## Appraisal Report 17 July 2024

## Disposal Justifications for Draft VicScreen RDA - VicScreen

**Status:** Draft

**Funding & Incentive Program Management 1**

Appraisal Context:

**Funding Levels**

During 2022/2023 VicScreen offered approximately $38 million across 18 different funding programs.  The majority was Minister approved funding included within the agency budget.  A small component (approx. $500K) was provided by other agencies as 'pass through' funding, whereby the providing agency has already determined how much and who to (usually in connection with a broader project the providing agency is working on to promote Victoria, or develop/uplift an industry within Victoria), and is simply using VicScreen mechanisms for providing the funds.

**Program Types**

* Development and Production Investment\* Programs - aimed at screen projects either to support writing and developing stories/scripts/game narratives etc., or support for production costs where the production of the project (filming, animating, visual effects, game production etc.) will generate employment and economic activity in Victoria
* Incentive Programs - aimed at attracting projects to be produced/worked on in Victoria, whether as a filming location, or accessing Victorian talent and experience in visual effects and post production (sound and editing etc.)
* Screen Event Funding Programs - partnership and/or support for organisations to deliver world-class screen events and film festivals in Victoria
* Skills Development Programs - support Victorian key creatives and crew develop and increase their practical skills and industry knowledge and experience through placements, workshops and training initiatives
* Travel Fund Programs - funding to enable Victorian screen creators to travel to key international festivals and events with their project to build international connections and promote their skills, projects and businesses

Depending on the program, applications may be called for at a particular time and a due date given, OR allowed at any time throughout the year (as and when an applicant thinks they have something ready to go), OR accepted by invitation only (e.g. Screen Event Funding - potential applicants must have discussed their project with the program grants officer first to ensure it meets VicScreen goals and objectives.)

\*In the past VicScreen predecessors ran investment programs which provided money to a project under an agreement by which VicScreen would receive some sort of financial payment in return (i.e. investment profit) at the conclusion of a project, or in the years following.  This approach was resource intensive as earnings, reports on takings, and other financial transactions had to be monitored over many years in order to track the return on the investment and ensure payment.  These days 'investment' programs calculate the return on investment from the number of dollars contributed to the Victorian economy for every dollar spent by the program.  In 2022/2023, this rate of return was reported as 1:13 i.e. for every $1 spent, $13 were spent in the Victorian economy as a result of the project being funded.

**Applications for Funding**

Broadly, applications to any funding program will include:

* name and contact details of the applicant (individuals and organisations alike)
* a proposal describing the project, the stage it has reached (if work has commenced), and what funding is sought for/will be put towards if successful, OR an outline of the skills, talents or opportunities a person wishes to gain access to through a skills development program, OR an outline of what expenditure the project expects to make in Victoria if applying for an incentive funding program
* outline of key personnel involved, including resumes
* sample recordings, plot outlines or scripts, 'trailers', or example screen layouts/shots to assist in describing the work and any progress made on it to date
* project plans or timetables
* supporting due diligence documentation e.g. financial statements, references and examples of past work, relevant professional memberships held, etc.

**Film Festivals and Screen Events**

VicScreen provides multimillion dollar funding for programs and partnerships to deliver film festivals and screen events each year.  Disclosure of all funding made is released in the agency annual report each year.

In the 2022-2023 annual report funding for 20 projects ranged from a few thousand for a local or regional event e.g. Benalla Short Film Festival, up to almost $2 million for the Melbourne International Film Festival.  Most funding arrangements are at the lower end of the scale with 9 out of 20 projects receiving $5,000 or less, and a further 5 projects receiving between $5,000 and $15,000.

Applications for funding are by invitation only, with new potential partners and programs invited to contact VicScreen to discuss their project and its potential for receiving funds.

**Funding & Incentive Program Management - Records of Continuing Value 1.1**

Disposal Status: Permanent
Disposal Action: Retain as State Archives, Transfer to PROV

Archival Justification:
*Permanent: Primary functions and programs of government*

Description:

*1. The summary records of funding and incentive program decisions made provide a high-level 'snapshot' of the amount of funding made available each year, how it was divided across the different funding and incentive programs, and who received it.*

*These records can help illustrate VicScreen's level of involvement in both nurturing and extending the local scene as well as securing the Victorian screen industry's place in the global market.*

*Additionally, while many of the entries in the summary record may be for smaller, less well-known projects, there will be peppered throughout entries belonging to well-known studios and projects which may be of interest to researchers in the field of pop culture, film genres and/or those pursuing fan projects.  For instance, Disney and its subsidiaries (e.g. Marvel Studios) periodically have post-production, visual effects and other work carried out by Victorian providers.*

Archival Justification:
*Permanent: Primary functions and programs of government*

Description:
*2. The records of the assessment panels meetings are an extension of the reasoning behind keeping the summary record of decisions - these records provide the 'next layer down' of how the criteria for each program were applied, what key elements in an application made the difference between a Yes or a No, and other contextual information for how programs actually worked in practice.*

Archival Justification:
*Permanent: Primary functions and programs of government*

Description:

*3. The program management records captured in this class provide the researcher/member of public with documentary evidence of how VicScreen designed, administered, and adjusted its programs over time to deliver its key functional responsibilities towards shaping and supporting the Victorian creative screen industry, and more broadly towards driving industry growth and jobs.*

*The records described in this class are intended to cover the 'life cycle' of a program from inception, through reviews and adjustments to meet changing needs or areas of focus, and eventually to the point where a program may be deemed of no further purpose and decommissioned.*

**Funding & Incentive Program Management - Records of Funding and Support Arrangements 1.2**

Disposal Status: Temporary
Disposal Action: Destroy 7 years after action completed.

Archival Justification:
*Temporary: Proof of accountability*

Description:

*The 7-year retention is largely based on the financial transactions which pay funding/grants/expenses to successful applicants.*

*The records included in this class either:*

* *provide evidence of the proposed project/event/person that the funding/support has been approved for, and how that funding is expected to be paid/support is expected to be provided*
* *record/report on progress towards achieving that project or event, or improving that person's skills and experience*
* *record/report on expenditure of funding received*
* *closeout the funding or support arrangement (final acquittal)*

*It was widely agreed during the interview process that sample recordings, plot outlines or scripts, trailers etc. should be kept for at least the duration of the funding arrangement as these may be referred to during milestone/stage reporting to check if the project is on track/still headed in the same direction (although acknowledging that a certain amount of creative evolution of a script or storyline frequently occurs once a project is underway.)*

*There was a concern that copyright applies to the creative materials produced by a writer or producer, and that therefore these items should potentially be extracted and destroyed as soon as VicScreen need for them ceases i.e. the final payment is made.*

*However, it was decided that the risk of these samples being released inappropriately was minimal, and that rather than separate these samples etc. out of the applications at the conclusion of funding, they have been 'bundled' for the same 7-year retention period for ease of management.*

**Funding & Incentive Program Management - Records of Unsuccessful Applications 1.3**

Disposal Status: Temporary
Disposal Action: Destroy 2 years after action completed.

Archival Justification:
*Temporary: Decision-making and administrative processes*

Description:

*Note: These records were 3 years under PROS 07/04 RDA for Film Victoria.  Agency staff report that there is very little need to ever look back at these after 12 months of the decision being made.*

*A 2-year retention period has been chosen as a generous time period for reference purposes.  It also allows VicScreen to look back at a previous application, e.g. if an unsuccessful applicant has applied again for the same project or idea the following year, to see what if anything has changed about the application and/or what reasons were given for not approving a previous application.*

*A 2-year retention matches the retention required for unsuccessful grant applications under PROS 07/01 Class 2.10.4.*

**Production Attraction 2**

Appraisal Context:

In the 2022/2023 financial year VicScreen's location and production services team supported over 25 productions to film on location in metropolitan Melbourne.  A number of projects were also supported to film in regional Victoria.

One large project alone created an estimated 220 FTE jobs and injected an estimated $31million into the State's economy.

Other projects attracted to Victoria included:

* a visual effects project for Marvel Studios which employed 60 Victorians
* an Australian mystery thriller filmed in Victoria's high country which spent $14 million in Victoria, employed 750 locals in varying capacities (equivalent of 100 FTE), and offered 6 skills development opportunities
* major work for local games studios and technicians on international titles such as Call of Duty.

VicScreen provides a searchable online image library of potential locations in Victoria sorted and tagged according to key attributes such as:

* location type (arid desert, tropical forest, urban, suburban),
* period or era (art deco, 60s, 70s, 80s etc.),
* types of building (churches, prisons, schools etc.)
* etc.

It also maintains an online industry directory broken down into categories for:

* Individuals (casting, hair and wardrobe, sound, directors, OHS etc.)
* Companies (accommodation/travel, aerial services, catering, equipment hire, distribution etc.)
* Formats (animation, children's, commercial, corporate, feature films, games etc.)
* Heads of Department (a level of experience gained in the industry)
* International Credits
* Feature Film Credits
* Female Crew
* Indigenous
* Early Career

**Production Attraction - Records of Continuing Value 2.1**

Disposal Status: Permanent
Disposal Action: Retain as State Archives, Transfer to PROV

Archival Justification:
*Permanent: Primary functions and programs of government*

Description:

*Although only likely to be comprised of one major strategy document every year or so, the promotional strategies for attracting productions and other related screen work to Victoria are likely to be of ongoing interest because they:*

* *provide a snapshot of what Victoria has to offer in the industry (talent, services etc.)*
* *over time will chart the rise and fall of areas of expertise and specialisation as individuals and/or companies make a name for themselves and become part of the promotional drive e.g. Melbourne has in the last few years become home to outlets of a number of internationally renowned visual effects studios such as WETA FX studios, Luma Pictures, Framestore etc.*
* *provide an overview of the different habitats/scenery available across the state*
* *provide a snapshot of our historic buildings and other heritage locations available for use in period projects*
* *demonstrate the approach used to showcase Victoria as a screen industry destination for projects and associated work, including an overview of available incentives and how these are expected to work to increase industry business*

**Production Attraction - Records of Promotional Pitches 2.2**

Disposal Status: Temporary
Disposal Action: Destroy 10 years after action completed.

Archival Justification:
*Temporary: Decision-making and administrative processes*

Description:

*A 10-year retention allows for:*

* *reference during the resulting project or work if required*
* *re-use if another similar project pitch is required*
* *reference if a studio or company wants to come back for a further instalment of a completed project*

**Production Attraction - Facilitative Records 2.3**

Disposal Status: Temporary
Disposal Action: Destroy 2 months after superseded.

Archival Justification:
*Temporary: Decision-making and administrative processes*

Description:

*The type of information included in this class is amassed to provide up to date directory style information to industry projects and participants and assist in local individual and companies in having opportunities to work/provide services.*

*VicScreen is not responsible for any undertaking towards either the people/companies included in the directories, or the projects and participants that utilise them to find talent, crew, production partners or locations etc.*

*Any agreements or arrangements arising are between the person/company on the list and the industry project or participant that wishes to hire/utilise them - VicScreen is not a party or guarantor.*

*Information is updated as and when VicScreen is:*

* *requested to add a listing*
* *informed of an update to listing details*
* *requested to remove a listing e.g. because a location is no longer being made available or an individual/company no longer wishes to work in the industry.*

*Once superseded or removed there is little to no requirement to look back at past details.  Any corrections to incorrectly entered listings or changes are highly likely to be picked within the 2-month period.  There is little impact if an error is discovered after this time - the listing is simply updated to correct the error upon request.*