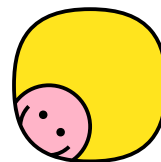


Corporate Plan.



Australian
Children's
Television
Foundation

FOR THE PERIOD
JULY 2022 – JUNE 2025



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.

Our Purpose is to make Australian children's lives better through screen content that reflects our culture and values.

Our Values are inclusion, diversity, resilience, imagination, having fun and striving to be our best selves.

Our Vision is high quality Australian children's screen content reaching and connecting with children on all the platforms we engage with.

What We Do

We provide assistance and support for children's media that delivers on our aspirations for the children's audience. Support is provided for the media by way of:

- Script development funding;
- Capacity building/enabling/nurturing;
- Production investment (via distribution advance and/or equity);
- Promotion, distribution, advocacy;
- Education resource development and scaffolding;
- Education Outreach;
- Measuring and reporting on the impact of our funding and other activities.

Why It Matters

Today's children are inundated with screens during their formative years, right at the time when they are developing their values, identity and self-esteem.

When Australian children see their lives reflected on screen, they experience recognition, affirmation, and gain positive role models; the characters and stories help them to imagine all the possibilities for someone who looks and sounds like them. But our nation's kids are not an homogenous group. We need an array of Australian stories, from different producers and from around our country, reflecting the full diversity of children and their lives, on all the platforms children turn to for entertainment. The screen stories we watch influence how we think about others, as well as how we think about ourselves. Quality local content exposes children to a range of faces and voices that is genuinely representative of their community. Becoming engaged in a television drama is an opportunity to try on someone else's shoes and consider what it's like to be them. Australian children's television is building empathy, kindness, social cohesion and shared values.

The creation of children's screen content is disadvantaged, however, because it does not command the levels of investment from broadcasters or others that content for adults does. It is the clearest example of market failure in the screen sector, but also the greatest example of public value.

ACTF support for children's television addresses market failure and ensures public value.

A Note on our Corporate Plan

Our Corporate Plan for the three-year period July 2022 – June 2025 has been prepared in consultation with our major funding partner, the Office for the Arts, in the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development Communications and the Arts.

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, we also measure several of our KPIs across rolling three-year periods. The protracted life span of television development, production and distribution means that sometimes a more accurate snapshot of our investment and its impact is able to be achieved by looking at a three-year period.

Government Support and Changes to Operating Environment

The screen industry, in Australia and around the world, is in a state of permanent transition. The rise and rise of the international streaming services have brought increased competition to traditional free-to-air television broadcasters. Old models of funding and regulation, as well as audience viewing habits, are being turned on their head. Audiences are consuming content – especially high-end drama – in ever greater numbers, but audiences are also fragmenting, on account of all that choice. For local broadcasters, working out how to keep their audiences is a massive challenge. Children's screen content, is, as it always has been, especially vulnerable within the broader environment.

In 2020, the Commonwealth Government announced the first part of a staged series of reforms to modernise television regulation and screen sector funding, in response to these challenges. The reforms included streamlining the sub-quotas in the Australian Content Standard, which effectively means the requirement that commercial broadcasters must screen minimum levels of Australian children's content has now been removed. But while commercial free-to-air television is expected to screen less children's content in the years to come, we can expect children's audiences to view large amounts of children's content on streaming services. An article in *Variety* in February 2021 – *How Kids Television Became The Most Heated Front in the Streaming Wars* – argued that whilst children's content does not command the publicity and marketing that the new "primetime" series and movies on subscription video on demand services (SVODS) do, it is the content that builds the watch hours and the lasting relationships a family has with the service.

The ACTF have submitted that with additional funding, it could play a more significant role in delivering Australian children's content to audiences in challenging times. The Commonwealth has responded to that submission with the provision of an additional \$20 million over 2 years from 1 July 2021 (coinciding with the commencement of this Corporate Plan). This is an opportunity for the ACTF to act as a catalyst, supporting more projects to achieve high level production standards, quality, impact and reach, at a critical moment for the screen industry. Our objectives with this funding are:

- To ensure increased levels of Australian content reaching children on the ABC's very successful children's platforms;
- To work with NITV to build a larger slate of Indigenous children's content which reaches children all over Australia;
- To look for opportunities and establish partnerships with commercial platforms (whether free-to-air, subscription and/or video on demand) to ensure Australian children's content is also available for children on those platforms.

The ACTF doesn't operate like an "ATM" and just make money available. We focus on results for the audience, so we will pro-actively leverage partnerships – whether with broadcasters and platforms themselves, with screen agencies, or between producers, to achieve our objectives.

We will also be measuring and regularly reporting on the impact of our content on the audience and what we know about the way that Australian children are engaging with children's content via a partnership with Swinburne University. The findings of that project will regularly inform and be available in conjunction with our reports against this Corporate Plan.



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: development funds, advice and mentoring, production investment (via distribution advance and/or equity), 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

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'

- List new projects, progress of projects, description of future projects.
- List expenditure on projects (annually, three year average, comparison of performance against previous years).
- Reported according to three year rolling period.

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 meet 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

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corp Plan'

- List new development projects, partnerships.
- List level of funds committed (annually, three year average, comparison of performance against previous years).
- Reported according to three year rolling period.
- Include appropriate data from acquittal forms.



1.3 Enabling capacity and brokering opportunities

Providing advice, professional development and facilities, pursuing partnerships to support commissioning, and assisting projects to get made

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 offer access to our offices and meeting rooms to producers to undertake development activities and workshops, we speak to emerging writers and producers and those in tertiary study, and we introduce new players with interesting projects to experienced producers and encourage partnerships to be formed.

We maintain and develop relationships with commissioning broadcasters, subscription services, as well as screen agencies, with a view to encouraging and supporting the commissioning of high-quality Australian children's screen content on all the platforms that target children.

KPI 1.3 – Professional development provided, assistance to producers to realise the full potential of their projects and partnerships with commissioning platforms to ensure Australian children's content is commissioned.

**Examples of data to be included in
'Report against Corp Plan'**

- List professional development and assistance provided to producers, opportunities provided to emerging practitioners and tertiary students, and partnerships brokered with commissioning platform briefings and networking events conducted by the ACTF/networking opportunities provided by the ACTF. Provide details of any feedback.
- Case studies outlining how ACTF's assistance for producers and investment in projects can enable capacity across the industry, where available.

1.4 Quality of Productions

The number of screenings, audience ratings and sales to international platforms of ACTF supported programs represent several measures of our success. Equally significant are the positive reviews and industry awards that our programs receive.

KPI 1.4 – ACTF supported projects receive critical acclaim and industry awards

**Examples of data to be included in
'Report against Corporate Plan'**

- Critical acclaim, reviews, industry awards, ratings.

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. The ACTF is 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, MIPJunior, 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

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'

- International sales figures for ACTF projects (annually, three year average).
- Attendance / engagement at international television events and markets.

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 Australian children's television. 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 developing resources and content that are accessible across all devices in 1-to-1 classrooms that reflect the changing way schools are accessing digital content. It also includes providing remote and regional schools with opportunities to participate in a range of online events via virtual learning. Ensuring that live ACTF student/teacher events are captured and edited into relevant access-anytime content is also a priority.

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. This includes curating longer form ACTF content into relevant shorter form digital content that meets teachers' curriculum needs.

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

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'	· List resources developed by ACTF and where they are available.
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2.2 Build students skills and knowledge as content co-creators

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.

- Virtual learning sessions – connecting students with industry experts and talent, and providing students with access to professionals in the production industry; and
- capturing and editing our virtual learning events to ensure they can be accessed online by schools on-demand.

KPI 2.2 – Promote child content creation and audience development

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'	· List virtual learning webinars and events held for students and where they can be accessed now.
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2.3 Engagement with the education community and developing teacher knowledge and capacity

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;
- presenting and conducting workshops on educational practices and the use of Australian children's television content in the classroom, participating 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

**Examples of data to be included in
'Report against Corporate Plan'**

- Engagement with teachers and other members of the education community.
- Conference workshops
- Delivery of virtual PD

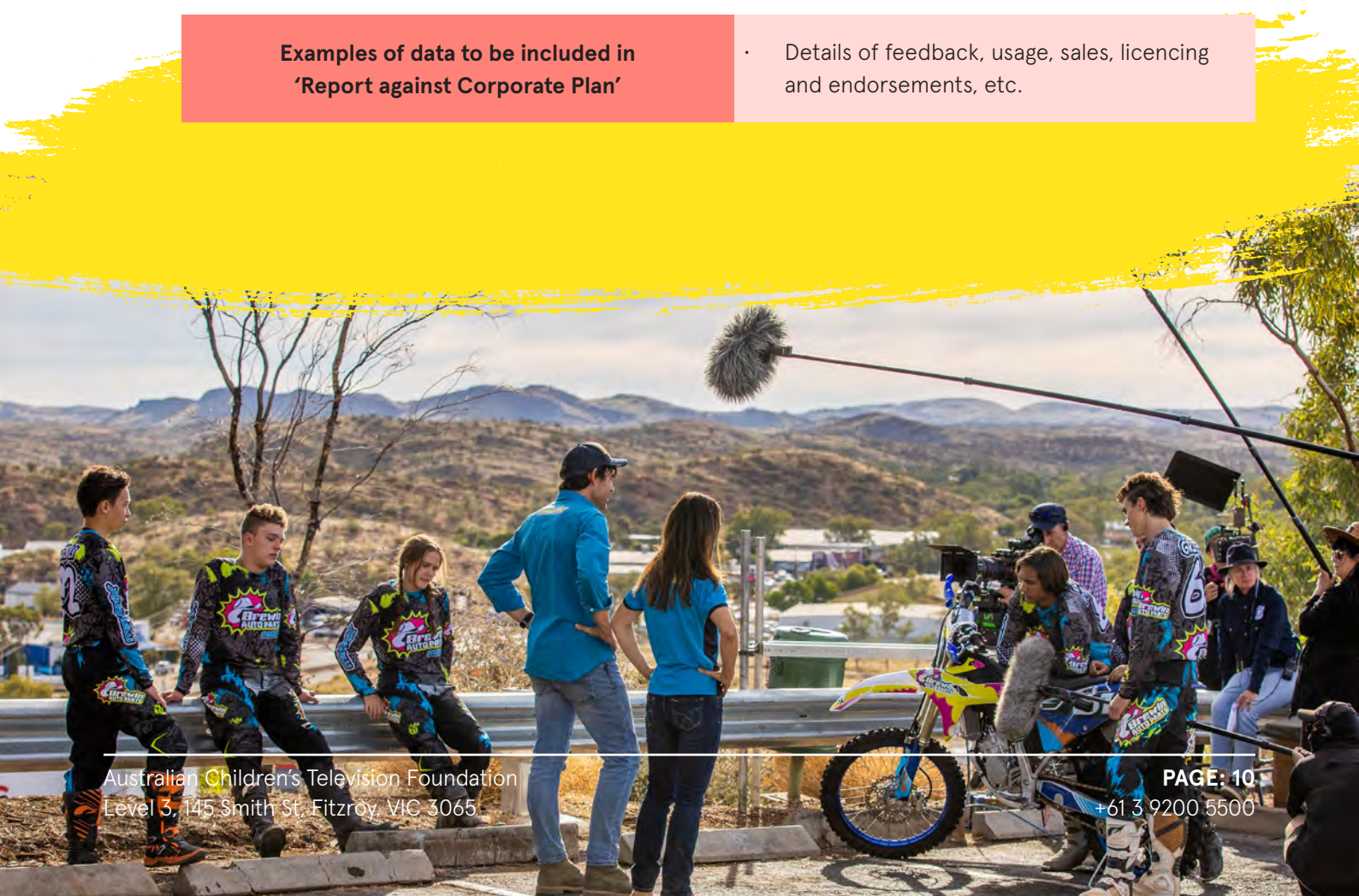
2.4 Measuring the quality, reach and growth of education resources and events

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

KPI 2.4 – Monitor and report on usage, feedback, licensing, sales and other endorsements

**Examples of data to be included in
'Report against Corporate Plan'**

- Details of feedback, usage, sales, licencing and endorsements, etc.



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, and their associated catch-up services, remain significant channels used by children and parents to access content, although Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) and Advertiser Video on Demand (AVOD) streaming 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 online including via streaming and download to own or rent, also providing children with the opportunity to engage with our programs in line with current media consumption habits, and we are specifically targeting streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon and Stan for the home market. Our content is also available digitally through our online shop.

We also offer our programs and aligned education resources to State/Territory education departments (to use in their portals), as well as to Catholic and independent school associations. Additionally, we also offer our programs to education-focused content providers (such as Kanopy).

We upgrade our website (including our online shop) on an ongoing basis to deliver our content to consumers and schools more effectively.

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

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'

- List of FTA and Pay TV screening, availability of programs on online streaming and catch-up services.
- Sales figures.
- Educational implementation (Kanopy, etc.).
- Include comparative performance over three-year-period.

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

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'

- List policy submissions and achievements.

3.3 Responses to ACTF Programs and Impact of ACTF Support

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

A four-year research project with Swinburne University will further study the impact of ACTF supported programs, culturally, socially, economically and within the education sector. It will also explore the ways Australian children are accessing content.

KPI 3.3 – Response to programs in which the ACTF is involved

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'

- List of ratings for FTA screenings, online streaming and catch-up services.
- Qualitative and quantitative feedback from the Swinburne University research, if available.



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 as required 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