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Alliance responds to National Cultural Policy

The Alliance welcomes the launch of Australia's first national cultural policy in 19 years but calls for a permanent increase to the location offset.

"Many of the announcements made today will be music to the ears of Australia's creative workers," said Sue McCreadie, director of the Actors Equity section of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance.

"The announcement of our first national cultural policy in nearly two decades comes at a time when the creative industries are under immense pressure as a result of technological and economic change. This additional funding and support from government is vital for the livelihood of many within our arts and entertainment industries." said McCreadie.

Arts Minister Simon Crean has promised a 30 per cent funding increase to \$20.8 million for six elite training organisations, including the National Institute of Dramatic Art and the Australian Ballet School.

At the launch of *Creative Australia* at the National Press Club in Canberra today Minister Crean also announced the long-awaited reform of the Australia Council, which will include a \$75.3 million injection of funds.

The new national cultural policy includes an immediate funding commitment of \$10 million over four years to support the production of Australian content on digital platforms.

Creative Australia also includes an additional \$20 million in funding to attract international feature films to Australia.

"We welcome an additional \$20 million in funds but the location offset needs to be increased permanently before we lose any more productions – and all the jobs and training opportunities that go with them," said Mal Tulloch, director of the Entertainment, Crew and Sport section of the Alliance.

The strong Australian dollar and competing incentive schemes offered by more than 40 states within the US and countries such as the UK and Canada have seen international productions desert Australia in recent years.

"Today's announcement had a big focus on training but there really needs to be jobs for skilled creative workers to go to after their training. Creating a strong, sustainable film industry is one way we can ensure this," said Tulloch.

Last year Australia lost a \$200 million film by the makers of *The Matrix* movies that would have employed 2000 people.

"Today Minister Crean said the funding boost was precursor to the location offset being permanently increased if the Australia dollar remains high – and we are going to hold him to that. The livelihood of our world-class film crew depends on it."

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The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance - the people who inform and entertain
