

18 December 2022

Industry Policy
Ministry for Business Innovation and Employment
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Tēnā koutou katoa

DUNEDIN CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION: INCREASING VALUE FROM GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN THE NEW ZEALAND SCREEN PRODUCTION GRANT

1. The Dunedin City Council (DCC) appreciates the opportunity to submit on Increasing value from government investment in the New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG).

Submission

2. Growing the screen sector in Dunedin has been identified as an economic development priority by Council. Since 2017 several international projects have been filmed in Dunedin including the 2021 NETFLIX film 'The Royal Treatment'.
3. The DCC supports retaining headline rates and criteria for the NZSPG-International and the NZSPG-New Zealand grants. Consultation with industry stakeholders has shown that the current settings are working well, and the feedback from these stakeholders is that any changes would create uncertainty in the industry and result in lost business.
4. The DCC suggests a targeted approach for the content creators in our regions outside of Auckland and Wellington, such as: more travel grants to attend events; more funding for talent development (like mentoring opportunities); and a specific development funding stream for first feature directors (from early development funding through to production funding).
5. Rather than a cap on the Qualifying New Zealand Production Expenditure (QNZPE) incentive, the DCC suggests lowering the current threshold from \$15 million to \$5 million in order to encourage more independent films to New Zealand. These productions tend to shoot more on location rather than in a studio, often provide better professional development opportunities for local crew, and are more likely to cast actors locally.
6. The DCC supports a 20% rate for the NZSPG - Post, Digital and Visual Effects (PDV), the rebate for post-production, digital and effects work to enable the need for more of these activities to happen outside Auckland and Wellington. To this end, it also supports reducing the minimum production expenditure threshold for these activities from \$0.5m to \$0.25m.
7. The DCC agrees that the current criteria for the 5% uplift process needs to be streamlined and made more accessible to international productions. It suggests that part of the new criteria should be a specific section on filming in the regions.

8. The DCC supports incentives to upskill both filmmakers and crew. From a regional point of view, additional support is needed to attract more domestic productions and to enable local filmmaking talent (writers, directors, producers). It recognises that creating a knowledge and skill base locally is one of the best ways to sustainably grow a pipeline of work in the regions and upskill local crew. The DCC suggests an additional incentive for domestic productions to film outside of Auckland and Wellington by providing an additional rebate to offset extra costs associated with transport and accommodation.

Conclusion

9. The DCC thanks you for the opportunity to submit on this topic.
10. The DCC would welcome the opportunity to speak to this submission.

Yours faithfully



Jules Radich
MAYOR OF DUNEDIN