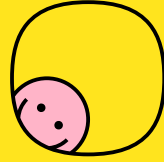


# Corporate Plan



Australian  
Children's  
Television  
Foundation

JULY 2024 – JUNE 2027



## 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 screen content that delivers on our aspirations for the children's audience. Support is provided for that content 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;
- 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 a 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 are 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 commissioners that content for adults does. It is the most vulnerable segment 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 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 time it takes to develop, finance and produce a show 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 of the international streaming services has brought increased competition to traditional 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 has always been especially vulnerable within the broader environment, but now it is facing an existential crisis. Children's content is the most endangered screen content globally, with Ampere Analysis research showing a 20% reduction in new children's programs commissioned worldwide in 2022/2023<sup>1</sup>. Alarming, Australia was the country with the largest decrease in new commissions for children – they were down by 50%. As broadcasters and streamers cut budgets and try to reduce risk, the Ampere Analysis study confirms that they are focused on commissioning global franchises and re-boots of old favourites. Opportunities for fresh, new, innovative Australian children's content are becoming harder than ever to secure.

Meanwhile, the demand for ACTF funds has grown markedly over the past few years as production budgets have increased by 20 – 30%, while the market contribution from broadcasters and streaming platforms has not kept pace. The ACTF now often finds itself the largest contributor to many of the children's projects it supports. In the 2024-25 Budget papers the Commonwealth Government has acknowledged this issue with substantially increased ongoing funding for the ACTF. This will enable us to continue to make significant investments in Australian children's content.

This Corporate Plan acknowledges the priorities and pillars of Australia's National Cultural Policy: Revive. They are:

- First Nations First
- A Place For Every Story
- Centrality of the Artist
- Strong Cultural Infrastructure
- Engaging The Audience

<sup>1</sup> Ampere Analysis, Children's TV content in a changing market, Cyrine Amor, October 2023, available [here](#);  
Karolina Kaminska: US kids' commissions decline, acquisitions on the up, 8 February 2024, available [here](#).



Subject to our available resources and capacity, the ACTF's objectives over the next three years are:

- To support First Nations children's content by working with NITV, ABC and other commissioning platforms to build a larger slate of First Nations children's content which reaches children all over Australia;
- To support high-quality children's content intended for streaming platforms and to establish and grow partnerships with streaming platforms, given the establishment of Australian content obligations on those platforms foreshadowed in Revive;
- To continue collaborating with the ABC to ensure increased levels of Australian content reach children on the ABC's very successful children's and family platforms;
- To deliver children's screen content to Australians on any other platforms available to us, including in cinemas, and to increase reach via established and emerging internet platforms and through schools and education department portals.



## Objective 1 – Production Investment and Market Representation

Support the production of engaging, entertaining, accessible and educative screen content for Australian children



### The relevant Revive pillars for Objective 1 are First Nations First, A Place For Every Story, the Centrality of the Artist and Engaging the Audience.

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: advice and mentoring, production investment (via distribution advance and/or equity), introductions to commissioners and international representation and sales.

We are committed to the 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 platforms;
- encourage new and emerging producers to enter the industry while at the same time harnessing the skills of experienced producers;
- identify gaps in content/genre/age groups in children's television programming; and
- encourage productions to employ First Nations creatives on and off screen.

#### 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 and upcoming financial commitments (annually, three-year average, comparison of performance against previous years).



## 1.2 Quality of productions

The quality of productions is indicated and captured by the number of times a program is screened, audience ratings, sales to international platforms, positive reviews, industry awards and qualitative feedback received from children, parents and educators.

### KPI 1.2 - ACTF-supported projects receive critical acclaim and industry awards

<p><b>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corp Plan'</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical acclaim, reviews, industry awards, ratings.</li> </ul>
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### 1.3 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, ensuring that Australian stories connect with children abroad and at home. The ACTF is a respected international brand in children's television, with the programs we invest in 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 buyers at the major international trade fair, MIPCOM, as well as at MIPJunior, Kidscreen, and other relevant international events. Our exposure to international markets also gives us invaluable insights into trends in international programming and we apply that knowledge to our development and investment decisions.

#### KPI 1.3 - International sales of ACTF supported projects

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

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



## Objective 2 – Development Funding and Industry Development

*Support the development of engaging, entertaining, accessible and educative screen content for Australian children*



### **The relevant Revive pillars for Objective 2 are First Nations First, A Place For Every Story, the Centrality of the Artist and Strong Cultural Infrastructure.**

For a sustainable local children's production industry, creators need incubators and opportunities to develop their ideas and materials.

We provide a tailored assistance program for producers in the development phase of a project, including advice and mentoring, providing script notes, facilities, development investment (for storyboards or scripts, to create teasers and trailers that can be taken to market, creating budgets or finance plans), introductions to mentors, experts, other creatives or potential commissioners.

A pipeline of quality children's content in development ensures a range of high-quality projects are ready to go for presentation and pitching to commissioners and potential partners.

#### **2.1 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 2.1 – 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 Corporate 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.



## 2.2 Enabling capacity, brokering opportunities and creating pathways

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

production process at the earliest stage of a project. By assisting producers in developing strategies for securing finance, negotiating arrangements with commissioners, 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 for 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, providing critical assistance to develop the career paths of screen creatives.

We maintain and develop relationships with commissioning platforms, 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. We assist in growing First Nations storytelling by mentoring First Nations creatives and providing support to First Nations screen projects at all stages of production.

**KPI 2.2 - 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.**

<p><b>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 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.</li> <li>· Case studies outlining how ACTF's assistance for producers and investment in projects can enable capacity across the industry, where available.</li> </ul>
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## Objective 3 – Education, Access and Distribution

*Delivering educational outcomes through the use of Australian children’s television and maximising access for the child audience to new and existing high-quality Australian children’s content*



### **The relevant Revive pillars for Objective 3 are First Nations First, A Place For Every Story and Engaging the Audience**

We are committed to delivering educational outcomes through Australian children’s screen content. We develop contemporary education resources based on ACTF supported projects (and occasionally, other projects) and make them available on a range of platforms.

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. An education advisory panel, with representatives from the State and Territory Education Departments, assists us in meeting this objective so that where possible and appropriate, Australian children’s screen content is incorporated into an Australian education. We also develop new approaches to engaging with teachers and children through our online events.

We aim to maximise access to high-quality, locally produced, distinctively Australian screen content made for children, so that Australian stories connect with children across Australia. We aim to licence our content to all possible platforms in Australia – whether on television or broadcaster video-on-demand services, streaming platforms or education department portals. Where it is not possible to licence a project to any of these platforms which pay a fee for content, we consider placing the project on an Advertiser video-on-demand service (such as You Tube) to ensure continued availability.

We also encourage discussion and debate about children’s screen content. It is essential that the screen industry, governments, and the wider community recognise the challenges facing the continued production of Australian children’s content.

#### **3.1 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 3.1 – Develop and produce education resources based on ACTF supported projects**

<b>Examples of data to be included in ‘Report against Corporate Plan’</b>	· List resources developed by ACTF and where they are available.
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### 3.2 Engagement with the education community and developing teacher and student knowledge and capacity

We connect with teachers 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; and
- student focused webinars which introduce behind-the-scenes and/or on-camera talent, introduce screen culture and develop media literacy skills.

#### KPI 3.2 – Promote ACTF programs, education resources and services to educators and students via online webinars

<p><b>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of Online Teacher Professional Development</li> <li>• Delivery of Student Facing Webinars</li> <li>• Student and Teacher Engagement with Virtual Events.</li> </ul>
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### 3.3 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, licencing and sales.

#### KPI 3.3 – Monitor and report on usage, feedback, licencing, sales and other endorsements

<p><b>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of feedback, usage, sales, licencing and endorsements, etc.</li> </ul>
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### 3.4 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 and we are specifically targeting streaming services such as ABC iView, SBS On Demand, Netflix, Amazon and Stan for the home market, providing children with the opportunity to engage with our programs in line with current media consumption habits. Our content is also available for download-to-own through our online shop, and older content is available on our Twisted Lunchbox YouTube channel.

We aim for all Australian children, regardless of language, literacy, geography, age or education to have access to Australian children's screen content.

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.

#### KPI 3.4 – Ensure access to ACTF supported programs for children by distributing programs widely

<p><b>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of FTA and Pay TV screening, availability of programs on online streaming and catch-up services.</li> <li>• Sales figures.</li> <li>• Educational implementation.</li> <li>• Include comparative performance over three year period.</li> </ul>
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### 3.5 Provide expertise on issues concerning Australian children's television and screen content

We have been an investor, producer and international distributor of children's screen content since 1984. Our unmatched experience and insight into the issues affecting children's content 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 environment.

#### KPI 3.5 – Lead, shape and contribute to policy on issues concerning Australian children's television and screen content

<p><b>Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List policy submissions and achievements.</li> </ul>
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### 3.6 Responses to ACTF Programs and Impact of ACTF Support

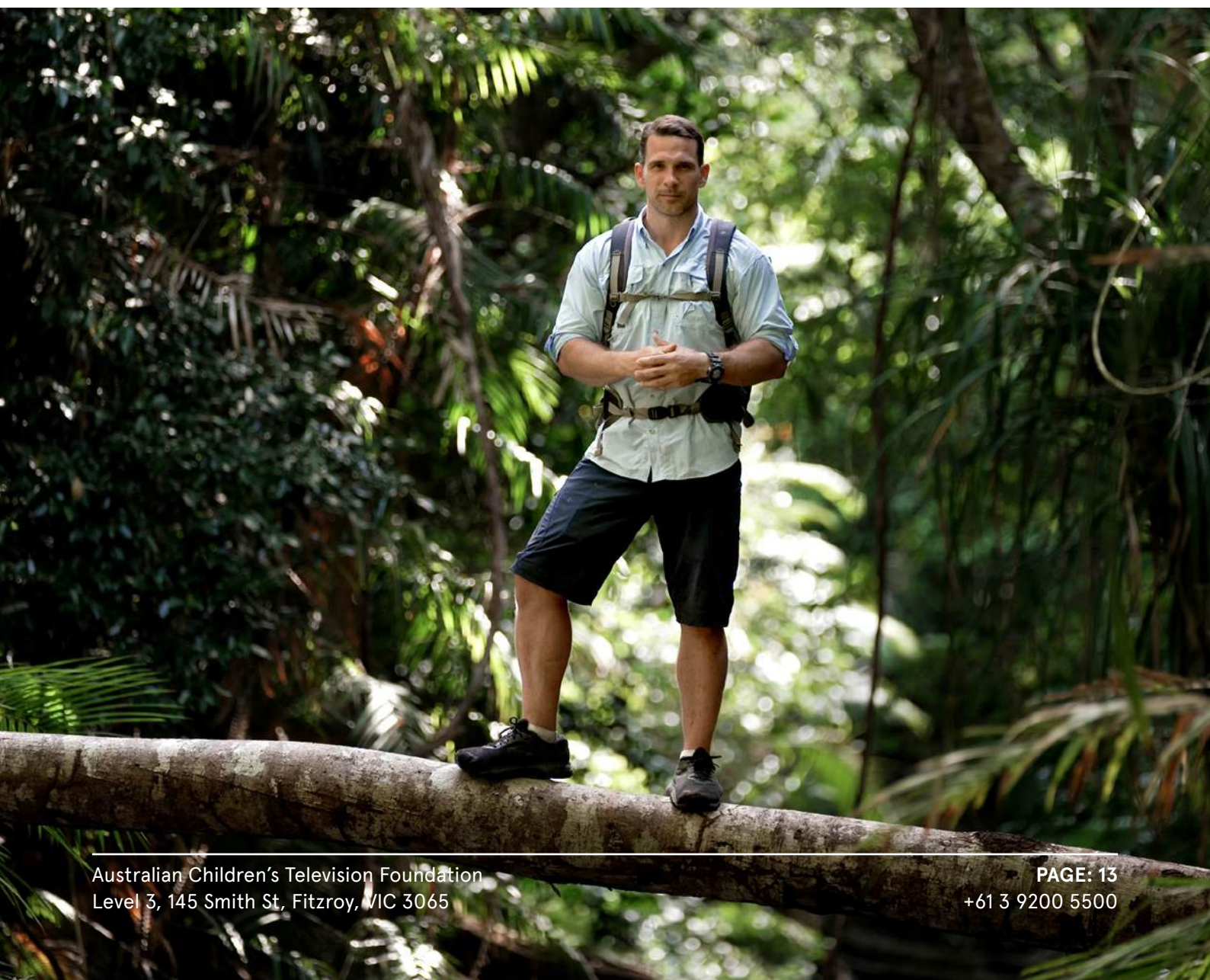
We monitor available ratings data, surveys and audience feedback to gauge responses to programs that we are involved in. We also seek feedback from educators on ACTF supported programs.

A four-year research project with Swinburne University is studying 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 3.6 – 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, develop and nurture its staff*



## The relevant Revive pillar for Objective 4 is Strong Cultural Infrastructure

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.

The ACTF staff are its greatest asset, with expertise, knowledge, experience and relationships that are invaluable to the organisation itself and of substantial benefit to the wider screen industry. The ACTF will ensure that a culture of continual improvement and collaboration includes the sharing of knowledge within the organisation, as well as the development of careers and skills of its staff, to support succession planning, meet the evolving needs of the organisation and contribute to the skills and capacity of the screen sector as a whole.

### *Budget*

**KPI 4.1 – Annual budget approved by the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee and Board and incorporated into the Corporate Plan**

### *Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee*

**KPI 4.2 – The Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee considers all proposed investments above pre-approved levels and reports recommendations to the Board; and reviews all ACTF financial reports directly with the external auditor and independently of ACTF management.**

### *People and Culture Committee*

**KPI 4.3 – The People and Culture Committee assists the Board by ensuring that appropriate human resources strategies, policies and procedures are in place to support, develop and nurture ACTF staff.**

### *Nominations Committee*

**KPI 4.4 – The Nominations Committee assists the Board with reviewing the composition of the Board and Committees and makes recommendations to the Board on potential future Board members**



## Meetings

**KPI 4.5 – The Finance Audit and Risk Management Committee and ACTF Board meet at least four times in each 12-month period**

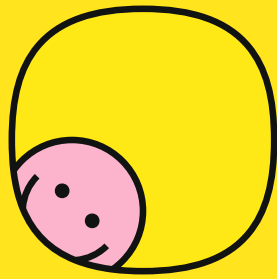
**KPI 4.6 – The People and Culture Committee meets at least three times in each 12-month period**

**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**





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