services; strengthening of copyright laws to fight video piracy; improved collection of statistics, as the commission had lacked reliable data on which to base

\footnote{122} Ibid.
\footnote{123} Ibid., pp. 18–21.
\footnote{124} Ibid., p. 21.
some findings; repeal of the Cinematograph Films Act 1935; and the archiving of the records of the commission, including oral and written submissions, under embargo for ten years.\textsuperscript{125} The full summary of recommendations is found in Appendix 6.

The final recommendation was ‘that the Report of this Commission of Inquiry should be forwarded to the Federal Government and to other State Governments’. \textsuperscript{126}

The ‘Background to Recommendation’ reads:

As noted earlier, the Commission of Inquiry is cognizant of the implications and relevance of this Report to the Federal Government and other State Governments. Accordingly, its recommendations have not been limited to those matters which might be the responsibility of the New South Wales Government alone, and the Report should be drawn to the attention of other governments in order that they may address the recommendation and other issues raised.\textsuperscript{127}

This paragraph reveals two things: it further confirms the role of national leadership that the corporation had assumed, especially in relationship to the Australian Film Commission, but it also recognises that to effect the proposed changes, it was the Commonwealth that had to act, either by legislation or by regulation, not the government of New South Wales. Indeed, recommendations one, two, four and five could only be accomplished by the Commonwealth government. Recommendation six concerning the collection of statistics could be undertaken by the state but would be far more useful if it collected data from all states.

Indeed, of all the recommendations that required Commonwealth action, only the collection of industry statistics seems to have been acted on in any comprehensive fashion: the first edition of Get the Picture, subtitled ‘Essential Data on Australian Film Television and Video’, was published by the Australian Film Commission in 1989, long enough after the Report of the Commission of Inquiry, perhaps, to uncouple the publication of statistics by the AFC from recommendation six of the NSW inquiry.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., pp. 23–9. 
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., p. 33. 
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{128} Peta Spear, Get the Picture: Essential Data on Australian Film, Television and Video, Australian Film Commission, Sydney, 1989.
The report was circulated to other state government and at least one, South Australia, examined it in detail. Working papers and correspondence can be found in the correspondence file ‘General: NSW Film Corporation–General’ in the archive at the SAFC. Like earlier attempts to use regulation to influence the distribution and exhibition of Australian cinema, the Report of the Commission of Inquiry achieved little.

The Independent Commission against Corruption

After the dissolution of the New South Wales Film Corporation and its replacement by the NSW Film and Television Office, within the Ministry for the Arts, a Banquo’s ghost of deals-past-done came back to haunt the corporation’s reputation. On 20 September 1989, the Minister for the Arts, Peter Collins, referred a matter to the attention of the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC), and on 8 June the following year, ICAC commissioner, Ian Temby QC, issued a warrant of approval:

TO INVESTIGATE the conduct of employees, officers and agents of the NSW Film Corporation and/or any subsidiary or associated entities relative to the management and use of funds and the grant of rights belonging to the NSW Film Corporation.

TO ASCERTAIN whether any corrupt conduct within the meaning of section 7 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, 1988 has occurred.\(^{130}\)

The minister’s reference recognised concerns of many producers who had assigned marketing rights to the NSW Film Corporation as part of the deal to finance their films. These producers included senior and experienced figures like Margaret Fink (My Brilliant Career), Anthony Buckley (The Night, the Prowler), Jill Robb (Careful He Might Hear You) and David Elfick (Newsfront). In the years since 1983, the corporation had on-sold these rights to a foreign company, Pepper Distribution Inc., ‘incorporated under the laws of Panama and trad[ing] under the laws of California’. These sales had been recommended and negotiated by Daniel (Danny) Collins, the corporation’s marketing and production consultant, and Robert (Bob) Lewis, president of the AFI Inc. in Los Angles. Peter Collins said that he referred the matter to the ICAC after failing to get satisfactory answers to his questions about the deals. ‘All my enquiries, even after I became a minister, couldn’t get to the bottom of what had happened. No matter which avenue I went down, it always led to a brick wall.’\(^{131}\)

The concern of Collins, Fink, Buckley, Robb, Elfick and the others was that:

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\(^{130}\) Ian Temby, Appendix 2.

\(^{131}\) Collins, 14 June 2000.
Extraordinary latitude has been granted to Pepper, a company with no established track record in the extremely competitive world of film distribution. For a relatively small up-front payment, Pepper has been given exclusive world-wide distribution rights in all media (except in a few cases where this clashed with pre-existing distribution agreements) for terms ranging between 75 years and “perpetuity”.\footnote{Collins, ‘Letter to David Catt’, p. 2, in Temby, Appendix 1.}

Though the relationship between Pepper Distribution and the corporation extended over five years, Pepper is never specifically mentioned in the corporation’s annual reports, though the 1982–83 report does allow that:

The AFO has been involved in arranging television and video distribution for the Corporation’s existing catalogue of producer. This is a significant aspect of the AFO’s operations as not all Australian films have the potential to gain theatrical release in the highly competitive North American market.\footnote{Riomfalvy, \textit{Sixth Annual Report}, p. 6.}

In his report, Temby pointed to serious impediments to the investigation, such as the place of residence and citizenship of several individuals, the commission’s lack of authority to require disclosure in foreign jurisdictions, and the efflux of time since the initial deals. He warned ominously that ‘a hearing in these circumstances could never obtain the whole truth’.\footnote{Temby, p. 2.} Though Temby concluded that there were no grounds for legal action against any individual, a pattern of relationships emerged that gave weight to the concerns of Fink et al. and led to legal action in the Los Angeles Superior Court in 1998 to recover the rights apparently sold so cheaply.\footnote{Los Angeles Superior Court BC194242. New South Wales Film & Television Office, an Australian governmental agency, Australian Films International, Inc., a California corporation v. Daniel P. Collins, Ronald M. Greenberg, Rosenfeld, Meyer & Susman, Robert Lewis, Robert Mittledorf, Pepper Distribution, Inc., a Panamanian corporation, Pepper Distribution Corporation, a California corporation. http://entlawdigest.com/story.cfm?storyID=1744, sighted 8 April 2005.}

Danny Collins’s company, Oscabout Pty Ltd, had been contracted by the corporation in June 1981 for services to replace David Roe’s, who had left to become an independent producer.
In 1984, Collins became an employee of the corporation and remained so until retrenched in June 1988. In September 1988, he moved to Los Angeles where he became ‘a director and President of Pepper Distribution Inc., which is incorporated in the Republic of Panama. He [was] also a consultant to Pepper Distribution Corporation which [was] incorporated in California’.\(^{136}\) Robert A. Mittledorf and Ronald M. Greenberg, the public face of both companies, were directors of both. Neither company would reveal its shareholders’ names, according to Temby, who also reported a statement from Pepper that Robert Lewis ‘is not and has never been a principal of Pepper’.\(^{137}\)

Temby found that on two occasions Collins, apparently acting as a private individual, had assisted producers to place films with Pepper but in a manner where ‘his private interests appear to have been intermingled with his public functions with the Corporation’.\(^{138}\) Neither of the films had been financed by the corporation and on neither occasion, Temby was told, did Collins receive payment from any party to the agreement.\(^{139}\)

Between 1983 and 1987, and acting for the corporation, Danny Collins in Sydney and Lewis in Los Angeles licensed twenty Australian titles to Pepper, but ‘other than an amount (45% of the contracted amounts) received at the time of licensing, no moneys were received from these distribution licences by the former NSW Film Corporation or [its successor] the [NSW Film & Television] Office’.\(^{140}\) The terms of the licences were indeed generous and, in some cases, on the expiry of pre-existing licences, the expired rights were automatically conferred on Pepper.

In 1986, a dispute arose between a distributor and the Film Corporation as to the territories which had been previously licensed to that distributor in relation to films now distributed by Pepper … Hoodwink and My Brilliant Career. There was concern that Pepper would sue.\(^{141}\)

Riomfalvy ruled out direct financial compensation because of the scrutiny of the Public Accounts Committee, so a deal was cut increasing the period of licences to seventy-five

\(^{136}\) Temby, p. 4.

\(^{137}\) Ibid., p. 4, 5.

\(^{138}\) Ibid., p. 16. The films were The Settlement (Howard Rubie 1984), and Desolation Angels (Chris Fitchett 1982), probably not released in Australia. Title later changed to Fair Game.

\(^{139}\) Ibid., pp. 7, 15.


\(^{141}\) Temby, p. 12.
years, ‘granting the rights to another film with no advance requirements’ and relieving Pepper of an obligation to pay ‘$40,000 in relation to a further film’. 142 ‘On his redundancy Collins went to work for Pepper in America. It is not surprising that those affected by the deals with Pepper had their suspicions aroused.’ 143 Temby went on:

His [Collins’] subsequent employment, however, can only lend credence to such an hypothesis. Indeed, those responsible for the assertion that Collins “was” Pepper believed so because the contractual arrangements were so favourable to Pepper and because of his employment with the distributor. 144

And later…

This conduct at the very least arouses suspicion that the offer of employment was a benefit granted in return for favours done. This has not been proven in this case, although the appearance of such largesse is there. 145

Surprisingly, Temby was all but silent on the corporation’s duty of care or its obligation to supervise the work of Collins and Lewis, allowing only implied criticisms to arise from statements attributed to Stapleton and Riomfalvy. Instead, he focused on the ‘issue of post separation employment in the public sector’, especially after redundancy, and found that ‘it is not unreasonable that he [Collins] would rely on contacts made while in the employ of the Corporation’. 146 He concluded: ‘The Commission has taken this matter as far as it usefully can. Any further resolution must lie in the civil courts, if any of the parties involved wish to and can pursue the matter’. 147

Temby handed down his report in March 1992, but it was not until 1998 that the NSW Film and Television Office pursued the matter in court. The auditor-general then reported:

The matter was resolved on 8 August 1998, costs of litigation have been met by the [NSW Film and Television] Office. As part of the out of court

142 Ibid., pp. 12, 13.
143 Ibid., pp. 17, 18.
144 Ibid., p. 18.
145 Ibid.
146 Ibid., p. 19.
147 Ibid.
settlement, Pepper terminated existing distribution agreements for the Australian films licensed to it. Those rights have now been assigned to the Office. The Office also received a cash settlement of $712,405 as part of payment of earnings due under the distribution agreement. The Office is considering, in cooperation with the films’ producers, ways to disburse these funds and how best to manage the future distribution of the relevant films.

And continued…

At the time the Corporation entered into the agreements with Pepper, there was speculation that certain (then) employees of the Corporation were associated with Pepper and could benefit from the agreements between the Corporation and Pepper. The matter was investigated by the Independent Commission Against Corruption in September 1989 but the allegations were not substantiated. Information emerging as part of the settlement process suggests that the allegations ought to be reconsidered.148

What that information was has not been established, the NSWFTO being unwilling to discuss the matter. It seems that the repatriation of the rights to the twenty films and the cash settlement of A$712,405 satisfied the NSWFTO for no further action has been taken.

Conclusion

The court settlement in 1998 closed a chapter of commercial ambition in the history of the state film agencies. One can only speculate about what might have emerged if Riomfalvy had been able to pursue his grant plans to raise large amounts of overseas capital and spend funds ‘on unorthodox items like extensive overseas travel … heavy media advertising, promotion and entertainment on a lavish scale’.149

But, of all the figures that this period in our film history brought forward, the only one that could play opposite Louis B. Mayer… was Paul H. Riomfalvy.

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149 Riomfalvy, ‘Report to the Premier by the Chairman of [the] New South Wales Film Corporation’.
CHAPTER SEVEN: The Tasmanian Film Corporation

Physically, Tasmania forms part of the Great Dividing Range;
culturally, it is part of Melbourne's metropolitan sphere of influence.

Nobody thought there should be a Tasmanian Film Corporation. And
I thought they were one of the few people that really needed it at that
stage and I think they still need it.

Gil Brealey, O.A., 1997. ¹

In a paper read at the Second Southern Hemisphere Conference on Marine Archaeology in Adelaide in March 1982, Professor Geoffrey Bolton lamented the lack of appreciation of Dutch, Portuguese, Indonesian and Chinese contact with Australia prior to Cook’s first voyage:

It’s possible that because the majority of Australian historians have
lived in Canberra, Sydney or Melbourne they have been slow to
appreciate the significance of a contact which occurred mostly on
the northern and western shores of the continent. ²

In a similar way, the contribution of the Tasmanian Film Corporation to the Australian film industry is unappreciated by most writers on the subject, perhaps because of Tasmania’s distance from the self-styled centres of film culture, the corporation’s limited production output, and the brevity of its existence. Nevertheless, the Tasmanian Film Corporation enjoyed what Sylvia Lawson called ‘a brief but honourable career’. ³

¹ Gil Brealey, recorded interview, Lower Hawkesbury, NSW, 26 June 1997.
Contrasts and Codas

The South Australian Film Corporation and the Victorian Film Corporation lie at opposite ends of a spectrum of ideas on how a state film agency might be structured and administered. These organisations, in their original forms at least, can be regarded as ‘ideal types’ in the Weberian sense. Other state governments, as they established film agencies, took cognisance of these models and, in general, favoured variations on the Victorian model. The Tasmanian Film Corporation, however, drew its inspiration from South Australia.

Initially the South Australian Film Corporation was dominated by the chairman and chief executive, Gil Brealey. Its structure was progressively modified after 1974, with the appointment of John Morris as head of production and Stewart Jay as assistant director—responsible for all administrative matters. Neither of these positions were part of the structure recommended in P. E. Consulting’s feasibility study.\(^4\) The appointments lightened the administrative burden that Brealey had carried from the first days of the corporation. However, they diluted his authority and denied him, in practice at least, the absolute control of the corporation that had been a feature of the original model. The authority vested in Brealey reflected the confidence of the corporation's creator, the premier, Don Dunstan.\(^5\)

Brealey left the South Australian Film Corporation in 1976 following the completion of *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Peter Weir 1976), in which the corporation was a major investor. Before long, *Picnic* would join *Sunday Too Far Away* (Ken Hannam 1975) in the pantheon of films that signalled the rebirth of the Australian cinema.\(^6\) Brealey’s departure marked the end of a chapter in the corporation’s creative and managerial history. Subsequently, he was commissioned by the Tasmanian government to examine and report on the Tasmanian Department of Film Production. He was given a free hand (with but one caveat), so one might expect to find in his recommendations his ideal structure for a state film agency.

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\(^5\) The combination of these two roles was to avoid conflict and empower the office holder but, as noted in *ibid.*, p. 87–8, the antagonisms between the board members, Bone, Williams and Brealey, made Brealey’s exercise of authority problematic.

\(^6\) Twenty-four years on, *Picnic* was the twentieth top-grossing Australian film of all time, without any adjustment to the gross box office figures for inflation over the intervening period. Mary Anne Reid, *Distributing Australian Films – A Survey of Current Market Conditions and Distributors’ Perceptions*, Marketing Branch, Australian Film Commission, Sydney, August 1999, Table 8.
The Tasmanian Film Corporation was the fourth such state agency to be proposed, the first to be privatised, and the first to disappear entirely from the national cinema and television production scene. Thus (to draw a biological metaphor), one might observe in the Tasmanian Film Corporation’s history, a life cycle (complete, except for reproduction) of a state film agency.

A Pseudonymous Start to Reform

The Tasmanian Film Corporation was created by the reformation of the Tasmanian government’s film production facility, variously called the ‘State Film Department’, the ‘Government Department of Film Production’, or the ‘Tasmanian Government Film Unit’ by different authors and in different records. It was most commonly referred to as the Department of Film Production. As with so many similar organisations in Commonwealth countries, its philosophic origins lay in the Griersonian tradition of the British Crown Film Unit and, before that, the Empire Marketing Board Film Unit.

The department had enjoyed a long and occasionally illustrious history but was endemically underfinanced and territorially inbred, rarely recruiting its staff from outside the island. It was initially established to service the photographic needs of the state Department of Lands and Survey but was constituted by statutory rule as a separate entity in 1960. It employed its first professional manager, H.V.L. (Vic) Taylor, the same year and principal among its staff was the pioneer Tasmanian film-maker, Norman Laird.

7 The Tasmanian Film Corporation Act, Number 34 for 1977, was introduced to parliament on 19 May 1977. Queensland followed in September and West Australian brought up the rear when, on 22 January 1978, Sir Charles Court, Premier of Western Australia, announced the formation of the Western Australian Film Council.

8 Such of the real estate and equipment of the original corporation as now exists is owned by Southern Cross Network (Productions) Pty Ltd and is used as their Hobart production centre. The same company also owns the name Tasmanian Film Corporation Pty Limited. See: http://www.search.asic.gov.au/cg-bin/gns030c?acn=009_540_149&juris=9&hdtext=ACN&srchsrc=1


10 This was the official name, though the word ‘Government’ will be dropped in this text, for brevity.

11 Tim Bowden, One Crowded Hour, Imprint Collins Australia, Sydney, 1988, p. 30.

12 Kay Chung, ‘The Transition from the Department of Film Production to the Tasmanian Film Corporation’, case study, Department of Political Science, University of Tasmania, 1981, p. 1.
In 1967, it was at 46 Brisbane Street, Hobart, in the former red-light district of the city; it had been housed there for some years. According to R.D. (Ray) Barnes, manager from 1967 to 1977, the house had been constructed in 1832 and was in an advanced state of decay. Soon after his appointment he was able to find new quarters for the department ‘a thousand per cent better’ across the road at 64 Brisbane Street. This author visited those new premises in 1975 and found them squalid enough.

The department enjoyed brief international attention for Hard to Windward (Max Graham 1957), a documentary on the Sydney to Hobart yacht race produced by Norman Laird, which won the Cortina di Ampezzo Cup at the International Festival of Sporting Films in 1962. The film had previously received a Silver Award at the newly instituted short film awards at the Melbourne Film Festival of 1958. Probably, the department’s most famous ‘graduate’ was Neil Davis, the Australian news cameraman killed in Bangkok on 9 September 1985 after twenty years working in Southeast Asia. As well as producing motion pictures, the department had a microfilm service, a number of still photographers on staff, a graphic arts section and a library of photographs principally used for tourism promotional purposes and in commercial advertising.

In October 1974, without forewarning, the Department of Film Production came under public attack. The attack was, in large part, conducted pseudonymously, and seemed planned and coordinated. The first shot was fired on 25 October by Mrs H. M. Doran of South Hobart. It established the public field of battle, the ‘letters to the editor’ page of Hobart’s daily newspaper, the Mercury, and the themes of the attack. Mrs Doran identified her source as:

The recently published Tasmanian Government Gazette [which revealed] that the operating costs of the State Film Department [sic] during the year ended June 30, 1974 were $347,113. However contributions received ...

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13 Earlier, according to Bowden, p. 34, the department was at 79 Bathurst Street, Hobart.
15 The National Film and Sound Archive catalogue gives the year of production as 1955.
16 Bowden, p. 37. Bowden implied that the director was Norman Laird, but the Cinemedia access collection catalogue names Max Graham as director and Norman Laird as producer.
17 Reported by Mercia Herbert in Observer, 14 June 1958, p. 276.
18 Bowden, p. 424.
amounted to a mere $58,714 ... It is scandalous that such a blatant waste of public funds be allowed to continue year after year.\textsuperscript{19}

Mrs Doran concluded by calling for the department to be cut ‘from the Treasury’s apron strings to make it entirely self supporting like at least one Tasmanian private production house’.\textsuperscript{20} Thus, the three principal themes developed (or more commonly, repeated) by subsequent correspondents were set.

Three days later, on 28 October 1974, ‘Fiat Lux’ and ‘Disgusted’ backed Mrs Doran’s comments, again in the \textit{Mercury}.\textsuperscript{21} ‘Fiat Lux’ was concerned that the overseas travel of the department’s head was to seek ‘even more equipment to be purchased at public expense’.\textsuperscript{22} ‘Disgusted’, however, was just content to be disgusted by the expense of government support for the department, demanding that ‘if the civil servants of the department are so creative and industrious surely they would have nothing to fear from standing on their own two feet’.\textsuperscript{23} ‘Amazed’ and ‘Film Maker’ joined the fray on 30 October,\textsuperscript{24} rehearsing the same themes and, on 31 October 1974, ‘Anxious Citizen’ of West Hobart and ‘Action Demanded’ of North Hobart added to the clamour. Again the themes emphasised were those of ‘expenditure exceeding revenues by $300,000 a year’ and ‘shocking waste of taxpayers’ money’.\textsuperscript{25}

By 31 October 1974, the Minister for Lands and Works, Michael Barnard, had roused himself to defend the government and the Department of Film Production. He explained that the department ‘had played a valuable role in both industrial development and tourism in Tasmania’ and that ‘it should also be realised that the department produced special films designed as a public service’.\textsuperscript{26}

On 1 November, ‘Fiat Lux’ and ‘Disgusted’, and, by implication, the other pseudonymous authors were attacked by A.M. Berkshout of Sandy Bay\textsuperscript{27} for hiding behind pen names,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} \textit{Mercury}, 25 October 1974, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid. Presumably she was referring to Impala Films Pty Ltd, 9 Franklin Wharf, Hobart, run by A.W. (Alister) Matheson and his wife.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 28 October 1974, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 30 October 1974, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 31 October 1974, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 9
\item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 1 November 1974, p. 4.
\end{itemize}
and, on 5 November 1974, the sole letter specifically in defence of the department, from a T.S. Kingston, appeared.  

The spring of 1974 was not the first time that the future of the Department of Film Production had exercised the mind of the Tasmanian government. In 1972, the department had sought to pool all the monies allocated for film production by various government departments and put the pool under the control of its own creature, the Government Film Committee. The Under Treasurer, K.J. Binns, in a memorandum to the Treasurer and Premier, E.E. (Eric) Reece, mounted a sterling defence of the status quo. He then deflected the whole proposal with a masterful and even more radical counter proposal (radical, that is, for its time). ‘If there is to be any change’, Binns wrote, ‘I would prefer to see the status of the Department [of Film Production] changed to that of a business undertaking. That is, it would be established as a full [sic] self-sufficient organisation comparable to the Government Printing Office’. Reece dropped the matter there and then.

The unexpected guerilla action of October 1974 was without public precedent but there is further evidence of a desire for change in the tiny film community of Hobart. More than a year earlier, on 4 January 1973, A.W. Matheson of Impala Films Pty Ltd had written to Gil Brealey of the South Australian Film Corporation saying that he had had ‘the opportunity of discussing with Tom Stacey of the Australian Film Development Corporation, the future possibility of expanding the film industry in Tasmania along similar lines to those now operating in South Australia’. Matheson went on:

Our company at the present time is engaged in advertising and commercial film making while the Tasmanian Government film unit produces all Government sponsored films. As we are anxious to see a greater utilisation of talent, equipment, and finances between the Government and private sector, we are interested in obtaining information about your Corporation.

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28 Ibid., 5 November 1974, p. 4.
29 K.J. Binns to E.E. Reec, 7 June 1972, in PCS 1/911, file 256/12/76, Tasmanian Archives Office. Chung, in ‘The Transition from the Department of Film Production to the Tasmanian Film Corporation’, construes this differently. She says: ‘In the early 1970s Premier Eric Reece asked the Under Treasurer [Binns] to look at the possibility of changing the Department of Film Production into a commercial operation’ (p. 2). Binns’s letter seems clearly to identify this initiative as his own idea.
30 A. W. Matheson to Gil Brealey, 4 January 1973, in SAFC microfilm: General: Tasmanian Film Corporation, 1 of 2, SAFC, Adelaide. Brealey’s reply is dated 10 January 1974, so Matheson’s letter may be misdated.
It is likely that Matheson was most interested in the SAFC’s policy of subcontracting almost all government production to the private sector and could see the benefit of a local film agency with a similar policy. It would have been a boon for the tiny private sector as the 1972–73 annual report of the Department of Film Production listed nineteen 16mm or 35mm films either commenced or completed in that year, and a further sixteen ‘Television Commercials, Interviews, News Items’ as having been produced.  

In April 2000, I contacted the *Mercury* newspaper seeking their assistance to identify the pseudonymous authors and received a telephone call from the paper’s editor. He suggested that I pursue the search through writing to the letters page of the paper. This line of inquiry brought forward two sources, a former sound recordist with the Department of Film Production, Peter McKinley, and, most important, the manager of the department, from 1967 until the creation of the film corporation in 1977, R. D. Barnes.

**R. D. Barnes, Manager, Department of Film Production, 1967–77**  

R. D. (Ray) Barnes now lives in Augusta, Western Australia, and contacted the author by letter dated 13 May 2000, from the Charles Gardiner Cancer Units in Nedlands, where he was undergoing treatment. A clipping of my letter of 4 May 2000 in the *Mercury* had been forwarded to him.  

Subsequently, we had two telephone conversations, each of about forty-five minutes, and each, with Barnes’s permission, was recorded. In them Barnes painted a dismal picture of the department and of the wider film community in Hobart at the time.

Barnes was appointed manager of the Tasmanian Department of Film Production in February 1967, having worked in scientific and instrumentation film-making with the Long Range Weapons Establishment in South Australia since 1950, and rising through the ranks from  

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32 R. D. Barnes, recorded telephone interview, Melbourne–Perth, 21 and 27 June 2000. Information in this section of the chapter is taken from those recordings, except as otherwise cited.  
34 Part of the Weapons Research Establishment at Salisbury and Woomera in South Australia.
When he joined the department, the staff establishment was thirty-two officers, though not all positions were filled. Such staff numbers, plus a few freelancers, would have made it the second largest government-financed film-production unit in Australia, after the Commonwealth Film Unit in Sydney.

According to Barnes, the staff of the department was divided, stratified along lines that reflected the structure of the wider community in Hobart. Tasmanians have long divided themselves into ‘northerners’ and ‘southerners’, the geographical boundary lying southeast–northwest in the vicinity of the town of Ross, mid-way between Hobart and Launceston. The eminent Tasmanian historian, W. A. Townsley, puts this sociological ‘Mason–Dixon’ line thirty-two kilometres further south at Oatlands on the watershed between catchments of the southern and the northern-flowing river systems. Collectively however, all Tasmanians qualified themselves as different from the ‘mainlanders’, and Barnes, though a fifth-generation Tasmanian, born at Penguin on the northwest coast, was considered a ‘South Australian mainlander’ because of his long absence interstate.

In addition, he said, throughout government and commerce there was a sectarian division between communities of different religious affiliation. The public service administration, in general, tended to be Catholic, while the police force and the Department of Agriculture were Protestant. Protestants were favoured as members of the service organisations too. Cutting another way was a Liberal–Labor divide that did not follow the religious fault lines as closely as on the mainland. In addition, the left wing of the labour movement included a number of influential academics and film society members. In this climate of division, perhaps of mutual suspicion, Barnes says he found it difficult to advance the interests of the department.

Another dividing issue in the late 1960s was opposition to plans of the Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Commission to flood Lake Pedder in the state’s southwest wilderness. The ‘Hydro’ or the ‘HEC’, as it was known, had enjoyed bipartisan political support for half a century, and cheap electricity had succeeded in attracting energy-hungry industry to the state, such as the aluminium refinery at Bell Bay. The premier of the day, Eric Reece, was a particular

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35 A clapper-loader is an assistant to the assistant cameraman. Tasks include operating the clapper board, used for shot identification and sound synchronisation, reloading film magazines and keeping film stock records.

supporter and often referred to as ‘electric Eric’.

As Townsley put it ‘by the mid-60s the HEC had become a powerful institution, some would say “a State within a State”’. The conservation movement created new loyalties across old divides and included Barnes himself, who, being a ‘mainlander’, did not regard the HEC with quite the reverence accorded it by many Tasmanians.

Barnes believed the October 1974 outburst was fuelled by three factors. First, in 1973, the under-treasurer, K.J. Binns, at the direction of the premier, had directed government departments to meet some of the costs of the films produced at their request. Thus, for the first time, the department’s annual report showed income attributed to production work, in addition to the annual allocation from treasury, and revenue from print sales.

Second, there was pressure on Barnes from a prominent ‘left-wing’ academic at the University of Tasmania, W.H. (Bill) Perkins, and others, including the head of adult education in Tasmania, Ken Brooks, and a certain Mrs H.M. Doran, to reorder the department’s priorities. Perkins was doyen and chairman of the Australian Council for Children’s Films and Television and, later, the Australian Society for Education in Film and Television. This group saw the department as a base from which to produce cinema features for children, and had organised political support for their plans, notably with Reece’s deputy, W.A. Neilson.

Financial considerations aside, Barnes had resisted their initiative, believing that the day of the Saturday children's cinema matinee was over. They were seeking to recreate, he said, ‘nostalgic things ... what they found enjoyable in their boyhood’. This may have been true for some of the group but, during a conversation recorded by Dr Ina Bertrand in 1979, Perkins

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37 Ibid., p. 200.
38 Ibid.
39 Dr Ina Bertrand interviewed Perkins for the oral history program of the National Library in 1979. She characterised his politics as ‘independently minded’ rather than ‘left-wing’. (Telephone conversation with Dr Bertrand, 28 July 2000.) See footnote 43. In 1971, Perkins was senior lecturer in education at the University of Tasmania.
42 Title page, Mass Media Review, vol. 6, no. 1, Autumn 1973, p. 3. The Australian Society for Education in Film and Television ‘was born at a meeting in Melbourne, on 11 September 1970, of an Australia-wide committee which had been formed by the undersigned and financed by part of a grant which ACCFT [Australian Council for Children’s Film and Television] had received in 1969 from the Australian Council for the Arts [now the Australia Council]’. Mass Media Review, vol. 4, no. 1, spring 1971, p. 1.
said this of his youth: ‘In those days [early 1930s] my interest in film was fairly minimal’.

He cited his experience in World War II as a captain in the Army Education Corp and later, in 1947, as a full-time Guidance Officer [at the University of Tasmania] as the times ‘that I first became really interested in film’. 43

Instead of producing films for cinema, Barnes had ideas of producing children’s entertainment, educational and training programs for television, using the under-utilised studios at the recently completed college of advanced education at Mount Nelson on Hobart’s south-western outskirts. The college had TV studio facilities but no staff, while the Department of Film Production had staff but no TV facilities. One of Barnes’s proposals involved Tasmania’s renowned Terrapin Puppets, but his ambitions were overtaken by, among other factors, the arrival of the US children’s television program, Sesame Street, on Australian screens.

The third factor, Barnes believes, was an overseas trip he made in early 1974. Barnes visited Photokina, a major European film industry trade show, and other overseas destinations, with a view to the purchase of new microfilm, sound-recording, and film-editing equipment for the department. 44 A representative of the Tasmanian police force, one of the department's major clients, accompanied him. According to Barnes, several members of the film community, in particular Perkins and a number of the staff of the department, notably Norman Laird, a friend of Perkins, believed that they should have been chosen to accompany Barnes to Europe instead of the police officer. In Barnes’s view the police representative ‘had the better call’ because the proposed microfilm equipment purchases were to service the police department’s requirements. 45

To these factors might be added a fourth: a desire, perhaps a campaign, by A.W. Matheson to precipitate change and open up government work to private sector contractors, something that might benefit to his production company, Impala Films.


44 As a consequence of security aspects of his work in the Department of Supply, Barnes claimed he was prohibited from leaving Australia for seven years. The prohibition expired in February 1974.

45 Also, Laird seems to have been overlooked for promotion when Barnes had been appointed in 1967, as had another staff member, Fred Clark. Laird may also have been overlooked at Taylor’s appointment in 1960. Laird had been associated with government film production since 1946. Such passings-over may lend weight to Barnes’s recorded allegation that Laird was a drunk, incapable of working on anything for more than two days without a drinking bout. Barnes, 21 June 2000.
Barnes attributed the letter writing campaign to ‘sour grapes’ and personal hostility. He suggested the following identities for the various letters’ authors:\footnote{46}{Barnes, 21 June 2000.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>25 Oct. – 5 Nov. 1974</th>
<th>Barnes’s opinion</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs H. M. Doran</td>
<td>herself</td>
<td>Friend of Perkins and Laird.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiat Lux</td>
<td>Norman Laird</td>
<td>Staff producer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgusted</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Maker</td>
<td>Name unrecalled</td>
<td>Staff director.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazed</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious Citizen</td>
<td>Possibly Perkins</td>
<td>Same suburb as Perkins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Demanded</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. M. Berkshout</td>
<td>himself</td>
<td>‘Amateur film club thing’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. S. Kingston</td>
<td>Tony Kingston</td>
<td>Film projectionist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 7 September 1976      |                  |          |
| Fair Go               | Don Anderson     | Staff producer, Hobart. |

Table 1: Authors of letters to the\textit{Mercury}.\footnote{47}{Ibid.}

Barnes also reported another source of ill will towards himself and the department. He claimed that Perkins had financed a film for children and had shot several thousand feet, and then used his political influence to gain access to the post-production facilities of the department:

The Premier ordered us to allow him to have editing facilities. He was going to edit this film and show how easy it was to make films [for children] ... but he could never actually produce the film because the editing system defeated him completely. It rather showed him up in some respect as being perhaps academically sound on a few things, but technically unwilling or unable to do much about it. So he rather had a ... I suppose the term would be ... he had it in for the staff of the department who had work to do and didn’t want to help him.\footnote{47}{Ibid.}
Barnes’s recollection is perplexing. The only film that Perkins is on record as having made is Weekend at Cradle Mountain (W.H. Perkins 1960), seven years before Barnes joined the department. It was photographed by Charles Wolnizer, ‘a crazy man who always wanted to make films’. Wolnizer went on to produce They Found a Cave (Andrew Steane 1962) in Tasmania, The Special Magistrate (Richard Phelps 1982) in Hong Kong, and Daisy and Simon (Stasch Radwanski Jr 1989) in Western Australia.

According to Perkins, the ‘Cradle Mountain film’ was premiered in Hobart ‘in about December 1960’. Certainly, he made no mention of any other production work during four hours of conversation with Dr Ina Bertrand in 1979, simply acknowledging that the production of the film ‘was [a] long drawn-out business. I learnt a lot about film making during that ... particularly about editing which appeals to me very much’.

Weekend at Cradle Mountain’s finished length was about 800 feet (244 metres), a running time of approximately 22 minutes in 16mm and was part financed by Ampol Petroleum who ‘gave us ... four hundred pounds’. Of course, if Perkins had ventured a second production and it had come to naught, particularly in problematic circumstances, he might not have been happy to acknowledge his failure to Bertrand, in a recording that was destined to form part of the collections of the National Film and Sound Archive.

In all events, in the space of those ten days in October 1974, within the letters page of the Mercury, strong hostility to the Department of Film Production and, by implication, Barnes himself, had been rehearsed in public. During the two interviews with me, Barnes insisted that the letters had no political impact that he knew of, but, in the light of subsequent events, they may well have stimulated the interest of the future premier, W.A. (Bill) Neilson, who had had some unsatisfactory encounters with Barnes several years previously.

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48 Bertrand, ‘Interview with W. H. Perkins’, side B.
49 Ibid.
51 Bertrand ‘Interview with W. H. Perkins’. There is no record of this title in the catalogues of Screen Sound Australia or the Tasmanian State Library. If a print has survived it may be with Perkins’ papers or the records of the Australian Council for Children’s Film and Television.
52 Bertrand, ‘Interview with W. H. Perkins’, side B
53 Ibid.
Barnes reported that, following Labor’s defeat in 1969, Neilson had demanded that the department produce pro-Labor TV commercials at no cost to the party. Barnes had refused, on the grounds that the department served government and not the partisan interest of the Labor Party—and though the Labor Party had been in government since 1939, the Labor Party and the government were different entities. Neilson was not impressed. Barnes continued, ‘he looked at me and said, “We need a department that’s more amenable to my wishes”’.  

The department, subsequently, did make some television commercials for Labor, through the party’s advertising agency. But that experience was not free of conflict either:

> We charged the full commercial rate for it, including costs and overheads, the whole shooting match, so that we were fire proof, and still we got a lot of nasty letters to the paper, a lot of back-lash from it. In fact, I even had to front-up to the public accounts committee and explain [what] we had done ... and why we had done it. So it was not a nice time for me at all ... I was the meat in the sandwich, all the way along the line.

Barnes believed that Neilson carried resentment over these matters and that neither he nor the Department of Film Production had a friend in the man who was soon to become the premier.

**The Ascendancy of the Old Guard**

On 31 March 1975, Eric Reece retired after thirty years in the Tasmanian parliament, including two terms as premier. He was succeeded by the deputy leader of the party, W.A. Neilson. Neilson was not a young reformer in the mould of Donald Dunstan in South Australia but he soon ‘began a process of executive and administrative reform that was to go on for some years’.

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54 Barnes, 21 June 2000.

55 Ibid.


57 Townsley, p. 374.
After the passionate outbursts in the *Mercury* in the spring of 1974, the public debate on the future of the Department of Film Production subsided but, in private and some government circles, the debate remained current. Within the department, it seems that the problems of staff morale and slack administration continued, Barnes apparently unable or unwilling to overcome them.

After assuming office, Neilson called Barnes to his office and said ‘we are going to make children’s films’. According to Barnes, Neilson ‘was a man with what you might call footlight fever. He wanted to be at the forefront of the entertainment industry and never quite made it. He even paid for and had a singing record made, and things like this’.  

Barnes reported the conversation with the premier thus:

> H said: I have formed a committee, I am the chairman of it, my head of department—the Premier’s Department—will be the secretary ... he said Mr Perkins will be my adviser and ... [will be on the committee]. I can’t think of the bloke’s name ... he was the head of the adult education ...
> I can’t think of his name, but he was a great mate of Bill Perkins.

Barnes was referring to Ken Brooks. This committee has been referred to by an assortment of names. Barnes called it the Government Film Advisory Committee, a researcher from the University of Tasmania used the name State Government Film Production Advisory Committee, while the 1975–76 annual report of the Department of Film Production, more economically, called it the State Film Program Committee. However, the committee's purpose was not the reform of the department, rather it was to exercise executive control of the subjects selected for production and the scale of each production. The tone of voice in which Barnes referred to this committee intimated that

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59 Barnes, 21 June 2000.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Chung, ‘The Transition from the Department of Film Production to the Tasmanian Film Corporation’, p. 2.
he was not a member, but his tone was misleading: more likely, he simply felt like an outsider or, perhaps, servant.

The department’s annual report for 1975–76 advised:

**State Film Program**

A State Film Program Committee was formed and had its first meeting in February 1976. The Committee is to advise the Premier on film production generally and set priorities and approvals from film requests received by the Department of Film Production.

The Committee consists of: the Premier (the Honourable W.A. Neilson) Chairman; the Manager (Mr D.R. Barnes) [*sic*], Department of Film Production; Administrative Officer (Mr R. Grierson), Premier’s Department; Mr D.E. Kirby, Treasury Department; Mrs M. Lowry, Tourism Development Authority; Mr W.H. Perkins; Mr K. Brooks; and Mr D. Donnelly (Secretary), Executive Officer, Department of Film Production. The Committee met three times during the year to approve films for production.⁶⁴

At about this time too, Premier Neilson determined to establish an inquiry into the department. Malcolm Smith, who became the first director of the Tasmanian Film Corporation, was sure that the government was aware of its problems and thought that Neilson might have visited South Australia and discussed the department with Don Dunstan.⁶⁵ Certainly, Dunstan’s South Australian Film Corporation was enjoying considerable success at the time with *Sunday Too Far Away* and *Picnic at Hanging Rock* to its credit. The corporation would have been the natural model to consider if reform of the department was Neilson’s intention, as no other state had a similar film agency at the time.

In a 1980 interview conducted by Scott Murray and Peter Beilby and published in *Cinema Papers*, Malcolm Smith was quoted as saying that Neilson ‘had sent a team across to look at the South Australian Film Corporation in 1975 [and] was sufficiently impressed that

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⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Malcolm Smith, interview, ABC Gore Hill studios, 4 December 1995. There is no mention of any visit by Neilson in the minutes of the meetings of the SAFC, which did record a visit by an officer of the NSW Ministry of Cultural Activities, O. J. Boardman, in December 1974.
there were other ways of doing things within a bureaucratic structure’. 66 Gil Brealey, on
the other hand, said that Neilson rang John Morris, Brealey’s successor at the South
Australian Film Corporation in 1976, seeking his advice. Brealey said that it was on
Morris’s recommendation that he was approached to undertake the inquiry. 67 In these
differing reports we may simply be observing a sequence of events, selectively visible to
different observers but all leading to Brealey’s appointment.

On 11 August 1976, three weeks before the public announcement of the inquiry, Neilson
wrote to Brealey saying, ‘Mr Bill Perkins and Mr Ken Brooks, both of the Government
Film Advisory Committee, have suggested that you would be the ideal person to conduct
an inquiry and make recommendations aimed at effecting such re-organisation’. 68
Certainly Brealey’s name seems the only one canvassed to undertake the proposed
investigation of the department.

Barnes claims that he knew nothing about the decision but Kay Chung reported that:

At a meeting of the [State Film Program] Committee on the 9th August 1976, Mr Bill Perkins suggested that Mr Gil Brealey (an ex-Director of
the South Australian Film Corporation) should come to Tasmania and
advise whether he thought it would be a good idea to change the
Department into a Corporation as had been implemented in South
Australia. The Committee unanimously agreed this would be a good
idea, and the Premier, then asked the Treasury Representative to make a
note to set aside $5,000 for Mr Brealey’s Report on the Department. 69

The copy of Chung’s case study examined for this dissertation came from R. D. Barnes’s
personal papers and bears many annotations in his handwriting. Beside the word
‘unanimously’ are two annotations: one a question mark in brackets, the second the figures
‘5/2’, perhaps indicating that the vote was not unanimous but 5 to 2, and implying that the

67 Gil Brealey, 26 July 1997.
68 Neilson to Brealey, 11 August 1976, in PCS 1/911, file 256/12/76, Tasmanian Archives Office.
69 Chung, ‘The Transition from the Department of Film Production to the Tasmanian Film Corporation’ p. 3.
minutes were unreliable. These annotations seem strongly to imply Barnes’s presence at the meeting.

Chung does not cite her sources for this report but Neilson’s comment and this report would seem to confirm the pre-eminent role that Perkins and Brooks—the group Barnes labelled the ‘Children’s Film Block’—had played in the reforms, and that Barnes himself, though he was the manager of the Department of Film Production, was peripheral to their plans. Neilson’s letter of 11 August, inviting Brealey’s participation, was answered on 19 August, Brealey expressing his interest in conducting the proposed inquiry.

Gil Brealey Reports

On 1 September 1976, Premier Neilson quietly announced the appointment of Gil Brealey to inquire into the future of the Department of Film Production. Only one public reaction was forthcoming. A very well-informed ‘Fair Go’ of Hobart, in a lengthy letter to the editor, published 7 September, found it ‘disgusting to read the Premier’s bombshell announcement that a top South Australian film consultant Mr G. J. Brearley [sic] is to investigate the possibility of establishing a film corporation’. ‘Fair Go’ has been identified by Barnes as Don Anderson, a film producer on the staff of the Department of Film Production, perhaps acting in this circumstance as Barnes’s cat’s paw.

In retrospect, Barnes says he was not unduly surprised by the government’s actions. Morale at the unit was low; indeed, he claimed that one staff member, a sound recordist, had locked himself in a toilet and drunk himself to death, and the death had been hushed up. Despite the purchases of 1974, the overall state of equipment remained poor and out-dated, much of it having been built by an instrument maker who worked for the department. This man’s skill

70 Chung, ibid, in Barnes’s personal papers. A copy is in possession of the author.
71 Handwritten note on ibid, p. 3.
72 Brealey to Neilson, 19 August 1976, in PCS 1/911, file 256/12/76, Tasmanian Archives Office. According to Kay Chung, the reply was received on 25 August.
73 Mercury, 2 September 1976, p. 12. The report occupied 5 column centimetres and was tucked away centre right on page 12. By comparison, two stories on the likelihood that cinema admission prices would fall as a consequence of the seat tax being dropped took the top third of page 7 the following day.
74 Ibid., 7 September 1976, p. 4.
75 See Table 1: Authors of letters to the Mercury, p.239.
and ingenuity are to be admired as the equipment he built included two black and white film processing plants, a 16mm sprocketed sound recorder, as well as film-editing equipment.\textsuperscript{76}

In the interview of 21 June, Barnes recalled that the first he had heard of the review was when he read it in the newspaper but, in the second interview a week later, he agreed that he had had several days notice of the premier’s announcement. It seems that he had, in fact, known of the premier’s intention, if not the details of its implementation, from early August. That he had been kept completely kept in the dark is not possible, though his opinion may never have been sought on the premier’s intended action.\textsuperscript{77} If the committee’s meetings were his only source of information, then one must recall that the committee met only every three months and the selection and appointment of Brealey took barely four weeks.

Contrary to his recollections, Barnes did act immediately in response to Perkins’ proposal at the meeting of 9 August. The following day, and before Premier Neilson had written to Brealey, Barnes wrote to Neilson advising the premier as follows:

Following discussions with my senior staff this morning, I have to offer the following suggestions:

1. I would like to propose that before an outside consultant is brought in, Officers of this Department conduct an investigation of similar organisations which exist in South Australia, Victoria, Queensland, and the ACT.\textsuperscript{78} The operation of Film Australia should also be included in this survey.

2. The suggestion that Mr Gil Brealey be invited to examine the possibilities of the present Tasmanian Film Unit being made into a Corporation is not without value, but ...\textsuperscript{79}

The winds of change had been blowing for some time. Now, belatedly, the management of the department strove to influence the review process—perhaps to subvert it. However, the

\textsuperscript{76} Barnes, 21 June 2000.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{78} At this date (10 August 1976), the creation of the Queensland Film Corporation was still a year away and the Victorian Film Corporation would meet, for the first time, the following day. ‘ACT’ may refer to a small studio facility that was operating in 1975 in Canberra. It was (much to the annoyance of Film Australia) under the control of the Australian Information Service. The studio was later the basis of the Canberra facility opened by Film Australia in the mid-1980s.

\textsuperscript{79} Barnes to Neilson, 10 August 1976, in PCS 1/911, file 256/12/76, Tasmanian Archives Office.
delaying tactics were too late; Perkins’ initiative was in place and Neilson was set upon his course of action, as his letter of 11 August confirms.

At the time Brealey commenced his study, and despite its title, the Tasmanian Department of Film Production provided four separate services:

- motion picture production services;
- still photographic services;
- microfilm production services and;
- graphic arts studio.

The department had grown over the years with little apparent strategic planning, though the microfilm service was, partly at least, driven by the needs of the state police force. Perhaps the department had grown in response to opportunities to provide services that the private sector was unable (or had never been asked) to provide in so small a market as Hobart in the 1950s and 1960s. Brealey, however, was adamant that the growth was driven by R. D. Barnes’s desire to feather ‘his own nest’. That seems too simple an analysis but it suited Brealey's brief.

The department had started within the Lands and Survey Department as a unit providing still and motion picture photographic services and achieved a separate identity in 1960. The specialist microfilm section was added, possibly because it was a related technology and a synergy of skills could be argued. Certainly, the Tasmanian police were developing their use of microfilm technology for record storage purposes. In a similar manner, the graphic arts section had grown ‘in house’, alongside the still photographic service and the motion picture service, as these latter services would have been supported by a graphic arts capacity. The department had accumulated a substantial library of still photographs, and the graphic arts facility provided other government departments with an advertising art department, which was especially valued by the tourism authorities.

When I first visited the Department of Film Production in the winter of 1975, it occupied the premises at 64 Brisbane Street, Hobart, formerly a residential terrace on the lower side of the street. The building and its neighbours, into which the department had expanded behind the street facade, were in run-down condition and overcrowded. Even the space below street and

80 Brealey, 26 June 1997.
floor level that the sloping ground afforded was occupied. ‘The second-in-command of the Dept (the producer) had an office in a bathroom (with the bath removed). He used a packing case for a desk’, Barnes was to lament in response to the Brealey report.  

I remember a certain air of domestic and technological squalor; it was the most unlikely state film studio I had encountered. This depressing sight may have confronted Gil Brealey when he came to Hobart on 22 September 1976 for a 2 p.m. appointment with Premier Neilson. Brealey had formally accepted the task of undertaking ‘enquiries into the activities of the Film Department’ in a letter dated 20 September 1976. The terms of reference he had accepted were set out in a letter from Neilson three weeks earlier and were:

1. Scope of existing operations;
2. Efficiency of operations;
3. Ratio of outside work to government commitments;
4. Profitability of output, including costing expenditure and accountability;
5. Suitability of existing accommodation;
6. Staff establishment and use of outside agencies, having due regard to staff rights as public servants;
7. Duplication of operations in other government departments;
8. Desirability of-
   (a) merging the Department into other government departments having major requirements for film production, or
   (b) upgrading the Department and its activities, or
   (c) establishing the Department as a corporation. If this is recommended, how it should be implemented.

Premier Neilson went on to offer Brealey remuneration of $500 per week, a travel allowance of $36 per day, and the re-imbursement of air fares. The fees were by no means lavish for a

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82 My visit was made in the capacity of Film Consultant to the Film, Television and Radio Board of the Australia Council, in 1975.
83 Film Consultant (S.A.) [Brealey] to Neilson, 20 September 1976, in PCS 1/911, file 256/12/76, Tasmanian Archives Office.
84 Neilson to Brealey, 1 September 1976, in PCS 1/911, file 256/12/76, Tasmanian Archives Office.
report that would influence the expenditure of millions of dollars and the career prospects of
dozens of people. 85 Copies of the letter were circulated to the Chair of the Public Service
Board, the manager of the Department of Film Production, and the Secretary of the Film
Advisory Committee. The appointment was formalised on 21 September in a minute signed
by the Governor-in-Council 86 but, in reality, the tone of all the correspondence suggests that
Brealey’s appointment was *fait accompli* from 19 August 1976, when he had first expressed
his interest and availability. 87

Brealey worked rapidly on his commission and, by the following January, the report was in
first draft. In November of 1976, he proposed advertising for submissions from the public.
Grierson, the premier’s private secretary, wrote to Brealey saying that ‘the Premier has asked
me to advise you that he does not consider this necessary’. 88 This incident seems to be the
only occasion when there was a difference between Brealey and the premier. It may indicate
that Neilson wanted to avoid giving the dissenting voices of October 1974 any public status.

This overall unanimity of view explains, in part, the rapid adoption of the recommendations
of the report. It may also confirm that the core purpose of the report was for Brealey to lend
his professional credibility to Perkins’ and Brooks’ agenda. Indeed, when the report was
tabled in parliament, it still bore the January date, suggesting that the first draft was little, if
at all, amended. It comprised eighty-four pages, of which twelve responded to the brief, and
six made recommendations. The balance consisted of supporting data, about which Brealey
made this qualification:

> The following information has been compiled of their own volition by
> some of the senior members of the staff of the Department of Film
> Production. I have taken this material in good faith. Where possible it
> has been checked and found accurate.

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85 For comparison with industry pay rates, I was paid $200 per week, with similar travel allowances, when
working as an in-house director at the South Australian Film Corporation in 1974.
86 Minute, Governor-in-Council, 21 September 1976, in PCS 1/911, file 256/12/76, Tasmanian Archives Office.
87 Brealey to Neilson, 19 August 1976, in PCS 1/911, file 256/12/76, Tasmanian Archives Office.
88 Grierson to Brealey, 12 November 1976, in PCS 1/911, file 256/12/76, Tasmanian Archives Office.
It would be necessary for the material to be further checked by a suitable Government Officer from Treasury or Auditor General’s Department before distribution or publication of any kind.\textsuperscript{89}

According to Chung,\textsuperscript{90} this information was compiled by Norman Laird, for whom Brealey had declared his admiration,\textsuperscript{91} but Barnes attributes the data to a group of senior staff, as Brealey stated.\textsuperscript{92} I am struck by Brealey’s caution; it is as though he feared that ticking away in the data was something to undermine the credibility of his work. If the removal of senior staff, too, was part of the agenda, then they might be judged to be hostile sources, capable of supplying false information intended to undermine the credibility of the report.

Another light was shone on this observation by the first director of the Tasmanian Film Corporation, Malcolm Smith, during an interview on 4 December 1995. Smith, at the time Acting Head of TV Drama in the ABC, said that the Department of Film Production ‘was ill managed by the person who was the chief executive at the time, who was less than honest in the way he dealt personally with the film unit [sic]’.\textsuperscript{93}

If one or more officers were ‘less than honest’ then a restructure of the Department of Film Production would have allowed their removal. Such a tactic would avoid the problems of legal proceedings and the need for a conviction, then formal public service dismissal procedures, not to mention the prospect of a public scandal. Certainly, Barnes’s removal would favour the Perkins agenda to produce cinema for children. In fact, Brealey was aware of the agenda and confirmed, when asked, that ‘I was to get rid of him [Barnes]’.\textsuperscript{94}

But the question of the presence of a corrupt officer or officers on the staff of the department remained. Smith’s remarks are specific but he would have had no first-hand experience of Barnes’s management as he joined the new corporation in September 1977. Local hearsay he might be privy to would be coloured by his status, like Barnes, as another ‘South Australian

\textsuperscript{90} Chung, ‘The Transition from the Department of Film Production to the Tasmanian Film Corporation’, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{91} Brealey, 26 June 1997.
\textsuperscript{92} Barnes, 21 June 2000.
\textsuperscript{93} Smith, 4 December 1995.
\textsuperscript{94} Brealey, 26 June 1997.
mainlander’, though some old hands might have sought to curry favour with the newly arrived
director. In addition, as Brealey’s choice for director, Smith might reasonably be expected to
be loyal to any assessment of Barnes that Brealey himself had made.

When Smith’s words were quoted to him, Barnes refrained from commenting on the phrase
‘less than honest’. He went on to explain that, in the years after his appointment in 1967, he
had acquired a number of duties in addition to the management of the Department of Film
Production. These duties, such as membership of numerous government committees,
diminished the time available to manage the department, although he said he worked fifty to
sixty hours per week.95 One might argue that to allow one’s time to be diverted to non-core
duties was, in itself, evidence of poor management. The same can be said about allowing
internal dissent to flourish and allowing morale to remain low. Barnes did concede, however,
that there were officers who could, for example, have hired-out departmental equipment and
pocketed the proceeds. He could neither confirm nor deny that this had ever happened, but
simply acknowledged that it was administratively possible.96

That the government was pleased with Brealey’s report is clear from the dispatch with which
it acted on the recommendations. The first draft is dated 28 January 1977 though the report
was not tabled until 22 March. The parliamentary counsel received instructions to draft the
bill on 16 March97 and, on the same day, the manager of the Department of Film Production,
R. D. Barnes, was personally informed by the premier of the government’s intention to
legislate for a film corporation, advice that was subsequently confirmed in writing.98

R. D. Barnes’s Response

Barnes kept the government’s decision to himself: it was not until 25 March, three days after
the report was tabled in parliament that he reported to the staff individually by letter on recent
events. Barnes threw his support behind the government’s proposed legislation and warned
the staff against conducting tours of the premises for members of the opposition or talking to

95 Barnes, 21 June 2000.
96 Ibid.
97 Neilson to parliamentary counsel, 16 March 1977, in PCS 1/911, file 256/12/76, Tasmanian Archives Office.
98 Neilson to Barnes, 16 March 1977, in PCS 1/911, file 256/12/76, Tasmanian Archives Office.
the media. He also offered to arrange access for a delegation to the premier. By that date, too, Barnes was well advanced on a thirty-four page response to Brealey’s report, a copy of which he may have received as early as 16 March.

Barnes’s response kicks off well. ‘I am afraid the only faulty thinking here is on Mr Brealey’s failure to assess the situation in depth and with care’, but soon lapses into petty self-justification or maudlin introspection:

[Film] direction is a similar problem. One director was tried in the job but due to a technicality over his appointment he could not be removed when it was found that he was not satisfactory. The other director is a major problem as he will only work on films that interest him and only at his own pace.

He goes on to strike a chord that resonates with anyone who has produced sponsored films:

Often the Department cannot meet sponsors’ requirements because he (the sponsor) has no clear idea of what he wants or wants to include in the film... and

...the sponsor (and on occasions his Minister too!) will virtually re-edit the film as they think it should be. The film maker becomes demoralised at this attitude and eventually the sponsor blames the Department for a poor product.

Overall, and perhaps unknowingly, Barnes’s words confirmed that the Department of Film Production was in need of revolutionary change. And revolutionary change is what the department, government, and state of Tasmania got.

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99 Barnes to staff of the Department of Film Production, ‘Report on the Department of Film Production’, 25 March 1977, in PCS 1/911, file 256/12/76, Tasmanian Archives Office.
101 Ibid., p. 7.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid., p. 11.
The Recommendations

The first three recommendations in the Brealey report were, operationally speaking, the crucial ones:

1. That the microfilm section be detached from the Department of Film Production and become independent or part of the State Library or a section for Office Services under (say) the Public Service Board. That the Manager of the Department of Film Production be placed in charge of the microfilm section.

2. That the Arts Graphics section be attached to another department, e.g. Tourism.

3. That a departmental corporation “The Tasmanian Film Corporation” be established to undertake the production of all film and photographic services of the Tasmanian Government.  

The remaining eleven recommendations detailed the manner in which the corporation should operate and included recommendations: for the retention or redeployment of staff of the old department; for a small core of technical staff; for exemptions from the Public Service Act to allow the senior staff to be contracted; and for the reform of the Government Film Committee. The report directed attention to the production of children’s films and to the early appointment of a marketing officer and adoption of ‘an aggressive sales policy’. The re-housing of the corporation and the equipping of ‘a small sub-professional colour TV studio (approximate cost $ 150,000) to produce specialised low budget productions at much lower cost and greater efficiency’ were also priorities.

Finally, Brealey recommended the encouragement of young film-makers and the support, ‘with modest grants’, of film cultural activities in Tasmania, citing the influence and activities of the ‘Australian Film Institute, the Australian Society for Education in Film and Television, and similar bodies’.

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In essence, the Brealey report called for the total dismemberment of the old department and, specifically, for the re-assignment of its manager, R. D. Barnes. The removal of Barnes was an important objective of the report but not one included in the terms of reference. Pragmatic and diplomatic, too, is the specific mention of the Australian Society for Education in Film and Television, one of a number of similar groups in existence in Australia at the time. The reformation was, after all, part of Bill Perkins’ agenda, as was the commitment to the production of films for children.

Brealey was sensitive to the potential charge that the establishment of a departmental corporation was a foregone conclusion, given his background. He devoted the last three pages of his report to justifying his principal recommendation. 105 Central to the argument was that, compared to a government department, ‘a departmental Corporation will’:

a) Enable the creative staff to be hired on short term contracts whilst the Act can protect present public servants under permanency.

b) Make easier the entering into investment agreements with private enterprises, other State and Federal bodies.

c) Deal equally with Film Corporations in all other States—possibly in co-productions.

d) Place commercial motive strongly when dealing with private producers, investors and distributors.

e) Permit semi-Government loan borrowings direct to the Corporation with Treasury approval and backing.

f) Allow investment of surplus funds in other interest bearing investments with Treasury approval.

g) Stimulate a more customer oriented commercial attitude within staff members who must realise that their services are in competition with private contractors.

h) Facilitate dealings with the Australian Film Commission. 106

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106 Ibid., p. 17.
These justifications are not in themselves extraordinary; their ilk is common in the rhetoric of the times. But nested in the report are implicit assumptions—never acknowledged or examined at the time—about the qualities and attributes that make up the identity and character of the state in the Australian federation, and assumptions about the role of state film agencies as a now vital part of that identity. In essence, the idea that a state was not a complete state without a film agency was a concept that was absent from the Australian cultural discourse ten years earlier, as indeed were the agencies themselves.

The first assumption was that a local cinema culture and industry, encouraged and supported by the state, was an essential manifestation of statehood: an economic duty and a cultural obligation that proved the virility of the state. It was a matter of public pride, a mark of cultural maturity. Brealey’s report never examined questions of potential cultural benefits nor asked the question whether a state as small as Tasmania could afford to support a film-production industry. Arguably, perhaps intentionally, such considerations were outside the terms of reference. As at 30 June 1976, the population of Tasmania was 407,360. The same population could be found at that time in as few as four municipalities southeast of the Melbourne CBD, and was little more than half the population of the area administered by the Brisbane City Council. Any proposal to establish a film corporation exclusively for such areas would have been judged then, as now, to be ludicrous. But then, as now, the institution that is the sovereign Australian state, or its government, is an institution that does not always operate rationally.

Brealey also assumed, indeed argued, that film corporations (and locally based production) have an essential role in projecting the image of a state, an image made almost tangible by the act of screening, of exhibition, and that there was an indisputable link between that act, the near tactile image, and a greater public good. The argument that we must ‘tell our own stories’ does not appear but, by 1977, that concept had become such an article of faith within the wider cultural discourse of the film and television industry as not to require restatement.


Finally, there is a call to history and tradition and an appeal to continuity as reasons for a corporation. With only a gentle challenge to state pride, Brealey reminded the government:

Finally, the Government must try to decide what it wants to do with film production. On present costs it would be simpler and cheaper to disband the Department of Film Production and contract interstate production companies to produce films. This would be a sad action, especially when Tasmania was the first State in Australia to set up its own State film unit—it could be the end of film making in this State.\textsuperscript{110}

The Tasmanian Film Corporation Bill, No. 34 of 1977, was introduced into parliament on 19 May, and the corporation formally established on 5 September 1977. Gil Brealey was appointed part-time chairman of the new corporation, and Malcolm Smith, the former executive producer of educational films at the South Australian Film Corporation, became director of the new organisation. The board met for the first time in the premier’s department in Hobart on 9 September at 10 a.m. Present were Gil Brealey, Mrs B. Manning, Messrs Malcolm Smith, William (Bill) Perkins, C. Hogden, R. Grierson and Don Donnelly, the full complement of the new board.\textsuperscript{111} Among many procedural decisions, this first meeting agreed in the matter of the appointment of a staff representative to the board:

That no further action should be taken on this matter for at least six (6) months. It was also agreed not to inform staff at this stage of the suggestion that a staff representative may be appointed to the Corporation.\textsuperscript{112}

This was a strange decision given that Premier Neilson, in his second reading speech, had foreshadowed the inclusion on the board of a staff-elected board member. In most Australian states, such parliamentary speeches would be recorded in a public document, but in Tasmania at the time no such public record of the proceedings of parliament was kept. Thus this public undertaking could remain effectively secret, unless mentioned in the state parliament reports in the \textit{Mercury} newspaper, which on this occasion did not report the speech in any degree of detail.

\textbf{Malcolm Smith}

\textsuperscript{110} Film Consultants (S.A.) Pty Limited, ‘Report to the Parliament of Tasmania’, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{111} Tasmanian Film Corporation, \textit{Minute book}, in PCS 1/911, Tasmanian Archives Office, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 6.
Malcolm Smith came to Australia on 30 January 1966, at the age of twenty-two, to break into the film industry, an industry that was difficult to enter in his native Britain. He joined the Commonwealth Film Unit (CFU, now Film Australia Pty Limited) about three months later. There, as a production assistant, he shared a small room with other production assistants such as Don Crombie, Peter Weir, Tim Read, Hal McElroy and, later, Richard Brennan, who had been a specialist trainee at the ABC. It was a cohort that would revitalise the Australian film-production industry. In addition, both Gil Brealey and John Morris were staff producers at the Commonwealth Film Unit at the time.

Smith moved from the CFU into the commercial sector, working first for Edwin Scragg on documentary production and, later, editing Jimmy Sharman’s first feature, Shirley Thompson versus the Aliens (1972), whose associate producer was Matthew Carroll. Smith spent a year administering the Experimental Film Fund, after which he was approached by Gil Brealey to join the newly established South Australian Film Corporation as production manager. There he joined Jill Robb, Matthew Carroll, John Morris and Penny Chapman, each of whom, in a variety of roles, would prove influential in the Australian film industry. Smith stayed four years with the corporation, sharing the production management credit on Sunday Too Far Away and becoming ‘one of the producers ... responsible for documentaries and in fact specialised in the education department’.

I got tapped on the shoulder... [for the job with the Tasmanian Film Corporation]. I think [that] once Gil had recommended the setting up of it [the corporation], the mind turned to “Who can do it?”

There was a great shortage of people who had that sort of experience. I think the incestuous network leapt into power... I don’t necessarily think I was the first person thought of, but certainly, in the end, Gil took the risk and asked me if I wanted to go down there ... and it was another great adventure.

113 Unless otherwise noted, information in this section is derived from two interviews with Malcolm Smith, each of one hour’s duration, conducted at the Gore Hill studios of the ABC, 4 December 1995 and at ABC South Bank studios on 29 September 1999.
Relationships between Gil Brealey and some senior members of the staff of the corporation had been soured by editorial conflicts over *Sunday Too Far Away*, but John Morris’ appointment as head of production distanced Brealey from daily production matters. This had the benefit of maintaining Smith’s good relations with Brealey, because Smith’s day-to-day dealings were principally with Morris.

The challenge in Tasmania, as Smith quickly recognised, was to take ‘what was basically a documentary unit’ and then to start building ‘an organisation that would manage a new and diverse film and video production facility to serve government clients’. In addition, it would become ‘an innovative television and cinema producer, with a particular interest in quality children’s production’.

The new Tasmanian Film Corporation opened for business on 5 September 1977. But, just as a change of political leadership created the opportunity for its creation, it was a second change of leadership that signalled the fiscal conflicts that would in five years result in the sale of the corporation to a private buyer.

Unfulfilled Promises

Brealey made three recommendations specifically concerning finance. Recommendation seven established for the corporation a monopoly ‘for the production of all State Government films and photographic film services’, with full accounting procedures for production costs. These government services were to be financed by an allocation ‘as a separate line on the budget of the Department of the Premier’ and would need to be $400,000 in 1977–78. Additional ‘funds to cover annual development costs of the Corporation should be in the vicinity of $150,000 pa’.

Recommendation seven continued: ‘as a semi-government body the Corporation should be permitted to borrow funds guaranteed by the Treasury to help finance feature film production

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116 Ibid.
117 Ibid.
and major equipment purchases’. \(^{118}\) In this recommendation, Brealey followed the example of the SAFC act. Indeed, this same provision of the SAFC act had alarmed Brealey greatly on his appointment in 1972, and underlay that corporation’s financial problems. \(^{119}\)

Recommendation twelve concerned the need for new modern production facilities if the corporation was to profit from the monopoly of government production and broaden the use of video by government and other clients. It specifically recommended ‘that the new building be equipped with a small sub-professional colour TV studio (approximate cost $150,000) to produce specialised low budget productions at much lower cost and greater efficiency’. \(^{120}\)

In summary then, Brealey recommended annual government production funds of $400,000, indexed for inflation, a pool of $150,000 for overheads and development costs, and capital expenditure of approximately $150,000 on a new video studio to be housed in new premises. The premier acknowledged the necessity of recommendation seven, undertaking that ‘a minimum guarantee of work will be ensured, providing a sound financial basis to cover the basic operating costs of the Corporation’. \(^{121}\) But while Neilson described Brealey’s document as a ‘hard hitting report, the recommendations of which have been accepted by the government’, \(^{122}\) the second reading speech is short on specific commitments on finance and ventures this reservation:

The Government was particularly pleased that Mr Brealey was able to firmly recommend the establishment of a new studio for the proposed Film Corporation. While I cannot commit the government to building this studio at a specified time in the near future, I can say that it is persuaded as to the necessity of the facility. \(^{123}\)

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\(^{118}\) Ibid., p. 14.


\(^{120}\) Film Consultants (S.A.), ‘Report to the Parliament of Tasmania’, p. 15.

\(^{121}\) W. A. Neilson, Second reading notes, p. 1, in PCS 1/91, Tasmanian Archives Office. As reports in the Mercury were the only public record of what was said in parliament until 1979, it may be argued that the second reading notes are just notes and may not truly reflect Neilson’s actual speech to the House of Assembly. However, given the speed of adoption of the report and the lack of correspondence from the government raising any criticism, it is reasonable to believe that the notes do reflect the sentiments of the premier and the government, spoken or unspoken.

\(^{122}\) Ibid.

\(^{123}\) Ibid., p. 5.
These remarks directly contradict a statement from earlier in the same printed draft of the speech that ‘it is intended that a studio and equipment will be provided as a capital investment, so overcoming the need to borrow initial capital experienced by the South Australian Film Corporation’. 124 Thus, and perhaps with no conscious intent on the part of Premier Neilson at that time, the scene was set for the future financial problems and eventual demise of the Tasmanian Film Corporation.

Crisis: Closure or Sale

It was a weary Minister for Industry and Small Business and member for Bass in the lower house of the Tasmanian parliament, N. M. Robson, who rose on 30 June 1982 to defend his government’s decision to seek a buyer for the Tasmanian Film Corporation as an on-going concern. Sniping from the Labor opposition had been regular since his ministerial statement-by-leave the previous day, announced cabinet’s decision. 125

Since that self-contradictory second reading speech by Premier Neilson in 1977, there had been three changes of premier. On Neilson’s retirement, the Labor Party elected Doug Lowe as premier; 126 but then came a change of government, with the Liberal party, led first by Harry Holgate and then by Robin Gray, 127 replacing Labor on the Treasury benches.

In response to the tenth question of the day on the subject of the film corporation, a question from Andrew Lohrey, MHA Wilmot, who was proving a tireless interrogator on the subject, the Minister for Industry and Small Business, Mr Robson, let fly:

In the first place, the previous governments which set up the Film Corporation stated they would provide a fully equipped studio as a capital investment; that in fact has never been done. Secondly, when the Film

124 Ibid., p. 1.
126 Hon. Doug Ackley Lowe, MHA, Member for Franklin, 1 December 1977–11 November 1981.
Corporation was established there was a provision for a $100,000 subsidy for the first year to cover establishment costs; this has never been given. As to standards of accounting, operation and business administration, this report has been written to me by the Chairman of the Tasmanian Film Corporation, Mr Brealey, and it will be tabled.

Thirdly there was a promise to give the corporation access to government loan funds and, after the first year, all such loans have been refused. The fourth promise made by the previous government—talking about standards—was that they would provide a basic amount of government work to cover operating costs for the period of establishment; this funding has declined rapidly to the point where, in 1981, one-third of the business was cut off without notice.

Fifthly, the previous governments were to encourage private investment in film production and, due to the uncertain future of the corporation brought about by the widely publicised government attitude, it has become increasingly difficult for the corporation to attract private investment in film projects. It has lost highly talented creative and technical staff to the booming industry on the mainland.  

The thoroughness of Robson’s reply did little to deflect the opposition attack, a further three questions being asked that day, and a further dozen or more in the days leading up to the second reading of the Tasmanian Film Corporation Amendment Bill 1982 on 10 August.  

While the bill was essentially procedural, it gave the government another opportunity to explain itself on its own terms. Robson explained that ‘the Government had resolved to withdraw from the business of film making which is not a function of government but properly belongs to the sphere of private commercial enterprise’. Robson announced that ‘the net loss to the corporation for [1981–82] is $401,991’ and, under questioning from Dr Julian Amos, MHA Denison, agreed that of this amount $215,469 was in interest on loans and overdrafts. The accumulated trading losses of the corporation amounted to $861,512 over its

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130 Ibid.
This was a liability the new government was unwilling to carry, with forecasts that the corporation would require ‘$1,105,370 and $710,000 from Consolidated revenue and the Loan Fund respectively’ in 1982–83.\(^{132}\)

The Labor opposition’s response to the government’s decision was opportunistic if not perfidious. Without any doubt, Labor in government had failed to fulfil its commitments to the corporation, undertaken when it accepted the Brealey report in 1977. In addition, it had been warned about the parlous state of the corporation’s finances by the opposition, by Robson himself, on 4 November 1980, during the committee stages of the 1980–81 budget. Under pressure the premier, Doug Lowe, had undertaken to review the corporation’s performance after five years, buying time for his government if not for the corporation.\(^{133}\)

That year loan borrowings of $300,000 were approved as well as $695,000 to purchase still and motion picture production services from the corporation.

Seven months later, in the face of worsening economic conditions, Lowe announced that ‘as part of the Razor gang measures … the corporation’s grant … would be reduced by $195,000 and that by 1983–84 it would be expected to be self-supporting’.\(^{134}\) This cut was not a cut in any ‘grant’, as the *Mercury* reported, but a cut in the government’s guarantee of production work. A cabinet minute dated 18 August confirmed the premier’s decision, advising that ‘Cabinet concluded that, at this stage, no change could be made to the provision of $500,000 in the Budget Estimates for Government film and photographic services’.\(^{135}\)

These troubles had started much earlier. On 11 September 1978, Brealey had written to Premier Lowe, who was just ten months in office, concerning ‘a matter of extreme urgency which could affect the development of the Tasmanian Film Corporation’.\(^{136}\) The corporation itself had been in operation for just one year. In early August, it had been told that its bid for a firm commitment for government production work, based pro-rata on the 1977–78 figure of $535,000, plus a margin for inflation, would not be met. Instead of a guaranteed income in
the order of $700,000, the government proposed a cut of 30 per cent to around $500,000. After negotiation, the agreed figure was $640,000 just $2,000 short of the pro-rata figure for 1977–78, with little margin for inflation, then a significant factor. Then on 21 August, Treasury advised that the corporation would not have access to state loan funds, but that it could borrow up to $791,000 on the open market. The chairman expressed the board's concern unambiguously: ‘All members of the Corporation feel most strongly that it would be irresponsible to accept the conditions of loans from private sources’.  

One of those conditions was interest rates some two per cent higher than the government, a secured borrower, would expect to pay. Another was the expectation that the capital of the loan would be progressively reduced during the term of the loan, rather than when the investment returned dividends.

This then was the end of the honeymoon. Little had changed but everything had changed. Neilson had departed as premier. The state economy was feeling the pressure of the mild recession of the late 1970s as the Commonwealth government under Malcolm Fraser sought to wind back the spending programs of the preceding Whitlam government, and all sectors of the economy were affected by high interest rates, an aspect of the stagflation of the mid-1970s.

Conclusion

There seems little doubt that the Tasmanian government lost interest in the Tasmanian Film Corporation in mid-1978. Circumstantially at least, this might be linked with the ascent of Doug Lowe to the premiership (30 November 1977) and the retirement from the corporation of W. H. (Bill) Perkins, the champion of children’s films (8 December 1978).

Though the corporation described itself as ‘an independent, profit-oriented film-making enterprise’, it was financially compromised from the beginning. Speaking in defence of his government’s decision to sell or lease the corporation, the Minister for Industry and Small Business, Mr Robson, said ‘the expenditure on it [the corporation] over the last four

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137 Ibid.
138 ‘Film group logo chosen’, Mercury, 14 October 1977, p. 10.
years was inadequate; it was totally undercapitalised. Later, in the second reading speech of the Tasmanian Film Corporation Amendment Bill 1982, Robson quote from a letter from Brealey citing the failure of the previous Labor government to make good Neilson’s original financial undertakings.

Why this happened is unclear. Perkins’ influence with Neilson seemed important, as was the removal of Barnes as head of the film unit, an obstacle to Perkins’ plans to produce children’s films. In that area the corporation did well; its major output, in addition to sponsored films for government departments and agencies, centered on films for general exhibition and aimed at young audiences. Its first feature, Manganinnie (John Honey 1980), sits proudly with films like Sunday Too Far Away and My Brilliant Career (Gillian Armstrong 1979) as works of commercial as well as cultural merit. Other films like Save the Lady (Leon Thau 1981) and the television series Fatty and George are works of merit without being iconic, but achieved only modest returns on the investments.

The corporation was sold in December 1982 to Hukot Adina Pty Ltd, a Tasmanian company owned by Hobart entrepreneur Peter Hookway. Hookway’s other business interests included hotels, furniture imports and aviation. Indeed, some years earlier, he had sought to buy military aircraft used in the atomic bomb tests at Maralinga for resale to collectors.

Hookway saw the infrastructure of the corporation as a strategic purchase, it being the only broadcast-quality video-production facilities in Tasmania not owned by the existing television licensees. At the time, the Commonwealth government was planning to open solus commercial television markets, such as Tasmania, to competition, and ownership of studios would position Hookway to win the second commercial television license in Hobart.

As it transpired, the Commonwealth decided to allow existing operators to broadcast in adjacent licence areas—aggregation of solus markets—and not to issue new licences.

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140 Ibid., p. 820.
141 ‘Solus’ was a term used to describe television markets served by only one commercial operator and the ABC. This was the circumstance in all rural and regional areas of Australia, including Newcastle and Wollongong in NSW. Tasmania was treated as a regional market and divided into service areas, centred on Hobart and Launceston, each served by one commercial operator. Aggregation allowed each formerly solus market to be served by two new commercial operators drawn from the pre-existing and probably adjacent solus markets. As it worked out regional and rural Australia was served a country clone of the urban triad of Seven, Nine and Ten.
Subsequently, Hookway sold the corporation’s assets to Southern Cross Television, a Victorian broadcaster that was allowed into the Hobart market as competition to Channel Six.

Film-making returned to being a cottage industry in Tasmania: a small sector produced commercials and industrial films while independents like Di Nettlefold\(^\text{142}\) struggled to make feature films, especially for children, and Tasmania itself served as an exotic location for foreign and mainland film-makers. Only with the election of the Bacon Labor government in September 1998 did the state of Tasmania again interest itself in the film industry with the creation of Screen Tasmania within the Department of Economic Development, which managed cultural as well as economic development-oriented programs.\(^\text{143}\)

**John Honey**

A brief mention should be made of the second (and final) director of the corporation, John Honey. Honey directed the well received *Manganinnie* which was completed ‘on time and under budget’\(^\text{144}\) in May 1980 and was appointed director of the corporation following Malcolm Smith’s retirement in September 1980.\(^\text{145}\) Honey was Tasmanian by birth and had worked for ABC television in Hobart for ten years before joining the corporation in 1978.\(^\text{146}\) He continued to develop the corporation’s production slate with a mix of feature and television projects with young audiences in mind but, like the South Australian Film Corporation, had an interest in adult-oriented projects including the intriguingly titled *Gland Time* based on a novel by Don Townshend with a script by Townshend and Phillip Noyce.\(^\text{147}\) Planned for production in 1980 with Richard Brennan as producer, the project remained on the books until the corporation was sold.\(^\text{148}\)


\(^{148}\) *Tasmanian Film Corporation, Annual Report, 1980–81*, p. 5.
Correspondence preserved in the Tasmanian Archives confirms that Honey was tireless in his attempts to convince the government not to dispose of the corporation, presenting arguments in favour of its retention and, finally, resigning from the committee charged with its disposal on the grounds that he was bound by the act which established the corporation to further the interests of the corporation and so could not legally participate in its disposal.\textsuperscript{149}

In 1982, he and his wife Maria founded a production company called Sensory Perception Incorporated. In 1989, they moved to Washington DC where for over ten years they produced, wrote and directed more than sixty television documentaries principally on aviation-related topics, and co-established the Wingspan cable television channel. In 1999, the Discovery Network bought Wingspan and Honey and his wife returned to Hobart.

Honey’s first novel \textit{Paint}, a ‘novel about food and wine, love and death and skulduggery in the art game’ was published in 2004. It was followed by \textit{Threatened Species}, a thriller, in 2005. Both are set in Tasmania.\textsuperscript{150}

\textsuperscript{149} John Honey, \textit{Director’s Report on the Minister’s Announcement of Intention to Dispose of the Tasmanian Film Corporation}, unpublished memorandum to staff, Tasmanian Archives Office, 15 July 1982, pp. 3, 4.

\textsuperscript{150} \texttt{http://bicentenary.tas.gov.au/events/event.php?id=179} sited 29 June 2006. \\
CHAPTER EIGHT: The Western Australian Film Council

ScreenWest is much more than a funding agency. We take an active and innovative role in developing the Film and Television industry in Western Australia to ensure growth, opportunity and quality of product. We provide leadership, support and services to advance Western Australia as an internationally recognised centre for screen production.

Screen West, 2000

Private Beginnings

The Western Australian Film Council Inc., alone of all state film agencies, was established as a private organisation—an incorporated association—albeit financed by the government of Western Australia and subject to a degree of government direction.

In January 1994, the Western Australian Film Council became ScreenWest, a portfolio agency of the Department of Culture and the Arts. Despite the take-over by government, ScreenWest remained an incorporated association instead of being ‘structured as a corporation limited by guarantee under the Australian Corporations Law’ with ‘the Minister for Culture and the Arts the sole shareholder’. This change was recommended by Malcolm Long, among others, who decried ‘its currently anomalous status as an incorporated association’ and insisted that it ‘present itself to the screen industry and the community as a responsible, commercially facing entity’. The anomaly remains today.

4 Other anomalies surround the name. Screenwest Pty Ltd, ACN 081 512 96, was registered on 4 February 1998, with its office in Albany WA. Directors or shareholders are unknown. The business name ‘Screen West’, (Reg. # 0100018k), has been deregistered with the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection, the official registry of business names in Western Australia, but continues to be used by the government.
As elsewhere in Australia, the creation of a state film agency was a response to an amalgam of influences. They were, in part, the historical forces of state rivalry but, principally, commercial pressure from within the production industry and creative ambition—commercial and cultural. The council’s establishment at a time when the state was heavily oriented towards industrial development, especially mining, was not disadvantaged by the framing of the proposal in industrial and financial terms rather than in cultural ones. In this sense, and only in this sense, the engagement of the Western Australian government with the state’s film production industry bore similarity to the Queensland experience.

A roneoed press release dated 22 January 1978, over the signature of Perth film producer Brian Williams, announced the circumstances of the council’s birth: ‘On Sunday 22nd, the Premier of Western Australia, Sir Charles Court, announced the formation of the Western Australian Film Council’. And, in a footnote, the crucial distinguishing quality of the Western Australian Film Council (WAFC) was clearly spelled out:

Perhaps the major difference between the philosophy of the Western Australian Film Council and the equivalent bodies in the Eastern States is that of private sector administration of the fund locally. There will be no government involvement or representation on the Council. Members have been appointed from commerce, law and the television and cinema industries.

However, perhaps taking a lead from the Victorian Film Corporation, the chairman of the new council, stockbroker Bernard Wright, was independent of the industry and had good political connections. Certainly, the Premier and Minister for Industrial Development, Charles Court, thought highly of him.

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6 Ibid.
7 Sir Charles Court, recorded telephone conversation, Melbourne–Perth, 17 November 2000.
The Swan River Colony

Perth is the most isolated of Australia’s capital cities and one of the most isolated cities on earth. This has encouraged self-reliance and a disdain for all things ‘over East’. Even the European history of Australia, as revealed in Perth’s cultural institutions, has a distinctly Western Australian slant: they celebrate the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Dutch and English traders, and make little mention of the charting of the east coast of the island continent by eighteenth-century late-comer, Captain James Cook.

The development of the cinema in the west, including local film production, was closely linked with the economic fortunes of the state. For example, the gold rushes of the 1890s ensured that, when cinema exhibition arrived in November 1896, the price of admission was in most people’s pockets.

By World War I, as a small film-production industry developed, many outdoor and indoor venues were exhibiting motion pictures, a few of which were produced locally (especially newsreels and promotional films).

The 1920s brought economic prosperity and further immigration to WA. Local film-makers began to appear…

Prominent among them was Fred Murphy, who had returned from war service via Hollywood. Once established in Perth, he made numerous films, both promotional documentaries and narrative dramas. It was the accidental destruction by fire of many of his films that led to the creation of a state film archive, since 1979 a part of the J. S. Battye Library of Western Australia, the only such state collection in Australia.

After World War II, the state government became interested in film production for instructional and promotional purposes and established the Western Australian Government Film Unit.

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8 ‘Western Australia’, Encyclopaedia Britannica on CD, 2002.
9 Author’s own observations and comments made by Western Australian artists and cultural workers Matt Trinca, Sarah Miller, Jon Burtt and Julie Dowling on the radio program, Arts Alive, episode 01-2000, first broadcast 7 February 2000.
Within the Education Department, the Visual Education Committee, which grew to become the Audio-Visual Education Branch, was active as early as 1945, and Norman A. Uren photographed films for both.\textsuperscript{12} The Audio-Visual Department became West-Ed Media and occupied premises in the inner northern suburb of Leederville until the 1990s.\textsuperscript{13}

The arrival of television in 1959 widened the employment base, enlarged the professional horizons, and stimulated the ambition for authorship of a new generation of film-makers. Even so, by the time television came to Perth, local film makers such as Leith Goodall and Alex McPhee, who had worked with Uren, had established reputations for quality documentary film production.\textsuperscript{14} But it was the mineral boom of the 1960s that led to the expansion of the commercial film industry and, for a time, to considerable prosperity.

Looking Outwards

At a time when east-coast producers were beginning to enjoy the first fruits of the renaissance of the film-production industry, Western Australian producers were already working around the Indian Ocean rim and beyond. The January/February 1974 edition of Lumiere carried a two-page article titled ‘Way out West’. In it Don Rowe reported:

[Jon Noble is] currently shooting in Ethiopia and will be flying to Ireland where he’ll be on location for a while on another production. Then to New Zealand for more filming before getting back to Perth. The staff of four have six films under production at the moment, some in 35mm some in 16mm.\textsuperscript{15}

Among the five photographs illustrating this two-page article was one of ‘Ron Sullivan and Mike Baker on location in Malaysia’.\textsuperscript{16} At a commercial level at least, Western Australia’s film makers were busily employed, with Perth as a home base but not as their only market.

\textsuperscript{13} Hon. Kay Hallahan, ministerial minute to the acting chairperson, Western Australian Film Council, 28 January 1993. Archives of ScreenWest.
\textsuperscript{14} Foley, ‘Western Australia’, p. 533.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 27.
At the height of the mining boom, Perth was base for nineteen film production companies and, at one time, Brian Williams Films had three crews on the road and a staff of fourteen. 17

Brian Williams confirmed this outward-looking attitude among his fellow Western Australian film makers:

Perth as a society tends to look outside because they are so far away from where it’s all happening, from an Australian viewpoint ... So there is a psychological thing saying: “OK we’re here. We’re our own little kind of hub and the rest of the world is our oyster, if we like to go and find it”—as opposed to Sydney or Melbourne, which were complacent within their own ego-satiation. 18

Williams, who first worked in radio then television with the ABC in Melbourne, also reported another east coast attitude. He said that Perth was regarded as a hardship posting, along with Port Morseby and Darwin, by ABC management. It was a place where troublesome members of staff were assigned to cool their heels and contemplate their careers. 19 But some individuals, like Jo O’Sullivan, chose Perth for the opportunities it offered for advancement.

The Western Australian Film Council I

The formation of the Western Australian Film Council in 1978 continued this tradition of independence of action that included the creation of the Perth Institute of Film and Television (PIFT) in 1971 20 by ‘maverick media academic’ 21 Jo O’Sullivan, and the formation of the Film Producers’ Guild of Western Australia by commercial producers in the following year. 22

18 Brian K. Williams, interview recorded at Radio 6NR, Perth, 7 February 2000.
19 Ibid.
21 Williams, 7 February 2000.
22 ‘Interview with Mr Daryl Binning and Mr. Brian Williams’, recorded and interviewed by S. Bower & I. Cumming, Battye Oral History Collection, call number OH359/1-2 A/r.
PIFT was ahead of its time. O’Sullivan had returned to Perth after spending upwards of six months observing the film industry in Europe and the United States. He was initially inspired to create a screen culture organisation modelled on the American Film Institute and purchase a Cinemobile, a kind of outside broadcast van for film production. He was tireless in his hunt for political and financial backing. Brian Williams again:

When the news got out that [Jo had] got into the Australia Council’s federal money, he’d got into the state government, he’d got into the R & I Bank, he’d got into Alan Bond and he’d got into the Fremantle City Council … the coterie of local producers that called themselves the Film Producing Guild … the Film Producers’ Guild of Western Australia … who used to have meetings about every six or eight weeks … It got up their nose that here they were struggling to maintain an on-going cash flow through shooting film, and suddenly along comes this guy with no previous experience in the industry … [who] was getting all this help. So that started a murmur amongst the people that what the government should do is set up some form of film agency.23

Williams was a little mistaken concerning O’Sullivan’s industry credentials—he may have been a maverick but he was not an academic and he did have industry experience. However, according to Williams, there was a wide range of views within the Film Producers’ Guild of Western Australia on what form a government film agency should take.

The formation of PIFT provided a catalyst for the unification of a group of disparate film people … brought them together … and the fact that they couldn’t make a decision on what the government should do precipitated me … [into] taking solo action if you like … I was helped along the way to push this by the appointment of a new project officer in the Department of Industrial Development.24

That officer was Gus Kingsley. Kingsley had been hired from outside the bureaucracy and ‘a lot of lads who had expected to get that position were pretty irate about [his appointment]’.25

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23 Williams, 7 February 2000.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
Thus Kingsley was especially keen to be innovative in the job. Hans Zeitlin, one of Kingsley’s associates and one with whom Williams had had previous contact, rang Williams one day and invited him to meet Kingsley to talk about the film industry.

So I went around there … and I spent something like about four hours talking to these guys saying what I thought should happen and so forth. And it ended up with Hans saying, “That’s absolutely terrific, very exciting… but I must say”—looking rather diffidently at the other bloke—“I didn’t understand all of it … what say you go away and do a … make a few notes … [do] a briefing paper, and we’ll put something together and put it to the minister”, who was then Andrew Mensaros. So I said, “Yep, that’s fine”, and I came out of the office which is only five minutes away from my place … feeling absolutely marvellous. And as I walked back, I said, “No, if I give those guys a bunch of notes they’ll loose something in the translation. It needs some emotional content not just the fact”. So I got back to the office and said to the blokes, “Watch the fort, I’m going home to write”.  

According to Williams, he delivered a typed and bound proposal to Zeitlin thirty-six hours later. The proposal went to the minister, then to the premier, Charles Court, and then to the cabinet, which approved the project. At some point, Charles Court took the advice of fellow Western Australian, Ken Watts, the chairman of the Australian Film Commission, ‘to make sure it rings true’, and probably also Jim Cruthers, general manager of TVW channel 7. ‘About five weeks after the initial event’, Williams recollected, ‘I got a call from Hans again who said “well you’re got yourself a film council, who do you want on it?” And that’s how it started’.

Williams places these events in the last months of 1977, saying that he knew that the council was a ‘goer’ before Christmas 1977. Interestingly, though the formation of the council was announced on 22 January 1978, it was not legally incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act, 1895–1969, until 28 November that year.

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26 Ibid.
27 Ibid
28 Ibid.
The key features of this incorporation were, first, to give the council a legal personality and, second, to limit the financial liability of the councillors to the amount of their nominal annual membership fee. The government’s contribution, set at one million dollars over five years, was managed through a trust fund. The cabinet minute approving the fiscal commitment seems to have been dated 21 April 1978, as a letter to the minister, the Hon. B. J. MacKinnon, in 1982, advised him that ‘the initial 5 year term of the Western Australian Film Council expires on 21 April 1983’.

As we have seen the Queensland Film Corporation, alone of all the state film agencies, had a sunset clause in its legislation. In Western Australia, though the financial commitment of the government was capped at ‘one million dollars over a five year period’, the deed of incorporation of the Film Council did not place a similar limitation on its legal status.

Indeed, the press release of 22 January 1978 was confident that:

Its “seed-bedding” policy, together with the assistance of the A.F.C. [Australian Film Commission] and the growing confidence of the private sector, will enable the program film industry in this State to become a stable, self-supporting operation by the end of the initial five year period.

Such an expression of confidence that the industry would become financially self-sufficient was a feature of the times, as well as politically pragmatic. At the business end of the film production industry, it arose from a belief that scripts would be found and movies made that would appeal to a mainstream audiences in profitable numbers; at the cultural end of the industry, it was an expression of hope that audiences could be led to change—to enjoy cinema as an art form and attend as a patriotic duty.

For a production industry such as Australia’s, with a small home market, the hope for industry-wide financial independence was and remains illusory. This understanding came slowly to the industry and politicians in the west as elsewhere. The Screen Industry Taskforce, established by Premier Richard Court, son of Sir Charles Court, recognised it in the 2000 report, Content is the Key, which anticipated the need for continuing government spending.

30 Bernard Wright (WAFC Chairman), Recommendations for the Future of the Western Australian Film Council, Western Australian Film Council, 21 September 1982.

The over-arching strategy for Western Australia is to develop its capacity to make and exploit quality, competitive content for niche markets by building on its existing strengths. The key planks of this strategy are building industry partnerships, servicing growth and attracting productions. To do this will require adequate, well-targeted funding and competitive incentives, plus training programs and production facilities which support the market position for Western Australia, establishing the State as a leader in the creative and commercial application of digital technology.

Screen West, which has already played a pivotal role in the development of this Report, is ideally placed to implement this strategy and coordinate the involvement of private, public sector and industry stakeholders. Key public sector partners will be the Ministry for Culture & the Arts, the Department of Training and Employment, the Department of Commerce and Trade, and the Lotteries Commission. Important opportunities also exist for involvement by Education, Youth Affairs, Tourism, and Local Government.32

The report went on to recommend a ‘New Screen Industry Incentive Package of $18.85 million over five years’, a ‘Screen Industry Training Education Scheme’ (un-costed, as its purpose was ‘coordinating and refocussing existing and planned resources to … ensure the Government gains optimum advantage for its investment in screen industry training and education’) and the creation of a ‘Screen Industry Precinct at a cost of $12.4 million’, which would:

- be designed to support the projected market position for Western Australia’s screen production industry, be located in a near inner Perth location and feature:
  - a low-cost flexible production studio and support facility featuring digital technology, online delivery capability and broadband connectivity;
  - accommodation for a range of commercial screen industry and related enterprises—including media, communications and production companies;

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32 Peter Lalor, Content is the Key, Screen Industry Taskforce, Perth, September 2000, p. 5. The Screen Industry Taskforce was established by the Premier, the Hon. Richard Court, in 1999 to develop a state government strategy for the broad-based, structural development of the Western Australian screen production industry at a time of robust growth in the sector overseas and within Australia. Ibid, p. 33.
• accommodation for government bodies and resource organisations including ScreenWest and the Film & Television Institute;
• a public interface with the industry such as a cinema complex or “MediaTec”, and Community TV.33

While these recommendations must be read as an ambit claim, they exemplify how different is the modern relationship between the state and agents of cultural production from that in 1978, when Charles Court, first led Western Australia.34 At that time such a close engagement with government for the WAFC was unthinkable. Sir Charles Court explained that the independence of the council was important:

It reflects my own and the government’s attitude. We were essentially a private enterprise government and the more you keep the dead hand of government off anything, we found it the better … And also it would reflect very much the attitudes and wishes of Sir James Cruthers … he wasn’t Sir James then of course … and it would also have reflected Syd Donovan. They would have wanted as little government involvement. They’d want government support, government encouragement, but they’d want as little dead hand of government as they could get.35

Brian Williams had been more concerned with avoiding political interference:

I felt we shouldn’t be in a situation where we were going to be driven by the whims of a [minister]…a political situation. We needed to be independent regardless of what government was in [office]. We needed to be seen as independent of that.36

33 Ibid., pp. 6, 7.
35 Sir Charles Court, 17 November 2000.
36 Williams, 7 February 2000.
After receiving the news that the government would back the creation of the Film Council, Brian Williams said he was asked: ‘Who do you want on the board?’ This selection required a close political and commercial reading of the Perth scene and while, as a private organisation, the council could choose whom it wished to appoint, consultation with the government was both diplomatic and expedient. Indeed, Williams’s first suggestion for chairman (whom he declined to name) was turned down by the minister.

The press release of 22 January 1978 said that the ‘interim body’ comprised ‘Bernard A. Wright, Bill Bowen, Owen Burns, Syd Donovan, John Pye, Russell Twogood and Brian Williams’. Bernard Wright, the founding chairman, was an accountant who became a partner in a long-established stock-broking firm, now known as Paterson Ord-Minnett Ltd, which celebrated its centenary in 2003. ‘What we were looking for’, said Williams, ‘was a conduit into the financial heart of Western Australia’.

Bill Bowen was the program manager at STW 9, the other commercial operator in Perth at the time. His inclusion was essential as TVW 7 was represented by Syd Donovan, a producer close to TVW 7’s managing director, Jim Cruthers (now Sir James Cruthers), influential behind the scene. Owen Burns was a lawyer in a prominent Perth practice, and Bernard Wright’s lawyer. John Pye was the chairman and managing director of ACE Theatres, an exhibitor and pioneer of drive-in cinemas in Western Australia, and owner of the Flag Motel chain. Russell Twogood was

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37 Ibid.
40 Williams, 7 February 2000.
42 Court credits Cruthers with alerting him to the potential of the television industry. Court, 17 November 2000.
44 According to Williams, one of Pye’s companies had sought the commercial television licence that Cruthers had succeeded in winning. Williams felt that there was no love lost between the rivals. The unsuccessful
another accountant and partner in Henry, Ray & Court, Premier Charles Court’s old practice. It was a board well connected with old money and political patronage.

At the time, Williams saw no advantage in having representation from the educational or cultural sectors. Perhaps the very existence of the Perth Institute of Film & Television precluded the need for an educational and cultural presence on the council. The council was managed by Williams and a full-time administrative officer, and their wages and office expenses were met by the Department of Industrial Development. Initially the offices were in Law Chambers in Hay Street, in Perth’s central business district, but later the council moved to Suite 8 in Churchill Avenue, Subiaco, an inner suburb immediately west of Perth city, and adjacent to Leederville, where the Education Department’s audio-visual facilities were housed.

Jo O’Sullivan

It is hard to overstate the importance of Brian Williams and, behind the scenes, Jim Cruthers, to the establishment of the commercially oriented Western Australian Film Council, but the influence of Jo O’Sullivan, beginning a decade earlier, on the cultural profile of film-making in Perth and, in particular, the experimental and alternate production sectors, deserves examination.

When I joined the staff of the Film & Television Board of the Australian Council in 1974, I quickly became aware of the name of a most irritating character from Perth—Jo O’Sullivan. O’Sullivan had been a founding member of the board and his influence was still felt. His successor, Irma Whitford, a member of the staff at Murdoch University, was often caught

45 Sir Charles Court, 17 November 2000.
between defence of her Western Australian colleague and frustration with his *take no prisoners* approach to extracting Commonwealth funds in support of PIFT.

Though Williams characterised O’Sullivan as a ‘maverick media academic’, O’Sullivan had worked in the ABC in Melbourne and Perth. He was born in rural western Victoria and, after attending boarding school, re-joined his family, which had moved to the coastal city of Warrnambool.

There was an eccentric and darling man there called Vic Batros who ran a shoe shop. And he had a tertiary education, which was quite rare in my background, and, for the sake of his sons and for me, he set up a film society. And on Friday night he would move all the shoes back in the shoe shop and bring in a projector. And I got to see Renoir, and Goddard and Bergman … and these were fascinating journeys I suppose…

And he also had a 16mm camera and was known to nick off for a couple of months, and you’d find he’d been up in Mount Hargan in New Guinea, shooting a film on feet … or he’d been on a tramp steamer to the Seychelles … and so I got not only an exposure to sophisticated European cinema but I also saw very, very practically a man handling 16mm film, cutting and splicing … and it was imagination capturing.48

When he was old enough, O’Sullivan went to Melbourne and, he said, laid siege to the ABC in Lonsdale Street, where the radio studios were located, until they gave him a job. It was initially in dispatch. He was delighted as he got to deliver mail to all departments: ‘to Radio Australia during Confrontation, to Henry Cuthbertson in Drama … you got to see the whole spectrum’. He then got into the sound effects department where he worked with ‘Teddy Robinson … Ted went on to do all the great comedies’.

Very quickly O’Sullivan realised that his lack of a tertiary education would prove to be a handicap. He found that the University of Western Australia had a fine music department ‘into which … I could get entry with out any kind of depth of previous study of music’ and

47 Williams, 7 February 2000.

48 Jo O’Sullivan, Film & Television Institute of Western Australia, 10 February 2000. All unattributed quotations in this section come from that interview. The V. F. Batros Shoe Emporium was at 72 Liebig Street, Warrnambool, *Victorian Country Telephone Directory*, no. V1, 1962, p. 234.
this decision to go to university led him to seek a transfer to the ABC in Perth.\textsuperscript{49} In Perth, he worked initially in:

Sound effects, then in TV presentation, then as a duty supervisor … while studying music, literature, French … [It was a] luxurious time. I got to work with the balance officer in the music department here [at the ABC], so that in the morning I would be in the ABC studios—the Basil Kirke Studios—watching the symphony work, and in the afternoon watching the manuscripts being “ripped apart” by academics. It was thrilling.\textsuperscript{50}

He wanted to become involved in production and, in 1968, met Mike Brock, who produced a weekly program called \textit{Review} looking at the local arts scene and going to air live at about 9.30pm. Brock was also involved with Barrie King in a film society that ran screenings on a Sunday night and so ‘around [\textit{Review} and the screenings] a discourse started to take place’.

\textit{Review} would finish and we’d all go to Brock’s house and have a joint … and have some red wine and play Miles Davis loud and talk about the great film we were going to make tomorrow. I think, mostly, we were all staggering around in the dark … because it was very rare to meet someone who had been involved in the whole process. To my knowledge there was only one person living in Western Australia who had been through that and that was Sydney Box and Sydney had done the whole “Carry-on” series and then, for health reasons, come to live in Western Australia. Sydney was funny and charming and thought I was a twerp.\textsuperscript{51}

Around 1969, O’Sullivan and the ABC parted company. He said, ‘I came to grief at the ABC … the ABC got pissed of with me’, but acknowledged that he probably provoked

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid. The dating is O’Sullivan’s and has not been independently corroborated. ‘Confrontation’ (Indonesian: Konfrontasi) probably refer to the hostilities between Indonesia and Malaysia, 1962–66, which involved Australian forces defending the new Malaysian state. It ended after the coup against President Sukarno in 1965, when the new president, General Suharto, recognised Malaysia.
\textsuperscript{50} O’Sullivan, 10 February 2000.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid. See also ‘Gainsborough Pictures & Gaumont-British Studios’,
http://www.britmovie.co.uk/studios/gains/biog01.html, and ‘Sydney Box Biography’,
http://www.britmovie.co.uk/biog/b/007.html, sighted 17 January 2005
\end{flushleft}
senior colleagues as he was ‘always jabbering and nothing happens’, and wanting to do music programs inspired by the work of John Hopkins in Adelaide.

Now out of a job, O’Sullivan proposed a program of film-making in schools to the Director of Catholic Education, Brother Woodruff, who had been one of his teachers at boarding school in Victoria. With Woodruff’s help, he went to Trinity College, where, with ‘a bunch of kids, over a period of time, [I] made a small [Super-8mm] film that I then took to the Education Department’. An officer in the Education Department, John Bottomley, an older man, was already experimenting with a similar program: ‘John and I were an uncomfortable team, but I had enormous energy and I got about thirty schools involved’. However, it is Bottomley not O’Sullivan whom Brian Shoesmith, writing in ‘Film, Television, and Education in Western Australia: A Brief Survey’, credits for being ‘a strong advocate of teaching about film and television as distinct from teaching through film and television in the schools. His enthusiasm laid the foundations for the strong media studies movement that emerged in West Australian schools in the 1970s’.  

O’Sullivan recalled further: ‘Then in about the summer of 1970 we ran a workshop for teachers in my home … [I] put seventy teachers through a workshop in Super-8 and 16mil’. Thus, a body of individuals who had a perspective on film-making very different from those in commercial production and television started to emerge. From these experiences grew the idea of the screen ‘cubby-house’, a place equipped to support the creative endeavour of a community and to exchange knowledge and experience.

Meanwhile, at the University of Western Australia, Steve Jodrell, the activities officer at the UWA Student Guild, was also interested in film-making. With the financial help of the guild, some professional equipment was acquired and production workshops held. Their endeavour got support from David Rapsey, an academic newly arrived at the university.

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53 Super-8mm film was extremely popular as a domestic ‘home movie’ format and 16mm was the standard gauge for television news and current affairs reporting, and limited drama production. Production for the cinema internationally, and most production for television in North America, was done on 35mm film stocks.

54 Jodrell went on to direct a short film Buck’s Party assisted by the Experimental Film & Television Fund and, later, the feature Shame (1988). He now directs series and serial drama for television.
‘Rapsey had come from the business in Canada’ and ‘brought into this unit some notion of how you go about it [film-making]’.  

Until that time there was almost no professional film equipment in Perth available for hire. O’Sullivan reported that the arrival of this equipment caused concern in the ranks of the commercial industry, which feared the emergence of low cost competitors. But the eyes of the nascent film-makers were more on Bergman that on bucks.

O’Sullivan continued to gather supporters:

I slowly went around the town and talked with anybody that I thought was going to be sympathetic and had an insight that I thought would be of value. I ultimately put together a meeting of twenty-six people at the University of Western Australia … [there] was the Anglican Bishop [of Perth], that wonderful man from the theatre [name not recalled] … Barrie King, Michael Brock, Henry Schapper, the economist from UWA, Harry Lodge, who was the senior lawyer in Parker & Parker at the time … an extraordinary group of very diverse people, and John Murray was a member of that particular group. John had come through [Perth] with The Naked Bunyip. John stayed at my house and we became friends and at that very first meeting at the University of Western Australian, in 1972, I think, John was there.

A decision was made on that day that we would form an organisation called the Perth Institute of Film and Television … to do anything that was required to establish film as an art… film and television [as an art].

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55 David Rapsey came to Perth on a brief visit with his Western Australian-born wife, in 1969, but fell ill with Ross River fever. This delayed their departure and exhausted their funds, so, to earn the fare home, Rapsey took a lectureship at the University of Western Australian in Medieval Studies, which he had read at Cambridge. He never left; he became an important figure in the Western Australian film industry and, more recently, has been living and working in Melbourne.


The Perth Institute of Film and Television

The search for a home for the proposed film institute came at an opportune time for the Fremantle City Council. Fremantle was a port city and, all over the world, port cities were changing. Since the introduction of the Boeing 707 and the Douglas DC8 in the late 1950s, travellers had increasingly favoured aircraft to ships, and a new generation of wide-bodied aircraft, typified by the Boeing 747, which entered service in January 1970, completed the take-over by aircraft of long-distance travel.

Conscious of these changes, the council had sent a senior member of its staff, Murray Edmunds, to Europe to see how other port cities had dealt with the challenge. His report on how Fremantle might respond to change identified a special place for cultural enterprise. PIFT was just one of a series of cultural enterprises that were established in Fremantle in those years, the Fremantle Arts Centre Press, which opened in 1976, being the most prominent internationally. The Fremantle Arts Centre and the History Museum were rehoused in 1972 in the colonial-gothic asylum building whose renovation commenced in 1970.

By 1972 the Fremantle Boys’ School premises had stood vacant for fourteen years and had become derelict. O’Sullivan sent an architect, John Rowney, a member of the council of PIFT, to inspect the site and he reported that it had the potential to house the institute, if money could be found for extensive renovation. Here then was a home for the institute. However, the experience that gave O’Sullivan the conceptual framework for PIFT was an extended visit to Europe and the United States. In 1971, the Australian Council for the Arts funded a program of seminars in Perth on arts in education. A key speaker was Professor Harold Taylor, former president of Sarah Lawrence College in New York. Taylor told O’Sullivan to ‘get out of this place and have a look at what you’re doing from another perspective’. Taylor then approached the Australian Council, with success, to make a grant-in-aid to allow O’Sullivan to ‘look at structures to nurture screen discourse’ in various overseas countries.

59 O’Sullivan, 10 February 2000. In this section, ‘Perth Institute of Film and Television (PIFT)’, all quotes not otherwise attributed are from this interview.
In Britain, O’Sullivan visited the British Film Institute, a film and television school in London, got an attachment to the BBC, and worked on *Monty Python* and *Softly Softly*. He met the then head of the BBC, Huw Weldon, who warned him that ‘you must remember, as you walk the corridors, you’ll be viewed as a colonial. My advice to you is: “Ignore it”’.  

He then went through Europe, ‘Sweden at the top, France at the bottom, and the model I found most attractive was in Denmark. There was a film school in Copenhagen and it was quite politically motivated … it was agitprop stuff’. ‘Then I left Europe with most people saying “Why would you want to go to America?”’ In the United States, O’Sullivan stayed at Boston University with Tony Hodgkinson, an early advocate of teaching film-making in schools, whom he had met when Hodgkinson visited Perth. He also visited MIT’s Rickie Leacock, who was developing a sound system for semi-professional production in Super-8 film, and then the film school at New York University, where he spent: 

A fair amount of time with Michael Shamburg who at that stage had the first Sony Porta-Pack … and was working technically to develop an editing system for [tapes recorded on the Porta-Packs]. One of the great things about America is that you see technology in its playful stage. By the time it gets to us it’s pre-packaged and we don’t get that kind of option.

In Washington he went to the head office of the American Film Institute and was invited to visit the institute’s ‘big act’ on the west coast: 

I flew out there [to Los Angles] and stayed there for four or five months. It just … you know … you’re just a country kid from Australia and suddenly you’re let loose and you’ve got access to being able to talk to people. And I started with the American Film Institute and that was all your dreams come true. Twenty-six cutting rooms, two wonderful screening rooms … And I was now starting to formulate a pretty clear idea of what I would think would work in Western Australia.

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He then sought out Roger Corman ‘because he [worked] on a small scale and [did] a lot of productions’, and Corman sent him to Fouad Sa’id, who had just set up Cinemobile, a company that produced and managed mobile production facilities.

That was an eye opener and made a lot of stuff real for me. And I started to see how from a business viewpoint, you’re dealing with time, money and technology with creative management to accomplish an objective that’s very, very defined and has to interface with the market. I hadn’t thought about that kind of stuff: that wasn’t some thing that had come up for me in the ABC as a youngster.

O’Sullivan returned to Perth highly motivated, almost evangelical in expounding his vision. Though he claims that some people thought, ‘Oh well, he’s got his trip … he’ll just disappear back into the wood work’, he soon proved them wrong, deploying his crash or crash-through style. ‘By the time I got back and people started saying “No” to me, I simply took the position: “Oh well—I was speaking to the wrong person; who is the person who can say yes”.’

Alan Bond

The creation of PIFT, up to this stage, had been principally a matter of time and talk. The first to make a financial contribution was the rising entrepreneur, Alan Bond. Bond was new money to the old money of Perth’s business establishment and the Film Producers’ Guild of Western Australia. O’Sullivan, too, was an outsider: perhaps that was part of the appeal that O’Sullivan and his evangelism had for Bond, the pommy sign-writer made good. Bond later warned O’Sullivan that accepting money from him would exclude O’Sullivan from half the board rooms in the country.

Earlier, O’Sullivan had interested a lawyer, Harry Lodge, in the PIFT project. Lodge drew up a constitution for the proposed institute and ‘came on board as the lawyer’. Lodge was also Alan Bond’s lawyer and arranged an introduction.

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63 Corman has credits as director, producer or executive producer on more than 400 films dating from the mid-1950s. See [http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000339/](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000339/), sighted 18 January 2005.

It was one of the great encounters in my life. Little bloke … got up from behind his desk, came around, shook hands, and sat on the side of the desk with me.

And he said: “Well, what is it you wanna do Jo?”

And so I said to him: “Well we have a situation where we don’t have any cultural insights provided by television or cinema in Western Australia and I think we should create an environment where it’s possible to nurture that”.

And he said: “How do you wanna do that, how do you propose to do that?”

And he let me speak for six or seven minutes … didn’t interrupt.

And then the said to me: “Now if I understand you correctly, what you wanna do is” … and he played the six minutes back almost word perfect.

I was stunned: It was the first time I’d heard my ideas come from somebody else. When I say “My idea”, hundreds of people had been involved in this discourse and so, forgive my hubris, but for the sake of trying to draw stuff back quickly, I use “I” perhaps a tad too much. 65

Bond then analysed the presentation, pointing to weaknesses in the proposal, but concluded, as O’Sullivan recalled, that ‘I’ll think about this, and if we come in, we’ll come in with substantial money’. 66

I left that meeting with a very different view of him. I’d said quite cruel things to him in the context of that meeting about my view of coming to see him and he just laughed with such graciousness.

And I look back at it and I’m astonished he didn’t get up and say: “Get out of my office”. 67

Time passed and pressure was building on O’Sullivan and the institute to show firm commitments to renovating the buildings. One day O’Sullivan waylaid Bond at the Royal Perth Yacht Club and explained that he needed a response, one way or the other:

65 O’Sullivan, 10 February 2000.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
He was pleasant about that: he could have said “Nick-off”.

So he said, “I’ll get on to Harry Lodge and Harry’ll contact you”.

So I spoke to Harry Lodge probably later that night, and Harry was very measured, and said “Master Bond would like to have breakfast with you at my place tomorrow morning”. 68

Time went by as he waited in the outer office. Finally he got to meet Bond again.

So he said: “What do you want?”

I said: “Well, I need $100,000”.

He said: “I’ll give you twenty-five”.

And I think I said to him: “Alan, for $25,000 what we can do would be shit. It’s got to be one hundred thousand”.

He said: “I’ll give you fifty thousand”.

And we shook hands and that was it.

And the cheque was available that afternoon. 69

With further funds from the Fremantle City Council, funds from the Public Works Department for long-delayed maintenance work on the building, and an at-cost agreement from the principal contractor, Multiplex, renovations went ahead and PIFT opened its doors in the heart of Fremantle in 1974. David Rapsey, who became associated with the PIFT movement, said that Alan Bond recognised in O’Sullivan a fellow entrepreneur and liked his style: ‘They were both slightly psychopathic entrepreneurs’. 70

The Western Australian Film Council II

The establishment of the Perth Institute of Film and Television, and O’Sullivan’s subsequent selection as the sole member from Western Australia on the newly created Film and Television Board of the Australian Council for the Arts, sharpened personal enmities and

68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 David Rapsey, recorded interview, West Brunswick, Victoria, 17 January 2005.
widened the gulf between the supporters of PIFT and many of the commercial producers who formed the Western Australian Film Council four years later in 1978. The council was an incorporated association and, as such, its obligation public accountability was very limited. In fact, the council did not produce an annual report until 1988, thus details of the first nine years of its operations are sketchy, though the agendas and minutes of meetings have been preserved.\textsuperscript{71} Governments may have ‘dead hands’ but their bureaucracies leave marks—files full of documents and reports for historians to ponder.

The first major investment made by the Film Council was of $100,000 in \textit{Harlequin} (Simon Wincer 1980),\textsuperscript{72} the first feature film to be shot in Western Australia since the \textit{Nickel Queen} (John McCallum 1971), in which TVW channel 7 had been a substantial investor. According to Sir James Cruthers, TVW channel 7 was a significant investor in many Western Australian productions, as much to be a good corporate citizen as from any real expectation of profit.\textsuperscript{73}

The council’s second major investment, also of $100,000, was in \textit{Road Games} (Richard Franklin 1981).\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Australian Film 1978–1994} lists five further credits on feature films for the council: \textit{Fran} (Glenda Hambly 1985); \textit{Daisy and Simon} (Stasch Radwanski Jr 1989); \textit{Dingo} (Ralph de Heer 1992); \textit{Blackfellas} (James Ricketson 1993); and \textit{Love in Limbo} (David Elfick 1993).\textsuperscript{75} The $40,000 investment in \textit{Fran} was for production\textsuperscript{76} but the four others were for developmental finance only, following a change in council policy.\textsuperscript{77}

Unlike many of his commercial colleagues, Brian Williams saw a role for PIFT and served on its council for a time. Looking back, Williams said that we [the WAFC] saw PIFT as ‘the nursery for young film-makers … and the place for film culture; there were people working there and affiliated with it who were of that ilk. They weren’t hard production people’.\textsuperscript{78}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{71} Ian Booth (Screen West) to Vincent O’Donnell, letter re: Research into the history of the Western Australian Film Council, 19 January 2000, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{73} Sir James Cruthers, 11 February 2000.
\item \textsuperscript{74} \textit{West Australian}, 13 November 1981, p. 20.
\item \textsuperscript{76} \textit{West Australian}, 13 November 1981, p. 20.
\item \textsuperscript{77} \textit{West Australian} 12 November 1981, p. 31.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Williams, 7 February 2000.
\end{itemize}
In the light of this assertion, it is a little ironic that the first television series produced in Western Australian did not come from the ‘hard production people’. *Falcon Island* (David Rapsey 1981) was an initiative of PIFT and its director, Paul Barron, formerly of Frevideo, the community video access centre established in Fremantle in 1974–75 by the Film and Television Board of the Australia Council. Frevideo and PIFT merged in November 1982 to form the Film and Television Institute of Western Australia Inc., under which name the institute continues today.\(^{79}\)

In time, the Western Australian Film Council and the Film and Television Institute of Western Australia collaborated. Seminars such as ‘Investing in Australian Film’, held at the Parmelia Hilton Hotel on 28 April 1983, with an all-star cast of local and East-coast film-makers and lawyers, and ‘Towards a Western Australian Film and Television Industry’, held at the Film and Television Institute from 22 to 24 June 1984, were indications of the diminution of hostilities and growing mutuality of purpose. Many people including O’Sullivan acknowledge the contribution of the then chairman of PIFT, Bill Warnock, himself from an advertising background, to this process of bridge-building and peace-making.\(^{80}\)

But it is also significant to these rapprochements that the political climate of the state was changing. The mineral boom was well over. Sir Charles Court retired as ‘Premier, Treasurer and Minister coordinating Economic and Regional Development’ on 25 January 1982, and his successor as premier and leader of the Liberal-National coalition, Ray O’Connor, lost office thirteen months later, at the election of 19 February 1983.\(^{81}\) The succeeding ALP government under Brian Burke was more inclined to see a cultural as well as an industrial role for film and television production in Western Australia.

**Brian Williams**

The Western Australian Film Council shared with the Queensland Film Corporation an industrial and commercial focus, but the two organisations would also share the


\(^{80}\) O’Sullivan, 10 February 2000.

enthusiasm and drive of Brian Williams. David Rapsey said he interviewed Williams for Westerly, then the quarterly literary journal of the University of Western Australia:

I was struck very strongly [by] his perception about how a cultural industry always has its feet well and truly in an industrial operation. He understood clearly that, essentially, television and corporate documentaries provided the sub-structure upon which any [film] industry was built in Australia. And he was really clear about that.

I was impressed, partly … because I had come out of television and I knew that television was what Canada did … it didn’t have a film industry … it was just starting to have one. And so I was impressed by the fact that you had to have the sub-structure, the labs and all that, and that would not come out of the through-put from a feature. There isn’t enough money involved and there isn’t enough activity.

Brian’s notion of making sure there was a vibrant television industry in Western Australia, I thought, was really … I was impressed with it.82

Williams had come to Australia as a teenager with his family in 1951. They were probably ‘Ten Pound Poms’. He found work with ABC radio in Melbourne and moved into television when that service commenced in 1956, rapidly rose to floor manager and then to studio director and producer.83 When TVW channel 7 advertised for staff for the new commercial station in Perth in 1959, Williams applied and joined the station on a two-year contract. In 1966, he left the station to set up his own business but maintained close links with TVW, undertook co-productions with it and returned to work for the station in several roles during the 1970s.

While running a commercial business and enjoying good profits from making industrial documentaries and commercials, Williams invested some profits into project development. He was one of the few producers in Perth to do so. According to briefing notes for an interview on TVW Channel 7, up to 1978 these projects included:

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82 Rapsey, 17 January 2005. Westerly is now published annually. I have been unable to trace the article that Rapsey referred to. The only article credited to David Rapsey in Westerly is a review ‘Cinema Papers (periodical)’, in Westerly, no. 2, 1975. The article may have been for Pelican, the student newspaper.

83 Cummings, ‘Brief for interview with Brian Williams’.
Three pilots for a T.V. series called “Outback” starring Harry Butler; a general interest program for the 6-7 time slot on T.V. called “Flash of Fremantle”[and starring a Labrador wonder dog who could do anything]; a pilot for a kids’ Hobby show; [and] a featurette about Rottnest Island.\textsuperscript{84}

In addition, in 1974, the company did a pilot for a drama series called ‘Angelina’ for which they imported a British director of photography, Wally Fairweather. Fairweather subsequently settled in Perth. That project was assisted by the Film and Television Board of the Australia Council for the Arts, according to Williams. ‘Angelina’ was to be a co-production with the ABC and a German TV network, but was a victim of 1976 budget cuts to the ABC by the Fraser government.\textsuperscript{85} These developmental policies are clear evidence of Williams’ attitude to the film industry—of the need for personal and professional development for himself and his staff—and the need to develop an infrastructure on which a cinema and television industry might be built.

The state government support for the film council project in 1978 happened at a crucial time for Williams. The industry was quiet after the boom years; he had returned to TVW channel 7, initially to produce some special programs for the sesquicentennial European settlement of Western Australia and then to replace their production manager (but with the title of executive producer). In addition, in December 1977, the premises and equipment of Brian Williams Films suffered water damage as a result of a fire next door; the losses forced a relocation of the business. For the next few years Williams divided his time between administration of the Film Council, his own production business, and TVW channel 7, before being lured to Brisbane to become the executive director of the Queensland Film Corporation.

Williams departed for Brisbane in mid-1980. From about that time the Western Australian Film Council, the Perth Institute of Film and Television, and members of the film community across the spectrum from commerce to culture started to discuss their expectations of a film industry—how the institutions that made up the industry related to one another, and what role the government should play. It was a debate that Williams’ certainty about industry structure and O’Sullivan’s evangelism (though he had been replaced at PIFT by Paul Barron) seemingly had suppressed.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid. and Williams, 7 February 2000.
\textsuperscript{85} Williams, 7 February 2000.
Brian Williams’ replacement as the executive officer of the council was Andrew Swanson, a television director who had worked with Crawford Productions in Melbourne. In December 1980, the first of many substantial discussion papers on the future of the industry appeared. The authors of Report on the West Australian Film Industry: Options for Development, E. Goldfinch, Glenda Hambly, David Noakes and David Rapsey, were identified with the PIFT sector of film industry thinking.

Within the WAFC, the councillors and staff were aware that the government’s five-year commitment of funds would end in 1983 and were examining options. Changes in the council’s constitution were required immediately to accommodate amendments to the Commonwealth taxation law and these formed part of a ‘Submission to the Minister on the Future of the Western Australian Film Council’ dated 12 March 1981. Cabinet approvals relating to the changes were dated 8 July and 1 October 1981, and on 11 November the responsible minister, B. J. MacKinnon, the ‘Honorary Minister assisting the Minister in the portfolio of Industrial Development and Commerce’, made a policy statement. He confirmed that the government’s original financial support would end in April 1983 and announced other changes to the council.

First, the government ‘felt there was no longer any need for the Film Council to provide sizable equity in feature films’ because the Division 10BA tax changes ‘had boosted private investment’. Selective investments would continue, but there would be a greater ‘focus on developing film properties in WA [and] coordinating film-related activities in the state’. Further, ‘the role of the Council [would be] broadened to include the encouragement and development of skills within the industry’, and ‘training of industry personnel … would be undertaken by financing selected people [to attend] special courses at the Australian Film and Television School’. As well, ‘government departments and instrumentalities needing documentary or promotional films would have to refer details to the council’, which ‘would coordinate production and call tenders to ensure maximum local participation’. Finally, the membership of the council would be trimmed to just four persons plus the executive director,

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87 Black and Mandy, Western Australian Parliamentary Handbook, p. 287.
Andrew Swanson. The new councillors were named in the West Australian the following day. They were John Beaton (writer), Don Shepard (producer) and David Pye (distributor). Bernard Wright is not mentioned in the news reports, but he continued as chairman of the council. Despite that, it was clear that there had been a palace revolution and the business-oriented cohort had been excised.89

These changes were elaborated in an internal paper ‘Future Policies and Objectives’, which stated on its title page that ‘a viable film industry in Western Australia will be established by producers as has been the case in the Eastern States and overseas’.90 The paper canvassed eight classes of external activities to support that outcome:

1. Attracting experienced interstate producers;
2. Developing local producers;
3. Contracting an experienced television series producer;
4. Attracting overseas producers;
5. Assistance to local writers;
6. Attracting experienced interstate writers;
7. The search for story material;
8. Professional workshops with prominent Australian filmmakers.91

The paper also recommended changes in the administration of the council, including a full-time executive director and assistant, an increase in funding to $300,000 per annum indexed to inflation, enhancement of the council’s role as a broker, and a proposal that the production of ‘films for the Departments of Tourism, Agriculture and Westrail … be produced by private sector and channelled through film Council [sic]’.92 A policy directing the council to ‘coordinate [government] production and call tenders’ had been announced by the minister the previous November93 so its reiteration here is curious. It seems that some departments strenuously opposed this policy, as it became an enduring issue for the council.

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91 Ibid., pp. 2–5.
92 Ibid., p. 6.
John Beaton, a former teacher and at the time an independent video producer, was one of the new councillors. He suggested a reconsideration of the proposal to import an ‘experienced television series producer’ because ‘the two only tv [sic] series producers in WA—Paul Barron and Paul Bendat … would be justified in being angry’. Instead he proposed that ‘the council should look at ways of … helping existing producers’ by investing in a number of projects from each producer (a package) to spread the risk, and devise ways to encourage interstate producers to relocate to Perth.\textsuperscript{94}

On 21 September 1982, Bernard Wright wrote to minister MacKinnon. Enclosed was a document ‘Recommendation for the future of the Western Australian Film Council: submission to the Minister for Industrial, Commercial & Regional Development’. It included a discussion on the need for state funding, but implementation of its recommendations was caught up in state political fortunes. At the election of Saturday 19 February 1983, the long-serving Liberal-National coalition government was swept from office.

A Rich Vein of Reports

The change of government brought out further proposals for the future of the council and revealed an apparent split between the executive officer of the council, Andrew Swanson, and its chairman, Bernard Wright. Box 042 in the archives of ScreenWest contains three interesting documents.

The first is a ‘Proposal for the Establishment of a Statutory Film Body: The Western Australian Film Commission’.\textsuperscript{95} It is dated 17 June 1983 and recommended draft legislation based on the legislation for the South Australian Film Corporation but including a ‘Production and Development Branch’. The second is ‘Summary of the Proposal for the Establishment of a Statutory Film Authority “The Western Australian Film Commission”’; it carries the name of the executive director, Andrew Swanson, and is dated 18 November 1983.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{94} John Beaton, ‘Memo to Andrew Swanson and Councillors, Appointment of TV Series Producer, 14 April 1982’, Attachment 3, to ‘The Western Australian Film Council. Future Policies and Objectives’.

\textsuperscript{95} Western Australian Film Council, ‘Proposal for the Establishment of a Statutory Film Body: The Western Australian Film Commission’, Western Australian Film Council, Perth, 17 June 1983.

\textsuperscript{96} Andrew Swanson, ‘Summary of the Proposal for the Establishment of a Statutory Film Authority “The Western Australian Film Commission”’, Western Australian Film Council, Perth, 18 November 1983.
Appendices three and four to the latter document relate to the visit by Melbourne film-maker Ian Jones, who, in a letter dated 20 September, provided a SWOT analysis of Western Australia’s film-makers. But the first two appendices are of more interest. The first appendix is a copy of a letter to the Hon. Malcolm Bryce, Deputy Premier and Minister for Economic Development and Technology, the responsible minister, from Bernard Wright. It is a commentary on the proposal and makes a number of assertions that seem to express the personal views of the chairman. It is dated 21 September 1983.

The second appendix is a copy of a letter from Andrew Swanson to the same minister, Malcolm Bryce, dated 3 November, taking issue with his chairman’s comments. ‘I find Bernard Wright’s document both confused and confusing’, Swanson wrote. ‘It represents a mixture of accurate perceptions and mis-interpretations contributing to a non-argument in favour of letting sleeping films lie.’ The new minister did what any minister would do faced with high level but dissenting advice. He called for a further report and this was delivered in June 1984. It is the third document in the box and is titled ‘Preliminary Report on the Proposed Western Australian Film Commission’.

Meanwhile, David Rapsey, one of the authors of the ‘Report on the West Australian Film Industry: Options for Development’ of December 1980, had circulated another paper, a ‘Proposal for the Development of a West Australian Film Industry’ to add to the debate that clearly was raging in informed circles.

Government policy towards the film industry and the council now appears to have entered a period of ‘masterful inactivity’, to borrow a phrase from Yes Minister. Though uncertain as to the direction to take, the ALP government did at least increase funding to the council. The following table is based on figures in a telex from the WAFC to the Film and Television Policy Section of the Commonwealth Department of Arts, Heritage and Environment.

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97 Ibid., Appendix 2.
98 Western Australian Film Council, ‘Preliminary Report on the Proposed Western Australian Film Commission’, Western Australian Film Council, Perth, June 1984.
100 MacBeth reported that, in 1986, the Council’s current funding was $500,000. See MacBeth Review of the Western Australian Film Industry, p. 15.
101 Telex in ScreenWest archive box 019, WAFC to Garrett Upstill, Director, Film and Television Policy Section, (Commonwealth) Department of Arts, Heritage and Environment, the date is illegible.
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Figure 1. Annual government subvention, Western Australian Film Council, 1982–87.

After 1987 the council’s annual budget rose gradually reaching $800,000 in 1992, until:

In 1993, the WAFC was able to announce a major boost to industry funding with the introduction of the Lotteries Commission Film Incentive Scheme. Through this scheme $2 million was to be made available annually for specific industry support programs over the next three years.\(^{102}\)

During the policy hiatus following the 1983 election, the Film Council produced a fourth report on its future titled ‘A State Film Authority for Western Australia’ dated October 1984. It did little more than revisit the arguments contained in the previous submissions.\(^{103}\)

The Ann MacBeth Review

Brian Burke’s Labor government faced the voters on 8 February 1986 and was returned to the treasury benches. There seems to have been a commitment from the ALP to revisit the question of the place of the film industry in the state. After the election, the WAFC became a portfolio responsibility of David Parker, ‘Minister for Minerals and Energy, the Arts, Minister Assisting the Minister Co-ordinating Economic and Social Development’.\(^{104}\)

Ann MacBeth was a member of the Senate of Murdoch University and prominent in arts and cultural organisations including the Artists Foundation of WA. The selection of her company, Annimac, to undertake the review is interesting given that Macbeth was a founding member of PIFT and could be expected to have sympathy for ‘film industry-as-cultural production’ thinking, rather than take a ‘film industry as industry’ approach.

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\(^{103}\) Western Australian Film Council, ‘A State Film Authority for Western Australia’, October 1984, in ScreenWest archive box 043.

\(^{104}\) Black and Mandy, Western Australian Parliamentary Handbook, p. 293.
Her brief was within seven weeks:

.1 To summarise
   .11 the existing film industry endeavours in Western Australia
   .12 present industry expenditure
   .13 a review of the existing WA Film Council
   .14 proposals for a WA Film Authority
   .15 similar structures elsewhere, as applicable

.2 To recommend on:
   .21 the role and definition of a West Australian Government film body, its relationship with other government departments and national bodies.
   .22 the optimal organisational structure and financial parameters for such a State film body.\(^{105}\)

At the time, enough rumours were circulating in the industry about the future of the council to prompt one prominent member of the film-as-business sector, G. D. (Geoff) Pearson of the Film Corporation of Western Australia Pty Ltd, to write to the minister on 18 August 1986:

I have heard rumours from several sources within the film industry that you are giving consideration to changing the role of the WAFC. In particular it is being suggested that the government is considering reducing the Council’s script development work and moving into the area of experimental and so called “Creative” films.

To now change that policy and make grants to the “arty” fringe would disrupt all the good work done over the past few years.\(^{106}\)

Pearson’s worries were misplaced. While MacBeth saw a place for creative development, it was not at the expense of the ‘more self-supporting commercial ventures’. She reported that the structure for the council most favoured by all sectors of the industry was that of a statutory authority and that it would need to be well resourced. Indeed, she said, that:

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\(^{105}\) MacBeth, Review of the Western Australian Film Industry, p. 2.

\(^{106}\) Paragraph 1 and 9, G. D. Pearson, to Hon. David Parker, MLA, Perth, 18 August 1986. The Film Corporation of Western Australia Pty Ltd was a private company and able to take advantage of the limited partnership provisions of Western Australian company law.
If the Statutory Authority were not to receive a resourcing minimum of $3 million for its first year’s operation, IT SHOULD NOT BE ESTABLISHED. An inadequately resourced Statutory Authority could hinder the continuing development of a viable film industry in Western Australia.  

She acknowledged that the existing council, with similar resources, could achieve many of the desired outcomes for the industry. But if there were to be no statutory authority then she recommended that ‘the funding of the creative development areas … remain within the Department of the Arts, outside the WA Film Council’.  

She also recommended that the new organisation:

Co-ordinate Government documentary production through selective tendering in the private sector. If some government film units remain, all their projects should be scrutinised and supervised by the Statutory Authority.

This paragraph suggests at least one reason that previous attempts to implement this policy had not succeeded. Another possible reason may be found in what Macbeth called the ‘Ad World’ and the ‘continued practice of ad agencies “importing” Eastern States crews to film State government commercials and promotions’. These were made on large budgets, for example, a WA Lotto promotion with a budget of $250,000. In those days, especially in Perth, $250,000 was sufficient to make a no-frills feature film.

The year 1986 was notable for one other thing. ‘The Western Australian Film Council was transferred to the Minister for the Arts in [May] 1986 and is administered by the Department for the Arts.’ This was victory for the film-as-culture sector but not an abandonment of the economic arguments for government subvention, as economic and arts portfolios reported to the same minister.

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107 MacBeth, Review of the Western Australian Film Industry, p. 16.
108 Ibid., p. 17.
109 Ibid., p. 16.
110 Ibid., p. 7.
State support for the film industry was a much reported upon activity in Western Australia. Certainly in no other state was there quite the same official examination and re-examination of the subject. Writing in 2001, Malcolm Long noted:

In addition to the Milliken Report of 1992 and the Screen Industry Taskforce of 2000, this review has also taken into account a number of other reports analysing the experience of the Western Australian screen industries and ScreenWest over the past decade including:

*Western Australia Film and Television Funding Report*, Commissioned by ScreenWest Inc and the Lotteries Commission, January 1997.


*Film Futures: A Vision for the Development of the Western Australian Film Industry*, ScreenWest, August 1997.


*ScreenWest Inc: Organisational Strategy and Design*, facilitated by Integrated Consulting, 2000.\(^{112}\)

With the exception of Sue Millikan’s report of 1992, commissioned as an outcome of a public meeting in 1991 and sometimes referred to as the Film Forum Review, this listing goes back only to 1997, but, when viewed alongside previous writings on the subject, confirms the high level of investigation of the issues. Perhaps this repeated scrutiny of policy reveals a fear of getting it wrong, a fear that an earlier generation like Williams and O’Sullivan did not share.

Malcolm Long noted that the Milliken Report of 1992 had not been fully implemented. On 5 January 1993, the Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Kay Hallahan, presented a minute titled ‘Western Australian Film Council Review’ to cabinet. It identified a budget provision of $1,400,000 and approval was sought to:

1. Establish the Western Australian Film Development Corporation, a successor body to the WA Film Council

2. Establish the WA Film Centre at West-Ed Media premises as a base for the industry for a 5 year initial term

3. Grant to the new film corporation, responsibility to oversee whole-of-government film and video production

4. Appoint John Fiocco, Kevin Campbell, Susan Milliken, Glenda Hambley [sic] and Austin Holland as members of the film corporation for a period of two years.\(^{113}\)

Items one, two and four received cabinet approval and, on 28 January 1993, Hallahan wrote to the ‘Acting Chairperson, Western Australian Film Council’ instructing that the ‘the Film Council should make arrangements for relocation to [the former West-Ed Media premises at Leederville] as soon as possible’.\(^{114}\) Item three was not approved so resistance to the proposal within government, at least, remained strong. A week later, the ALP government, led by Carmen Lawrence, lost office. Elements in the Film Council and its commercial backers seized the opportunity of the election of the Liberal-National Party coalition, under Premier Richard Court, to demand a re-examination of the recommended reforms.

On 19 May the acting chair of the council, Murray Oliver, wrote to the new minister to advise progress in soliciting public comment on Milliken’s report, a process that it seems the previous government had not countenanced. He enclosed a draft council paper, ‘The WAFC and the Film Industry Review Report Recommendations’.

The paper was blunt in its criticism of the Milliken Report:

c) Background to the Film Forum Review

Acting only on the advice of the previous Minister for the Arts’ Advisor – Mr. Chris Keely, the Department for the Arts called a one day open meeting in December1991. A range of grievances and opinions about film


\(^{114}\) Kay Hallahan, Memorandum to Acting Chairperson, Western Australian Film Council, dated 28 January 1993. Archives of ScreenWest.
and TV in WA were aired. The most vocal participants were young film makers and students from tertiary institutions.

Without consulting the Council, the Department consequently established a Review of the WA Film Industry.

Members of the Review were chosen by the Minister’s Arts Advisor. Consequently, the commercial thrust of the WAFC was very limited in representation. The WAFC believes that the Review was deliberately jigged to give the arts/culture/grants sector an improper ascendency over the commercial sector of the industry.115

Oliver went on: ‘We are of the view that the Department of the Arts and Sue Milliken … and the Review Committee are not the appropriate parties to assess the responses to the Review Report and Recommendations’. While the incoming government had proposed to cut the council’s subvention by 5 per cent, something that the council opposed, it is also clear that Oliver and his supporters were seeking to minimise the influence of the ‘arts/culture/grants sector’ in any new organisation.116

An amended set of recommendation went to cabinet on 21 September:

1. That the Government support the formation of Screen West.
2. That Cabinet endorse the retention of $600,000 from Barron Films and Nomad Films for Screen West to manage a post production incentive fund.117
3. That Cabinet endorse the establishment of the Ministerial Task Force to investigate the co-ordination of documentary films for government departments.
4. That Cabinet note the transitional arrangements.118

116 Murray Oliver, Memorandum to Hon. Peter Foss, Minister for the Arts, Western Australian Film Council, Perth, 19 May 1993.
117 This item related to return of loans to the companies and the retention of the funds by ScreenWest.
Cabinet minute number 040119, dated 18 October, recorded approval of items one, three and four but in response to item two directed ‘that funding must go through the normal budget process’.  

The issue of control over films and video production for the government departments continued unresolved. Some departments rejected a role for the council but sectors of the commercial industry may have opposed it too. Government contracts were a low-risk but profitable stream of work that had kept many members of the Film Producers’ Guild of Western Australia in business since the heady days of the mineral boom. It was a boys’ club but, in Brian Williams’s terms, it helped maintained the infrastructure. They would have shared Williams’ assertion that a ‘cultural industry always has its feet well and truly in an industrial operation’.  

**ScreenWest**

The change of name to ScreenWest became effective in January 1994 and replaced the name West Film, which had been employed by the Western Australian Film Council on letter heads for some years. While the industry in Western Australia saw some successes over the following ten years, including luring Melbourne production company Media World to establish its animation business to Perth and, more recently, an investment in the well-received TV series, *Surfing the Menu*, the innovation scheme that provided the cash for such initiatives as these was the Western Australian state lotteries. Commencing in 1992, the rolling three-year agreement enabled:

A radical restructuring of the control, use and allocation of industry support funds provided by the Lotteries Commission including a shift from formula driven and employment based back-end funding to up-front funding for approved projects. This was a major and controversial development as funding under the Lotteries Commission’s Film Employment Scheme comprised 47% of film industry funding commitments in 1997/98.  

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119 Cabinet decision sheet, minute number 040119, copy number 146478, 18 October 1993. ScreenWest archives.

120 Rapsey, 17 January 2005.

These funds empowered ScreenWest to be active rather than reactive as state film agencies have traditionally been. The chair of ScreenWest, Deborah Shorter, reported that ‘our outstanding triennial partnership with Lotterywest [formerly the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia], securing $12 million over 3 years, has enabled us to make a real investment in our many talented local screen practitioners and the returns they bring to the State both culturally and economically’. ¹²²

Of course, picking winners is a risky business, especially in film and television. But it is an essential risk when investment in film and television becomes the business of the state, which also carries some responsibility for the citizen’s identity and pride. Occasional successes enable ScreenWest to express its vision and nominate its purpose as ‘to lead the West Australian screen industry to a level of creative and commercial success which is a source of pride and opportunity for all Western Australians’. ¹²³

This is very different from the original film council, whose role was forever mid-wife.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 2.
CHAPTER NINE: A Model of Cultural Policy

The ultimate aim of this cultural policy is to increase the comfort and enjoyment of Australian Life. It is to heighten our experience and add to our security and well-being. ... This cultural policy is also an economic policy. Culture creates wealth.¹

The case studies of the six Australian state film agencies reported in the previous six chapters demonstrate the diversity of the political and cultural forces at play in just one sector of Australian society in the 1970s and 1980s. Each of these agencies was a singular response to a complex mix of social, industrial, political and cultural factors but, while acknowledging that diversity, we can also detect elements in common. If the pressures and influences can be identified and described, then their relationships may be modelled. This chapter takes the examples of the six state film agencies as a starting point for such a model and describes and categorises the relationships and influences observed and hypothesises others.

Five of the six state film agencies were created within a thirty-month period in the second half of the 1970s, during the terms of the Fraser coalition government. I would argue that Commonwealth cultural, political and economic factors touched each of the five in much the same ways, so Commonwealth factors may be put to one side in examining the specifics that influenced each agency. The South Australian Film Corporation, imagined in 1970 and legislated in 1972, was different but not so different that it should be excluded. Simply put, a greater leap of the political imagination—perhaps faith—was required for its creation.

In hypothesising the model, a retroductive strategy is employed. The retroductive strategy diverges from the inductive or deductive strategies of post-Enlightenment thinking, and led to the abductive strategy and, later, to grounded theory. In his collected papers, published between 1931 and 1958, a major theorist on the retroductive strategy, C. S. Peirce, elegantly enunciated the essence of the strategy thus:

¹ Commonwealth of Australia, Creative Nation, Department of Communication and the Arts, 1994, p. 7.
The surprising fact C is observed;
But if A were true, C would be a matter of course,
Hence there is reason to suspect that A is true.²

The outcome of the interaction of the influences, observed or hypothesised as above, was policy: a set of prescriptions intended to accomplish desired and defined outcomes. For these agencies, the desired outcomes were support of Australian cinema and television production in the specific state, in some cases the creation of a production industry.

The term ‘cultural policy’ is used here in full consciousness of the criticism of writers like Jon Hawkes that cultural policy often means ‘arts and heritage policy’.³ One needs also to acknowledge that the terms of this discourse are econometric in inspiration and part, therefore, of a system of definitions of culture that draw on marketplace metaphors. The constraints and limitations of such a reading position, such as the high equivalence of box office returns to cultural worth, are acknowledged; nevertheless this type of reading still elucidates some of the dynamics of cultural policy and its outcomes. I would argue that the model here presented is quite capable of accommodating non-market processes by which the prescriptions for desirable and defined outcomes in a wide range of human endeavours are arrived at and valued. While modern cultural studies is often concerned with symbolic exchange, the cultural economy—in particular, the film industry—is as much concerned with market exchange, box office success, as with other values. With or without subvention, culture is business too.

Models of Influence: Communication Theory

Graphic modelling is commonly used as an aid to theorising complex relationships or processes. They are little more than simplifications or idealisations but help to identify the independent variables. For example, the first models of communication processes, such as those of Lasswell and of Shannon and Weaver, were essentially linear. Noise injected into the communication channel might distort the message, and coding and decoding might introduce errors, but each step was discrete and sequential.

As late as 1949 Norbert Weiner identified the importance of feedback in communication processes, and now feedback has become ‘one of the most frequently borrowed concepts in communications’. Outputs can regulate inputs and process. Though Lasswell and many of his colleagues came from the social sciences, much of the subsequent communications modelling was technical and empirical in nature. Indeed, Shannon’s theorising led directly to the development of digital communications.

Communication theory, as it developed, brought to prominence the idea of negotiation—in effect, interactive feedback—between the various poles in the communication process. These negotiations occur between the producers of texts, the audiences, and the texts themselves in the communication and production of meaning. The processes were no longer considered only as linear and sequential: they could be multilateral and simultaneously occurring. The idea was represented in Newcomb’s basic ABX model of 1953:


5 Ibid., pp. 38, 39.

6 Ibid., p. 39.

The graphical symmetry of Newcomb’s model should not be taken to represent equality of power in the relationships represented. Neither should it be assumed that there is, necessarily, a conscious recognition by the participants that these negotiations have occurred, nor indeed that the process of making meaning relies only on intrinsic factors. Few theorists would deny that members of an audience draw on personal, exogenous experience in understanding the texts or that a producer might use audience surveys and program ratings, as well as critical reviews of the texts, in fine tuning content, in TV program scheduling, or in making editorial judgement.

Models of Influence: Arts & Cultural Policy

Figure 3 proposes a similar, simple model of cultural policy development. A stable policy is an equilibrium negotiated between three elements: policy-makers/administrators, audiences and prospective audiences (the consumers of the cultural products), and the arts producers.

There are significant differences between this model and that in Figure 2. The relationship between the arts producers and the audiences is characterised as semi-bi-directional and that between the audiences and policy-makers/administrators, unidirectional. This is because it is uncommon for complaints to be made to arts centres, performing arts venues or galleries on aesthetic matters, and writing to a politician or even to the letters column of a newspaper to relate a poor arts or cultural experience is rare. This model also recognises that audiences for the arts, especially the performing arts and the visual arts, are more likely to tell their friends or co-workers, other prospective audiences/consumers, rather than the performers, if they are not pleased by their experience. Of course, there are exceptions to these generalisations.

8 The occasional public consultation on policy issues, such as those held by the Australia Council in 1999/2000 does not invalidate this statement. While they may be of some public relations value, these public consultations tend to attract practitioners and their cognoscenti, rather than consumers.
Public opposition to the exhibition of *Piss Christ*, by US artist Andre Serrano, in Melbourne in 1997, especially from right-wing Christian groups, reached the most senior levels of politics and provoked a response from the Catholic archbishop of Melbourne.\(^9\)

The relationship between policy-makers/administrators and the arts producers is, however, much closer and is characterised here as bi-directional. The term policy-makers / administrators has been used, initially, to accommodate the idea that there is more at work here than just politics. The term is intended to suggest that the sum of the political relationships and processes is greater than the parts: that the ideas and attitudes of both the politicians and the arts bureaucrats, their relations with one another, be they of trust or of suspicion, and the relationship between those parties as a group and larger issues of state politics create a heterogeneous authority whose centre of power shifts with the particular issues being considered. In this discussion, the term may be replaced by ‘politics’, ‘politician’ or ‘bureaucrat’, etc. according to the needs of the context and the probable centre of power in the relevant transaction.

Arts producers are ever ready to lobby the politicians and bureaucrats. They flatter them and deliver social pleasure and personal fulfilment through expressions of approval and recognition of the role of policy-makers / administrators in creative endeavours. In return, the politicians award or continue the fiscal support that allows the arts producers to follow their chosen form of arts or cultural production. Thus the parties to this symbiosis are locked into a mostly unrehearsed but formal and indeed necessary embrace.

If the works of the arts producers find an audience and provide an edifying experience for that audience, then there are several outcomes. The arts producer enjoys a personal sense of fulfilment and reward from the audience’s responses, and may also earn financial rewards from them by way of box office receipts. Both forms of reward complement those from political patronage and enable a continuation of the forms of arts production practised. The politicians and bureaucrats are recognised for their wisdom and good judgement by both the arts producers and the audience. Those who take credit for the patronage, the politicians, may be rewarded with the audience’s vote and (perhaps) a prolonged term of office, and the bureaucrats are rewarded with enhanced standing in the eyes of the arts producers and enhanced authority over the politicians.

\(^9\) *Age*, 28 September, 6–17 October, 8 November 1997.
However, this is still a simple model and represents only a limited series of relationships, complex though they might be. Clearly, the real world is more complex still and the model in Figure 3 cannot accommodate that further complexity. Most important, it takes no formal account of economic factors. Governments must raise revenues if they are to deliver fiscal support to the arts: many forms of artistic expression require the hiring of venues or the purchase and fashioning of goods, and artists must eat. Indeed, the whole economic frame of reference of the government is important. Some governments believe that arts expenditure, particularly on capital works, should come from surpluses;[10] others regard infrastructure for the arts as part of the nation’s social and cultural capital.

In addition, wealthy communities, or a specific section of a community, may exert influence on arts production by their own decisions about discretionary spending[11] or by their expectations of government and their exercise of political influence.[12] The religious convictions of a community may be of consequence, approving one form of artistic expression and suppressing another, while a nation’s collective self-image may slew artistic production away from traditional forms of expression in favour of the innovative. On the other hand, the demands of the marketing of cultural tourism may require performance of traditional forms (or sanitised versions of them) rather than innovative cultural forms.

Figure 4, below, is a more elaborate representation of the relationships. In this model further influential elements are introduced—economic factors, national culture and identity, and the arts cognoscenti. The introduction of this last element recognises that, in addition to the arts producers, there are others who share their interests and directly gain from any benefits that the arts producers receive. However, there are still further factors that the model does not account for: the value of a charismatic social actor, differing ethnic sensitivities of audiences or arts producers, or opportunistic political considerations such as the rediscovery of regional Australia by the Liberal/National Party Coalition for the 1996 Australian Federal election.[13]

[12] The Melbourne City Council was reported to have pulped its unreleased arts funding guidelines following Jewish hostility to an Anti-Israeli art work titled ‘56’ that appeared in a Council-funded street-front gallery. See Age, 4–10 May 2004.
The model suggests that national culture and identity are shaped by four principal sites of influence: economic factors; policy and political factors; audiences, actual and prospective; and the makers of cultural products and their close associates. These factors are in mixed modes of dialogue from the interpersonal ( ), to the social ( ), or the symbolic ( ) as the dominant mode. In some cases the dialogue is principally in one direction. The agents of influence are a fifth site of influence but stand outside these sites of dialogue as something like honest brokers. In two areas the model suggests a degree of elasticity in the roles that individual may play with the areas of influence ( ).

While the model has been drawn as a tetrahedron, it may be more accurate to imagine it to have some of the characteristics of the quantum model of the atom with its retinue of sub-atomic particles in descending orders of mass and charge. At the nucleus is national culture and identity, a body composed of a myriad of lesser national particles, like the protons and neutrons, mesons, pions, perhaps quarks, each of a different character, held together by the large atomic force called nationalism. Around this nucleus swirl, in differing energy levels, an electron cloud of policy makers/administrators/politicians, the arts producers and their cognoscenti, and all the audiences and consumers. All the time they are acting interacting and reacting, but are forbidden by a cultural equivalent of Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle from simultaneously revealing their true position and their state of agitation or interest—their true energy level.14

In the following discussion, the components of the model will be examined in two modes: The first takes a general overview of how the components might be discussed in analytic, historical and national terms; the second will draw examples of the processes of interaction of the components suggested in the model from the practices of individuals and institutions associated with the film and television industries, particularly in the years 1970 to 1988.

**Economic Factors: General**

A country's arts and cultural activity is subject to the influence of economic factors. The choices made for expenditure within that spectrum of activity are determined by ideas of culture and identity, of image and self-image, of ideology, of how the nation sees itself and how it wishes to be seen by others. For example, sport is a cultural activity and Australia sees itself as a sporting nation par excellence. In reality, of course, most Australians engage in sports principally as spectators rather than as participants. After what was universally deemed to be a ‘failure’ at the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games—to the nation’s disgrace not one gold medal was won—in 1981 the Australian Institute of Sport was founded. Now part of the Australian Sports Commission, it ‘is often referred to as the “gold medal factory”’\(^{15}\) and is well endowed fiscally by the Commonwealth government to ensure Australia’s standing in elite sport and regular success at the Olympic and Commonwealth Games.

Sport is but one aspect of national cultural activity, however. More generally, culture and identity are in continual dialogue, one modifying the other and, in turn, being modified in the process. Despite assurances to the contrary by the current Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, that ‘there is no longer that perpetual seminar about Australia’s cultural identity’,\(^{16}\) culture and identity are processes not destinations or products. They look back to tradition and forward to an idealised image for the nation in the world of the future. In the end, the influence of economic factors comes down to the question of how scarce resources are allocated, questions not so much of ‘should afford’ but of ‘can afford’ or ‘must afford’ or ‘who cares anyhow?’ It is all a matter of priority, be it in relation to swimming, cycling, cinema production or ballet.

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In 1956, John Douglas Pringle, the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, was concerned that Australia should be known for something more than ‘an uncommon aptitude for sport’. He argued that, with twice the population of England in the time of Queen Anne (and by implication with commensurately greater wealth and creative talent), Australia should be able to afford to produce ‘the great plays of Shakespeare, Congreve, Sheridan, and Shaw (which only a national theatre could do)’. Pringle was writing to celebrate the new Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, which in its first year had supported a season of seven performances that included Ray Lawlor’s *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, Sheridan’s *The Rival*, *Medea*, *The Boy Friend*, and a production by the Tintookies, a Tasmanian-based puppet company. He confidently anticipated that ‘the theatre will keep bright one of the two golden chains whichbind England and Australia together—the English Crown and the English language’.

In 1969, echoing Pringle, film critic Sylvia Lawson pointed out that there were ‘feature film industries in countries smaller and poorer than ours, in countries which are politically unstable and under perpetual military threat, and in countries where all expression is endangered’. These countries, she asserted, placed a high cultural value on the indigenous production of films, a value higher than simply an economic one. In both cases, the writers were arguing for the re-allocation of resources to support what Australia should afford, and could afford. But in shaping the policies that influence allocation of resources, in cultural matters and otherwise, other factors are also at play.

**Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**

The US-born psychologist, Abraham H. Maslow, argued that each human being has a hierarchy of needs and experiences a drive to satisfy them. These range from basic requirements such as food, shelter and security, to love, esteem and, finally, self-actualisation. According to Maslow, self-actualisation is not commonly achieved in one’s lifetime. Once a lower order of need is satisfied, the next level in the hierarchy comes to dominate the consciousness; thus people who lack food or shelter or who do not feel themselves to be safe are unable or unlikely to undertake higher forms of emotional expression.

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18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

For most individuals scarce resources are used to satisfy the immediately perceived needs. Only surplus resources are available to meet higher needs and only once lower needs have been satisfied, even if only temporarily.\(^{21}\)

To extrapolate Maslow’s ideas from the individual to a whole community, one would need to argue high levels of uniformity: that the whole community presented a high degree of agreement about the needs to be satisfied and experienced a high degree of satisfaction of those needs. Alternatively, the argument might be sustained if the individual(s) who determine(s) allocation of resources for the whole community perceive the needs to be essentially homogeneous and satisfied. If either were the case, then any surplus production of the community might be applied to satisfying the higher aspirations of the community towards some collective self-actualisation. If one accepts the argument that the arts are sources of self-actualisation (Maslow himself certainly saw music as having this capacity), then a hierarchy of needs approach might be useful in examining the allocation of scarce resources to music production and, by extension, to arts and cultural policy in general.

A pluralist democratic society is characterised by diversity of needs, and the degree to which needs are satisfied will vary, as will opinion as to what degree of satiation is appropriate. In such a society there will always be elite clusters with different priorities and different levels of needs satiation. A crucial factor is the control of the allocation of resources, and responsibility for such decisions is most frequently distributed within the governing authority and subject to diverse opinions, even if those opinions are heard only in elite circles.

Needs analysis would therefore seem more useful in a society with an authoritarian form of government and a centrally planned economy, one with relatively unvaried levels of social aspiration and physical satiation. Alone and unqualified, a model based on Maslow’s ideas would seem to provide no more than a partial insight into allocation of resources and hence the economic decisions that influence arts and cultural policy.

Nevertheless, and in the specifically Australian context, the comments made by Sir Charles Court must be borne in mind. He was quite adamant that his government would not have gone into debt to build up Western Australia’s arts and cultural infrastructure: the funds had all come from windfall royalties of the 1960s mineral

boom. Sir Leo Hielsher, Queensland’s under treasurer during successive Bjelke-Petersen governments in the 1970s, expressed similar sentiments. Economic surpluses may be, for some governments at least, a necessary if not sufficient precondition for directing funds towards community self-actualisation.

As Sylvia Lawson wrote (without naming them), there are some countries less wealthy than Australia that have indigenous film-production industries, but we must also remember that there are countries, also less wealthy, with bigger armies than Australia. It is a matter of the priorities for national achievement, and those with the greatest need to choose between guns and butter, or guns and theatre, never get to make the choice; it is always made for them.

Economic Factors: Specific

In terms of economic factors, the South Australian Film Corporation must be considered separately from the other state film agencies. The Whitlam government and the stagflation of the middle 1970s stand between it and the creation of the others.

Dunstan acknowledged three key factors in creating the corporation, each being evidence of his strong sense of state sovereignty. First, he wanted the state to share in the Commonwealth’s fiscal commitment to the Australian film industry, announced by John Gorton in late 1969. Second, by encouraging cultural industries, he sought to reduce the dependence of the state on the manufacture and export of consumer durables, especially whitegoods and motor vehicles. Small falls in the sales of these goods elsewhere in Australia or overseas had a disproportionate impact on South Australia’s economy. Third, by encouraging the performing arts generally, he sought to create an economic synergy between them so that a small city like Adelaide could support a diversity of arts activities. The arts, he believed, were essential for South Australia to become a tolerant, civil society, where the streets were a safe recreational space for all, black or white, gay or straight, female or male, at any time of day or night, as well as a place for itinerant activity.

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22 Sir Charles Court, recorded telephone interview, Melbourne/Perth, 17 November 2000.
23 Sir Leo Hielsher, recorded interview, Treasury Corporation offices, Brisbane, 9 July 1999.
24 Lawson, ‘Not for the likes of us’.
Dunstan’s expectation that the film corporation would become financially independent of the state was misplaced and this expectation dogged the corporation for two decades. The 1981–82, balance sheet did show an operating profit but, after interest payments and the government’s offsetting contribution to meet those payments were accounted for, the corporation showed a loss of just $18,840. It was ‘the best financial result since the Corporation was established in 1972’ but it was not repeated in succeeding years. In terms of drawing funds into South Australia, however, the corporation succeeded in attracting a sizable proportion of the funds of the Australian Film Development Corporation, its successor, the Australian Film Commission and, later, the Australian Film Finance Corporation, as well as investments from the private sector. Before the Division 10BA tax boom, and together with earnings from film rentals, these funds totalled $23.6 million by June 1982. The local industry alone could never have attracted these sums to the state.

Elsewhere the drivers of state sovereignty, economic independence and cultural maturity were differently evident. In Western Australia and Queensland economic factors were dominant considerations and, in both states, expenditure on cultural infrastructure in general was dependent on continuing state budget surpluses. Without the mineral wealth in the west from iron ore and in Queensland from coal, little of those states’ present cultural infrastructure would have been built, let alone a film agency established, whatever the pressures of interstate rivalries or local lobbying. Once established, the Queensland Film Corporation was treated with modest fiscal generosity by the government, receiving $7,740,000 from the state during its life, while the WA Film Council received just $3.6 million. Both agencies expected to become economically self-sustaining. The Western Australian Film Council gave itself five years but the Queensland Film Corporation was vague on deadlines, though its legislation gave it a ten-year life. Neither achieved the goal of self-sufficiency.

The NSW Film Corporation was more fiscally aggressive. It saw itself as an unlisted public company with one shareholder, the state government, but there was no evidence that the corporation ever did enough financial planning to identify the annual revenues required to meet its large overseas promotional plans and pay a return on the state’s investment. It corporatised its practices but socialised the risks.

26 Ibid., p. 9.
27 The figure is an estimate because annual reports for the early years were not available to the public, and operating costs seem to have been separately accounted and paid directly by the Department of Economic Development.
If economic factors were not an important concern at the time of the creation of the Tasmanian Film Corporation, they quickly became so. The state government, especially after Premier Doug Lowe retired, failed to make good its fiscal undertakings to the corporation, which quickly became financially unviable. As in South Australia, though for a much briefer time, the corporation attracted Commonwealth and private sector investment, monies that the local industry itself could not have attracted.

Political patronage as it influenced economic factors was particularly evident in Victoria. Eric Westbrook, the first director of the Ministry for the Arts, told Premier Hamer that film-making was expensive and the corporation should be well resourced. Hamer heeded the advice and the first year’s budget was $1 million.28 He must, then, have been chagrined to open the Age on 25 August 1977 to read the headline ‘Board men given most film grants’. Indeed, of total commitments of $951,637 reported, $526,500 had gone to projects associated with board members.29 This was an inevitable outcome of opting to constitute the corporation from leading and active members of the industry it was to serve. However, the Victorian government had concluded that ‘to ignore people with vested interests in such a small industry would lead to unimaginative mediocrity’.30 Hamer’s personal support continued but state finances came under pressure and in 1978 Hamer handed the arts portfolio to a junior minister, Norman Lacy, better to attend to his role as treasurer. The corporation’s finances continued to deteriorate until Terrance McMahon, who had been appointed director of Film Victoria in March 1983, took proposals to the recently elected Cain Labor government that blended economic arguments with cultural hubris. McMahon revitalised the corporation’s finances and enabled it to surf the rising wave of Division 10BA investments in production.

The Cain government, like the Whitlam government in Canberra a decade earlier, attached a high priority to cultural enterprise. In the case of Film Victoria, the doubling of its budget, engineered by McMahon, paid economic dividends. In the two years following, the corporation was an investor in $71 million worth of production work, though its participation was less than 10 per cent of total budgets. Given the maturity of the industry in Victoria, it is hard to say how much production would have occurred anyhow. However, the convenience to producers of employing the corporation as investors’ representative, as well as the cachet of

28 Victorian Film Corporation, Annual Report 1976/77, Melbourne, September 1977, p. 2. This was the same as the initial investment capital of the AFDC in 1970.
receiving investments from the corporation (an assurance to the private sector of the worth of
the project), was attractive and delivered strong economic performance to the industry.

The importance attached to the NSW Film Corporation by the premier, Neville Wran, was
more to do with maintaining the place of NSW as the national and natural epicentre of film
production than with its economic importance or indeed accountability. As Riomfalvy’s
submission to Wran of 1978 illustrates, the corporation’s own ambition knew few bounds and
lacked only an open cheque book to pursue them. The corporation’s accounts were drawn
such that its investments were regarded as capital assets that were written down over time.
This accounting practice was its undoing: the growing annual deficits on the balance sheet
attracted the attention of the Public Accounts Committee and the parliamentary opposition.

After Wran’s retirement, the new premier, Barrie Unsworth, was obliged to confront the
issue of the deficit but to no avail. When Labor lost office in 1988, the incoming Coalition
government seized on the deficit as proof of failure of the NSW Film Corporation and
replaced it with a portfolio office under direct ministerial control. If the corporation had
presented itself as a cultural equivalent of a rural assistance scheme through which funds
flowed to needy film-makers rather than farmers, then the operations of the corporation
might have been viewed differently. But then, perhaps, the corporation would have been
constrained in its overseas marketing, which was as aggressive as a capitalist enterprise
with deep shareholder pockets.

Agents of Influence: General

Agents of influence on priorities for national achievement are like the submerged part of the
iceberg: the buoyancy of the unseen part lifts the iceberg above the water making it visible.
In this model, these individuals are distinguished from those directly involved in policy-
making and from the cognoscenti because they may operate under the surface of several of
the sites in the model. Their crucial relationships are with the politicians, policy-makers and
administrators, where their opinions mediate the influence of the economic factors and
amplify or diminish that of the cognoscenti and audiences.

In the course of this research, a number of single individuals were identified whose
influence on the establishment and direction of key cultural agencies was vital.
Given the importance of economic issues, it should come as no surprise that several of them were economists. Others were historians and politicians but each had an enthusiasm for the arts that bordered on the passionate, though rarely were they capable practitioners. It was, however, the casual and confidential access to politicians and bureaucrats occasioned by their ‘day jobs’ that made them effective as advocates.

Though the great person explanation for historical change is attractive in this context, the value of circumstance, of being in the right place and having the right connections should not be underestimated. Even then, individuals still need the wit to recognise opportunities when they are offered and the fortitude to persist with their efforts. People act; circumstances allow.

In Canada, such a figure with crucial influence on cultural policy, though not an economist, was Charles Vincent Massey, who lectured in modern history before entering politics. From 1949, he served as chairman of the Royal Commission on National Development in Arts, Letters, and Sciences, which led to the formation of the Canada Council in 1957. He was the first Canadian-born governor-general (1952–59) and his brother, Raymond, achieved fame as an actor and director on stage and in US television drama. Charles Massey was outspoken on the need for Canada to emerge from the cultural hegemony of the United States of America, an influence that continues today to dog Canadian cultural production.

In Great Britain, the key player was John Maynard Keynes. His books, from The Economic Consequences of the Peace (1919) to The General Theory of Employment Interest and Money (1936), had a profound influence on economic management in Western countries. But he also founded the Arts Theatre of Cambridge, managed the career of his wife, the Russian-born ballerina Lydia Lopokova, advocated the establishment of the Arts Council of Great Britain and was its founding chairman. Had Keynes lived a further ten years, his contribution to the arts may well have out-weighed his contribution to economics. And doubtless, too, he would have agreed with Charles Massey’s nationalist sentiments and similar sentiments expressed

31 Also referred to as the Massey-Lévesque Royal Commission on the Arts, Letters, and Sciences or the Massey Report and dated for the year of its release, 1951. Alison Beale and Annette Van Den Bosch, Ghosts in the Machine: Women and Cultural Policy in Canada and Australia, Garamond Press, Toronto, 1998, p. 7. These authors date the formation of the Canada Council to 1956.
more recently by a former Australian prime minister, Malcolm Fraser, on the deleterious impact of globalisation on national economies and national cultures.\(^{34}\)

In Australia, it was another economist, and one who was profoundly influenced by Keynes, who played a central role in the emergence of the cultural state. Dr H. C. Coombs served successive Australian governments for forty years as a senior public servant and was an advisor to seven prime ministers. He first joined the staff of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, then served as Director of Rationing, Director-General of [Post-war] Reconstruction, later as Governor of the Commonwealth Bank and, subsequently, as Governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia. He was founding chairman of both the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust and of the Australian Council for the Arts (now called the Australia Council for the Arts), and founding chairman of the Council for Aboriginal Affairs.\(^{35}\)

While Coombs nurtured the emergence of the cultural state in Australia, his specific contribution to the renaissance of the film industry was limited. Others were crucial to the creation of the state film agencies. But, as I maintain that the Keynesian vision, the Keynes–Coombs connection and Coombs himself were cornerstones of the Australian cultural renaissance of the 1970s, the context in which new state and Commonwealth film agencies emerged, this relationship will be explored here in more detail.

In fact, Keynes is doubly important. Not only did he influence Coombs personally but his theoretical approach to the authority, indeed the responsibility, of government to stimulate demand in an economy experiencing recession provided the practical mechanism and political justification for government patronage of the arts. Thus the influences that shaped the ideas and achievements of these two men were crucial to the renaissance in Australian cultural life.

John Maynard Keynes

John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) was an influential economist, a prolific writer and columnist. There is a vast literature on Keynes, stretching back for more than seventy years and ‘the nature of the Keynesian legacy is itself highly contested terrain’.\(^{36}\)

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\(^{34}\) Malcolm Fraser, ‘The global march is slowly suffocating Melbourne’, \textit{Age}, 28 December 2001, p. 11.


The summary that follows here will, perforce concern itself only with the principles and agreed features of Keynes’ ideas and as they relate specifically to the Australian political, economic and cultural context.

Writing in Abandoning Keynes, Tim Battin distinguished ‘Keynesian Social Democracy’ from ‘Keynesianism’. He favoured the former term, in most contexts, as ‘less ambiguously a political term which conveys more expressly some of the associated politics’, a term ‘concerned with the ways in which ideas associated with Keynesianism were united with social democratic ideals’. It is the link between social democratic ideas and ideals, and a concern for the arts and culture of a society that concerns us here.

John Maynard Keynes challenged the economic orthodoxy of his times, which held ‘that laissez-faire, only slightly tempered by public policy [was] the best of all possible social arrangements’. Keynes was a student of the last great nineteenth-century British theorists of laissez-faire, Alfred Marshall and A. C. Pigou. On graduation in 1906, he joined the Indian office of the British civil service, but returned to Cambridge two years later to lecture in economics. In 1919 he attended the Versailles Peace Conference as an officer of the Treasury and an economic advisor to British Prime Minister David Lloyd George: it was this experience that transformed his economic and ethical thinking. By Christmas the same year, he had published the polemical essay The Economic Consequences of the Peace, a damning attack on the conference and an anticipation of dire outcomes foreseen by few others. His repudiation of Britain’s return to the gold standard in 1925 and the publication the following year of The End of Laissez-Faire signalled the extent of the re-evaluation of classical economic paradigms that he was undertaking. Subsequently, Keynes’s observation of the shrinkage of the money supply in the first years of the Great Depression led him to reconsider further the very conceptual basis of his chosen profession, work that

37 Ibid., p. 16.
40 Ibid., pp. 135–47.
43 Lekachman.
found expression in his monumental thesis *The General Theory of Employment Interest and Money*, published in 1936.\(^{44}\)

Keynes epitomised the qualities of a certain group of upper middle-class Edwardian men: cultured, educated, literate and (privately) homosexual or bisexual. In the years between the two world wars, he alternated between the civil service and academic teaching; he wrote for the popular press on economic issues, and edited the scholarly *Economics Journal* for more than thirty years.\(^{45}\) Keynes was also a member of the fabled Bloomsbury group where he kept company with the authors, painters and intellectuals of his day, and engaged in romantic relationships with Duncan Grant and Lytton Strachey. In 1925, to the great surprise and disapproval of Virginia Woolf among others,\(^ {46}\) he married the Russian ballerina Lydia Lopokova, though the widow of his former teacher, Professor Alfred Marshall, judged it to be ‘the best thing Maynard ever did’.\(^ {47}\)

It is crucial to his story to recognise that Keynes was deeply committed to the development of the arts. Mary Glasgow, secretary of the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, recorded in an essay:

> He really believed that the creative artist was more important than the economist or the politician and said so in so many words: ‘The day is not far off when the Economic Problem will take a back seat where it belongs, and the arena of the heart and head will be occupied, or reoccupied, by our real problems—the problems of life and of human relations, of creation and behaviour and religion’\(^ {48}\)

His first biographer, R. F. Harrod, put it more succinctly. ‘He was something more than an economist; he had a vision of what the good life should be.’\(^ {49}\) In the midst of his war work, though in failing health, Keynes took on the chairmanship of the Committee for the

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\(^{47}\) Lekachman.


Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) and, later, became the founding chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain. Without doubt, the prominence of the arts in British post-war reconstruction policy and practice owes much to his influence.\textsuperscript{50}

The degree to which Keynesianism or Keynesian social democratic thought influenced the overall planning and management of the Australian economy during the 1950s and 1960s continues to be debated by academic economists. What is important to accept is, first, that Keynes had a strong influence on some individuals who were concerned with Australian arts and cultural policy development in that period. Second, Keynes’s ideas provided a new way of examining the relationship between the state and fiscal policy and, later, the arts and cultural production. Third, Keynesian thought was present in Australian economic discourses after World War II. Even those sceptical of the influence of Keynesianism on Australian economic thought, like Evan Jones, allow that.\textsuperscript{51} State intervention in cultural production in Australia—a major cultural policy initiative that was taken in the late 1960s—required all three as preconditions.

H. C. Coombs: The Agent’s Apprentice

Prominent among those in Australia whom Keynes influenced was H. C. Coombs, still referred to affectionately as ‘Nugget’ Coombs.\textsuperscript{52} Coombs’ admiration for John Maynard Keynes grew over the years. He opened the first chapter of his 1983 memoir, Trial Balance, a chapter entitled ‘The Keynesian Crusade—Domestic’, thus:

The publication in 1936 of John Maynard Keynes’ \textit{General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money}, was for me and for many of my generation the most seminal intellectual event of our time …

Soon I had become convinced that in the Keynesian analysis lay the key to comprehension of the economic system.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{50}Sinclair, \textit{Arts and Cultures}, pp. 47, 48.

\textsuperscript{51}Evan Jones, ‘Was the Post-War Boom Keynesian?’, Department of Economics, University of Sydney, 1989, p. 36, cited in Battin, \textit{Abandoning Keynes}, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{52}Coombs explained that he acquired the nickname because he was short and nuggetty. ‘There were certain character thing that went with being nuggetty … they were a bit stupid but they worked hard.’ H. C. Coombs, ‘Dr H. C. ‘Nugget’ Coombs’, Australian Biography, Film Australia, Lindfield, 1992, (videotape).

\textsuperscript{53}H. C. Coombs, \textit{Trial Balance}, p. 3, but note that Dr Tim Rowse, Coombs’ biographer, believes that this enthusiastic retrospective endorsement of Keynes does not accurately reflect Coombs’ thinking in 1936. Telephone conversation with Dr Rowse.
Though impressed with Keynes, whom he met in London in 1943, Coombs did not abandon the work of earlier economic theoreticians, especially J. S. Mill, in favour of Keynesianism:

I have all my life turned to men like Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, and Alfred Marshall, for enlightenment. Indeed, apart from Keynes, J. S. Mill is probably the economist who has most profoundly influenced my thinking.\(^{54}\)

For Keynes, as we have seen earlier, the arts were crucial. George Rylands, Keynes’s associate in many of his artistic ventures, suggested three reasons for Keynes’s’ passion for the arts:

First … Keynes was a Wordsworthian and a follower of Ruskin, Pater, and Arnold … He shared Arnold’s approval of Schiller’s dictum that all art is dedicated to joy… He believed in that now tarnished watchword “culture”.

Second there was his friendship for artists… and now Lydia, who through Ballet brought him closer to the world of drama and the related arts of music and stage design.

Third, Keynes would have liked to be a creative artist. It seemed he could do everything to which he turned his trained intelligence; but here was a mystery; here was something—the highest of all things—a world that contained only a few inhabitants, the men of creative genius.\(^{55}\)

On the other hand, the depth of Coombs’ interest in the arts has been more difficult to chart. He is quite unsentimental about his own engagement ‘with the Arts and in particular with government support for them’, and avoids all romanticism:

[My] involvement did not reflect any creative capacity in the Arts themselves nor any profound appreciation of them. It arose rather from the opportunity to advise Ministers from whom financial support was sought, an opportunity which came first during my term as Director-General of Post-War Reconstruction.

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\(^{54}\) Ibid., p. 5.

However, from that beginning developed an interest in the various arts themselves which has given me increasing pleasure.\textsuperscript{56}

Coombs’ memoir, *Trial Balance: Issues of My Working Life*, and the several biographical videotaped interviews, including the ‘Dr H. C. “Nugget” Coombs’ episode of *Australian Biography* and the Australia Council’s archival interview, are historically descriptive, anecdotal, but not at all reflective.

Coombs was born in the small Western Australian town of Kalamunda on 24 February 1906,\textsuperscript{57} far from the intellectual ferment of Cambridge before 1914, or of the Bloomsbury group in the interwar years. His parents scrimped to send him to Perth Modern School but, as his academic performance had been only ‘moderate’, he was obliged to follow the path of teacher training as ‘only teaching offered both easy access and professional training … and entry to the professions [was] generally the privilege of the more affluent’.\textsuperscript{58}

After a year as a “monitor”, a kind of pupil-teacher’ in the seaside town of Busselton, Coombs became a residential student at the Claremont Teachers’ College. There, for the first time, he experienced the ‘exhilaration which comes with the conviction that one holds the keys to understanding what otherwise seems chaotic’—for Coombs it was ‘how marginal utility theory helped explain how prices are determined’.\textsuperscript{59} Subsequently, he enrolled as an external student at the University of Western Australia, ‘concentrating on economics’, later completing a master’s degree and winning a scholarship to the London School of Economics to undertake a doctorate,\textsuperscript{60} a qualification he achieved in just two years.

Coombs’ talent for economics led him to the Commonwealth Bank in 1935 and then to the Australian Treasury in the early and darkest days of the Second World War. He writes with enthusiasm of his move to Sydney, and of ‘contact with a group of economists who shared my excitement over *The General Theory*, among them future ministers of state, senior diplomats and academics. These young intellectuals:

\begin{footnotes}
\item[56] Coombs, *Trial Balance*, p. 217.
\item[58] Coombs, *Trial Balance*, p. 185.
\item[59] Ibid., p. 187.
\item[60] Ibid., p. 190.
\end{footnotes}
…used to meet for informal discussion most mornings at one of the then popular Repin’s coffee shops … while at another nearby a more senior group … conducted a more sober discussion except when provoked by [the future Liberal parliamentarian, Billy] Wentworth.61

In Trial Balance, Coombs paints an intimate picture of pre-war Sydney, of a country preparing for an inevitable European war and of an economic intelligentsia formulating ideas, ‘which would make the conduct of the war when it came and the planning of the transition from war to peace exercises in the application of Keynesian economic theory’.62 Trial Balance, however, is not an autobiography. Coombs makes little mention of his interests other than those professional. Even then, he is utterly self-effacing in reporting his considerable contribution to Australian public life, preferring instead to credit colleagues and subordinates. References to recreational interests are rare too. In Busselton he played football, cricket and tennis, common enough social activities in urban or rural Australia in the 1930s, and in sport he excelled. During the 1930–31 cricket season, he played in the ‘A’ grade for the University of Western Australia Cricket Club.63

The memoir is even less enlightening about Coombs’ interest in the arts, though in Nugget Coombs: A Reforming Life, Tim Rowse, points to his engagement with arts and cultural pursuits while at the University of Western Australia.64 Coombs does confide too that when ‘teaching Class 7c in a Junior High School’ he made ‘the acquaintance of T. S. Eliot’s Waste Land and Other Poems and the work of other contemporary poets like W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender and C. Day Lewis’, and read them to his class, a class ‘composed of boys in their final year of compulsory education who were impatiently waiting for release’. To his astonishment and delight, ‘they responded [to] the streak of toughness, phrases like “smells of steak in alley ways”, [or] “of faint stale smells of beer”. These allusions ‘rang bells with them even when they could not understand the poems’. However, the departmental inspector found the Waste Land ‘decadent and corrupting’ and this opinion confirmed to Coombs that a career in the classroom was not for him.65

61 Ibid., p. 4.
62 Ibid., p. 6.
63 Ibid., pp. 185, and facing 151.
65 Coombs, Trial Balance, pp. 188, 189.
A strong interest in theatre became evident too. He wrote of moonlighting as a teacher in London to augment his doctoral scholarship and make the experience of living there more culturally rewarding. The extra money enabled him and his wife to ‘enjoy some theatre’ and the ‘gentility of South Kensington’.  

Certainly, Coombs was well read and fond of literary allusion. In Ireland, he found resonances of the dialogue in John Synge’s play, *Playboy of the Western World*, in the language of children playing by the Shannon River.

All in all, the picture is of a young man of increasing sophistication, developing an appreciation of the arts as one attribute of a future senior manager in the Commonwealth Bank. It is not a picture of passionate engagement with the arts or one of seeing them as a central part of a greater whole.

Dr H. V. Evatt, Mary Alice Evatt, and Sam Atyeo

With the outbreak of World War II, H. C. Coombs, was seconded to the Commonwealth Treasury. In 1942, he was appointed Director of Rationing and finished the war as Director-General of Post-War Reconstruction, a post he held until 1949, when he took up appointment as Governor of the Commonwealth Bank.  

In 1943, as Director-General of Post-War Reconstruction, he accompanied Dr H. V. (Doc) Evatt, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and former High Court judge, on a series of visits to the United States and Great Britain. He found that Evatt ‘as a man to work for … was difficult: suspicious, exacting and apparently capricious. Outside politics he was shy but capable of warm and friendly response, a lonely man anxious to be liked’. These overseas visits were crucial for Coombs, catapulting him from the role of advisor to one of decision-maker and, for his future commitment to cultural issues, awakening in him a larger awareness of the value of the arts and, in particular, the visual arts.

For me the wonderful by-product of this journey was the way it extended my experience of the visual arts. The Doc himself was interested but in this field did not show the encyclopaedic knowledge he exhibited in others. But Mary Alice, his wife, had comprehensive familiarity with the

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66 Ibid., pp. 190, 191.
67 Ibid., p. 38.
69 Ibid., p. 45.
world’s great pictures and where they could be seen. Furthermore, Evatt had on his personal staff a strange man, Sam Atyeo, a painter who had been caught in France by the German invasion, escaped and found his way, with Evatt’s help, to Australia, where he acted as a kind of confidant and, we thought, court jester to the Doc.\textsuperscript{70}

Here was a transformation taking place and it was in remarkable company: Sam Atyeo was ‘the first of the prodigious talents’ of his generation;\textsuperscript{71} he attended Melbourne’s National Gallery Art School in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and ‘set the intellectual tone and pace’ for the group that congregated there.\textsuperscript{72} For Coombs, Atyeo may have been ‘court jester to the Doc’, but ‘in matters relating to painting Sam’s integrity and critical understanding were unquestionable’. In city after city, Coombs’ leisure time was taken up in visits to galleries and museums in the company of Mary Alice and Atyeo.\textsuperscript{73}

Many times I have listened, my eyes being opened to a new vision and consciousness, as he and Mary Alice talked of the paintings we were looking at. In Washington, New York, Chicago, the great galleries housing many of the world’s masterpieces became the source of increasing wonder and understanding for me.\textsuperscript{74}

Coombs’ recollection is enlightening. The words seem to be those of a person discovering a new way of seeing and feeling: discovering that feelings and emotions as well as facts

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., p. 46. Atyeo was, in fact, Melbourne born and was one of many young and talented Australian painters, singers and actors, who left Australia in the interwar years. According to National Gallery of Victoria curator and author of the catalogue for a 1982 retrospective of Atyeo’s work, Jennifer Phipps, Atyeo went to Paris to further his career in the spiritual home of the Impressionist painters he so admired and to resolve an affair he had been having with Sunday Reed, the wife of John Reed, a prominent art patron.


\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., p. 18.

\textsuperscript{73} Coombs, \textit{Trial Balance}, p. 46.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid. Atyeo had such an effect on others. The war correspondent and author, George Johnston, knew Atyeo in Melbourne and the character Sam Burlington in Johnston’s \textit{My Brother Jack} was modelled on him and painter Colin Colahan. It was Colahan’s arrest in November 1930 on suspicion of the murder of his girl friend, Mollie Dean, that provided the plot of the ‘Jessica Wray’ case, whose outcome led to Burlington’s flight to Paris. See Garry Kinnane, \textit{George Johnston: A Biography}, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1996, pp. 19, 115–17.

According to Kinnane, Atyeo had been appointed to the Australian War Procurement Office in Washington. The appointment was made by Evatt himself (Kinnane p. 46) after Atyeo had fled France ahead of the German invasion. After the war, Evatt assigned Atyeo and career diplomat John Hood ‘to handle the Palestine brief when the British turned the mandate over to the United Nations’. The partitioning of Palestine
and figures are a reliable and legitimate experience from which to act. Later, as Governor of the Commonwealth Bank and then Governor of the Reserve Bank, he would pioneer a role for state institutions in Australia as patrons of the visual arts and commissioners of paintings and sculpture. Never, however, did Coombs see himself as anything more than an amateur, one engaged in the arts solely out of interest. Ever self-effacing, he was adamant that ‘good bureaucrats make other people’s dreams come true’.  

Coombs and Keynes: The Cultural Legacy

Coombs corresponded with Keynes early in 1943 concerning the Conference on Food and Agriculture and also the Stabilisation Fund and Clearing Union that Keynes had proposed to regulate post-war trade and finance.

This led to more extensive consultations when I reached London. I dined several times with Keynes in a little restaurant in Clarges Street off Piccadilly, where I saw and heard him at his most persuasive and charming best. He was not always so.

Keynes had moved in culturally elite circles from his earliest days at Cambridge, and, though his professional interests were firmly directed to economics, his interests in the arts were omnipresent. In addition to managing his wife’s acting and dancing career, he jointly launched with her the Camargo Ballet Society in 1930. The visual arts came in for Keynes’s attention too and, ‘apart from the purchase of paintings for his private collection, he was instrumental in forming the London Artists Association. The purpose of this group [was] to provide worthy artists with a guaranteed income from the proceeds of exhibitions of their works’.

On 3 February 1936, the day before The General Theory was published, the Arts Theatre of Cambridge had opened. This was another of Keynes’s projects, one in which he invested much money and enormous attention to detail, right down to setting the mark-up on the price of champagne. In 1942, though suffering from ill health and profoundly committed

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75 Coombs, *Australian Biography*.
76 Coombs, *Trial Balance*, p. 45.
78 Ibid., pp. 291–3.
to work to finance Britain’s war effort, Keynes accepted the chairmanship of the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), and saw in it ‘the germ of a great idea’. That germ evolved ‘toward the vision and the principles of the Arts Council under which the government assumed permanent patronage of the arts’.  

Keynes was the most prominent English-speaking economist of his day, an urbane and cultured man. Dining with Keynes in that ‘little restaurant in Clarges Street off Piccadilly’, Coombs could not but have been impressed by the influential sixty-year-old, twenty-three years his senior, across the table. In his essay, Economic Possibilities for Our Children, Keynes had prophesied that ‘there would be a greater amount of leisure for the mass of the population. They should be able to enjoy the fine arts as the rich and privileged had in the past. Now was the time to prepare the ground’. Could Coombs do anything but agree?

Coombs returned to Australia to resume duties as Director-General of Post-War Reconstruction, an agency that, as Geoffrey Serle has noted, ‘envisaged a prominent place for the arts in the new Australia’.

Coombs in Australia

Coombs’ achievement in arts and cultural matters over a span of thirty years is impressive. Repeatedly, in Trial Balance, he casts himself as an attendant lord rather than Prince Hamlet, but he must receive a considerable part of the credit for the developments that he fostered. In 1944, as Director-General of Post-War Reconstruction, he influenced the establishment of the Australian National Film Board and the Commonwealth Film Unit. The latter is now Film Australia Propriety Limited, the government’s film and video production house. Then, in 1948, he proposed the establishment of a national theatre. This was rejected by Chifley, but Coombs persisted and the following year the proposal was approved, in principle, by cabinet. However, the Chifley government was defeated in the general election of 1949 before cabinet’s approval could be acted upon.

In the same year Coombs became Governor of the Commonwealth Bank and initiated a design competition for the bank’s Christmas cards, by inviting students at the Arts School of

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79 Ibid., p. 359.
80 Ibid.
East Sydney Technical College to submit work. This venture began the bank’s practice of making art purchases, initially with the Christmas card in mind, but eventually with the aim of gradually building up a collection of original works by Australian artists and craftsmen for display in the bank’s buildings. This program grew in subsequent years and included a commission for Lyndon Dadswell and Gerald Lewers to create sculptural works for the bank’s new premises fronting Market, York, and George Streets, Sydney.  

An early and key achievement was the enlistment of the support of Prime Minister Robert Menzies for the creation of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust in 1953. Menzies had earlier halted the establishment of the national theatre, a project inherited from the Chifley government, but found in this proposal a fitting way to memorialise the first visit to Australia of a reigning monarch, Elizabeth II. Coombs was appointed chairman of the Trust. In the period 1954–1968, the Trust was the key agency in developing the performing arts in Australia and was crucial to the establishment of the Australian Opera, the Australian Ballet, state drama companies and several state orchestras.

In January 1960, Coombs becomes governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia and instituted what was probably Australia’s first ‘Percent for Art’ program. The regulatory and currency control functions of the Reserve Bank had previously been undertaken by the Commonwealth Bank but the new bank had not only to be independent but be seen to be independent. Thus the bank undertook a major building program to rehouse its staff and, in the construction estimate for all new buildings, a budget line was included to meet the costs of monumental art works. In Melbourne, a twenty-metre-long work by Sidney Nolan was commissioned for the bank’s Collins Street offices, which opened in 1965.

Coombs had continued as chairman of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust, but recognised that its several functions as theatrical entrepreneur, as cultural patron, and as a source of advice to the government were increasingly in conflict. He thus proposed to Harold Holt, who had

\footnote{Coombs, Trial Balance, p. 224, 31. In these purchases, Coombs included Indigenous Australian art. The third acquisition was a watercolour by Otto Pareroultja. Interestingly, in the early 1950s, Coombs thought the commissioning of an established woman artist, Margaret Preston, a more risky venture than acquiring Indigenous art for the bank.}


\footnote{Coombs, Trial Balance, pp. 224–9.}
succeeded Menzies as prime minister in 1966, that the government establish an arts council to provide advice to the prime minister and to manage Commonwealth cultural patronage. Following Holt’s disappearance at Portsea on 17 December 1967, Coombs encouraged Holt’s successor, John Gorton, to complete the establishment of the council and he became its chair, probably at Gorton’s insistence. It was the three recommendations of the council’s Film Committee that catalysed the renaissance of Australian film production, led to renewed cultural competition between the states and the establishment of the state film authorities.

With the change of government in December 1972, Coombs remained chairman of the Council and had oversight of the reforms instigated by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, reforms that empowered practising artists, created art-form specific boards, and appointed artists to those boards. Among Coombs’ many other achievements are public lending rights and educational lending rights for Australian authors, and the championing of the interests of Australia’s Indigenous people.

This is not the record of achievement of a person for whom an educated interest in the arts is one quality of being a bank manager. There is something more here, some driving passion. Coombs was thirty-seven when he met Keynes in London, shortly after encountering the effervescent Sam Atyeo in the United States. Keynes was sixty. By the mid-thirties, the direction in life, and the values and interests of most people have been established but, in Coombs’ case, these meetings with Keynes seem to have invigorated a vision of arts and culture as a responsibility of government and a necessary component of human enterprise. Coombs seems to have been influenced by more than just Keynes’ economic agenda. After Keynes’s death in 1946, it seems that Coombs sought to implement Keynes’ unrealised cultural vision in post-war Australia, perhaps as a quasi-filial duty.

**Agents of Influence: Specific**

Direct political patronage, arising from a desire either for active cultural management or for economic development, as well as from personal interest, was a key factor in most states and some political figures exercised an influence beyond a policy-making and administrative function.
Most notable was South Australia’s Don Dunstan, whose vision of a civil society and a desire to ease the state’s economic dependency on whitegoods and automotive manufacture were prime motivations. For Dunstan, a civil society was more than one in which men and women could walk the streets without fear of injury or intimidation. It was a society with a high but balanced level of material and spiritual satiation. The South Australian Film Corporation was for Dunstan both a cultural and industrial agent of change, a part of a process that has transformed the material and spiritual fabric of Adelaide over the past thirty years.

In New South Wales, the free hand that Premier Neville Wran gave the film corporation and its chair, Paul H. Riomfalvy, was, in part, the freedom to create, to succeed. The freedom was also evidence of his confidence in Riomfalvy and the political debts he owed him. Only after Wran’s retirement did the corporation’s critics and opponents succeed in first making it more than nominally accountable to parliament and then in closing it down.

In Tasmania it was the premier, W. A. (Bill) Neilson, who personally instigated the review of the Department of Film Production—a review whose recommendations were not rigged, as such, but were still a foregone conclusion. He acted partly out of personal interest, partly at the urging of influential associates and, partly, in the context of structural reform of government. In Victoria, Premier Rupert Hamer’s interest arose from his concern for active cultural management and economic development of the state but, as in Tasmania after Neilson’s retirement, once Hamer was no longer minister for the arts, the Victorian government’s interest in the corporation waned, only to be revived by a change of government and an economic argument spiced with an element of interstate rivalry.

Economic development arguments were central to the creation of state film agencies in both Queensland and Western Australia, and in neither state was the premier much interested in the cultural aspect of the film industry. In Queensland, there is good evidence that the premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, had no enthusiasm for the film corporation at all. Mike Williams believed that the important supporters in cabinet were the successive leaders of the Liberal Party, and treasurers Bill Knox and Lew Edwards.  

Perhaps Liberal leader Gordon Chalk should also be mentioned as he was treasurer when the proposal for a film corporation first appeared on the coalition’s election platform.  

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85 Mike Williams, telephone conversation, Brisbane–Melbourne, 10 May 2005. Lew Edwards would later receive a knighthood and chair the Brisbane-based Pacific Film and Television Commission.  
for the corporation was driven by the organisational wing of the National Party as part of a plan
to capture urban electorates and destroy the parliamentary Liberal Party.

Such an exercise of patronage is more like the work of agents of influence, though
Queensland’s cultural agenda seemed more a vehicle for the re-branding of the Country Party
after it changed its name to the National Party in 1974. Despite Mike Williams’ assertions, the
top candidates as agents of influence there must be Allen Callaghan and Mike Evans, with Sir
Robert Sparkes, the then president of the party, playing a supporting role. Those within the
film industry in Queensland who campaigned in support of a corporation, like Williams, were
essential to the process but not decisive. Williams’ unfaltering pressure enabled Callaghan and
Evans to keep the corporation on the state’s political agenda but, without them, the lobbying
could not have succeeded. Williams’ contribution was acknowledged in his appointment to the
board of the corporation, though that gift, in time, proved something of a poisoned chalice.

In Western Australia, Brian Williams was essential to the creation of the film council and,
arguably, also decisive. His influence was mediated through the ambitious public servant,
Gus Kingsley. Williams was able to harness this support because prior lobbying had
brought him to the attention of Kingsley’s associate, Hans Zeitlin. Williams became, de
facto, the first executive officer of the film council, confirming his centrality to its creation.
At a distance, Jo O’Sullivan, with his passion to create in Perth a film-culture organisation
modelled on the American Film Institute, widened interest in film culture. In this changing
climate, support for the film industry could become part of a state development agenda,
partly cultural, mostly economic.

In Tasmania, Bill Perkins and Ken Brooks were associated with film culture but not
professionally engaged in the industry. Their status and influence within the education
community and their political allegiance gave them privileged access to senior ranks of the
Labor Party and its political agenda. The pseudonymous letter-writing campaign was a
unique event in the national narrative of the state film agencies. Though a letter to the editor
in a daily newspaper frequently generates further correspondence on the same topic, the
stream of letters in October and November 1974 indicated either widespread and passionate
interest in film production in Tasmania—of which there is little other evidence—or a focussed
and co-ordinated campaign by an animated few. In this case, conspiracy wins, I think. The
timing is interesting too: could those who shaped the Queensland National Party policy for
the election of December 1974, noting the passions aroused in Tasmania and the successful
example of the South Australian Film Corporation, have decided to try a little market testing by putting the proposal for a state film agency in the government’s election policy?

In New South Wales, there is an enigma. In 1968, Peter Coleman\(^{87}\) chaired the Film Committee of the Australian Council for the Arts, the report of which instigated the whole Commonwealth program of support for the Australian film industry. Coleman was elected as a Liberal member the NSW Legislative Assembly in February of the same year. He was a member of the governing coalition for eight years, so it is hard to understand why he did not do more to advance the state’s interests in film than simply make the NSW Film Council, the state’s film-lending library, into a statutory authority. Neither Coleman nor Liberal Party strategists seem to have picked up the film agency trend, though an officer of the NSW Ministry of Cultural Activities had visited the SAFC in late 1974 and ‘had discussed with Messrs Brealey and Morris on [sic] the organisation and operation of the Corporation. The N.S.W. Government is considering establishing its own film corporation’.\(^{88}\)

Strategists in the Labor Party may not have picked up the trend unaided either, but industry figures like Tom Jeffrey and Joan Long,\(^{89}\) as well as industry bodies like the Australian Film Council, had been active lobbyists of the party for almost a decade. And Appendix E of the Interim New South Wales Film Commission’s Report and Recommendations to the Premier added a further name to the ranks of lobbyists: that of Cecil Holmes, a maverick film-maker with sound left-wing credentials. As far back as 1957, in ‘Unmade Australian Films’, he had called for government support for Australian production.\(^{90}\)

The creation of the Victorian Film Corporation was uncontentious: all the players were headed in much the same direction. The report, Film in Victoria: An Industry Overview 1975,\(^{91}\) prepared by a sub-committee of the Victorian Council of the Arts provided the due process that Premier Hamer required, while Barry Jones, when he moved in parliament on


\(^{89}\) Tom Jeffrey was approached for an interview but indicated that his experience and advice would be charged as a consultation, though at a reduced rate. Letter to author, 9 March 1999. Joan Long died in 1999, aged 74 years.

\(^{90}\) ‘Unmade Australian Films’, Overland, no. 9, Autumn 1957 (also dated April 1957), pp. 33, 34.

13 November 1975 ‘that this house is of the opinion that a Victorian film corporation should be established’, provided the bipartisan political support.\(^92\) Industry bodies like the Australian Writers Guild and the Producers & Directors Guild of Australia (Victorian Division) were fully supportive, though Hector Crawford wanted good studios and risk and seed capital for television rather than a government bureaucracy.

There were no figures strictly fitting the model’s profile of ‘agent of influence’ in the Victorian story. The nearest was Peter Rankin, who chaired the sub-committee of the Victorian Council of the Arts and, subsequently, became the first chair of the Victorian Film Corporation. Rankin’s appointment as an outsider (he came from advertising) established the model of an independent chair for state film agencies, one that was adopted by several other agencies. The appointment of Dr H. C. Coombs, the interested outsider, to chair the Elizabethan Theatre Trust and, later, the Australian Council for the Arts may be seen as a precedent.

**Culture Producers & the Cognoscenti: General**

While the agents of influence are close to the locus of the policy-makers, administrators and politicians in the model in figure 4, the class of individuals and groups labelled as the culture producers & cognoscenti is vital. The producers need little further qualification. They are the individuals and groups—the makers—they are the clients of the art forms/arts practice boards of the Australia Council, the Australian Film Commission, the Film Finance Corporation Australia, the state-based and the local government agencies that serve their interests, mostly by way of providing financial support. They create content and strive to advance their freedom and authority so to do.

The cognoscenti are both the individual art form devotees and the letter-writing, politician-lobbying pressure groups, and formal and informal associations with which the arts and cultural industries abound. They also include that class of citizen that Coombs actively sought out, the ‘professional-managerial class’ into whose hands he believed the modern equivalent of *noblesse oblige* had passed as meritocracy by-and-large replaced aristocracy.\(^93\)


This class of individuals was influential in the early and middle decades of the twentieth century, as will be noted later, and continues to make up a significant fraction of the annual subscription holders of the theatre, opera and orchestras in Australia.\textsuperscript{94} An elite within this class may be found on the boards of arts and cultural institutions. The selection of these individuals, the connections they bring and the influence they may exert bear powerfully on the success of the institution, if not in aesthetic and creative terms then certainly in political and cultural terms. Some may also operate as agents of influence.

Groups: Large and Small

Since the 1920s, there has been some academic interest in the ways small groups function and exercise power. Writing in \textit{The Logic of Collective Action}, economist Mancur Olson argued that ‘it is not in fact true that the idea that groups will act in their self-interest follows logically from the premise of rational and self-interested behavior \textit{[sic]}’.\textsuperscript{95} Paradoxical perhaps, but he insisted that:

\begin{quote}
If the members of a large group rationally seek to maximise their personal welfare, they will \textbf{not} act to advance their common or group interests unless there is coercion to force them to do so, or unless some separate incentive, distinct from the achievements of the common or group interest, is offered to members of the group individually on the condition that they help bear the costs or burdens involved in the achievement of the group objectives. Nor will such large groups form organizations to further their common goals in the absence of the coercion or the separate incentives just mentioned. These points hold true even when there is unanimous agreement in a group about the common good and the method of achieving it.\textsuperscript{96}
\end{quote}

He does allow that these arguments apply to large groups—trade unions, cartels, corporations or, indeed, political states—and concedes that ‘none of the above statements made fully applies

\textsuperscript{94} The Melbourne Theatre Company advised concerning their subscribers that ‘of the 75% who are in employment, 50% are classed as professional and an additional 20% are in managerial positions: thus of all subscribers, 37.5% are professional and 15% are in managerial positions. This has been consistent through audience research from 1998–2003’. Tracey Webster, Melbourne Theatre Company, e-mail, 20 July 2004.


\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., p. 2.
to small groups for the situation in small groups is much more complicated … in many cases small groups are more efficient and viable than large ones’.  

Sydney Tarrow, looking back at Olson’s work, explained that:

In large groups, only its most important members have sufficient interest in achieving its collective good to take on leadership—not quite Lenin’s “vanguard” but not far from it. The only exceptions to this rule were the very small groups in which individual and collective goods are closely associated.  

Michael Olmsted divided the study of small groups into two classes, ‘the “external” or sociological and the “internal” or psychological traditions’. He delineates these approaches as the difference between seeing ‘society-as-groups’ and ‘groups-as-societies’. In terms of the relationship of small groups to the formulation of cultural policy, both approaches are useful but provide different insights. On the one hand, the sociological tradition allows some understanding of the strength and influence of small groups, acting either alone or in concert with like-minded groups, to influence cultural policy. On the other, the psychological tradition leads to some comprehension of the motivation of members of a group, the gratification experienced that fuels their continued passions, and the relationship between structure, durability, and social or political effectiveness. Since the focus here is the public and the political, discussion of these groups is mostly limited to the external or sociological stream. Nevertheless, an initial discussion based on the psychological tradition is valuable before discussing the functional relationship of small groups to policy formation.

The pioneering United States sociologist, Charles H. Cooley, made a distinction between primary groups and secondary groups a first-level distinguishing feature in his study of small groups. He wrote:

By the primary group I mean those characterized by intimate face-to-face associations and cooperation. They are primary in several senses, but chiefly in that they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual. The result of intimate association, psychologically, is a

97 Ibid., p. 3.
certain fusion of individualities in a common whole, so that one’s self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group. Perhaps the simplest way of describing this wholeness is by saying that it is a “we”; it involves the sort of sympathy and mutual identification for which “we” is the natural expression.100

While the family or the neighbourhood gang might be the most common example of a primary group, one might also think of the collective or the cooperative, especially those with few members and specialised interests, as a primary group. Though these are less favoured today as models of social or political organisation for arts and cultural interests,101 they were popular in the 1970s, the time when this study begins.

In addition, the film-makers’ collectives, especially the Sydney Filmmakers Co-operative,102 the Media Resources Centre in Adelaide and the Perth Institute of Film and Television, influenced state and Commonwealth government film-industry policies. Such groups as these were partly inspired by the counter-cultural fervour of the 1960s: in rejecting many of society’s values, they often rejected the political expediency. Their influence was sometimes a result of the irritation and annoyance they caused to cultural agencies that were used to a quiet life, rather than any institutional sympathy for their ideology or programs.

As primary or quasi-primary groups become larger, they evidence more of the characteristics of secondary groups. Michael Olmsted defines the characteristics of the secondary group as:

…the opposite or complement of those of the primary group. Relations among members are “cool”, impersonal, rational, contractual, and formal. People participate not as whole personalities but only in delimited and special capacities; the group is not an end in itself but a means to other ends.103

101 A contrary view was put by Okwui Enwezor, Director of Documenta XI, making the keynote speech at the Empires, Ruins + Networks conference in Melbourne on 2 April 2004. His examples were drawn, however, from Africa and Europe. From author’s notes of the speech.
102 The organisation hyphenated the word ‘cooperative’ but not the word ‘film-maker’ in printed texts.
103 Cooley, pp. 18–19.
Olmsted articulated a further set of distinctions useful in the study of small groups, ‘between primary-expressive and secondary-instrumental behaviour’. It is to the latter, those expressing ‘secondary-instrumental behaviour’, that most arts and culture lobby groups belong. They draw together those with common interests, and function to achieve or at least advance towards some common goals. The actions and interests of such groups are what Neil J. Smelser would identify as ‘norm-oriented’ or ‘value-oriented’. I would suggest that a further distinction might be considered: one between groups that operate collectively whereby individual voices may be heard, and those that surround and support one, or a very few, self-selected key voices. Irrespective of the finer aspects of categorisation, ‘an essential feature of a group is that its members have something in common and that they believe that what they have in common makes a difference’.

J. D. Pringle, writing in the first annual report of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, acknowledged that the Trust ‘began as a movement among private citizens to raise money to establish a national theatre’. Coombs names several individuals, including Gertrude Johnson, formerly a principal soprano at Covent Garden and the ‘driving force behind the National Theatre movement in Melbourne’, and Clarice Lorenz in Sydney, whose ‘organisation derived some less committed support from the State Government of New South Wales’.

Influential individuals and small groups such as these display the characteristics of the primary-expressive group, though seemingly they act with instrumental purpose. Their effectiveness may be related to the access that the individuals or members have to key decision-makers and the fact that those decision-makers could refer to them as the tip of an iceberg of popular support for some specific cultural program.

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104 Ibid., p. 133.
106 Ibid., pp. 21–22.
107 Pringle, ‘The Theatre in Australia’.
109 I recall hearing that in the mid-1930s the foundation of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (SSO) by the Australian Broadcasting Commission was encouraged by a group of society women exerting influence on the general manager. However, the SSO website credits ‘a forceful new group of ABC managers [who] increased the size of the Sydney orchestra to 45 players … and inaugurated annual concert seasons in 1936’, (http://www.sso.com.au/about/index.html, 21 February 2002) with responsibility and the SSO’s biographer, Phillip Sametz, makes no mention of any such women. Phillip Sametz, Play on! 60 years of music-making with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, ABC Books, Sydney, 1992.
The early post-war years saw the establishment of other, more orthodox, secondary-instrumental types of organisation in various states. These were the state arts councils and they led to the inauguration of the Arts Council of Australia as a federal body in 1951.\(^{110}\) They have remained influential as tour managers and organisers.

While the Menzies years were marked by the methodical efforts of these orthodox, secondary-instrumental type organisations, the latter 1960s saw the emergence of a new generation of primary-expressive groups. The influence on Australian theatre of collectives such as the Australian Performing Group, associated with the Pram Factory in Melbourne, cannot be doubted,\(^ {111}\) and in the film industry, as mentioned above, significant influence was wielded by the film-makers cooperatives in Sydney and Melbourne—to a lesser extent in Hobart and Brisbane—and the Media Resources Centre in Adelaide and PIFT in Fremantle.

Today, the political and cultural idealism that fuelled the primary-expressive groups seems largely spent, replaced by the more measured professionalism of secondary-instrumental groups, exhibiting politically socialised behaviour. Indeed, there seem few active, let alone influential, primary groups at all in the present cultural landscape, with the possible exception of artist-run spaces in the rapidly gentrifying inner suburbs of the capital cities.

Within the cultural industries, secondary-instrumental groups may be further distinguished as first: ad hoc groups arising in response to specific needs or threats; second, continuing professional groups some of which are focused on craft while others are more broadly culturally oriented; third, continuing industrial groups whose focus is more political and commercial; and, finally, government agencies both state and Commonwealth, ad hoc or continuing. In addition, some recognition needs to be given to the influence of commercial interests—public and private companies engaged in the sector for profit.

Ad Hoc Groups

Alberto Melucci felt it important that the ‘analysis [of groups] must distinguish between a reaction to a crisis [that is for a purpose, hence ad hoc] and the expression of a conflict’.

\(^{110}\) Alan Brissenden, ‘Culture and the State’, in S. L. Goldberg and F. B. Smith with Ann Lane (eds), *Australian Cultural History Culture and the State in Australia*, Australian Academy of the Humanities and the History of Ideas Unit, Australian National University, Canberra, 1982, p. 48.

The appearance of collective action has often been linked to a crisis in one sector of the system or another, the crisis denoting a breakdown in the functional and integrative mechanisms of a given set of social relations. A conflict, on the other hand, is defined as the struggle between two actors to appropriate resources regarded by each as valuable.\footnote{Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 22.}

Prominent in Melucci’s first category would be the ‘TV—Make it Australian’ committee or, more correctly, committees, as two such committees existed, fifteen years apart. The ‘campaign of 1970 [resulted in] the introduction of a points system of Australian content over the quota system in 1973’.\footnote{Australian Heritage Commission, ‘Chapter 9: Radio and Television 1905–1970’, in *Australia: Our National Stories: Linking a Nation: Australia’s Transport and Communications 1788–1970*, Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra, [http://www.ahc.gov.au/publications/national-stories/transport/chapter9.html](http://www.ahc.gov.au/publications/national-stories/transport/chapter9.html), sighted 18 May 2004.} The group was a loose coalition of existing film industry, cultural, professional and industrial associations and succeeded in bridging the gap between these industry-affiliated secondary groups and the general public by deploying well-known screen personalities such as Bobby Limb and Ted Hamilton to argue the case. Another committee with a similar constituency, formed in 1988 under the same title, declared that ‘Australian television will not look Australian until we have effective regulation requiring more local content, particularly more drama’.\footnote{‘TV–Make it Australian’ Committee booklet, cited in Imre Salusinszky, ‘A Critique of Cultural Protectionism’, *Policy: A Journal of Public Policy and Ideas*, vol. 15, no. 3, Spring 1999, p. 18.} Prominent actor Genevieve Picot was both the secretary of the committee and a forthright speaker on its behalf.

The Australian Commonwealth government’s pursuit of a free trade agreement with the United States of America in 2003/04 saw the emergence of a new coalition of interest between these groups, not dissimilar to the ‘TV–Make it Australian’ campaigns of earlier years earlier. In 2003/04, however, each constituent maintained its own profile in the opposition to the free trade agreement rather than merging behind the one banner, perhaps suggesting a confidence that each enjoys a distinct and credible public profile. The deployment of well-known screen figures continued, however, the most prominent being Alan Fletcher (Dr Karl Kennedy in the long running series, *Neighbours*), and Garry Sweet, perhaps best known for his role as Mickey in the ABC TV series *Police Rescue*.

Continuing Professional Groups

Most of the professional groups presently existing can look back on a history spanning fifteen to thirty years. The Australian Writers Guild (AWG), the Australian Screen Directors Association (ASDA) and the Producers & Directors Guild of Victoria are among the more prominent. The Australian Film Institute is another, though, having been forcibly downsized in 2002 by the withdrawal of Australian Film Commission funding, it has concentrated on managing the annual AFI Awards rather than pursue its former broad cultural agenda. Activities on this agenda included the operation of the Vincent Library of Australian films, a short film distribution service, and the George Lugg library, which became the AFI Resource Centre, presently housed at and managed by RMIT University.

Continuing Industrial Groups

In the third category, by far the most important groups nationally are the Screen Producers Association of Australia (SPAA) (formerly the Film and Television Producers Association) and the union, the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA or ‘the Alliance’). The latter was formed by the amalgamation of the Australian Journalists’ Association, Australian Theatrical and Amusement Employees Association and Actors’ (and Announcers’) Equity. The Musicians Union of Australia stood aloof from the amalgamation that brought the other three together in the 1980s and remains a separate union in 2004. In the 1970s, the predecessors of SPAA and the MEAA, the Film and Television Producers Association of Australia and Actors’ (and Announcers’) Equity had influence on the evolution of film-industry policy, but more often at a national than at a state level.

In Olson’s terms, these organisations may be of a size that their power ‘does not derive from their lobbying achievements, but is rather a by-product of their other activities’.

Culture Producers & the Cognoscenti: Specific

The history of relations between governments and the Australian film production, distribution and exhibition industry is a history of lobby groups. With the exception of South Australia, SPAA and the MEAA also had reciprocal roles in the negotiation of industrial awards when the Arbitration Commission was a key institution in the regulation of wages and conditions of employment. Their roles have evolved since the Commonwealth government legislated for workplace agreement and individual contracts, but each remains firmly committed to influencing government policy in the interests of their members.

Olson, p.3.
the members of the production industry as well as film-culture groups and non-mainstream organisations involved in distribution and exhibition, played key roles in encouraging state governments to establish state film agencies. These lobbying activities were always necessary but never sufficient to account for the creation of the five state film agencies concerned. They were, however, a vital part of expanding the political, economic and cultural contexts in which political patronage could operate with confidence, sometimes, as in Victoria, with bipartisan political support and sometimes, as in NSW and Queensland, with only grudging bipartisanship.

The key lobby organisations have been mentioned above. They include the Producers and Directors Guild of Australia in both NSW and Victoria, the Australian Writers Guild, the various trade unions—Actors Equity and the Australian Theatrical and Amusement Employees Association (both now amalgamated with the Australian Journalists Association as the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance)—a variety of ad-hoc pro-Australian content committees, state-based industrial and cultural organisations, and individuals like Anthony Buckley, Joan Long, Tom Jeffrey and Michael Thornhill. Commercial organisations, especially Crawford Productions and the employers’ representative industry association, the Film & Television Producers Association of Australia (now the Screen Producers Association of Australia), were influential, especially but not only with conservative governments.

The collective influence of these lobbyists may simply demonstrate the operation of political power in a democratic society but it also illustrates the importance of agenda-setting at times of transition in political power, as four of the state film agencies owe their creation to either a change in the premiership (Tasmania and Victoria) or a change of party in office (South Australia and NSW).

119 Even in the case of South Australia there were factors that directed Don Dunstan’s mind toward the creation of a state film centre that could be properly classified in this category, but they were casual and unconnected rather than organised and coordinated. Those factors were discussed in some detail in Vincent O’Donnell, ‘Two Models of Government Intervention in the Australian Film Industry’, MA thesis, RMIT University, 1998, chapter 3.

120 The main-stream distribution and exhibition industries have also been active as lobbies but an examination of their efforts is outside the scope of this discussion, as, with the partial exception of Village and Greater Union, they had limited interest in the exhibition of local films.
Policy-makers, Administrators & Politicians: General

The influence of policy-makers and administrators, mostly within government agencies, and their political masters, the politicians, is mediated by the nature of the agency. Thus the agencies themselves should be distinguished as either department (or ministry), and therefore part of the executive arm of government, or statutory authority (occasionally referred to by the acronym QANGO\(^{121}\)), an agency, constituted by legislation but subject only to the general directions of government. The administrators working for the producers exert influence too but may be considered part of the cognoscenti.

A department of government or ministry provides advice to government, shapes policy, and implements the decisions of that government. It may conduct surveys, question the applicants for government grants or consult with secondary groups, cultural industry producers or the general public, but its task is not advocacy; rather, it is to provide balanced and authoritative information to politicians to consider in the formulation of policy. Of course it is difficult to imagine a circumstance where such information is utterly untainted by the attitudes of the bureaucrats or consciousness of the views of the minister, but biases are more likely to be systemic or strategic rather than personal or tactical.

The role of statutory authorities is more problematic. If they claim an advocacy role on behalf of their sector, then a potential conflict of loyalty between administering government policy and advancing the partisan interests of their constituency may arise. Their task is further complicated where a department or ministry stands between the statutory authority and the minister and chooses to mediate the communication between the two, as is frequently the case. Nevertheless, the statutory authority was the administrative model favoured by government during the 1970s:

The decision to provide government assistance through an independent statutory authority [the Australia Council] rather than a ministry was of great significance. It recognised that the adage “he who pays the piper calls the tune” has particular force when government is the dominant patron; it reflects the view that the arts are singularly vulnerable to political pressures and control and that there should be no government or bureaucratic intervention in their direction, expression or forms.\(^{122}\)

\(^{121}\) Quasi-autonomous, non-governmental organisations, hence QANGO.

This is, of course, an idealistic position because, in the end, governments control the budget and budgets can directly bear on an agency’s freedom to implement policy. As Phillip Parsons observed in 1986, in Shooting the Pianist:

The [Australia] Council has already suffered something of a pre-emptive strike in a $1 million cut to its current administrative budget, with further deep cuts required for next year … with further reductions in a staff described by the retiring General Manager as intolerably stretched, these budgetary measures amount to a de facto decision that the Australia Council shall not continue to carry out its present function.\(^\text{123}\)

The Australia Council and the Australian Film Commission are national statutory authorities with considerable influence on cultural policy. The first was created in 1968 as the Australian Council for the Arts, an advisory body to the prime minister, then expanded by the Whitlam government in 1973 and established as a statutory authority by the Australia Council Act of 1975;\(^\text{124}\) the second was created by the Australian Film Commission Act, also of 1975. Each officially deals with its minister through a department—at present (2006) the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA). While the statutory authority at arm’s length from executive government was the preferred model for the administration of government subvention in support of the cultural industries in the 1970s, it is no longer favoured as the recent fate of the National Film and Sound Archive would seem to confirm.\(^\text{125}\)

The fall from favour was slow. Industries Assistance Commission report on the performing arts of 1976 did not concern itself with organisational structure but the McLeay Report of 1986 was much concerned with structure and accountability. The McLeay Report, properly titled Patronage, Power and the Muse,\(^\text{126}\) defined the first duty of the Australia Council as being to the public not the artist. However, the council continued to have legislative authority to advocate on behalf of its constituency; the Australian Film Commission did (and does) not. The respective constituencies of each of the agencies—especially the producers and the cognoscenti—have long expected these agencies to use their status as independent statutory

\(^{123}\) Phillip Parsons, Shooting the Pianist, Currency Press, Sydney, 1987, pp. 9, 10.

\(^{124}\) Ibid., pp. 20, 21.

\(^{125}\) See page 348–9.

authorities to talk upwards to government—to the politicians, policy-makers and bureaucrats. However, in recent times, these agencies have more frequently talked down to their constituencies on behalf of government.

The Australian Film Commission

In 1976, the newly elected Fraser government consolidated all its engagements with filmmaking and film culture under the umbrella of the recently established Australian Film Commission (AFC), a creation of the Whitlam government, and inheritor of the mainstream industry programs of the Australian Film Development Corporation. The AFC’s act authorised the commission to ‘encourage whether by the provision of financial assistance or otherwise, the making promotion, distribution and broadcasting of Australian programs’. As time passed, the commission increasingly read this remit as a directive to innovate within its cultural sector, initiating, directing and expanding cultural policy. On a number of occasions the commission led cultural policy innovation.

Tim Rowse reported one example: the AFC’s attempts publicly to influence government policy on the development of cable television and radiated subscription television (RSTV):

In 1984, the AFC began to place a wider interpretation on these words [those quoted in the AFC act]. In order to secure the viability of the film and video industries, it [became] an active participant in the public forums in which broadcasting policy is … being decided.

Subsequently, the Hawke government decided not to act on cable television or RSTV, despite the AFC’s private recommendations and public lobbying.

Two other notable examples with consequences for cultural policy were the creation of a Women’s Film Fund in 1980 and, later, the quarantining of monies in the Creative Development Fund to support the Aboriginal Funding Initiative.

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128 Australian Film Commission Act, 1975, s5 (1) (a), Australian Government Printer, Canberra.


which, with ‘the appointment of Vicki Molloy as full-time manager … became clearly focussed on the funding of films “for, by and about women”’, was more a consequence of International Women’s Year in 1975 than any initiative of the AFC itself. However, the experience of hosting this innovative fund, at the time ‘the only one of its kind in the world’, may have alerted the AFC to the possibilities of more broad-ranging policy innovation, such as the campaign for the introduction of pay TV, or the creation of the Indigenous Unit. Molloy herself regards the formation of the Indigenous Unit as an institutional response to community pressure in a political climate sensitive to and, in part, supportive of Indigenous cultural interests. Certainly, ‘this special initiative [was] complementary to the AFC’s more general commitment to the development of Aboriginal television services (CAAMA) and media associations (Murriimage) through its Cultural Activities Unit’.

In recent times, however, this active innovation in relation to cultural policy has all but ceased. The Women’s Film Fund was folded into the general creative development programs on the grounds that a segregated function was no longer needed, though a women’s program continued with an emphasis on development of professional skills for women film-makers. By 2004, this distinct emphasis too had disappeared, though the Indigenous Unit remained in operation, albeit on a somewhat smaller scale than before.

Support for the screen culture programs of the Australian Film Institute by the AFC’s Creative Development Branch date from decisions of its predecessor, the Film Radio and Television Board of the Australia Council, but ceased at the end of 2001, resulting in the closure of the film distribution division on 30 June 2002 and the transfer of the resource collection to the stewardship of RMIT University in December of the same year.

More recently still, the minister directed the merger of the AFC and Screen Sound Australia—the National Film and Sound Archive—rather than legislate to establish the

131 Ibid., p. 7.
132 Vicki Molloy, recorded interview, RMIT University, Melbourne, 15 September 2004.
133 Ibid.
134 Ibid.
archive as statutory authority. This action was taken against the express wishes of the film community.\textsuperscript{139} At the Melbourne stakeholders meeting of 30 January 2004, a show of hands in opposition to the merger was called from the floor. The facilitator, Mark Armstrong, counted the show of hands and reported, ‘That's about 26. Those who like the decision that the government and the Parliament have made? Nobody!’\textsuperscript{140} No similar poll was called elsewhere as the government’s decision was characterised as ‘not for debate’.\textsuperscript{141}

Notable too has been the AFC withdrawal from analytical comment on the US–Australia Free Trade Agreement or other policy issues, when once it was prominent. In 2003, twelve of the fifty-six media releases issued (21.4 per cent) commented on government policy. For example, AFC lobbies Washington on Cultural Exemption for Free Trade Agreement of 15 September and America's Pie: Culture and Trade after 9/11 on 3 November were overtly political, as was Indigenous Artists support Cultural Exemptions in FTA (20 August 2003).\textsuperscript{142}

As of the date of writing (10 August 2005), 137 media releases have been issued since America's Pie: Culture and Trade after 9/11. Only two—‘Government pilot emphasises importance of Australian content’ and ‘Film industry gains boost for talent development’\textsuperscript{143}—have remarked on government cultural policy. It appears that executive government has asserted its authority in policy matters and demanded that the AFC fulfil a service role, as should a department or ministry of government. Implicitly, such an exercise of government authority acknowledges the power of a well-resourced statutory authority, directed by an independently minded board, to set cultural agendas that pre-empt the authority of the elected government or provide alternate and authoritative policy initiatives.

Such a tightening of the authority of the executive government over the initiation or negotiation of cultural policy has been a feature of the second half-decade of the Howard coalition administration, and especially of the tenure of the present Minister for Sport and the Arts, the Hon. Rod Kemp. This period has seen a reining-in of the statutory authorities,


\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.


at least in the cultural sphere. Perhaps that is why Prime Minister John Howard was able to say so confidently that ‘there is no longer that perpetual seminar about Australia’s cultural identity’ in the Australian community.\footnote{http://www.pm.gov.au/news/speeches/speech883.html, sighted 24 May 2004. Also \textit{Age}, 21 May 2004, p. 1.}

The Australia Council for the Arts

The Australia Council has always been more circumspect than the AFC in its relationship with government and, on at least one occasion, the council suppressed the publication of views of an art form board that dissented from government policy.\footnote{Following its last-ever meeting in 1976, the Film Radio and Television Board planned to issue a media release condemning the decision to transfer its responsibilities to the Australian Film Commission. The statement was not issued following the intervention of the deputy chair of the Council who confronted the Board at that final meeting. Personal experience of the author.} Under the chairmanship of Donald Horne, the council maintained a high public profile, while he freely rattled the cultural policy can. His successors, Hilary McPhee and Margaret Seares, did not enjoyed the same public profile; but they did not shun media attention as has the present chair, David Gonsky, who has expected the general manager, Jennifer Bott, to fulfil much of his public role. The council is considered here not only as the government’s largest arts bureaucracy but, for part of the time of the study, it had a mandate over cultural development aspects of film and television and, later, radio.

Like the Australian Film Commission, the Australia Council must manage the potential conflicts between implementing government policy and advancing the interests of its much wider constituency. Two statements from the Australia Council’s web site typify what I perceive to be the council’s ambivalence about these roles. On the one hand ‘the Australia Council is a service organisation enriching the life of the nation by supporting and promoting the practice and enjoyment of the arts’. However, across the page: ‘the Australia Council is the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body. The council directly supports young, emerging and established artists, as well as new and established organisations’.\footnote{http://www.ozco.gov.au/the_council/about_us/who_and_why_we_are/, sighted 24 May 2004.} Just as Coombs saw potential conflict for the Elizabethan Theatre Trust over its roles as an entrepreneur and a government advisor, the challenge for the Australia Council is whether a service organisation managing government patronage can also fulfil an effective advisory role, even though it is one of a very few Commonwealth authorities empowered by its legislation to advocate on behalf of its interests and those it shares with its constituents.\footnote{Section 5(c). Also at \texttt{http://scaletext.law.gov.au/html/pasteact/0/35/0/PA000100.htm}, sighted 6 July 2004.}
Any examination of the influence of the Australia Council on cultural policy is complicated by several factors. Institutionally speaking, it is a huge bureaucracy by Australian creative industry standards. It is also diverse: the council itself has fourteen members of whom seven are the chairs of the individual boards. These cover the ‘fields of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, community cultural development, dance, literature, music, theatre and visual arts/craft’. The boards have some fifty members in total and the council’s administration employs staff in approximately 140 full-time equivalent positions.

However, the size of the organisation and the breadth and diversity of art forms and arts practice has advantages. It allows cultural policy to be advanced by slow diffusion from one art form / arts practice to another. It can move from small precedent to small precedent, area by area, no one of them large or important enough to disturb the authority of the politicians or ministry bureaucrats, but effective in innovation nonetheless, given time. This breadth and diversity also allow innovation to proceed with less fiscal or political exposure. For example, if the whole of the council’s client base were to receive the same financial support per employee that is now received by the twenty-nine clients of the Major Performing Arts Board subsequent to the adoption of the recommendations of the report, Securing the Future: Major Performing Arts Inquiry, the cost would be fiscally and politically unsustainable. However, once that additional support had been negotiated for one sector, it was relatively easy for a subsequent report into another sector, the Report of the Contemporary Visual Arts and Craft Inquiry, undertaken by Rupert Myer, to recommend increased support for that sector as a responsible action and in light of a precedent.

Thus, the Australia Council’s ways of advocacy have seemed less threatening to politicians or ministry bureaucrats. Perhaps this is a legacy of its first chairman, H. C. Coombs, and the slow but steady revolution he wrought in the relationship between the cultural industries and the Commonwealth government. In contrast, the grand public campaigns of high principle and the innovative undertakings that were the way of the AFC for much of the last quarter of the twentieth century seem to have alarmed politicians and policy-makers and, as a result, they have been successful at capturing, or at least taming, the commission.

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149 http://www.dcita.gov.au/Article/0_0_1-2_1-4_14692,00.html, sighted 25 May 2004. This report is commonly known as the Nugent report, after its chair, Helen Nugent.
There are large differences in the wording of the acts of parliament that established and now regulate the Australia Council and the Australian Film Commission, despite their being agencies with quite similar purposes. The range of differences in wording is even greater when one inspects the acts establishing other cultural agencies such as the Museum of Australia or the National Gallery of Australia. In the case of the Australia Council and the Australian Film Commission, these differences have contributed to the distinct corporate culture of the agencies. The influence of the ‘fine print’ of their legislation and its consequence for policy is discussed in greater length in Appendix 9.

Published government reports and studies, either in guidance of the creation of cultural organisations or the assessment or redirection of their priorities, have a mixed record in influencing cultural policy. Such public documents reflect the hidden operation of the processes of the policy-makers and administrators. They are published for the specific purpose of influencing cultural policy, so both their motive and context needs be considered in any evaluation. Institutions are as able to act from self-interest as any individual.

Policy-makers & Administrators

For the most part, the pool of policy-makers and administrators who now attend the state and Commonwealth governments’ support for Australian cultural production and the film industry in particular did not exist in the earliest days of this study. As a source for administrators, the newly created state arts ministries and cultural agencies drew on practitioners as much as career public servants. Often members of the project staff were practitioners on fixed-term contracts who took time off from active cultural production to work for a cultural agency, while the registry and other administrative staff were tenured. One consequence was the accretion of power in the hands of the permanent staff sometimes to the disadvantage of the project and project officers.

The two decades encompassed in this study saw the emergence of the professional arts-manager, replacing the practitioner. The employment of ‘time-off’ practitioners on short-term contracts meant that those individuals continued to identify their career path as being principally in cultural production rather than administration. This attitude, I believe, fostered creative risk-taking by the short-term contractors rather than more conservative decisions in the interests of secure, longer term employment.
It is interesting to note that the share of the Australian box office for Australian films reached 21 per cent in 1982 with further peaks of 24 and 18 per cent in 1986 and 1988 respectively. Since then, the peak has not exceeded 10 per cent (1994) and in 2004 was down to 1.3 percent. The bureaucratisation and professionalisation of the management of state and Commonwealth film agencies coincided with this period of gradual loss of box-office share for Australian films. Whether this is circumstantial only is hard to say. It may suggest that secure employment is at odds with excellence in cultural policy-making and administration but more research on the observed correspondence is required.

Audiences and Prospective Audiences: General

In this discussion, most groups are directly implicated in the origination or negotiation of cultural policy. They have an indissoluble connection with such policy and its products, and an investment in its success or failure. The audiences and prospective audiences, however, have comparative freedom to consume or not to consume the products or outcomes of the policies. The audiences have a degree of independence not available to the other groups.

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer were pessimistic concerning modern cultural production and its consumers. Contrary to their views, especially as expounded in Dialectic of Enlightenment, modern audiences are discriminating consumers of cultural products, be they mass produced and marketed like television, popular music and video games and much cinema, or more individually crafted like live theatre or chamber music. Heavily promoted films or television programs still fail to attract audiences, some pop groups pass into oblivion without a tear being shed or CD single pressed, and some playwrights’ works remain unperformed. As Bradley Morison and Kay Fliehr remarked in In Search of an Audience: How an Audience Was Found for the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre, ‘the primary prerequisite to enthusiastic public acceptance of a product, service, or idea is the creation of something that fills a genuine need’. Perhaps, then, the audiences have ultimate power over the outcomes of cultural policy, at least as evidenced or represented by cultural production and consumption.

Like the tree falling unwitnessed in the forest, can the performance without an audience be said to have happened? Can the policy without outcomes have substance?

Television Audience Research

Ien Ang’s *Desperately Seeking the Audience* compares television audiences in the United States, with its private enterprise and commercial structure, to those of Europe with its public service tradition. Its bibliography runs to thirteen pages of single-spaced entries so it is clear that there is no shortage of research on the subject. The wealth of studies betrays, perhaps, the perennial anxiety that societies have had about the influence of television (and also of cinema) on immature or vulnerable minds, and on consequential social effects. It seems, however, that the consumption of other forms of creative expression, such as theatre and the visual arts, is less problematic, though each generation’s popular music invariably incurs parental disapproval. The relative lack of research on the audiences for the visual and performing arts seems to indicate less social anxiety about these media and their effects.

There is, however, a significant body of empirical work on audiences for the products of high culture—opera, ballet, classical theatre and music—one of the earliest being by William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen. Their study, *Performing Arts—The Economic Dilemma: A Study of the Problems Common to Theater, Opera, Music and Dance*, is frequently cited today, forty years after publication. Much of this empirical work is concerned with audience demographics and is pursued as part of market development strategies and for government funding agencies to support grant applications and the like.

Ang argues that ‘before television there was no such thing as a television audience. The television audience then is not an ontological given, but a socially-constituted and institutionally-produced category’. The logic cannot be disputed but there have always been audiences for entertainments—from mummers to grand opera—the television audience as a category is simply a new demographic within an existing population and its size comprehensively confirms the popularity of this form of cultural communication.

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156 Ang, p. 3.
In addition to Ang’s point about its distinctiveness, the television audience has a particular quality that distinguishes it from the traditional idea of audience: it is a distributed audience, one that, as a whole, is never found in one geographical location. It exists as a statistical and demographic construct. In that sense, the television audience is not one enjoying ‘lines of social solidarity, or what sociologist Max Weber called status groups—people who share a pattern of consumption which encourages them to experience a fellow feeling’.  

Despite its distributed nature, the television audience is influential. The influence is indirect, exercised through the statistical mechanisms of television ratings and, occasionally, through the mechanism of market testing of new programs. Ratings are blunt instruments for attempting to assess the degree of satisfaction or pleasure experienced, or for measuring small audience numbers: television audiences, in expressing a preference within a limited choice, must make their choices in large numbers to be counted accurately. These choices are made in a domestic environment and require little, if any, further expenditure, or the inconvenience of travel. For these reasons, I would argue that studies of the television audience are of little use in this consideration of audiences and potential audiences in relation to cultural policy in general.

Nevertheless, some recent aspects of media audience studies do bear on this thesis. Pierre Bourdieu’s analysis of audiences as consumers and of the place of cultural consumption in capitalist consumer society introduced the notion of symbolic consumption:

In particular, he demonstrated that the idea of “taste”—the “innate” power of consumers to discriminate qualitatively between products—is fallacious. According to Bourdieu, the “tasteful” selection and consumption of products is used as a social insignia for the privileging of particular individuals and groups. The selection of a product and the display of its value necessarily implicate consumption in the symbolic positioning of people and their everyday lifestyle and practices. Bourdieu argues, however, that symbolic consumption doesn’t merely reflect a person’s social position, but actively and actually generates it. 

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157 Rowse, Arguing the Arts, p. 56.

This of course amplifies the notion of the audience as active: actively selecting and being
itself actively shaped by the selection. Bourdieu’s innovation is that he applied this insight to
the consumption of popular media texts like television. Any acute observer of audiences
attending performances of the texts of high culture would witness that process of self-
invention at any performance and, in particular, on ‘first nights’. To be present by invitation
is recognition of one’s status on the A list, for some something to be flaunted.

One might apply such an observation to the audiences for all cultural products, high or low, and
extend the notions of cultural performance to exhibitions of the visual arts, to pop concerts, to
rave parties, indeed to wrestling as Roland Barthes argued in *Mythologies*. These audiences
not only are shaped by their consumption decisions but shape the texts themselves in the
process, and influence future production through the mechanism of the market place. These
audiences are culturally influential and economically powerful.

Going in Search of an Audience

In 1958–59, a very unusual endeavour got underway in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. Tyrone
Guthrie, the prominent British actor and stage director, whose influence and opinions were
sought in the late 1940s in Australia to support the founding of a national theatre, joined with
New York theatre figures Peter Zeisler and Oliver Rea, and local businessmen including
Bradley Morison and Roger Kennedy, to found a theatre. Guthrie and Zeisler had first met:

…in New York in 1955, when they mounted a production of *Candide*. Zeisler
says the play wasn't glitzy enough to draw in the New York crowds. Guthrie
and Zeisler were disgusted. They felt New York had become too commercial,
and decided in order to do great productions of the classics they had to leave.

They planned not to ‘commence as “acorns” and gradually grow into “oak trees”’ as was the
prevailing philosophy, but ‘to implant a full-grown “oak tree” of a theatre in Minnesota
soil’. To do this they needed quickly to find an audience for classical theatre where no
tradition of theatre attendance existed. They succeeded. In the first season total paid

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160 Morison and Fliehr, pp. xi, 14.
161 Marianne Combs, ‘The Guthrie at 40: Facing a crossroads’, Minnesota Public Radio, 7 May 2003,
162 Morison and Fliehr, p. xi.
attendance was 183,981, slightly more that the projected figure of 181,220.\textsuperscript{163} For live theatre in the United States, in the face of the spread of television, this was a watershed and ‘the creation of the Guthrie was one of a series of critical events in the 1960s that led to professional regional theaters springing up across the country’.\textsuperscript{164}

The search for that audience, as told by Bradley Morison and Kay Fliehr, two of the key people involved, offers some further insights into the characteristics of the influential audience. The authors were aware that little audience research had been done prior to the 1960s and were led to make numerous assumptions, assumptions that have been validated by the success of their search for an audience. Writing five years later, Baumol and Bowen were able to point to only seven audience surveys apart from their own, one being the work for the Minnesota Theatre Company.\textsuperscript{165}

The report initially identified and described three classes of people as the potential audience in the community but subsequently expanded the classes to four, to acknowledge that some people are unable to attend theatre at all irrespective of interest. Their work provides one mechanism to quantify and describe audiences for cultural products. I have tabulated their findings thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type # 1</th>
<th>Yeses</th>
<th>3%</th>
<th>People who know they like classical theatre and culture for its own sake, or because their attendance at such events gives them intellectual and/or social status.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type # 2</td>
<td>Maybes</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>People who are uncertain about whether they like or would like classical theatre or things on a so-called “cultural level” and are not driven by the social status urge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type # 3</td>
<td>Noes</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>People who are quite positive that they do not and will not like classical theatre or anything that has to do with culture or art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>People who are too young, too old, or economically unable to be considered as part of the prospective audience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. An audience demographic based on the marketing plan for the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre.\textsuperscript{166}

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., p. 17.  
\textsuperscript{164} Combs, ‘The Guthrie at 40: Facing a crossroads’.  
\textsuperscript{165} Baumol & Bowen, p. 72, footnote.  
\textsuperscript{166} Morison and Fliehr, pp. 48–52.
These observations suggest that all the ‘Yeses’ and some of the ‘Maybes’ comprised the influential audience in Minneapolis. Thus, in the north mid-west of the US in the early 1960s, the influential audience may have been as high as 10–11 per cent of the population (3 plus half of 17 per cent.). Minnesota Theatre Company effectively identified and attracted this audience within a year.

Of equal interest is the 50 per cent that they class as ‘Noes’. The importance of the ‘Noes’ to both the possibility of success for the Tyrone Guthrie and to the formulation of cultural policy lies not in their indifference to theatre or cultural initiatives but in their spoiler potential, that is, the potential of the ‘Noes’ to create political issues out of public expenditure on the arts and artists, rather than on schools, hospitals or other more material social goods. Morison and Fliehr are silent on this aspect of the implanting of the ‘full-grown “oak tree” of a theatre in Minnesota soil’, but note that, even after ‘nearly three years of extraordinary amounts of publicity’, the driver of a Minneapolis tourist bus was unclear who Tyrone Guthrie was.\footnote{Ibid., p. 47.} The potential for adverse effects arising from hostile elements within this ‘Noes’ group remains an issue, given that public money is frequently the feedstock of cultural policy.

The marketing plan for this theatre also laid down a principle that seems unduly respectful of classical theatrical texts but perhaps reflects the conservative views of Guthrie himself.

2. There is one fundamental difference between selling a product in the commercial market place and selling an artistic institution. If the public does not like a commercial product, there is freedom to change the product to suit public demand. In the arts the product is based on an artistic philosophy. The people charged with the responsibility to sell this product have no right to suggest changes in philosophy to please the public; they have only the challenge to educate that public to appreciate the philosophy.\footnote{Ibid., p. 15.}

It seems to me that a respectful attitude to classical texts may occasionally be warranted, but if a similar attitude is taken to policy then a great inertia will strike the arts and cultural policy. One of the foundation ideas underlying this model of cultural policy is that feedback paths do operate and that the feedback must be comprehended even if it is subsequently ignored.
Morison and Fliehr hypothesised a ‘Cultural Curtain’ dividing the ‘Noes’ from the other classes and suggested that to reach them ‘we must make the strange become familiar to them; we must take artistic experience to them in places that are familiar to them and in terms that are meaningful to them’\textsuperscript{169}—still valid advice.

**Roy Morgan/ Ogilvy & Mather Values Segments©**

Ever more systematic stratification systems exist today, based on forty years of audience research. A structure of audience classification, the Roy Morgan/Ogilvy & Mather Values Segments©,\textsuperscript{170} is frequently used in Australia in audience research and in arts and tourism marketing in particular.\textsuperscript{171} Sharron Dickman employed this demographic segmentation of audiences in her study for the Australia Council, *Arts Marketing: The Pocket Guide*. She described the characteristic of each segment thus:

1. **Basic Needs (4% of the population)**
   Refers to the pattern of responses from people who hold traditional views of life, enjoy passive activities, and are fairly satisfied with their life. These people are generally retired, pensioners, widowers, and people with low incomes.

2. **A Fairer Deal (5% of the population)**
   Refers to people who are relatively dissatisfied with their lives and includes the highest level of unskilled workers. They are pessimistic, cynical, and insecure. They think everyone else has all the fun and they miss out. Anger, disillusionment, and often hostility to authority lead to a desire to fight back against the system.

3. **Conventional Family Life (12% of the population)**
   Life revolves around the home and giving children the life opportunities they deserve. They place a high value on time with family and friends.

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., p. 214.
\textsuperscript{170} \url{http://www.roymorgan.com/products/values-segments/values-segments.cfm}, sighted 16 August 2004. Note that the Roy Morgan web site terms these the Roy Morgan Values Segments*\textsuperscript{181}, and acknowledges that they were developed in conjunction with Colin Benjamin.
They strive for financial security and see making money as a way to improve their lifestyle and make things more secure for their children.

4. Traditional Family Life (19% of the population)
These are the over-50 “empty nesters”. They retain a strong commitment to family roles and values and are interested in their extended family and grandchildren. Life centres around home, garden, and traditional activities and they are very cautious about new things and ideas.

5. Look at Me (13% of the population)
Young, active, and unsophisticated, they are self-centred, peer driven, and looking for fun and freedom away from the family. They seek an exciting, prosperous life, and are primarily unmarried with no children to worry about. They are fashion and trend conscious, and are active socially. They are not interested in causes and political activity, but take their sport and leisure very seriously.

6. Something Better (8% of the population)
Probably well-educated, they have a responsible job, feel confident, ambitious, and see themselves as progressive. They want all the good things of life and are prepared to overextend themselves financially to have things now rather than wait until later.

7. Real Conservatives (7% of the population)
They view themselves as conservative in most things. They are asset rich, but income poor; they are interested in security, tradition, and stability. They hold conservative social, religious, moral, and ethical views.

8. Young Optimists (8% of the population)
They are generally optimistic about the future and most likely to view themselves as middle to upper-middle class. They are today’s students, computer technologists, and young professionals. They are focused on building their career, travelling overseas, and setting up their own flat.
9. Visible Achievers (16% of the population)
Generally over 30 years of age they enjoy above average incomes, want personal recognition of their success, and are interested in gathering about them all the visible signs of achievement. They believe they are in control of their lives and they take an interest in public affairs and politics. They have a strong focus on themselves and their family’s needs and desires.

10. Socially Aware (10% of the population)
Socially responsible, community-minded people, they are likely to be involved in community activities, environmental and conservation groups, and believe they are progressive and open-minded. They are early-adopters of products and ideas, and they take a global view of the world and political issues.¹⁷²

Fotis Kapetopoulos writing in Who Goes There? National Multicultural Arts Audience Case Studies, also for the Australia Council, introduced a further set of categorisations that intersect with the Roy Morgan/Ogilvy & Mather Values Segments. These he attributes to Cultural Partners Australia Ltd.¹⁷³

One can add two sub-segments; non-English speaking background 1 (NESB1), representing Australians born overseas of non-Anglo-Celtic background and non-English speaking background 2 (NESB2), representing those of non-Anglo-Celtic background born in Australia. Children born of culturally diverse migrants are “influencers” who will make an effort to introduce their parents to new products and services.¹⁷⁴

Dickman goes on to say that ‘research indicates that the groups of most interest to arts and entertainment organisations’¹⁷⁵ (and by extension to those concerned with policy touching the same organisations) were:

¹⁷³ Kapetopoulos, p. 6.
¹⁷⁴ Ibid.
¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 32.
Thus Dickman’s ‘groups of most interest’ amount to 66 percent of the community, according to the Values Segments categorisations. Interestingly, Paul Costantoura, writing for Saatchi & Saatchi Australia and the Australia Council in *Australians and the Arts: What Do the Arts Mean to Australians?*, reported that ‘35% of people [surveyed] agree that “the arts are OK, they are just irrelevant to me”’. Responses to other questions in the Saatchi & Saatchi research tend to confirm that about two-thirds of the population have positive, active, participatory (as audience) but selective engagement in the arts, these numbers closely confirming Dickman’s statistic. One might then conclude that 66 per cent of Australians are, potentially, members of the ‘audiences and prospective audiences’ category in the model. They have influence and, as an audience for cinema, they have in their hands the fate of the Australian film-production industry in commercial terms, if not cultural and critical terms.

The Influential Audience

Tim Rowse made the point in *Arguing the Arts* that ‘all cultural forms are embedded in a system of distribution’ and that a live performance is as much a system of distribution as is a television broadcast. Indeed, too, they are each a means of exhibition but the circumstance and experience of the exhibition are different as are the two audiences.

I would suggest that the audiences for live performance, visual arts exhibitions and cinema have a greater influence in the formulation of cultural policy because a personal decision to support a particular cultural form (or forms) is a decision to use discretionary but scarce funds, and because attendance at live performances and, to an extent cinema, requires prioritisation of time in a manner unlike the consumption of television programs. A decision to consume particular cultural forms often stems from some intimacy and understanding of

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176 Ibid.
178 Rowse, *Arguing the Arts*, p. 57.
them and a desire to support their continued presence in society and, for some individuals, there is social status attached to cultural consumption. Today, more than ever, the production of a cultural form (or forms) is influenced by cultural policy, by government spending priorities and by the audience—all market mechanisms.

This influential audience—Max Weber’s status groups—is then, in cultural policy terms, like the ones recognised by Rowse:

All audiences created by performance or exhibition, and this includes wrestling matches and cinema matinees, are status groups or fellowships, formations of common identity and interest. Some are more internally cohesive and enduring than others, actually moulding in some permanent way the individual's sense of who he or she is.  

For this audience attendance is ritualised and integrative, as ‘attending a very special building in what the government [or prominent theatrical promoter] has expensively decreed to be an event of public importance must be one of the most cohesive, and self confident of such fellowships’. These qualities of identity—ritual and theatricality—empower this audience to proselytise towards policymakers as well as to peers in their social networks, and so shape cultural policy.

Audiences & the State Film Agencies

Even given the fact that most audience studies post-date the creation of the state film agencies, it was interesting to realise that audiences and consumers were considered only in the abstract—the ‘Australian people’ or ‘people of South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland’, etc.—in the arguments supporting the creation of these agencies.

It is not that that audiences were ignored, just that assumptions were made about what Australian audiences wanted, based broadly on the increasing popularity of locally produced television programs. It was initially assumed that all Australians wanted to see was their own stories on the screens, small and large, no matter what. As Jill Robb observed of her colleagues at the South Australia Film Corporation:

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179 Ibid.
180 Ibid.
It seem to me that all the creative decisions were being made by people on personal choices without any knowledge of the market place, or any interest really in what the market place wanted.181

It soon emerged that nationalist fervour (to what degree it actually existed remains a matter of conjecture) would not excuse a poor film. In only six of the past twenty-eight years has the share of the box office for Australian films exceeded 10 per cent. The successful films in those years have been unashamedly appealed to popular taste.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Titles</th>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Caddie, The Last Wave, Eliza Frazer, The Mango Tree</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Gallipoli, Mad Max 2, Puberty Blues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>The Man from Snowy River, The Year of Living Dangerously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Crocodile Dundee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Crocodile Dundee II, The Man from Snowy River II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert; Muriel’s Wedding</td>
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Table 2. Australian titles for years when the Australian box office exceed 10 per cent of gross box office182

Audiences for the cinema, perhaps more than audiences for some other forms of cultural production, place a premium on simple entertainment over cultural stimulation. The royal commission of 1927–28 came to much the same conclusion.

The Model as a Whole

This model of influence identifies the principal factors that bear on the formation of cultural policy. These are the independent variables in the mathematics of cultural policy. I have given names to them, explored their qualities and limits, and suggested ways that they interact and may be discussed.

The period during which all but one of the state film agencies was created spans little more than two years, 1976–78. Both chambers of the Commonwealth parliament were controlled by the conservative Liberal–National Party coalition under Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser.

181 Jill Robb, unpublished interview, Middle Park, Victoria, 18 February 1998.
The Fraser government did not capitalise on its political control to introduce radical new programs and, as a consequence, the period was relatively stable politically at both a Commonwealth and state level. The inflation of the earlier years was controlled, partly as a result of cuts in Commonwealth spending instituted by the ‘Razor Gang’, but otherwise economic policy and philosophy were stable.

Because these macro-economic and political contexts were common to the circumstances of the creation of all the state film agencies except the South Australian Film Corporation, the influence of other exogenous factors influencing film-production industry policy may thus be more clearly seen and their importance to cultural policy evaluated.

While this model has been evolved from an examination of the six Australian state-based film-production agencies in the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, I have sought to think about the model within the larger context of the origination, development and implementation of policy in the arts and cultural sector of the economy as a whole. Behind this approach is a belief that at the level of policy development, the many distinct areas of cultural production have more in common that divide them and that the silo-thinking and the emphasis on difference often practiced by producers, cognoscenti and, indeed, audiences, within the arts and culture sector acts to their collective disadvantage. This is especially so in the continuing competition with another sector of the economy for the public’s attention and an equitable share in the national wealth. The sporting sector of the economy has grown large over the past three decades with the professionalisation of the sporting industry and it is one with which the arts and culture sector must compete for corporate sponsorship and the public’s entertainment and amusement dollar.
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURAL POLICY FORMATION
State Patronage of Film Production in Australia, 1970–1988

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**ScreenWest, (includes records of the Western Australian Film Council)**

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<td>Beaton, John</td>
<td>‘Memo to Andrew Swanson and councillors’, Attachment 3 in ‘The Western Australian Film Council. Future Policies and Objectives’</td>
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<td>Hallahan, Hon. Kay</td>
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Member  
Chairman  
Director**  
Deputy Member:  
Staff elected member  
Assistant Director*

Notes

Data for this table was drawn from the annual reports of the South Australian Film Corporation no. 1–16.

The initial appointments were made in October 1972. A new board was appointed on 15 April 1976 following the proclamation of amendments to the principal act.

* Assistant Director, Stuart Jay, was appointed Deputy Director on numerous occasions during his career with the corporation, while Irving Cook deputised for Jack Lee on a number of occasions. Stuart Jay is included as he deputised from time to time for the director and various members.

** The title was changed to Managing Director following an amendment to the principal act of 23 December 1981. The Assistant Director’s title was changed to General Manager.

The terms of appointment of Davies, Hammond and Peleska expired on 15 May 1981, and their replacements were appointed from that date. Robert Jose was appointed 15 May 1982 and became chairman in 1987, succeeding Anne Deveson, who resigned when she was appointed the head the Australian Film, Television and Radio School in Sydney. Lesley Hammond was appointed as a member elected by the staff of the corporation in 1979, and was succeeded by Bruce Moir, then Janet Worth, later Andrew Zielinski.
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Full member: □
Deputy Member: □

Chairman □
Deputy Chairman □

**Notes**

Data for this table was drawn from the annual reports of the Victorian Film Corporation (no. 1–5, and Film Victoria (no. 6–11), both the formal listing of members as at 30 June of each year and the chairman’s statement or report as the section is variously titled. All those serving in 1977 were appointed in August 1976. If a person was a member at any time in the year, the whole year is coloured, except in the case of Lesley Stern who was a member only briefly and resigned to take up an appointment interstate.

The term of John Harrison’s appointment concluded in December 1986 and he was succeeded by Gavin Anderson whose term expired in December 1989. He was not reappointed. John Howie succeeded him.
### New South Wales Film Corporation 1977–1988

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- **Member**
- **Chairman**

**Notes**

Data for this table was drawn from the annual reports of the New South Wales Film Corporation for the year ending 30 June 1978 to 30 June 1988. All appointments commenced on 1 July of the listed year except for Mr Gleeson whose three year appointment commenced on 1 September 1987.

Messrs Riomfalvy, Stapleton and Thornhill served as commissioners of the Interim NSW Film Commission from 16 August 1976 to 30 June 1977.

The directors of the New South Wales Film Corporation were also directors of the Australian Films Office Inc. (later Australian Films International Inc.) in Los Angeles.

The Corporation was disbanded on 30 June 1988 and replaced by the NSW Film and Television Office.
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**Legend**

- **Member**: Active member of the board.
- **Delegate**: Temporarily substitute for the member.
- **Chairman**: Chair of the board.
- **Deputy Chairman**: Alternate chair of the board.
Data for this table was drawn from the annual reports of the Queensland Film Corporation for the year ending 30 June 1978 to 14 October 1987. Initial appointments commenced on 15 October 1977. Mr Callaghan’s term ran from 1 July 1979 to his resignation on 3 February 1986.

The Corporation was disbanded on 14 October 1987 when the ‘sunset’ clause in the legislation operated.

* Representatives of the Legislative Assembly. C. R. Porter resigned 9 February 1978 on his appointment as Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs. I. J. Gibbs term ended 24 August 1979. J. A. Elliot MLA was appointed 1 November 1979 and served until 23 December 1980, J. H. Warner from 19 February 1981 to 15 December 1983 and R. E. Borbidge from 15 December 1983 to 14 October 1987. Mr Borbidge became premier of Queensland for a period in the mid-1990s at which time Allen Callaghan was briefly rehabilitated and appointed to the board of the state library.¹

** D. G. Young was Acting Chairman from February 1986 until S.T. (Stan) Wilcox’s appointment in May 1986.

## Tasmanian Film Corporation 1977–1982

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<td>B. Manning (Mrs)</td>
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<td>M. N. (Malcolm) Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. V. (John) Honey</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Legend

- **Full member**
- **Chairman**
- **Executive Director**

### Notes

Data for this table was drawn from the annual reports of the Tasmanian Film Corporation for the year ending 30 June 1978 to 30 June 1981. Initial appointments commenced on 9 September 1977.

Bill Perkins resigned on 8 December 1978 due ill health. D. M. McQuentin was appointed 19 September 1978 and Miss P. C. Braithwaite on 19 December 1978.

Malcolm Smith’s three year term of appointment expired on 5 September 1980 and he did not seek re-appointment. John Honey was appointed to replace Smith from 6 September 1980.

The Corporation was sold as a going concern in December 1982, to Hukot Adina Pty Ltd, a Tasmanian company owned by Hobart entrepreneur Peter Hookway.
## Western Australian Film Council 1978–1987

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<td>Len Downs</td>
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<td>Andrew Swanson</td>
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<td>Don Sheppard</td>
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<td>David Pye</td>
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### Legend

- **Member**: Member
- **Chairman**: Chairman
- **Executive Director**: Executive Director

### Notes

This information has been gathered from a number of sources because the WA Film Council was not required to produce annual reports until 1988, and this author has not been able to afford to return to Perth to consult the extant reports to double check data.

Andrew Swanson was appointed to replace Brian Williams who had joined the Queensland Film Corporation in mid-1980. The change in board membership was announced on 11 November 1981.

In the Annual Report of the Western Australian Film Council for 1987/88, the ‘Note from Chairman’ was signed by Len Downs. He may have succeeded Bernard Wright in the latter part of 1987.
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CHAPTER TEN: Conclusion

The industry is accustomed to recovering from setbacks. That is why show business has a longer and more stable history than Christianity.

Paul H. Riomfalvy

A Bigger Picture: National Culture and Identity

If I should lift the choker-chain from the hook on the back of my front door, the family dog will arrive in seconds from where ever it is snoozing. The subtle friction of steel-on-steel is an acoustic signifier that alerts him to a universe of novel possibilities that the creak of the opening door does not. Other sounds speak of food or of freedom to romp in the lane.

A nation’s cultural identity is a huge assemblage of signifiers, capable of mythic and political deployment. Some are ineffable, others mundane; some are timeless, almost abstract, like the kangaroo logo employed by Qantas, or the profile of the Sydney Opera House; others are classical and literal like the lyrics of Down Under by Men At Work, or I Should Be So Lucky by Kylie Minogue, or iconic like the Ned Kelly images created by painter Sydney Nolan.

The factors that shape policy responses to cultural challenges also shape national culture and identity by assisting or preventing signifiers from acquiring shared symbolic value. The attendance of many young Australians as well as Prime Minister John Howard at successive commemorative services on Anzac Day at Gallipoli has contributed to the re-invention of Anzac Day as inclusive of women and families. The recognition of the massive Turkish losses in those battles may, one day, include Australians of Turkish descent in the Australian Anzac myth.

2 Colin Hay and Ron Strykert, Down Under, M.A.W., Melbourne, 1980.
Certainly the visit to Australia by the Turkish prime minister in December 2005 and the screening in Australia of a Turkish-made documentary on the Gallipoli campaign supported that process.

The awarding or denying of symbolic value is not in the hands of any one of the factors shaping policy alone but is the outcome of a process of conscious and unconscious negotiation. The negotiations are not, however, necessarily inclusive of all that may be touched by cultural policies. The creation of the state film agencies is one example. The introduction of green and gold as the colours worn by Australians competing at international sporting events is another. The latter involved little public consultation, but drew on familiar colour choices, the yellow of wattle blooms and the green of suburban lawns. It became accepted perhaps because these colours were chromatically distanced from British red-white-and-blue. Today the Indigenous Australia’s red-black-and-burnt umber stands at an equal chromatic distance on the other side, recognised but not yet universally respected.

Indeed, the ethnic heterogeneity of the Australian population adds further complexity to the contemplation of national culture and identity. Each new wave of immigration, from the earliest when more robust individuals seemingly displaced their gracile antecedents, to the recent influx of people from war-torn Vietnam, then Middle-eastern and African countries has diversified the signifiers in circulation and introduced into our largely Anglo-European culture markers that are specific to minority communities. Part of the challenge that the nation faces is to incorporate such idiosyncratic markers in a holistic identity without each and every one having universal currency or recognition.

The process of validation or rejection of signifiers is a continuing one. The Union Jack evokes few patriotic responses today, and the simian images in anti-Japanese propaganda evoke only curiosity. The slouch hat and Gallipoli are being re-invented, the boxing kangaroo awaits another America’s Cup yachting challenge.

The decades of the 1970s and 1980s were a time of expanding cultural self-confidence in Australia, not only in the cinema and television but in theatre, dance, literature and the visual arts. The period saw a reshaping of Australian culture and identity, as growth in the creative arts demanded new cultural policies, new solutions to new cultural challenges.
Cinema and television production was one public face of that self-confidence and, though film production for cinema can be discerned along a culture/commerce opposition—‘Industry-1 / Industry-2’ as Dermody and Jacka have characterised it, television was unashamedly mainstream. While few of the films in Table 2 in Chapter Nine had state film corporation backing—most were financed by Division 10BA deals that saw much money flow to the deal-makers and not to the screen—their success was a success shared by the industry as a whole, Industry 1 and Industry 2.

Was then the importance of the state film agencies as limited as Dermody and Jacka would have it? The argument here is that the state film agencies were significant as investors in and authenticators of cinema and television projects. Some were especially important in backing the miniseries boom. The state agencies contributed policy innovations such as Division 10BA and supported screen culture projects that the private sector would not, and they offered alternative sources of finance at that most speculative stage of project development, the first draft. Some, like the South Australian Film Corporation, enjoyed both commercial and cultural success; the Tasmania Film Corporation demonstrated that quality cinema and television could be produced on the periphery; and the Queensland Film Corporation, though doomed to disgrace, left in its wake the Gold Coast studios now home to much of the overseas production work done in Australia.

Equally important, the state agencies provided a constituency for the Australian Film Commission itself and one, the NSW Film Corporation, considered itself the true film corporation for Australia. Collectively, the state film agencies constituted a powerful voice when they chose to speak in chorus, and, within some states, they carried responsibility for part of the honour of the state and its citizens.

These two decades—the 1970s and 1980s—may now be regarded as the spring tide in Australian arts and cultural identity, such was the vitality of cultural production of the period. The subsequent decades have been less adventurous. Political patronage has been bureaucratised, agents of influence have become fewer and less influential and the

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5 The other government film organisations, especially the South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC), the New South Wales Film Corporation (NSWFC) and the Victorian Film Corporation (VFC – Film Victoria after 1981) were much less significant in shaping film policy [than the AFC]. Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka, *The Imaginary Industry: Australian film in the late ’80s*, Australian Film, Television and Radio School, North Ryde, 1988, p. 39.
culture producers and their cognoscenti corporatised. Audiences and consumers now seem more comfortable with soma than surprises.

At the time, state and Commonwealth governments responded to cultural challenges in ways that may also mark a high water of responsive and democratic practice in Australia: Australian cultural production was supported by the public purse, if not extravagantly, then certainly generously. For the first time our cultural production was valued by government and citizens at a price above its cost in hard cash.

In cinema and television, the state film agencies were crucial to that transformation. The investment and production policies of the state film agencies ensured that for the first time in five decades a specific but diverse national identity was visible in the mainstream of audio-visual media and that the producers, directors, writers and actors who created those images and reflected that identity were not solely domiciled on the eastern seaboard where the cities of Sydney and Melbourne had long held dominant positions in film production.

The recently agreed free trade agreement with the United States of America ‘locks in access for U.S. suppliers of films and television programming to the Australian market over a range of media, including cable, satellite and the Internet’ and ‘also limits Australia's ability to implement new measures to limit access in the broadcast and audiovisual sector.’6 If this agreement is not to stifle the presentation of images of a specific but diverse national identity in the mainstream of audio-visual media, then the cultural status of film and television production must rank higher in national importance than at present. In cinema and television, as elsewhere in cultural production, Australia must be clear about what past cultural policies have achieved, how the nation’s future is shaped by cultural as well as economic forces, and deploy innovative cultural policies to nurture an Australian cultural identity while continuing to trade in a global economic and cultural environment.

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### Appendix 2

**Time line: State film Agencies 1972–1990 as independent authorities.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>South Australian Film Corporation</th>
<th>Victorian Film Corporation</th>
<th>New South Wales Film Corporation</th>
<th>Tasmanian Film Corporation</th>
<th>Queensland Film Corporation</th>
<th>Western Australian Film Council</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

Life of agency:  
- ALP government: 
- Liberal–National Coalition government: 
- National government:

419
Appendix 3  Chronology: Cinema and State in Australia.

History of government involvement in the Australian film industry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type of involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910s to 1976</td>
<td>Entertainment taxes, both Commonwealth and state. Tasmania last government to withdraw.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-1917</td>
<td>State and Commonwealth Film Censorship Boards established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Cinema and Photographic Branch (Commonwealth production house) created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Weekly exhibition quota of British film introduced in Victoria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927-1928</td>
<td>Royal Commission into the Moving Picture Industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929 and 1933</td>
<td>Awards of Merit given by the Commonwealth Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Commission established (changed to Australian Broadcasting Corporation in 1983).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-1938</td>
<td>NSW quota on Australian film screenings and acquisitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-1940</td>
<td>Victorian quota on Australian films.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>NSW Act – restricted cinema building to prevent undue competition and waste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late 1950s</td>
<td>Similar Acts existed in Queensland and Tasmania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Customs tariff preference for Australian film production industry and to British films over American films.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1940</td>
<td>Government Documentary Films Committees in NSW, Vic, SA and Commonwealth established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>National Film Council established. Later renamed the Commonwealth Film Unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>then Film Australia (1973).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Australian Council for the Arts established. Later renamed the Australia Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Ceding of censorship powers to Commonwealth Censor by NSW, the last state to do so, with exception of South Australia, which still does its own censorship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969/70</td>
<td>First grants for film production from the Commonwealth Government’s Experimental Film Fund. Administered by the Australian Film Institute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1970</td>
<td>Australian Film Development Corporation established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>South Australian Film Corporation established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-1978</td>
<td>State film corporations established in WA, NSW, Queensland and Tasmania. Tasmanian Film Corporation later privatised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Australian Film Commission established (replaced the Australian Film Development Corporation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Victorian Film Corporation established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Tribunal established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Film Victoria established (replaced the Victorian Film Corporation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Tax Incentives Scheme (Division 10BA) introduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985 on</td>
<td>Several changes to 10BA; reducing the taxation incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Film Australia incorporated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1988</td>
<td>NSW Film &amp; Television Office set up (replaced the NSW Film Corporation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1988</td>
<td>Australian Film Finance Corporation established.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 4  Production and script development investments of the film agencies

The information presented here is a composite of a number of data sources.

In the case of South Australia Western Australia and Tasmania only completed productions are reported, and the data is drawn from annual reports. In the case of South Australia Appendix V of my Masters thesis may be consulted for a digest of all production or investment proposals put to the board between November 1972 and May 1976. That work was not extended here as the direction of research was different in the present work.

In New South Wales and Victoria the investment decisions of the agencies, as reported in the annual reports have been summarised for this appendix.

In Queensland there was, according to the officers of the Ministry for the Arts, considerable uncertainty about the investment portfolio of the corporation and much effort was put into reconstructing the corporation’s accounts after it was closed down. Thus the annual reports have been augmented by other sources, including a former board member Mike Williams and the former executive director Brian Williams. A copy was also supplied to the Queensland government for comment but nothing of significance to the accuracy of the QFC document was forthcoming.

Other sources include Albert Moran’s Images & Industry, Scott Murray’s Australia on the Small Screen and Australian Film 1978–1994 and of course Andrew Pike and Ross Copper’s Australian Film 1900–1977.

- South Australian Film Corporation
- Victorian Film Corporation / Film Victoria
- New South Wales Film Corporation
- Queensland film Corporation
- Tasmanian Film Corporation
- Western Australian Film Council / Screen West.
### Appendix 4: South Australian Film Corporation Major Productions 1973–1988 (including investment in other productions).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Producer(s)</th>
<th>PC</th>
<th>DOP</th>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Editor</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>YR</th>
<th>RT</th>
<th>Cast</th>
<th>Synopsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>WHO KILLED JENNY LANGBY?</td>
<td>Crombie, Donald</td>
<td>John Morris</td>
<td>South Australian Film Corporation for the South Australian Department for Community Welfare</td>
<td>Peter James</td>
<td>Greg Barker, Donald Crombie</td>
<td>Rod Adamson</td>
<td>Bob Allen</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>49 min</td>
<td>Julie Dawson, Peter Cummins; Host: Anne Deveson</td>
<td>Jenny is wife to an insensitive and unemployed husband and mother to four children. She reaches breaking point and suicides under a train. Anne Deveson, hosting a television programme, Crisis, about people under stress had, 16 months earlier, covered Jenny's attempted suicide. When she hears of Jenny's death she returns to find a family in an advanced stage of disintegration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>SUNDAY TOO FAR AWAY</td>
<td>Hannam, Ken</td>
<td>Gil Brealey, Matt Carroll</td>
<td></td>
<td>Geoff Burton</td>
<td>John Dingwall</td>
<td>Rod Adamson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rachel Roberts, Dominic Guard, Helen Morse, Jacki Weaver, Vivean Gray, Kirsty Child, Anne Lambert, Karen Robson, Jane Vallis, Christine Schuler, Margaret Nelson, John Jarratt, Ingrid Mason, John Fegan, Martin Vaughan, Gary McDonald, Frank Gunnell, Peter Collingsood, Oldga Dickie, Kay Taylor, Jenny Lovell, Janet Murray, Faith Kleinig</td>
<td>In the summer of 1900 three girls ascend a mysterious rock in the midst of the Australian bush and disappear. The Victorian girls' school for the daughters of the privileged is gradually destroyed from within by its inability to understand the forces confronting it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK</td>
<td>Weir, Peter</td>
<td>Hal McElroy, Jim McElroy, Patricia Lovell</td>
<td></td>
<td>Russell Boyd, Cam Op: John Seale</td>
<td>Cliff Green, from the novel by Joan Lindsay.</td>
<td>Max Lemon</td>
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<td>114 min</td>
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1976
Title: STORM BOY
Director: Safran, Henri
Producer: Matt Carroll
Writer: Sonia Borg
DOP: Geoff Burton
Editor: G. Turney-Smith
Art Director: David Coppin
Music: Michael Carlos
Running time: 87 min.
Cast: Greg Rowe, David Gulpilil, Peter Cummins
Synopsis: Internationally acclaimed feature film, about a lonely and shy boy's friendship with a pelican and a retired seaman. Based on the novel by Colin Thiele.

Title: FOURTH WISH, THE
Director: Chaffey, Don
Producer: John Morris
Writer: Michael Craig
DOP: Geoff Burton
Editor: G. Turney-Smith
Art Director: David Coppin
Music: Michael Carlos
Running time: 104 min
Cast: John Meillon, Robert Bettles, Robyn Nevin, Brian Anderson, Julie Dawson, Ann Haddy, Michael Craig, Max Wearing, Brian James, Don Crosby, Cul Cullen, Ron Haddrick, Julie Hamilton, Les Foxcroft, Moishe Smith
Synopsis: James Casey learns that his son Sean has developed a terminal illness. The boy is not to know about his condition and the father is to try to keep things as normal as possible while granting the boy three wishes.

1977
Title: SOUND OF LOVE, THE (AKA: TOUCH OF LOVE, THE)
Director: Power, John
Producer: Jane Scott

1978
Title: BLUE FIN
Director: Schultz, Carl
Producer: Hal McElroy
EP: Matt Carroll
Writer: Sonia Borg. From the novel by Colin Thiele.
DOP: Geoffrey Burton
Editor: Rod Adamson
Music: Michael Carlos.
Cast: Hardy Kruger, Greg Rowe, John Jarratt, Liddy Clark, Elspeth Ballantyne, Hugh Keays-Byrne, Alfred Bell, Ralph Cotterill, George Spartels, Jock Owen, John Godden, John Thompson, Kelly Aitken.
John Frawley, Graham Rouse, Terry Camilleri, Wayne Rodda, Peter Crossley, Brian Moore, Anne Mullinar, Max Cullen

**Synopsis:** This action adventure is set in the town of Streaky Bay, South Australia, among the people involved in the hunt for the famed southern Blue Fin tuna, it is the story of a young boy's relationship with his father, owner of the trawler Blue Fin, and the chance the boy has to prove himself.

**Title:** HARVEST OF HATE

**Director:** Thornhill, Michael

**Producer:** Jane Scott

**Writer:** Michael Thornhill

**DOP:** David Sanderson

**Editor:** G Turney-Smith

**Art Director:** David Copping

**Running time:** 75 min.

**Cast:** Dennis Grosvenor, Kris McQuade, Michael Aitkens, Richard Meikle, John Orcsik

**Synopsis:** Middle Eastern terrorists track two young Australians in the Simpson Desert.

**Title:** PLUMBER, THE

**Director:** Weir, Peter

**Producer:** Matt Carroll

**Writer:** Peter Weir

**DOP:** David Sanderson

**Editor:** G Turney-Smith

**Art Director:** Wendy Weir

**Running time:** 74 min.

**Cast:** Judy Morris, Ivan Kants, Robert Coleby, Henri Szeps, Candy Raymond

**Synopsis:** Set in the apartment of a university doctor's wife, the plumber employed by the university systematically terrourises her.

**Title:** WEEKEND OF SHADOWS

**Director:** Tom Jeffrey

**Producer:** Tom Jeffrey, Matt Carroll

**Writer:** Peter Yeldham, adapted from The Reckoning by Hugh Atkinson.

**DOP:** Richard Wallace

**Editor:** Rod Adamson

**1979**

**Title:** MONEY MOVERS, THE

**Director:** Beresford, Bruce

**Producer:** Matt Carroll

**Writer:** Bruce Beresford, original story: Devan Minchin

**DOP:** Don McAlpine

**Editor:** William Anderson

**Art Director:** David Copping

**Running time:** 92 min


**Synopsis:** A security officer plans to rob Head Office with his gang, but is pressured and intimidated by a policeman, a businessman and an insurance investigator. A solid thriller with a violent ending, controversial at the time.

**Title:** DAWN!

**Director:** Hannam, Ken

**Producer:** Joy Cavill

**EP:** Jill C. Robb

**Writer:** Joy Cavill

**DOP:** Russell Boyd

**Editor:** Max Lemon

**Art Director:** Ross Major

**Running time:** 109 min

426

Synopsis: A private and professional biopic of Dawn Fraser, Olympic swimming champion, from her early days of swimming to being retired in her local Sydney suburb of Balmain.

1980
Title: CLUB, THE (AKA: PLAYERS)
Director: Beresford, Bruce
Producer: Matt Carroll
Writer: David Williamson
DOP: Don McAlpine
Art director: David Copping
Music: Mike Brady
Editor: William Anderson
RT: 96 min
Cast: Jack Thompson, Graham Kennedy, Harold Hopkins, John Howard, Frank Wilson, Alan Cassell, Maggie Doyle, Lou Richards, Toni Gay Shaw, Jack Harris, Frank Haggart, Jim Cain, Gary Files, Ed Turley, Scot Palmer, Ron Carter, Nick Harvey, Ann Henderson, Diana Greentree, John Proper, Susan Hopkins
Synopsis: The Club is about a VFL football club in Melbourne. When one of the players demands a higher price the Club's management have different ideas.
Synopsis: A 1970s style soft-core porno, set in South Pacific airline ferrying sex-starved passengers to Tahiti. The dialogue is heavily laced with double entendres. The SAFC’s name did not appear in the credits.

1983
Title: FIRE IN THE STONE
Director: Gary Conway
Producer: Pamela H. Vanneck
EP: Jock Blair
Writer: Graeme Koetsveld, based on the novel by Colin Thiele
DOP: Ross Berryman
Art director: Derek Mills
Music: Gary & Anita Hardman
Sound: Lloyd Carrick, James Currie
Editor: Phillip Reid
Running time: 94 min
Synopsis: Children’s adventure set in the opal mining fields of Coober Pedy.

Title: PLAYING BEATIE BOW
Director: Don Crombie
Producer: Jock Blair
Writer: Peter Gawler, from the novel by Ruth Park
DOP: Geoffrey Simpson
Art director: George Liddle, Anna Wade
Sound: Robert Cutcher
Editor: A.J. Prowse
Running time: 93 min
Synopsis: Abigail is a discontented teenager who encounters Beatie who takes her way back to The Rocks area of 19th century Sydney.

Television series/miniseries
Stacey’s Gym (two pilots) 1973–75
Director: Don Crombie
Writer: Anne Brooksbank

River Boy (one pilot) with US Hanna-Barbera.

1982
Title: SARA DANE
Director: Gary Conway, Rod Hardy
Producer: Jock Blair
Writer: Alan Seymour, novel by Catherine Gaskin
DOP: Ernie Clark
Art Director: Christopher Webster
Sound: Robert Clayton
Editor: 
Running time: 2 x 2 hours (248 min.)
Cast: Juliet Jordan, Harold Hopkins, Brenton Whittle, Barry Quin Sean Scully.
Synopsis: A rags-to-riches story of a young servant girl transported to the colony of NSW for a crime she did not commit.

1984
Title: UNDER CAPRICORN
Director: Rod Hardy
Producer: Jock Blair
Writer: Tony Morphett, novel by Helen Simpson
DOP: Ernest Clark
Art Director: Leslie Binns, Anna Senior
Music: Garry Hardman
Sound: Lloyd Carrick
Editor: Philip Reid
Running time: 2 x 2 hours
Cast: Lisa Harrow, John Hallam, Peter Cousens, Julia Blake, Jim Holt, Catherine Lynch, Peter Collingwood, Daphne Gray
Synopsis: Set in colonial era NSW, it is the story of frustrated love and of terrible secrets.

1985
Title: ROBBERY UNDER ARMS
Director: Ken Hannam, Donald Crombie
Producer: Jock Blair
EP: John Morris
Writer: Graeme Koestveld, Tony Morphett, novel by Rolf Boldrewood
DOP: Ernest Clark

1988
Title: THE SHIRALEE
Director: George Ogilvie
Producer: Bruce Moir
EP: Jock Blair
Writer: Tony Morphett, novel by D’Arcy Niland
DOP: Geoffrey Simpson
Art Director: Kristen Fredrikson, Anna French
Music: Chris Neal
Sound editor: Denise Haratzis
Editor: Robert Gibson
Running time: 2 x 2 hours (161 min.)
Cast: Bryan Brown, Noni Hazlehurst, Rebecca Smart, Lewis Fitz-Gerald, Lorna Lesley, Ned Manning, Madeline Blackwell.
Synopsis: The story of a growing love between an itinerant father and the daughter (the shiralee or burden) who accompanies him on the road, looking for work in out-back Australia.

The SAFC also was an investor in The Last Wave (Peter Weir 1977) and supported the development of Gallipoli (Peter Weir 1981) before selling its rights to Patricia Lovell who subsequently produced the film. The corporation also developed a German-Australian TV series, The Valley Divided, but did not shoot a pilot before abandoning the project.
Appendix 4: Projects Approved by the VFC / Film Victoria 1976–1988

This information is based principally on the annual reports of the corporation Nos 1–12. The data is reported verbatim and relates to decisions within the relevant financial year. Where a production did not proceed or the investment was not taken up, this is noted if known. This listing does not include government-sponsored films, marketing loans or screen culture projects.

Financial Year 1976/77

**Feature films**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Production Company</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Getting of Wisdom</td>
<td>Southern Cross Films</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summerfield</td>
<td>Clare Beach Films</td>
<td>76,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Search of Anna</td>
<td>Storm Productions</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>Quest Productions</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary and Joe</td>
<td>Whitbrown</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith</td>
<td>The Film House</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Weekend</td>
<td>Dugong Films</td>
<td>40,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouth to Mouth</td>
<td>Vega Productions</td>
<td>85,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mad Max</td>
<td>Mad Max Productions</td>
<td>50,000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bed</td>
<td>Producers &amp; Directors Guild</td>
<td>150,000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Television**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Production Company</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young Ramsey</td>
<td>Crawford Productions</td>
<td>119,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Documentary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Production Company</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Documentaries</td>
<td>Educational Media Australia</td>
<td>34,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Making of In Search of Anna</td>
<td>AVEC</td>
<td>13,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Healers/Men of the Long Tails</td>
<td>Harry Martin</td>
<td>27,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three TV Pilots</td>
<td>Warrnambool Education Centre</td>
<td>9,850</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Script development investments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Writers</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My Brilliant Career.</td>
<td>Margaret Fink/Eleanor Whitcombe</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence.</td>
<td>Phillip Adams/Sol Shulman</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird’s Eye View of Australia.</td>
<td>Michael Berry/Michael Berry</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Game of Chess.</td>
<td>Giorgio Mangiamele/Max Richards</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimboola.</td>
<td>The Pram Factory/Jack Hibberd</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusty Bugles</td>
<td>Henry Crawford/Michael Jenkins</td>
<td>5,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** $1,188,368

*Project not proceeded with.  **Investment not taken up.

Financial Year 1977/78

**Feature films**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Production Company</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Search of Anna</td>
<td>Storm Prod. Pty Ltd</td>
<td>23,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith</td>
<td>Filmhouse Aust. Pty Ltd</td>
<td>350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>Patrick Prod. Pty Ltd</td>
<td>78,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouth to Mouth</td>
<td>Vega Films</td>
<td>85,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimboola.</td>
<td>Pram Factory Prod. Pty Ltd</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grendel, Grendel, Grendel</td>
<td>Animation Aust. Pty Ltd</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last of the Knucklemen</td>
<td>Hexagon Prod. Pty Ltd</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Television**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Production Company</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Sullivans</td>
<td>Crawford Production</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi</td>
<td>Russell Hagg</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Documentary**
Financial Year 1978/79

Feature films
Grendel, Grendel, Grendel  Animation Aust. Pty Ltd  207,000
Kostas  Kostas Film Productions  100,000
Snapshot  Brigalow Nominees  50,000
Thirst  F. G. Film Productions  50,000

Television
Taxi  Russell Hagg  25,000
Water Under the Bridge  Shotton Productions  191,189
Young Ramsey Series II  Crawford Productions  110,000

Documentary
Death Railway  David Bilcock  3,000
Faith Healers  Harry Martin  2,500
Australian Landforms  Educational Media Australia  2,823

Total  $741,512

Script development investments
Water under the Bridge  Preproduction costs  6099
Tiger in the Bush  Possible Children’s Feature Film — Feasibility Expenses  139
Rose Castle  David Baker  2,500
We of the Never Never  Igor Auzins  5,500
Needs Must  Mary Wilton  3,000
Clement  Franco Cavarra  3,400
Shenandoah  William Pitt  1,000
Truthful & the Professor  Frank Hardy  10,000
Krabs & the Karboys  Chris Lofven Productions  2,500
The Anzacs  Cambridge Productions  9,500

Total  $43,638
### Financial Year 1979/80

#### Feature films
- Grendel, Grendel, Grendel: Animation Aust. Pty Ltd, 75,000
- The Chain Reaction: Palm Beach Pictures (Freeway) Pty Ltd, 150,000

#### Television
- Young Ramsey Series II: Crawford Productions, 52,500
- Bedfellows: AAV Australia, 20,000
- A Town Like Alice: Alice Productions, 200,000
- Water Under the Bridge: Shotton Productions, 55,000
- Ned Kelly Centenary Program: Don Bennetts, 25,000

#### Documentary
- Convergent Evolution: Educational Media Australia, 4,000

**TOTAL** $225,000

### Script development investments
- We of the Never Never: Igor Auzins, 7,500
- Needs Must: Mary Wilton, 5,500
- Cape Wilde: Rob Brow, 4,200
- Clement: Franco Cavarra, 5,000
- Billy: Greg Harper, 5,000
- King Hit: Capricorn Film Prod. Pty Ltd, 5,000
- Day of the Happy Event: Monte Miller, 3,600
- Krabs & the Karboys: Chris Lofven Productions, 5,850
- 5, 4, 3, 2, 1: Charles Tingwell, 1,500
- The Anzacs: Cambridge Productions, 9,500
- How Does Your Garden Grow: Carillo Gantner, 3,000
- Dejavu: John Duigan, 3,000
- Collingwood: Alan Hopwood, 8,400
- The Competitors: Karin Altmann, 6,000
- Blockbuster: Phillip Adams, 5,000
- Dusty: Kestrel Films (Australia), 10,000
- Troublemakers: Sonia Borg, 4,300
- Water Carrier: Andrew Hanos, 3,000
- The Man from Snowy River: Yenan Productions P/L, 8,400

**TOTAL** $99,950

### Financial Year 1980/81

#### Feature films
- Roadgames: Quest Films, 150,000
- Duet for Four: Burstall Nominees, 200,000
- Squizzy Taylor: Simpson Le Mesurier Films, 300,000

#### Children’s television
- Not Suitable for Adults: Pat Hunder and West Productions, 47,500

#### Television
- Ned Kelly: Don Bennetts, 25,000
- Water Under the Bridge: Shotton Productions, 21,500
- Black Planet: Paul Williams, 51,100

#### Other
- Six Training Films: Seven Dimensions, 21,000

**TOTAL** $816,100
### Script development investments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Writer(s)</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>Alan Hopgood</td>
<td>2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billabong</td>
<td>Simon Wincer</td>
<td>15,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Man from Snowy River</td>
<td>Yenan Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billy</td>
<td>Greg Harper</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Competitor</td>
<td>Karin Altman</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clement</td>
<td>Franco Cavarra</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dusty</td>
<td>Kestrel Films (Australia)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anzacs</td>
<td>Cambridge Productions</td>
<td>3,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troublemaker</td>
<td>Sonia Borg</td>
<td>5,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We of the Never Never</td>
<td>Igor Auzins</td>
<td>6,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast Creek</td>
<td>Ben Lewin</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carboni</td>
<td>Margaret McClusky and Franco Cav</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMX Bandits</td>
<td>Russel Hagg</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haxby’s Circus</td>
<td>Shotton Productions</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Carrier</td>
<td>Andrew Hanos</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caravan Park</td>
<td>Brian McKenzie</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$65,625</strong></td>
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### Financial Year 1981/82

#### Feature films

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Studio</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Man from Snowy River</td>
<td>Snowy River Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>18,732</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMX Bandits</td>
<td>Russell Hagg</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squizzy Taylor</td>
<td>Simpson Le Mesurier Films</td>
<td>150,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dusty</td>
<td>Dusty Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>139,615</td>
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</table>

#### Documentary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Writer(s)</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomastown</td>
<td>Lee Burton</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey to the End of Night</td>
<td>Peter Tammer</td>
<td>6,519</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### Television

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Studio</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camel Train Downstream</td>
<td>Highland Productions</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sullivans (Series Two)</td>
<td>Crawford Productions (Scriptplay) Pty Ltd</td>
<td>200,000</td>
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</table>

| **TOTAL**                    |                                  | **$543,866**|

### Script development investments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Writer(s)</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betwixt</td>
<td>Russel Hagg</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billabong</td>
<td>Simon Wincer</td>
<td>3,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Castle Keeps</td>
<td>Randall Berger and Chris Jennings</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spooks</td>
<td>Ivan Hexter</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Place or Mine</td>
<td>Patrick Edgeworth</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast Creek</td>
<td>Ben Lewin</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blockbuster</td>
<td>Adams Packer Film Productions</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everybody’s Talking</td>
<td>Philip Ackman and Adrian Tame</td>
<td>2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haxby’s Circus</td>
<td>Shotton Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>12,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldorado Park</td>
<td>Brian McKenzie</td>
<td>11,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Matters</td>
<td>Roger Dunn</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slim Dusty</td>
<td>Chadwick McMahon Productions</td>
<td>8,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Star Motel</td>
<td>Forrest Redlich</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Side Brief</td>
<td>Russell Hagg</td>
<td>407</td>
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</table>

| **TOTAL**                    |                                  | **$71,773**|
### Financial Year 1982/83

**Feature films**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Studio/Producer</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strikebound</td>
<td>TRM Productions</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Phantom Treehouse</td>
<td>Fable Films</td>
<td>13,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slim Dusty</td>
<td>The Slim Dusty Movie Ltd</td>
<td>258,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldorado Park</td>
<td>Standard Films Ltd</td>
<td>200,000</td>
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**Television**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Studio/Producer</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naked under Capricorn</td>
<td>Bloodwood films</td>
<td>280,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Documentary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Studio/Producer</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camel Train Downstream</td>
<td>Highland Productions</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomastown</td>
<td>Lee Burton</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia’s Hidden Wealth</td>
<td>Emilinski Ltd</td>
<td>59,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whalesavers</td>
<td>Bethune/Levy Productions</td>
<td>5,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Script development investments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Studio/Producer</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haxby’s Circus</td>
<td>Shotton Productions</td>
<td>39,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nemesis</td>
<td>Glen Crawford</td>
<td>8,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everybody’s Talking</td>
<td>Adrian Tame and Philip Ackman</td>
<td>12,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast Creek</td>
<td>Ben Lewin</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survival Camp</td>
<td>Serge de Nardo</td>
<td>4,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon</td>
<td>Hugh Stuckey and Sue Woolfe</td>
<td>5,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Matters</td>
<td>Roger Dunn</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Living Canvas</td>
<td>Lindsay Foote</td>
<td>1,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crow in a Barbed Wire Fence</td>
<td>E. McQueenMason</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demons Rising</td>
<td>Ivan Hexter</td>
<td>22,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fit for Heroes</td>
<td>Cliff Green</td>
<td>9,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buckley’s Hope</td>
<td>Tom Haydon</td>
<td>1,130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edge of the Forest</td>
<td>Paul Cox/Norman Kaye</td>
<td>11,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Last Star Model</td>
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**TOTAL**

$649,134

**TOTAL Script investments**

$171,852
## Financial Year 1983/84

### Feature Films

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**TOTAL** $275,090
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<td>Slate Me and Blanch McBride</td>
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**Financial Year 1984/85**

**Feature Films**

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**Television**

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436
## General Documentaries

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## Script Development

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437
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film Title</th>
<th>Studio</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Colin Golvan</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Pledge</td>
<td>George Mallaby</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ritual</td>
<td>Fable Films</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Steam Driven Adventures of Riverboat Bill</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Tale of Ruby Rose</td>
<td>Roger Scholes</td>
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<tr>
<td>This is Brutus</td>
<td>Margaret Marshall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traces</td>
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<tr>
<td>W.H. O.</td>
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Financial Year 1985/86

**Feature Films**

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<td>The Lighthorsemen</td>
<td>Picture Show Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rikki and Peter</td>
<td>Cascade films Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slate &amp; Wyn and Blanche McBride</td>
<td>International Film Management Ltd</td>
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<td>Seon Film Productions Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Warm Night on a Slow Moving Train</td>
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**Television**

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<tr>
<td>Coopers Crossing</td>
<td>Crawford Productions (Series) Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Crawford Productions Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Flowers of Retimo</td>
<td>Media World Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Kaboodle</td>
<td>A.C.T.F. Productions Ltd</td>
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**Genera Documentaries**

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<td>The Moving Picture Company Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>A Palette for a Sword</td>
<td>Yarra Bank Films Pty Ltd</td>
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**Script Development**

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<td>Hips Film Productions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>Mariner Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>10,215</td>
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<tr>
<td>Batavia</td>
<td>Rene Roelofs</td>
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<td>Block 13</td>
<td>Francis Brighta</td>
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<td>Capturing Sunshine</td>
<td>Michael Karaglandis</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Clock</td>
<td>J’elly Ballantyne Productions Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Coaster (formerly Leichardt)</td>
<td>Geoff Pollock</td>
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<td>Crime and Comedians</td>
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<td>Ann Darouzet</td>
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<td>The Drover’s Boy</td>
<td>Peter Oyston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Factory Girls</td>
<td>John Lonie &amp; Ray Quint</td>
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<td>Family Matters</td>
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<td>Rod Kinnear Productions (Aust.) Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Fire Country</td>
<td>Ian Lang</td>
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<td>A Fishing Story (formerly Caravan Woman)</td>
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<td>The Gift</td>
<td>The Australian Children’s TV Foundation</td>
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<td>Entity Name</td>
<td>Amount</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gold Fever</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Zero (formerly Maralinga)</td>
<td>Street Films Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Growing Up</td>
<td>Argosy Films Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Gulls</td>
<td>Robert Hewett</td>
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<td>Henderson Kids II</td>
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<td>The Impersonator</td>
<td>Steven Downes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invasion of Privacy (formerly Manly Ferry Incident)</td>
<td>Kent Chadwick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isabelle Eberhardt</td>
<td>Seon Film Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>8,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jack of Cape Grim</td>
<td>Impact Investigative Media Productions</td>
<td>3,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Last Gasp</td>
<td>Peter Dann</td>
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<td>Listen to the Silence</td>
<td>Harry Howlett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marc</td>
<td>Alison Tilson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Messages from Spain</td>
<td>Russell Porter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monty’s Choice</td>
<td>Tony Mahood</td>
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<tr>
<td>The More We Are together</td>
<td>Paul Davies Film and TV Enterprises Pty Ltd</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Next To Die (formerly Nason Next You Die)</td>
<td>Film &amp; General Holdings (Aust.) Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Options</td>
<td>Rosa Colisimo Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>A Palette for a Sword</td>
<td>Yarra Bank Films Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pardon My Heart</td>
<td>Lynda Watts</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Perfect Moment</td>
<td>Colin Golvan</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Quest of Harvey Cornelstein</td>
<td>Chris Quigley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruby Rose</td>
<td>Roger Scholes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Save the Last Dance for Me</td>
<td>Kent Chadwick &amp; Dennis Tupicoff</td>
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<td>Seed and the Stone</td>
<td>Bruce Walshe</td>
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<td>Sheila</td>
<td>Rick Held</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Straw (formerly The Boom Years)</td>
<td>Robert Pendlebury</td>
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<td>Slate &amp; Wyn and Blanche Mc Bride</td>
<td>Ukiyo Films Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Snowy and the Whale</td>
<td>Margaret Marshall</td>
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<tr>
<td>So You Said You Wanted a Revolution</td>
<td>Diane O’Connor, Brian Pola &amp; Ian Charleson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syndrome</td>
<td>Adam Kliska</td>
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<tr>
<td>To Market To Market</td>
<td>Goosey Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tribe</td>
<td>Cineco</td>
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<td>Who</td>
<td>Lampred Nominees Pty Ltd</td>
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**TOTAL**                                         **$331,845**

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**Pre-production**

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<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Australia Day Weekend</td>
<td>J’elly Ballantyne productions Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dogs in Space</td>
<td>Glenys Rowe &amp; Richard Lowenstein</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Zero</td>
<td>Street Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tale of Ruby Rose</td>
<td>Seon Film Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Market To Market</td>
<td>Goosey Ltd</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribe</td>
<td>Cineco</td>
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**TOTAL**                                         **$52,900**

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**Independent Filmmakers’ Fund**

<table>
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<th>Entity Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arguing the Toss of a Cat</td>
<td>Paul Brown &amp; Christine Sammers</td>
<td>3,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diary of a Vietnam Conscript</td>
<td>Mark Worth</td>
<td>2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feathers</td>
<td>John Ruane, Ken Sallows, Timothy White</td>
<td>22,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Truths</td>
<td>Michael Rogowski</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Hundred Percent Wool</td>
<td>Tony Mahood and Lynda House</td>
<td>18,300</td>
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**TOTAL**                                         **$49,300**

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439
### Financial Year 1986/87

#### Feature Films

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<td>Bushfire Moon</td>
<td>Entertainment Media Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cactus</td>
<td>Dofine Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mullaway</td>
<td>Ukiyo Films (Aust.) Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pieta</td>
<td>Ebony Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>230,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rikki and Pete</td>
<td>Cascade Films Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Brothers Running</td>
<td>Phillip Emanuel Productions</td>
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#### Television

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Young Writers Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coopers Crossing</td>
<td>Crawford Productions Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Dusty</td>
<td>Kestrel Film Productions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flying Doctors II</td>
<td>Crawford Productions Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Just Us</td>
<td>Entertainment Media Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>With Love to the Person Next to Me</td>
<td>Standard Films Ltd</td>
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#### General Documentaries

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelvin and His Friends</td>
<td>Brian McKenzie &amp; John Cruthers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lighthouse of Sanity</td>
<td>Q. F. Productions</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Maltese Connection</td>
<td>Charls Mangion &amp; Barry Merton</td>
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<td>Painting the Town</td>
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#### Script Development

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<tbody>
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<td>All the Way</td>
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<tr>
<td>The American Boys</td>
<td>Peter Herbert &amp; Casey Jones</td>
<td>6,650</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>Mariner Films Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aya</td>
<td>Solrun Hoaas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berrigan and Family</td>
<td>Michael Harvey &amp; Peter Herbert</td>
<td>2,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Best Foot Forward</td>
<td>Michael Harvey &amp; Peter Herbert</td>
<td>4,750</td>
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<td>Café Mozart</td>
<td>Frank Heimans</td>
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<td>The Cellophane Man</td>
<td>Coral Drouyn</td>
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<td>Merryweather Productions Ltd</td>
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<td>J’elly Ballianteine Productions Ltd</td>
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<td>Tasman Film International Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Day We Turned Around</td>
<td>James Clayden &amp; Stephen Cummings</td>
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<td>A Difficult Woman</td>
<td>Bob Weiss</td>
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<td>The Drovers Boy</td>
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<td>Factory Girls</td>
<td>John Lonie &amp; Ray Quint</td>
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<td>Freud &amp; the Nazis Go Surfing</td>
<td>G. &amp; S. Productions Ltd</td>
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<td>The Golden Mile</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gossamer</td>
<td>Robert Hewett</td>
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<td>Hope</td>
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<td>The Impersonator</td>
<td>Steven Downes</td>
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<td>In Our Lifetimes</td>
<td>Howard Griffith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isabelle Eberhardt</td>
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<td>Jake of Cape Grimm</td>
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<td>Jacks</td>
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<td>Jacobs Dream</td>
<td>Alan Madden</td>
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<td>Jesse</td>
<td>Rhonda Wilson</td>
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<td>Jumping the Beat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keeping the Peace</td>
<td>Quantum Script Services Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listen to the Silence</td>
<td>Harry Howlett</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Magistrate</td>
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<td>Mullaway</td>
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<td>Next to Die</td>
<td>Ross Dimsey</td>
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<td>Now You See It Now You Don’t</td>
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<td>Rebel Guardians</td>
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<td>Rhoda-Dendron</td>
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<td>A Rivermans Story</td>
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<td>Room to Move</td>
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<td>Running Wild</td>
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<td>Saturdays Child-The Suzanne Steel Story</td>
<td>Joseph Talia</td>
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<td>Save the Last Dance for Me</td>
<td>Kent Chadwick &amp; Denis Tupicoff</td>
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<td>The Secret Downunder</td>
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<td>Short Fuse</td>
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<td>So You Said You Wanted a Revolution</td>
<td>Diane O’Conner, Brian Pala &amp; Ian Charleston</td>
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<td>Michael Gurr &amp; Brian Kavanagh</td>
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<td>Trouble with My Heart</td>
<td>Janet McLeod &amp; Georgina Wallace-Crabbe</td>
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<td>The Visit</td>
<td>Simpson Le Mesurier Films Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>The Von Kessel Dossier</td>
<td>Rosa Colisimo Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Waiting for the End of the World</td>
<td>Lee Harding &amp; John Baxter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whats the Difference II &amp; III</td>
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**TOTAL** $597,368
### Pre-production

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<td>Blind Faith</td>
<td>Brian Douglas</td>
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<td>Darlings</td>
<td>Simpson Le Mesurier Films Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>The Lost Domain</td>
<td>Murray Mancha Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Save the Last Dance for Me</td>
<td>Kent Chadwick &amp; Denis Tupicoff</td>
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**TOTAL** $89,068

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### Independent Filmmakers Fund

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<tr>
<td>Arguing the Toss of a Cat</td>
<td>Paul Brown &amp; Christine Sammers</td>
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<td>Cruel Youth</td>
<td>Tony Ayres</td>
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<td>Diary of a Vietnam Conscript</td>
<td>Mark Worth</td>
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<td>Feathers</td>
<td>John Ruane, Ken Sallows, Timothy White</td>
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<td>Home Truths</td>
<td>Michael Rogowski</td>
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<td>Louder than Words</td>
<td>Jenny Harding</td>
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<td>One Hundred Percent Wool</td>
<td>Tony Mahood and Lynda House</td>
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<td>Smoke ‘em if You’ve Got Them</td>
<td>Ray Bosley</td>
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<td>A Swimmer Drowning</td>
<td>Jan Sardi</td>
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<td>Trevor Island</td>
<td>John Taylor</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Ventriloquist</td>
<td>James Clayden</td>
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<td>Your Money or Your Legs</td>
<td>Mark Hanlin, Lucy McLaren</td>
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**TOTAL** $402,541

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### Financial Year 1987/88

#### Feature Films

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<tr>
<td>Batchelor Girl</td>
<td>Yarra Bank Films Pty Ltd</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushfire Moon</td>
<td>Entertainment Media Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celia</td>
<td>Seon Film Productions (Aust.) Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compo</td>
<td>Sunrise Picture Co. Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mullaway</td>
<td>Ukiyo Films (Aust.) Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Takeover</td>
<td>Phillip Emmanuel Productions Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>To Market, To Market</td>
<td>Goosey Ltd</td>
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**TOTAL** $978,301

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#### Television

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<tr>
<td>All the Way</td>
<td>Crawford Productions Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Broadcast Test Transmission</td>
<td>Television Unlimited</td>
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<td>Darlings of the Gods</td>
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<td>Flying Doctors III</td>
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<td>Flying Doctors IV</td>
<td>Crawford Productions Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>The Gift</td>
<td>Australian Children’s Television Foundation</td>
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<td>Raw Silk</td>
<td>Television House Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Sugar and Spice</td>
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**TOTAL** $1,675,569

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### General Documentaries

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<td>Animated</td>
<td>Craig Monahan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia’s Day</td>
<td>Velate Holdings Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greatest (Little) Show on Earth</td>
<td>Motet Nominees Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent Company</td>
<td>Media World Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Japanese Snipe Project</td>
<td>Charles Kenneth Taylor</td>
<td>8,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Painting the Town</td>
<td>Yarra bank Films Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Thanks Girls and Good Bye</td>
<td>New Ground Productions</td>
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<td>Yanyuwa History Project</td>
<td>Fruitcake Productions</td>
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### Script Development

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<td>Ukiyo Films (Aust.) Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alison Street</td>
<td>Simpson Le Mesurier Films Pty Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>The American Boys</td>
<td>Peter Herbert &amp; Casey Jones</td>
<td>3,350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aya</td>
<td>Solrun Hoaas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better off in a Home</td>
<td>Jon Stephens, Magic Media Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>The Big Australian</td>
<td>Entertainment Media Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Francis Brighta</td>
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<td>Breakaway</td>
<td>J’Elly Ballantyne Productions Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>By the Wings of a Moth</td>
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<td>Bourke</td>
<td>Jocelyn Moorhouse</td>
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<td>Cafe Mozart</td>
<td>Frank Heimans</td>
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<td>Catching the Jones</td>
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<td>Do You Want to Know a Secret</td>
<td>Jan Sardi, Victorian International Pictures</td>
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<td>Beverley Phillips</td>
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<td>Percy &amp; Rose</td>
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<td>The Suzanne Steele Story</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arguing the Toss of a Cat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonza</td>
<td>Deborah Hoare &amp; David Swann</td>
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<tr>
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<td>&amp; SalliEngelander</td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher than High</td>
<td>Virginia Murray &amp;Elizabeth Meyers</td>
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<td>Lover Boy</td>
<td>Daniel Scharf &amp; Geoffrey Wright</td>
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<td>Smoke ’em if You’ve Got Them</td>
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<td>Against the Innocent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>$108,892</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No credits were given in the annual report for the recipients of the Creative Initiatives Program grants.
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Appendix 4: Project Approved by the NSW Film Corporation 1976–1988

Financial Year 1976/77

An investment of $120,000 in *The Picture Show Man* (John Power 1977) was announced simultaneously with the formation of the Interim NSW Film Commission. During the second reading speech the premier Neville Wran mentioned investment of $100,000 in *Newsfront* (Phillip Noyce 1978) and $175,000 in ‘123 Palmer Street’. The latter was a project of Keith Salvat that did not proceed to production.

Financial Year 1977/78 (includes completion guarantees and marketing advances)

[Feature Films]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Studio</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newsfront</td>
<td>Palm Beach Pictures Pty Ltd</td>
<td>398,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Night The Prowler</td>
<td>Chariot Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>434,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Money Makers [sic]</td>
<td>South Australian Film Corporation</td>
<td>125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Odd Angry Shot</td>
<td>Samson Film services Pty Ltd</td>
<td>125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>Pisces Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy’s Child</td>
<td>CB Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>74,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimboola</td>
<td>Pram Factory Pictures (Management) Pty Ltd</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Brilliant Career</td>
<td>Margaret Fink Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>20,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sub-Total $1,352,617

Script/Project Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dempsey</td>
<td>Camilla Roundtree/Igor Auzins</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminus</td>
<td>Colin Waddy</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Captain’s Family</td>
<td>Chris McGill</td>
<td>1,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Flynn Story</td>
<td>Ken Quinnell</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedfellows</td>
<td>Michael Robertson Film Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Promotion of Mr Smith</td>
<td>Stephen Wallace/Bob Jewson</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday City</td>
<td>Bert Deling</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Stranger for the Reprieve</td>
<td>John Duigan</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sub-Total 18,630

GRAND TOTAL $1,371,247

Financial Year 1978/79

[Feature Films]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Studio</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Picture Show Man</td>
<td>Limelight Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsfront</td>
<td>Palm Beach Pictures Pty Ltd</td>
<td>305,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Night The Prowler</td>
<td>Chariot Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>503,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Money Movers</td>
<td>South Australian Film Corporation</td>
<td>155,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Odd Angry Shot</td>
<td>Samson Film services Pty Ltd</td>
<td>145,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>Pisces Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Brilliant Career</td>
<td>Margaret Fink Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>592,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy’s Child</td>
<td>CB Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>83,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimboola</td>
<td>Pram Factory Pictures (Management) Pty Ltd</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Yakka</td>
<td>Hard Yakka Production Pty Ltd</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Last of the Knucklemen</td>
<td>Hexagon Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Journalist</td>
<td>F. J. Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>325,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirst</td>
<td>F. G. Film Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>420,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe this Time</td>
<td>Anne Brooksbank and Bob Ellis</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stir</td>
<td>Smiley Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>11,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Rise</td>
<td>Keith Salvat</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sub-Total $2,986,019
### Script/Project Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Director(s)</th>
<th>Budget ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dempsey</td>
<td>Camilla Roundtree/Igor Auzins</td>
<td>12,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminus</td>
<td>Colin Waddy</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Captain’s Family</td>
<td>Chris McGill</td>
<td>1,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Flynn Story</td>
<td>Ken Quinell</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedfellows</td>
<td>Michael Robertson Film Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>4,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stir</td>
<td>Stephen Wallace/Bob Jewson</td>
<td>11,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday City</td>
<td>Bert Deling</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Stranger for the Reprieve</td>
<td>John Duigan</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit of the Year</td>
<td>Michael Robertson Film Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>9,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings Cross</td>
<td>Tim Gooding and Mark Stiles;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Runaways</td>
<td>Martin Phelan</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star Courier</td>
<td>Driftaway Productions</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kavanagh/Ellis Feature</td>
<td>Anne Brooksbank and Bob Ellis</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needles</td>
<td>Stoney Creek Films</td>
<td>8,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above the Knee Belongs Me</td>
<td>Carlene Hardy</td>
<td>9,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedy Script Competition</td>
<td>Donald McDonald &amp; Michael Robertson</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save the Lady</td>
<td>Yoram Gross Film Studios Pty Ltd</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farewell Sister</td>
<td>Terry Bourke</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four Legged Lottery</td>
<td>Frank Hardy</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Deaths than One</td>
<td>Jane Scott, Hilary Lindstead and Robert English</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Rise</td>
<td>Keith Salvat</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushfire</td>
<td>McElroy &amp; McElroy Pty Ltd</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis/Brooksbank Package</td>
<td>Boban Entertainment Services Pty Ltd</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls</td>
<td>CB Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>6,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Magus of Mungaroo</td>
<td>Theo Van Leeuwen &amp; Cintel Production Services Pty Ltd</td>
<td>3,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hail the Liberated Man</td>
<td>John Dingwall</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Me and the Others</td>
<td>Floating Bridge Productions</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Little Victims</td>
<td>Entertainment Industries Pty Ltd</td>
<td>6,767</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Budget:** 153,674

---

### Financial Year 1979/80

**Feature films**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film Name</th>
<th>Production Company</th>
<th>Budget ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Picture Show Man</td>
<td>Limelight Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>123,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsfront</td>
<td>Palm Beach Pictures Pty Ltd</td>
<td>467,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Night The Prowler</td>
<td>Chariot Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>551,339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Money Movers</td>
<td>South Australian Film Corp.</td>
<td>155,339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Odd Angry Shot</td>
<td>Samson Film services Pty Ltd</td>
<td>148,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>Pisces Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>105,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Brilliant Career</td>
<td>Margaret Fink Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>612,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy’s Child</td>
<td>CB Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>83,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimboola</td>
<td>Pram Factory Pictures (Management) Pty Ltd</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Yakka</td>
<td>Hard Yakka Production Pty Ltd</td>
<td>54,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Last of the Knucklemen</td>
<td>Hexagon Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Journalist</td>
<td>F. J. Films Pty Ltd</td>
<td>330,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirst</td>
<td>F. G. Film Productions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>509,774</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Budget for Feature Films:** 174,505

Less transferred to Investments: 20,000

**Sub-Total:** 153,674

**GRAND TOTAL:** $3,139,693
After this year, the annual reports do not specify details of investments. The following information is drawn principally from the annual reports and *Australian Film 1978–1994*.

### Financial Year 1980/81

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Producer</th>
<th>Final budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOOD WINKED</td>
<td>Claude Whatham</td>
<td>Pom Oliver &amp; Errol Sullivan</td>
<td>$1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE BEST OF FRIENDS</td>
<td>Michael Robertson</td>
<td>Tom Jeffrey</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALL TO WALL (became CROSSTALK. Director Keith Salvat was replaced by Mark Egerton.*)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOODBYE PARADISE (development costs only this year)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The annual report mentions capitalising payments of $180,000 for script development projects. The Income and Expenditure account reports ‘Script and Project Development’ expenditure as $350,271.


### Financial Year 1981/82

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Producer</th>
<th>Final budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOODBYE PARADISE</td>
<td>Carl Schultz</td>
<td>Jane Scott</td>
<td>$1.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROSSTALK</td>
<td>Mark Egerton</td>
<td>Errol Sullivan</td>
<td>$1.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDGE OF THE CITY</td>
<td>Ken Quinnell</td>
<td>Oliver &amp; Sullivan</td>
<td>Not reported*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAREFUL HE MIGHT HEAR YOU</td>
<td>Carl Schultz</td>
<td>Jill Robb</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEXT OF KIN</td>
<td>Tony Williams</td>
<td>Robert Le Tet</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Released on video, also know as *The City’s Edge*. The Income and Expenditure account reports ‘Script and Project Development’ expenditure as $535,881.

### Financial Year 1982/83

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Producer</th>
<th>Final budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOLLY</td>
<td>Ned Lander</td>
<td>Hilary Lindstead</td>
<td>$1 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The annual report mentions 22 new projects but does not name them. The Income and Expenditure account reports ‘Script and Project Development’ expenditure as $655,621. This figure was reported as $1,020,000 in the annual reports for the years ended 30 June 1986 and 1987.

### Financial Year 1983/84

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Producer</th>
<th>Final budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLISS</td>
<td>Ray Lawrence</td>
<td>Anthony Buckley</td>
<td>$3.4 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHORT CHANGED</td>
<td>George Ogilvie</td>
<td>Ross Matthews</td>
<td>$1.2 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Income and Expenditure account reports ‘Script and Project Development’ expenditure as $1,045,770.
### Financial Year 1984/85

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Producer</th>
<th>Final budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOING SANE</td>
<td>Michael Robertson</td>
<td>Tom Jeffrey</td>
<td>$2.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAD-END DRIVE-IN</td>
<td>Brian Trenchard-Smith</td>
<td>Andrew Williams</td>
<td>$2.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE MORE THINGS CHANGE</td>
<td>Robyn Nevin</td>
<td>Jill Robb</td>
<td>$2.32 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE BEE-EATER*</td>
<td>George Ogilvie</td>
<td>Hilary Furlong</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Became A PLACE ON THE COAST. The Income and Expenditure account reports ‘Script and Project Development’ expenditure as $662,000. The following years accounts report this figure as $875,000.

### Financial Year 1985/86

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Producer</th>
<th>Final budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The Income and Expenditure account reports ‘Script and Project Development’ expenditure as $583,000.

### Financial Year 1986/87

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Producer</th>
<th>Final budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMERALD CITY</td>
<td>Michael Jenkins</td>
<td>Joan Long</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRINCESS KATE</td>
<td>George Ogilvie</td>
<td>Antonia Barnard</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Income and Expenditure account reports ‘Script and Project Development’ expenditure as $778,000.

### Financial Year 1987/88

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Producer</th>
<th>Final budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWEETIE</td>
<td>Jane Campion</td>
<td>John Maynard</td>
<td>(development only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4  TASMANIAN FILM CORPORATION: MAJOR PRODUCTIONS, 1977–82

MANGANNINIE (1980)

Director: John Honey
Producer: Gilda Baracchi
EPs: Gil Brealey, Malcolm Smith
Writer: Ken Kelso. Based on the novel by Beth Roberts.
DOP: Gary Hansen
Editor: Mike Woolveridge
Music: Peter Sculthorpe
Art director: Neil Angwin;
Running time: 90 min
Cast: Mawuyul Yanthalawuy, Anna Ralph, Phillip Hinton, Elaine Mangan, Mana Mana Dhamarrandji, Jarka Dhamarrandji, Len Burarrapuwuy Dhamarrandji, Makultja Bapali Dhamarrandji.
Synopsis: In Tasmania in 1830 the white population was systematically killing the aboriginal population. A young white girl is separated from her family and is adopted by an aboriginal woman who has just lost her tribe and family. The two learn to communicate without knowing each other’s language, with the girl becoming more and more like the aboriginal woman.

AFI Awards: Best Original Music

SAVE THE LADY (1981)

Director: Leon Thau
Producer: Barry Pierce
E.P: John Honey
DOP: Gert Kirchner
Editor: Mike Woolveridge
Art director: Jon Bowling
Music: Peter McKinley
Running time: 76 min
Synopsis: A comedy about an old ferry, an old grouch and the youthful enthusiasm of a group of children to save the ferry.
Short Drama and Television.

**FATTY AND GEORGE (1981)**
- **Director:** John Honey
- **Producer:** John Honey
- **EPs:** Malcolm Smith; Writer: John Honey, John Patterson, Louise Sanders
- **DOP:** Greg Kirchener
- **Sound:** John Schiefelbein
- **Editor:** Kerry Regan
- **Prod. Design:** Jon Bowling
- **Music:** Peter McKinley
- **Running time:** 10 x 25 min
- **Cast:** Scott Finloch, Lisa Douglas, Pamela Archer, Barry Pierce, Matthew Excell, Fred Frampton, Michael Chapman, Michael Aitkens.

**Synopsis:**
Fatty and George was a children's series that followed the adventures of two children whose father was an eccentric scientist trying to construct a time machine. To complete his task, the father had to borrow money from a pair of criminals. He disappeared while constructing the machine. Fatty and George, with their friend Izzy, escape from their father's crooked business partners, Phil and Nancy. They take with them a crystal, which they discovered has the power to stop time, leaving them free to move around. They decide that their father must have disappeared in a time warp, and realise that they are the only ones who can rescue him. Set in a contemporary town (despite its fantasy content), the series was aimed at an 8-12 year age group.

Produced in association with the ABC.

**WILLOW BEND MYSTERY, THE (1982),
(Formerly The Mesmerist)**
- **Director:** Marcus Cole
- **Producer:** Don Anderson
- **Writer:** John Honey
- **EP:** John Honey
- **Sound:** John Schiefelbein
- **Editor:** Kerry Regan
- **Running time:** 5 x 25 min
- **Cast:** Rowena Wallace, Robin Ramsay, Adam Garnett, Michelle Jarman, Ursula Granville, Hazel Alger, Barry Pierce, Lindsay Arnold

**Synopsis:**
Kay is a painful fourteen-year-old who loves horses, but isn't so keen on her mother's grey-haired boyfriend, Adrian. Kay has never liked Adrian and this situation is not helped when he arrives at her riding school in a menacing, red station wagon. Apparently Adrian has hypnotic powers and persuades Kay to accompany her mother to his holiday mansion. Kay is quite peeved when she discovers that the house resembles the mansion she saw in a horror movie at the local cinema recently. The Willow Bend Mystery was a children's series, shot on video, featuring spectacular Tasmanian scenery.

Produced in association with the ABC.
WRITER'S PLAYHOUSE (1985?)

text

Writers: Angelo Loukakis, Christine Madaferi, Serge Lazareff, Peter Moon, Gary Deacon

Running time: 5 x 25 min

Synopsis: A series of short plays by local writers from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

'Dokerty' by Angelo Loukakis
'A Hard Bargain' by Christine Madaferi
'Second Chance' by Serge Lazareff
'Insult to Injury' by Peter Moon and Angelo Loukakis
'Heroes' by Gary Deacon

Produced in association with SBS.

ROUND THE BEND (1981)

Director: Whitehead, Anne
Producer: Damien Parer
Writer: Anne Whitehead
DOP: Russell Galloway;
Running time: 50 min
Cast: Shane Porteous, Olivia Brown, Joy Hruby, Pamela Archer, Pat Harrison

Synopsis: An intelligent schoolteacher in his mid-thirties goes 'round the bend'.

FRONTLINE (1983)

Director: Bradbury, David
Producer: David Bradbury
Production company: David Bradbury with the assistance of the Australian Film Commission, Tasmanian Film Corporation and the Australian War Memorial

Writer: David Bradbury, Bob Connolly
DOP: David Perry
Editor: Stewart Young
Narrator: Richard Oxenburgh
Music: Midnight Oil, Denise Wykes, Lindsay Lee
Running time: 54 min

Synopsis: A documentary on Neil Davis, an Australian cameraman correspondent who filmed the Vietnam War at the frontline for eleven years from 1964 to the fall of Saigon in 1975. Combines interviews with Davis with footage shot by him, and other archival film.
Title: HARLEQUIN (1980)
Director: Simon Wincer
Producer: Anthony I. Ginnane
EP: William Fayman
Writer: Everett De Roche
DOP: Gary Hansen
Editor: Adrian Carr
Music: Brian May
Sound: Garry Wilkins, Stephen Lambeth, Peter Fenton
Art Director: Bernard Hides / Terry Ryan
Running time: 95 min
Cast: Robert Powell, David Hemming, Carmen Duncan, Broderick Crawford, Gus Mercurio, Alan Cassell
Synopsis: Faith healer, magus, and entertainer, Gregory Wolfe, apparently cures Nick and Sandra Rast’s son of leukaemia. Nick and his backers, their eyes set on a political career, see Gregory as a spy for their opponents while Sandra finds solace in his bed. Ambitious and ambiguous levels of truth and reality don’t quite play through, in this first ‘internationalist’ film of the new wave.

Title: ROADGAMES (1981)
Director: Richard Franklin
Producer: Richard Franklin
EP: Bernard Schwartz
Writer: Everett De Roche
DOP: Vincent Monton
Editor: Edward McQueen Mason
Music: Brian May
Sound: Paul Clark Raymond Phillips
Art Director: Jon Dowling / Aphrodite Kondos
Running time: 102 min
Cast: Stacy Keach, Jamie Lee Curtis, Marion Edwards, Grant Page, Thaddeus Smith, Stephen Millichamp, Alan Hopgood, John Murphy, Bill Stacey, Robert Thompson, Colin Vannco.
Synopsis: A lot happens in the real and a constantly present darker world as Pat Quid, a truck-driving man-of-letters takes a load of meat across the Nullarbor, accompanied by his dog and a hitch hiker.

Title: FALCON ISLAND (1981)
Director: David Rapsey
Producer: Paul Barron, Judith West
EP: Excalibur Nominees & Nine Network
Writer: Joan Ambrose
DOP: Greg Schultz
Editor:
Music:
Sound:
Art Director: Owen Paterson
Running time: 26 x 30 min
Cast: Barry Barkla, Alan Cassell, Greg Duffy, Rowena Hockin, Justin Hollyhock, Bill Kerr, Bevan Lee, Francesca Shoesmith

Synopsis: Adventure series set on Rottnest Island.

Title: FRAN (1985)
Director: Glenda Hambly
Producer: David Rapsay
EP: Paul Barron
Writer: Glenda Hambly
DOP: Jan Kenny
Editor: Tai Tang Thein
Music: Greg Schultz
Sound: Kim Lord, Glen Martin
Art Director: Theo Matthews
Running time: 94 min


Synopsis: Fran is a likeable but irresponsible and negligent mother of three children, each by a different father. She herself is a product of the social welfare system and an alcoholic mother. Her constant enemy is the child welfare agency, but fear of losing the children does not dissuade her from taking off with Jeff. The story is about how some in society are forever cursed to repeat the cycles of the past.

The WAFC, given its limited budget, chose to support project development rather than to invest in production.

Projects supported include:

Sisterly Love (Mark de Friest 1987)
Daisy and Simon (Stasch Radwanski Jr 1989)
Dingo (Ralph de Heer 1992)
Blackfellas also known as Day of the Dog (James Ricketson 1993)
Love in Limbo (David Elfick 1993)

This list is incomplete, in part because there are a few primary resources concerning the WA Film Council in libraries in Melbourne and the author has been unable to return to Perth (due to financial constraints) since the research trip of January 2000.
Appendix 5 Terms of Reference: [South Australian] State Film Centre Feasibility Study

Item 1 of the terms of reference for the study set the principal tasks of the study.¹

1. The study will be designed to appraise:

   a) whether a state film centre should be established in South Australia, in order to serve the state needs for:

      educational films,
      films on tourist development,
      films concerned with industrial promotion
      and general promotion for the public
      and private sector.

   b) whether such a film centre could or should:

      (i) make films for other interested parties,
      (ii) provide facilities for others to use on a hire or contract basis;

   c) what facilities are required in order to provide the environment necessary to attract related private industrial or commercial investment, (for example, for the production of television commercials or full length feature films) in terms of both cost and expected benefits.

2. Within this framework, to study what further development towards a broad State film industry may be possible, and

3. recommend, if appropriate, the way in which a Centre should be established, including the form of organisation required and the range of activities which should be encompassed.

In order satisfactorily to complete this task, it will be necessary to appraise the costs and economic benefits which would flow from any such development, and also explicitly to define the non-quantifiable and less tangible factors which were included in any final recommendations which were made.

¹ Attachment to Saulwick to White, 26 October 1971, in SAFC microfiche: ‘Reports & Studies: P.E. Consulting / Premier’s Dept. Re: “S.A. Film Centre Feasb. Study—Original Correspondence”’.

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Summary of Recommendations

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1. We RECOMMEND, that a 10 per cent tax should be placed on a distributor’s gross revenue with a tax concession to that distributor based on the amount of Australian product handled by the distributor in the tax year. The concession should be 5 per cent for each Australian film handled and not exceeding more than 10 per cent. For example, if one Australian film is handled only 5 per cent tax would apply, if two Australian films are handled no tax would apply. The Commission of inquiry envisages that if revenue is raised from such a tax it will be pooled into a fund to cover marketing of Australian films. However, the prime motivation of the revenue tax is to encourage distributors of English-speaking product being released in commercial venues to handle Australian films.

We also RECOMMEND that an Australian Film Industry Trust Fund No. 2 Account shall be established under the Department of Home Affairs for the express purpose of receiving and administering those moneys received by the Taxation Department on account of distributors’ gross revenue tax. Those moneys shall be disbursed to meet the marketing costs of Australian films.

We further RECOMMEND in order to qualify for the concession on an Australian film handled by the distributor, the distributor should ensure that the producer/investor of an Australian film is to receive initial revenue of 10 per cent to come from the first moneys returned to the distributor from an exhibitor and in addition, in order to qualify for the concession, the distributor must spend a minimum of $75,000 on advertising and promotion on each of the Australian films handled by the distributor.

2. We RECOMMEND with respect to Australian short films, that the State Corporations assist in the blowing up of 16 mm films to 35 mm gauge and the marketing of these short subjects.

We also RECOMMEND that the Australian Film and Television School and the Australian Film Commission through its Project Development Branch, give consideration to funding or shooting suitable short films in 35 mm to encourage distribution.

We further RECOMMEND that no other immediate specific action be taken with respect to short films at the moment but that if within a two year period from the date of publication of this Report, sufficient Australian shorts are not shown on Australian screens Commonwealth wide, with an appropriate return to the producer, a quota system should be introduced. Having regard to the fact that in 1983 we cannot
predict the state of the film industry market in two years time, we
RECOMMEND that on the information available to date, that a quota
system should be based on the following principle:

With every non-Australian feature film, one or more Australian
short films shall be exhibited.

For the purpose of this recommendation, it is considered that a short
film means any film that has a running time of less than 80 minutes
but does not include a promotional documentary, travelogue or any
other film of that kind.

3. We RECOMMEND in respect of suggestions proposing subsidized
cinema chains or subsidized distribution for commercial Australian
films, that there is no need to establish new organisations or new
infrastructures to support these areas. It is imperative that the current
levels of funding be sustained in real terms.

4. We RECOMMEND to ensure that a reasonable proportion of Australian
films are distributed and exhibited through the media of broadcast
television, home video cassette and radiated subscription television:

(i) The Australian Content Regulations for commercial television be
strengthened to not only allocate points for the exhibition of
Australian feature films, but to require commercial television
channels to screen at least one first TV release of a theatrical
feature film every two months.

(ii) That points be allocated for the exhibition of Australian short films,
to ultimately provide a quota for such films on commercial
television, based on a knowledge of the availability of such product
which would be ascertained by the implementation of this
Commission’s recommendation on collection of statistics.

It should be noted that the gauge problems which exists with
respect to the exhibition of short films in cinemas, does not apply to
television exhibition of such films.

(iii) That Australian Content Regulations be implemented for
Radiated Subscription Television upon its introduction to ensure
that a proportion of feature films exhibited are Australian.
Further, that such Regulations also ensure the exhibition of
Australian short films.
(iv) That the New South Wales Film Corporation conduct an inquiry into the effect of distribution, sale and rental of home video cassettes on the market for films in New South Wales utilising the provisions of Section 14A (1) of the New South Wales Film Corporation Act, 1977, as amended.

5. We RECOMMEND that action be taken immediately by the relevant Government to deal with the question of piracy and breach of copyright by use of video cassette recorders.

6. We RECOMMEND to enable the proper and effective collection and use of statistics pertinent to cinema statistics:

(i) That the New South Wales Film Corporation be empowered to collect from theatrical exhibitors, distributors and producers operating in the State gross box office, screen time, gross rentals and admission figures showing comprehensive figures of foreign and Australian films. These shall be collected on a confidential basis, but the monthly and annual figures shall be published in aggregate.

(ii) That the New South Wales Film Corporation be empowered to collect statistics of film hire and the number of bookings relating to the non-theatrical distribution of film in New South Wales.

(iii) That the Australian Film Commission and other State film bodies and/or the Australian Bureau of Statistics be empowered to collect statistics about the leisure industry on a regular basis including information from Australian theatrical exhibitors, theatrical and non-theatrical distributors, producers, Government film bodies, video distributors and outlets, future RSTV, cable and satellite broadcasters, information relating to gross box office and admissions, film rentals, production investment, video cassette sales per dollar and per unit terms, television sales, including broadcast and pay TV.

This information shall be collated and published on a quarterly and annual basis.

7. We RECOMMEND that the New South Wales Film Corporation be empowered to appoint persons with expertise in the film industry to hear and conciliate in matters of dispute between sectors of the
Industry. It is envisaged that any persons so appointed would not have the power to affect the rights of parties in dispute but merely to provide the opportunity for the disputants to settle their grievance amicably.

8. We RECOMMEND that upon implementation of the recommendations of this Commission of Inquiry, the Cinematograph Films Act, 1935, as amended, be repealed.

9. We RECOMMEND that the complete records of the Commission of Inquiry should be forwarded to the New South Wales Archives Authority and should be placed under an embargo upon release for ten (10) years. That embargo should extend to access to the material by other Governmental authorities.

10. We RECOMMEND that the Report of the Commission of Inquiry should be forwarded to the Federal Government and to other State Governments.
Appendix 8  H. C Coombs: A short list of achievements

- 1944, as Director-General of Post-War Reconstruction, the establishment of the Australian National Film Board and the Commonwealth Film Unit;

- 1948, as Director-General of Post-War Reconstruction, a proposal to Cabinet for the establishment of a National Theatre. Rejected by Chifley. The following year, a proposal for National Theatre approved, in principle, by Cabinet. Chifley government defeated before implementation;

- 1949, as Governor of the Commonwealth Bank, the initiation of a design competition, at the Arts School of East Sydney Technical College, for the bank’s Christmas cards.

This venture was the beginning of the practice of making art purchases, initially with the Christmas card in mind, but with the aim of gradually building up a collection of original works by Australian artists and craftsmen, for display in the bank’s buildings;¹

- 1953, as Governor of the Commonwealth Bank, the enlistment of Prime Minister Robert Menzies’ support for the creation of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust.

He is appointed chairman of the Trust. In the period 1954 – 1968, the Trust was the key agency in the performing arts in Australia, crucial to the establishment of the Australian Opera, the Australian Ballet, state drama companies, (including Ballantyne’s South Australian Theatre Company) and several state orchestras.

- Early 1950s, as Governor of the Commonwealth Bank, the commissioning of Lyndon Dadswell and Gerald Lewers to create sculptural works for the Bank’s new premises fronting Market, York, and George Streets, Sydney;

- 1959, as Governor of the Reserve Bank, the institution of possibly Australia’s first ‘Percent for Art’ program by including a budget line for art works in the construction estimate for all new Reserve Bank buildings. In Melbourne, a twenty-metre-long work by Sidney Nolan was commissioned for the bank’s Collins Street office;

¹ Coombs, Trial Balance, Sun Books, Melbourne, 1983, p. 224. In this matter, Coombs included Indigenous art. The third acquisition was a watercolour by Otto Pareroultja. Interestingly, in the early 1950s, Coombs thought the commissioning of an established woman artist, Margaret Preston, a more risky venture than acquiring Indigenous art for the bank.
• 1952–67, as Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Australian National University, the acquisition of art works for the university on a combination of time payment to the artist and philanthropic donor-ship;²

• 1967, as Chairman of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust, the proposal to Prime Minister Harold Holt for the formation of the Australian Council for the Arts;

• In 1968, following Holt’s disappearance, the encouragement of Prime Minister John Gorton to proceed with the establishment of the Australian Council for the Arts. He assumed the chair of the new council probably at Gorton’s insistence.

• 1969, as Chairman of the Council, the successful presentation of the recommendations of the Council’s Film Committee to Gorton.

• The adoption of these recommendations led to the renaissance of an Australian film production industry that had been essentially dormant since World War II.

• 1972–74, as Chairman of the Council, the oversight of the reform of the Council in response to Prime Minister Gough Whitlam’s arts and cultural agenda, reforms that empowered practising artists and appointed them to boards.

• 1974, as Chairman of the Council, the engagement of Prime Minister Whitlam’s support for the Public Lending Rights program for Australian authors.

• Various dates, the pioneering the idea of a Residual Liability Fund to socialise the entrepreneurial risk of performing arts companies.

Unmentioned here, but as important, is Coombs’ considerable contribution to championing of the rights and interests of Indigenous Australians, especially from the 1970s until September 1995 when a stroke debilitated him. He died in October 1997.³

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² Coombs, p. 229.
Appendix 9  Comparative Notes on the Legislation Governing Some Australian Commonwealth Cultural Agencies.

The authority of a government agency is determined, in the first instance, by its legislation and there are wide differences in the power and scope of the legislative mandate of Australia’s cultural agencies. This appendix investigates in more depth than in Chapter Nine the legislation governing the Australia Council and the Australian Film Commission.

There are significant differences in the wording of the acts of parliament that established and now regulate the Australia Council and the Australian Film Commission, despite them being agencies with similar purposes. The range of differences in wording is even greater when one inspects the acts establishing cultural agencies such as the Museum of Australia or the National Gallery of Australia. In the case of the Australia Council and the Australian Film Commission, these differences have led to the distinct corporate culture of the two agencies, and these need to be considered in discussing their influence on cultural policy.

The differences may be sufficiently illustrated by a comparison of three elements of each act.

Authority of the Minister to Direct the Agency.

Section 8 of the Australian Film Commission Act (1975) reads as follows:

**SECT 8: Directions to Commission by Minister**

(1) The Minister may, by writing under his or her hand, give directions to the Commission with respect to the exercise of its powers or the performance of its functions but shall not give such a direction with respect to a particular project.

(3) Where the Minister gives a direction under this section, he or she shall, within 15 sitting days after giving that direction, lay before each House of the Parliament a copy of the direction together with his or her reasons for giving the direction.\(^1\)

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Subsection 8 (3) concerning the statement of reasons, was added by the *Administrative Changes (Consequential Provisions) Act*, number 36 of 1978, after Film Australia’s plans to produce a feature film based on David Ireland’s novel, *The Unknown Industrial Prisoner*, which dealt with industrial relations and foreign ownership issues, was blocked by the Minister for Home Affairs, Robert Ellicott. At that time, Film Australian was part of the AFC and the minister’s decision, one for which he refused to give reasons, was made despite the production having been approved by the board of the film commission.²

Here is the equivalent part of the *Australia Council Act (1975)*:

**SECT 6B: Directions by Minister**

(1) Where the Minister is satisfied that it is desirable in the public interest to do so, the Minister may, by notice in writing to the Chairperson, give directions to the Council with respect to the performance of its functions or the exercise of its powers.

(2) The Council must comply with a direction under subsection (1).

(3) The Minister must cause a copy of each direction to be laid before each House of the Parliament within 21 sitting days of the House after the direction is given.

(4) Nothing in this section authorises the Minister to give a direction to the Council in relation to the making of a decision by the Council in a particular case, being a decision relating to the making of a grant, the lending of money or the provision of a scholarship or other benefit.³

Unlike the AFC’s commissioners, the Council is bound to comply with the minister’s direction but the crucial difference is that the *Australia Council Act* binds the minister to consider the public interest and to act in the public interest. The AFC’s act does not so direct, so the minister may choose to act in other than the public interest. However, the minister must make public his or her reasons for any direction given to the Film Commission, a requirement that is absent from the *Australia Council Act*.


Interestingly, Section 14 of the *Australian National Maritime Museum Act 1990*, ‘Directions to Council’, has an interesting addition to this legislative regime. Section 14 reads in part:

(3) The Minister shall cause a copy of each direction to be laid before each House of the Parliament within 6 sitting days of that House after the direction is given.

(4) A direction that is not laid before each House of the Parliament in accordance with subsection (3) ceases to have effect.

Appointment of Members of Board and Council Members, and Commissioners.

There are further differences between the acts and these bear directly on the authority and loyalties of the members and staff of the organisations.

The chair of each organisation is appointed by the Governor-General and, in the case of the AFC, so too are the commissioners, and the commissioners may be appointed full-time or part-time. By way of comparison, members of the Australia Council and its boards are all part-time appointments, though the chair of the council may be full-time or part-time. In making such appointments as these, the Governor-General acts on the advice of the prime minister who, in turn, would, in general, act on the advice of the relevant minister. In practice, the minister too acts on advice but is not specifically required to do so.

In both organisations, the senior executive officer is appointed by the minister, not the commission or the council. In some ways then the loyalty of the senior executive officer is to the minister not the council or commission and, though each act directs the senior executive officer to administer the organisation in accordance with the directions of the council or commission, only the *AFC Act* required that any direction to the senior executive must be given in writing, presumably through the minutes of commission meetings.

In making appointments to the Australia Council and its boards, the minister is subject to considerable legislative direction:

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SECT 22: Membership of Boards

(1) The co-ordinating Board must consist of a Chairperson and not fewer than 4, nor more than 12, other members.

(2) A Board, other than the co-ordinating Board, must consist of a Chairperson and not fewer than 4, nor more than 8, other members.

(2A) Subject to this section, the membership of the co-ordinating Board must comprise:

(a) such number as the Minister thinks fit of persons who practise or have practised the arts or are otherwise associated with the arts; and

(b) such number as the Minister thinks fit of community interest representatives.

(3) A majority of the members of a Board for the time being shall be persons who practise the arts or are otherwise associated with the arts.

(3A) At least one of the members of each Board must be a community interest representative.

(3B) A member of the Council, or of a Board established under paragraph 20(1) (b), may be appointed as a member of the co-ordinating Board.

(4) The members of a Board shall be appointed by the Minister, and shall be part-time members.

(5) A Board shall from time to time publicly advertise, in such manner as it determines, for persons who wish to be appointed as members of the Board to submit their names for consideration, and shall at all times maintain a list of names so submitted.

(6) In selecting persons to be appointed as members of a Board, the Minister must give consideration to:

(a) any recommendations made by the Council;

(b) the list of names maintained by the Board; and

(c) any recommendations from that list made by the Board.5

The legislation governing appointments to the Australia Council itself is only a little less prescriptive:

SECT 9: Membership of Council

(1) The number of members of the Council shall be not less than 10 nor more than 14.

(2) Subject to subsection (4B), the Council shall consist of:
   (a) the Chairperson;
   (b) the Chairperson of each Board;
   (e) subject to subsections (1) and (4), such number of persons who practise or have practised the arts or are otherwise associated with the arts as the Minister thinks fit; and
   (f) subject to subsections (1) and (3B), such number of community interest representatives as the Minister thinks fit.

(2A) The members of the Council, other than the Chairperson and the members referred to in paragraph (2)(b), are to be appointed by the Minister.

(3) The Chairperson is to be appointed by the Governor-General.

(3A) Subject to subsection (4A), the members of the Council hold office on a part-time basis.

(3B) At least one of the members of the Council must be a community interest representative.

(4) In appointing members of the Council referred to in paragraph (2)(e), the Minister shall endeavour to ensure that:
   (a) a majority of the members holding office pursuant to that paragraph are persons who practise or have practised the arts; and
   (b) the membership of the Council includes a reasonable balance of persons who practise or have practised the various arts.

(4A) The Chairperson may be appointed either as a full-time member or as a part-time member.

(4B) In the event that the Chairperson is a part-time member, the person from time to time holding, or performing the duties of, the office of General Manager is, ex officio, a member of the Council.

(5) The performance of the functions or the exercise of the powers of the Council is not affected by reason only of:
   (a) there being a vacancy or vacancies in the membership of the Council; or
the number of members of the Council falling below 10 for a period of not more than 6 months.\(^6\)

Thus the freedom of the minister to make political appointments to the Australia Council or any of its boards is significantly constrained but such restrictions are not common in the legislation of other organisations. No such constraint applies to the appointment of members of the Australian Film Commission. In fact the AFC Act contains no stipulations at all about the qualities or experience of any member of the commission, but does spend considerable space sorting out the pecking order between first deputy chair and second deputy chair.\(^7\)

Several things emerge from these observations. First, they illustrate that the legislation within one small corner, a cultural industries corner, of Australian law varies widely, and small elements like the words ‘public interest’ can be crucial to the administration of the legislation. Second, in many cases, the present mechanism for appointment of members of boards and commissions grants the minister wide power to shape the organisation’s philosophy and priorities. There are few restraints on that power and fewer sanctions for its abuse.

Third, in the case of the AFC, there are no qualifications for appointment to the commission, and while wisdom should dictate the qualities one might seek—experience in film or television production; the law; accountancy; cultural values and, after legislative changes to amalgamate Screen Sound Australia, the National Film and Sound Archive, expertise in archival matters— the legislation requires none of these competencies in appointees. There lays both freedom for and threat to the performance of the agency in cultural policy matters.

Advocacy

It is interesting to note a further difference in these two acts concerning legislative authority to advocate to government. Section 5, Functions of Council, of the Australia Council Act says, in part, that the council has a duty:


(c) to furnish advice to the Government of the Commonwealth, either of its own motion or upon request made to it by the Minister, on matters connected with the promotion of the arts or otherwise relating to the performance of its functions;\(^8\)

That is, there is a specific direction to inform the government of the council’s interests and those of its constituents, and of their needs. The AFC Act lacks a comparable direction. Its sole similar clause reads:

12. **Commission to keep itself informed as to film industry**

   For the purposes of performing its functions, the Commission shall keep itself informed, whether by the collection of statistics, the conduct of market research or otherwise, of all aspects of making, promoting, distributing and broadcasting programs in Australia.\(^9\)

This is not an instruction to advocate policy to government at all. Perhaps this is why the AFC’s voice, so long an advocate on issues ranging from women and Indigenous film-making, to the introduction of pay TV and concern for the impact of the US–Australia Free Trade Agreement on Australian screen culture has, as of November 2004, fallen silent. It may be simply that the commission has realised or has had it pointed out that it has no role as an advocate on behalf of itself or its constituents and that the practice that became established when the chair was held by Phillip Adams should now cease.

In an old TV commercial, one that gave a phrase to Australian English for a time, the Mafia boss instructs his driver “‘Oils ain’t Oils” … Louie’… directing him to differentiate between products. One can say much the same about statutory authorities.


LISTEN MATE, THEY SPEND
MY TAX MONEY TO MAKE THAT
F--- * BAZZA MOVIE, I TELL YOU
MATE WHAT THEY NEED IS MORE
F--- * BLOODY CULTURE!

* INSERT FUCKIN
IF LIBERAL MINDED.

FOR VINCE.
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