



AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S  
TELEVISION FOUNDATION

## **Corporate Plan**

for the period  
July 2018 – June 2021

## **Introduction**

The Australian Children's Television Foundation ("**ACTF**") is a non-profit company funded by the Commonwealth Government and the governments of all States and Territories of Australia.

We are a national children's media production and policy hub and perform a wide range of functions in children's media: as a distributor of and investor in Australian children's television series; as an instigator of new, innovative and entertaining children's media and as a developer of valuable screen resources for the education sector.

We support and facilitate the provision of high quality, entertaining Australian content for Australian children, which makes an enduring contribution to their cultural and educational experience.

### **Our Vision**

To be the leading body for Australian children's media by enabling the production and distribution of high quality, culturally relevant and distinctive, creative and educational entertainment for Australian children, and children around the world.

### **A note on our Corporate Plan**

Our Corporate Plan for the three year period July 2018 – June 2021 has been prepared in consultation with our major funding partner, the Commonwealth Department of Communications and the Arts.

It outlines our focus and strategy for the period. Our objectives and performance indicators are reconsidered annually during the three year period, and may be amended if considered appropriate.

Although we report on our performance annually, several of our KPIs are measured according to rolling three year periods. Due to the protracted lifespan of television production, reporting across a three year period provides a more accurate snapshot of our ongoing investment that is less subject to annual variation.

## Government Support and Changes to Operating Environment

Children's content needs special and unique support and attention. Distinctively Australian children's content, in particular, is at a disadvantage because it does not command the levels of investment from broadcasters, screen agencies or the private sector that adult content does.

Successive Australian governments have supported the provision of high-quality, original and distinctly Australian television for children, through a mix of regulation, direct subsidies and tax incentives. As a result, Australia has been a world leader in the production of high quality children's screen content.

The ACTF, an organisation that is unique in the world, has played a key role in this success story. For 36 years we have embraced, championed and adapted to changing times and opportunities, whilst at all times maintaining a singular focus on achieving quality outcomes for the child audience. We occupy a singular position at the intersection of children's media, education and culture. No other organisation comes to the table with the same bundle of attributes: the cultural remit, the financing expertise, the distribution insight, the education background and reach. No other government funded organisation has a singular focus on the children's audience. In practical terms over the last few years, this has come to mean increased reliance on the ACTF for distinctively Australian projects.

In 2017, recognising that current regulations and support measures have not kept pace with digital disruption, the Commonwealth Government directed the Department of Communications and the Arts, Screen Australia and the Australian Communications and Media Authority to jointly undertake a review to identify the support mechanisms that are needed to ensure the continued availability of Australian and Children's Screen Content to domestic and international audiences. This matter is currently under consideration by Government. The ACTF is actively engaging with this Review and is optimistic that it will result in a suite of interconnected policies that ensure the ongoing provision of Australian children's content on public and commercial platforms, underpinned by a platform neutral regulatory framework that is fit for purpose and with the support of direct and indirect funding.

The arrival of on-demand streaming services is revolutionising the way in which audiences are consuming content, providing challenges and opportunities. The audience is fragmenting, and new players are challenging old models. The ACTF intends to survive and thrive in the face of disruption, and ensure that children can find quality Australian content on all the platforms where they engage with content, at home, at school and on the move.

Therefore, over the life of this Corporate Plan we will:

- Develop and maximise relationships with a range of new players, including SVODs and YouTube, as well as the Pay TV, Commercial Free TV and public broadcasting sectors;
- Explore contemporary ways of funding new content, including the inevitable trend towards brand funded content as the traditional advertiser supported Free TV model is disrupted; and
- Explore the possibility of developing a direct relationship with our audience, utilising legacy content and supporting content creators to make new content for new platforms, including YouTube.

There are ethical and philosophical discussions to be had as we navigate these issues, but if we wish to see Australian children's content readily available for all children, wherever they are, these are the conversations we need to be having.

# Objective 1 – Production and Development

## ***Support the development and production of engaging, entertaining, accessible and educative screen content for Australian children***

A successful, vibrant and competitive children’s production industry will result in the creation of better programs for the child audience.

We provide a multifaceted assistance program for producers including: production investment, development funds, advice and mentoring, professional development, industry networking events, introductions to broadcasters and international representation and sales.

We are committed to the development and production of quality children’s content that meets our exacting standards: programming that children, parents and educators can rely on to be engaging, entertaining, accessible, creative and innovative.

### **1.1 Assist in producing high quality children’s programs**

We initiate and facilitate the production of high quality children’s media, identifying opportunities to provide key investment to assist independent producers to produce programs.

Each project we invest in undergoes a thorough qualitative assessment. We consider a project’s originality and its storytelling, the quality of the team behind it, and its potential to engage child audiences. We ensure that they are produced to the highest standard by requiring creative input and regular consultation as a condition of our investment.

Although overall quality is our primary consideration in assessing a project, we take into account several important factors. We:

- encourage diverse stories, voices and faces;
- encourage innovative use of new and emerging media platforms;
- encourage new and emerging producers to enter the industry while at the same time harnessing the skills of experienced producers; and
- identify gaps in content/genre/age groups in children’s television programming.

**KPI 1.1 - Provide financial support, nurture and drive the production of children’s projects that meet the exacting standards of the ACTF, to allow those projects to enter into production**

<b><i>Examples of data to be included in ‘Report against Corp Plan’</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>List new projects, progress of projects, description of future projects.</i></li><li>- <i>List expenditure on projects (annually, three year average, comparison of performance against previous years).</i></li><li>- <i>Reported according to three year rolling period.</i></li></ul>
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## 1.2 Providing development investment in high quality concepts

We engage with producers and writers at the earliest stages of development, investing small amounts across a broad range of projects, targeted for their demonstrable quality and their future potential. We actively seek out and identify those projects with the most potential for further production and financing, capable of reaching a wide audience, and which also meets the criteria set out in 1.1.

### **KPI 1.2 - Provide seed funding to enable producers to develop high quality concepts for children’s screen content that meets the ACTF’s exacting standards**

<b>Examples of data to be included in ‘Report against Corp Plan’</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- List new development projects, partnerships.</li><li>- List level of funds committed (annually, three year average, comparison of performance against previous years).</li><li>- Reported according to three year rolling period.</li><li>- Include appropriate data from acquittal forms.</li></ul>
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## 1.3 Enabling capacity

### **Providing professional development, networking opportunities and facilities**

We provide professional development and networking opportunities for experienced and emerging industry practitioners (producers, writers and directors) to realise their potential. The support we provide enables greater capacity within the children’s television production sector.

Through our investments, we advise and guide producers through the development and production process at the earliest stage of a project. By assisting producers to develop strategies for securing finance, negotiating arrangements with broadcasters, and introducing them to potential creative collaborators, we empower producers to realise their projects. We also introduce producers to broadcasters both in Australia and overseas.

We facilitate networking opportunities for both experienced and emerging practitioners, and we also offer access to our offices and meeting rooms to producers to undertake development activities and workshops. Our professional development initiatives are distinguished by their exclusive focus on children’s television content and represent opportunities not necessarily available to independent practitioners otherwise.

Our support results in producers that are capable, skilled and resourced to bring their projects to production. From an industry wide perspective it increases the overall capacity and capability of the sector. As the federal and state screen agencies do not often provide development funding for children’s projects, our investments are a key entry point for new entrants to the industry.

### **KPI 1.3 - Professional development or networking activities provided, assisting producers to realise the full potential of their projects**

<p><b>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corp Plan'</b></p>	<p>List professional development, briefings and networking events conducted by the ACTF/networking opportunities provided by the ACTF. Provide details of any feedback.</p> <p>Case studies outlining how ACTF's assistance for producers and investment in projects can enable capacity across the industry, where available.</p>
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## 1.4 Quality of Productions

The number of screenings, audience ratings and sales to international broadcasters of ACTF supported programs represent several measures of our success. Just as important however in measuring quality, are the positive reviews and industry awards that our programs receive.

### KPI 1.4 - ACTF supported projects receive critical acclaim and industry awards

<p><b>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corp Plan'</b></p>	<p>Critical acclaim, reviews, industry awards, ratings.</p>
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## 1.5 International Market Representation for Australian Children's Productions

The reach of Australian children's television is worldwide, with children's series amongst the most widely exported Australian programs. We have established the ACTF as a respected international brand in children's television, with our programs watched by children in every continent. International sales of our programs help to build a distinctive 'Brand Australia', providing the world's children with a unique window into Australia.

International sales also represent a valuable source of revenue for producers and investors. They also showcase the quality of a production, which assists producers to build their profile and generate interest for the development and production of future programs.

Each year we present the latest ACTF supported projects to international broadcasters at the major international television market, MIPCOM, as well as at MIPTV, MIP Jnr, Asia TV Forum (Singapore) and KidScreen. Our exposure to international markets also gives us invaluable insights into trends in international programming and broadcasting that we apply to our development and investment decisions.

### KPI 1.5 - International sales of ACTF supported projects

<p><b>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corp Plan'</b></p>	<p>International sales figures for ACTF projects (annually, three year average).</p> <p>Attendance / engagement at international television events and markets.</p>
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# Objective 2 – Education

## ***Delivering educational outcomes through the use of media and television for Australian children***

We are committed to delivering educational outcomes through the use of media and television for Australian children. We develop contemporary education resources based on ACTF supported projects (and occasionally, other projects) and make them available on a range of platforms. This includes providing remote and regional schools with opportunities to participate in a range of online events via video-conferencing.

We keep abreast of continuing developments in education by maintaining currency with directions in curriculum, teaching and assessment and non-curriculum initiatives relevant to Australian schools.

We build and sustain relationships with professional teacher associations, education / curriculum leaders, and school-based advisors.

### **2.1 Development and production of education resources**

We develop high quality education resources based on ACTF supported projects (and occasionally, other projects) that are available on a range of platforms, including through the Education section of the ACTF website, and licensed directly to education departments.

#### **KPI 2.1 - Develop and produce education resources based on ACTF supported projects**

<i>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corp Plan'</i>	List resources developed by ACTF and where they are available.
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### **2.2 Quality of Education resources**

We measure the quality of our education resources through a range of indicators including reviews, usage data, teacher feedback and industry awards.

#### **KPI 2.2 - ACTF supported educational projects receive critical acclaim and industry awards**

<i>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corp Plan'</i>	Critical acclaim, reviews, industry awards.
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### **2.3 Engagement with the education community**

We engage extensively with the education community through a range of strategies.

We are increasingly connecting with teachers and students across Australia through our:

- online teacher professional learning webinars - aimed at informing teachers of our resources and sharing knowledge and expertise among teachers, educators and screen industry professionals; and

- online student webinars - connecting students with industry experts and talent, and providing students open access to professionals in the production industry.

We present and conduct workshops on educational practices and the adoption of digital interactive media, and participate in conferences and forums relating to educational issues.

**KPI 2.3 - Promote ACTF programs, education resources and services to all educators in state and non-state education sectors, universities and aligned cultural institutions; share knowledge and expertise with, and deliver training to, the education community; participate in education sector events**

<b><i>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corp Plan'</i></b>	List engagement with teachers, students and other members of the education community.
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**2.4 Child audience development and content creation**

In addition to ensuring better access and distribution of Australian content, we also encourage children to develop their skills as content creators and critical viewers, and are engaged with initiatives to develop the child audience's appreciation of locally produced content.

**KPI 2.4 – Promote child content creation and audience development**

<b><i>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corp Plan'</i></b>	Media literacy education initiatives. Online webinars for students. Resources developed for students.
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# Objective 3 – Access and Distribution

## **Maximise access for the child audience to new and existing high quality Australian children’s content**

We aim to maximise access to high quality, locally produced, distinctively Australian screen content made for children.

Free-to-air television and Pay TV remain significant channels used by children and parents to access content, although emerging online platforms are increasingly becoming the preferred destination to consume content for many parents and children. We continue to explore those new platforms for new opportunities to expand the reach of our content.

We also develop innovative new approaches to engaging with children through educational and learning opportunities.

We encourage discussion and debate about children’s screen content. It is essential that the screen industry, government, and the wider community recognise the challenges facing the continued production of Australian children’s content.

### **3.1 Access and distribution of ACTF supported programs**

We distribute our programs across a broad range of platforms to reach the greatest possible number of children across Australia. In addition to free-to-air broadcast and Pay TV, we distribute our programs on DVD as well as over the internet, providing children with the opportunity to engage with our programs outside of traditionally narrow broadcast windows. We also distribute our programs and aligned education resources extensively through schools as well as through partnerships with public education departments, and Catholic and independent school associations.

We continue to upgrade our website on an ongoing basis to deliver our content to schools more effectively.

#### **KPI 3.1 – Ensure access to ACTF supported programs for children by distributing programs widely**

<b>Examples of data to be included in ‘Report against Corp Plan’</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of FTA and Pay TV screenings, DVD sales figures.</li> <li>- Online downloads figures, Schools sales figures.</li> <li>- Educational implementation (Kanopy, direct to schools, etc.).</li> <li>- Include comparative performance over three year period</li> </ul>
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### **3.2 Provide expertise on issues concerning Australian children’s television and screen content**

We have been an investor, producer and international distributor of children’s television since 1984. Our unmatched experience and insight into the issues affecting children’s media production and distribution in Australia means that we have much to offer in the development of policy that supports children’s access to local screen content in a rapidly changing broadcast and content distribution environment.

#### **KPI 3.2 – Lead and shape policy directions on issues concerning Australian children’s television and screen content**

<b><i>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corp Plan'</i></b>	<i>List policy submissions and achievements.</i>
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### **3.3 Children's and educators' responses to ACTF Programs**

We monitor available ratings data, surveys and audience feedback to gauge children's responses to programs that we are involved in. We also seek feedback from educators on ACTF supported programs.

#### **KPI 3.3 - Children and educators respond positively to programs in which the ACTF is involved**

<b><i>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corp Plan'</i></b>	<i>List of ratings for FTA and Pay TV screenings, online streaming and catch-up services.</i>  <i>Qualitative feedback from teachers and students.</i>
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## **Objective 4 – Accountability**

### ***Efficiently and effectively manage the ACTF for its stakeholders***

The ACTF must:

- (a) maintain appropriate corporate governance protocols; and
- (b) be fully accountable to funding partners;

to ensure that available funds are maximised for projects aimed at the local child audience.

### ***Budget***

**KPI 4.1 - Annual budget approved by the Finance Sub-Committee and Board and incorporated into the Corporate Plan**

### ***Finance Sub-Committee***

**KPI 4.2 – The Finance Sub-Committee considers all proposed investments above pre-approved levels and reports recommendations to the Board**

### ***Audit and Risk Management Committee***

**KPI 4.3 – The Audit and Risk Management Committee considers all ACTF financial reports directly with the external auditor and independently of ACTF management**

### ***Nominations Committee***

**KPI 4.4 – The Nominations Committee assists the Board with reviewing the composition of the Board and Sub-committees and makes recommendations to the Board on potential future Board members**

### ***Meetings***

**KPI 4.5 – The Finance Sub-Committee and ACTF Board meet at least four times in each 12 month period**

**KPI 4.6 – The Audit and Risk Management Committee meets at least twice in each 12 month period**

**KPI 4.7 – The Nominations Committee meets at least twice in each 12 month period**

### ***Reporting Requirements***

**KPI 4.8 – Meet all Government reporting requirements on time, and provide prompt responses to any additional Government requests for information**