



# MEDIA RELEASE

**The Hon Peter Garrett MP**

*Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts*

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## **NEW AGENCY FOR AUSTRALIAN FILM MAKERS**

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett, today introduced into the Parliament legislation to establish a single screen agency, Screen Australia.

Screen Australia will come into being on 1 July 2008, following a merger of the Australian Film Commission, the Film Finance Corporation and Film Australia.

“Establishing Screen Australia is a key plank in the Rudd Labor Government’s strategy to revitalise and expand our film and television industry,” Mr Garrett said.

“Our film and television industry punches above its weight with award-winning productions, cast and crew. It contributes \$1.5 billion a year to the economy and employs more than 50,000 people.

“But the industry is crying out for more private investment and strategic government support. We need to help our creative talent withstand the competition from imports, especially from the United States.

“Screen Australia will be a strong central funding body, restoring investor confidence and putting the industry on a new growth path.

“The agency will ensure that Australian audiences see more films, documentaries and children’s programs with Australian voices and content.

“Too many talented Australians currently have to work overseas for long periods or find jobs in other industries to supplement their incomes. Many world-renowned Australians are eager to come home to work, and we want to make sure the work is here for them.

“This legislation, in conjunction with the new production offsets, will provide a stable footing for the Australian industry to increase opportunities for our talented actors, directors and technicians to work here at home.”

In addition, the Minister introduced legislation to make the National Film and Sound Archive, one of the nation’s premier cultural managers, an independent statutory authority.

“This decision directly reflects our election commitment to the industry, that the important role of the National Film and Sound Archive would be enshrined in legislation that protects its independence,” Mr Garrett said.

“The Archive will develop programs to ensure as many Australians as possible, from our cities to the regions, enjoy films and recordings in their magnificent national collection.”

Debate on the legislation will resume in March 2008. Visit [www.arts.gov.au/film](http://www.arts.gov.au/film) for links to the legislation.