

Corporate Plan

July 2026 – June 2029



Australian Children's Television Foundation



Introduction

The Australian Children's Television Foundation (**ACTF**) is a non-profit company funded by the Commonwealth Government with contributions from 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 they engage with.

What We Do

We assist and support children's screen content that delivers on our aspirations for the children's audience. Support is provided 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; and
- Measuring and reporting on the impact of our funding and other activities.

Why It Matters

Children are inundated with screens during their formative years, right when they are developing their values, identity, and self-esteem. But the shared experience of watching television together is being replaced by algorithms serving viewers a personalised stream, designed to keep children mesmerised, watching content that has been pushed to them, rather than deliberately chosen. Some of that content might be nourishing, but most of it is not. In a world saturated with harmful dross, we must provide Australian children and their families with better options.

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 writers and 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 screen story is an opportunity to try on someone else's shoes and consider what it's like to be them. Australian children's screen content is building empathy, kindness, social cohesion and shared values.

The creation of children's 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 screen content 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 can 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. Old models of funding and regulation, as well as audience viewing habits, are being turned on their head. 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. It is not seen as a driver of new subscriptions, so it does not attract large investments or licence fees in the way that landmark drama for adult audiences does. Whilst children's content is seen as a subscription retention tool, that purpose can be achieved through re-licensing old favourites for children who might be discovering them for the first time. Opportunities for fresh, new, innovative Australian children's content are becoming harder than ever to secure.

In this environment, the ACTF has become a critical stabilising force – investing in development and production, brokering partnerships with public broadcasters and streaming platforms, supporting digital-first content, and ensuring Australian children's screen content remains visible, viable and valuable. The demand for ACTF funds has grown markedly over the past few years as production budgets have increased by 30%, while the market contribution from broadcasters and streaming platforms has not kept pace. The ACTF is now often the largest contributor to many of the children's projects it supports.

Over the next three-year period, the ACTF is recommitting to our aspirational vision of high-quality Australian children's screen content reaching and connecting with children on all the platforms they engage with. This commitment requires us to address the challenges of discoverability – how much harder it is for children and their families to find the Australian content that is being made for them in a fragmented media environment, and how challenging it is to build ongoing engagement and interaction with Australian children's content in the contemporary market. We will be considering all possible levers – including marketing strategies, contract terms and policy interventions – that might support the reach of Australian children's screen content, and we will invite all stakeholders to join us in this focus. We will also engage more proactively with the online platforms children are turning to and develop our strategy to support content for these platforms that is consistent with our Purpose and Values and can reach the widest possible audience.

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

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

- To support First Nations children's content for NITV and all other platforms;
- To support high quality children's content intended for streaming platforms and to establish and grow partnerships with streaming platforms;
- To continue collaborating with the ABC to ensure increased levels of Australian content reach children on the ABC's very successful children's platforms;
- To support the broadest range of screen content that resources allow; and
- To deliver children's screen content to Australians on any other platforms available to us, including through established and emerging internet platforms, through schools and education department portals, and through strategies intended to support discoverability and draw attention to Australian children's screen content.



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 consider 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 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 from children, parents and educators.

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

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'

- *Critical acclaim, reviews, industry awards, ratings.*



1.3 International market representation for Australian children's productions

The ACTF is a respected international brand in children's content, with the programs we invest in watched by children on 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.

The international market for screen content, however, is challenging. Free-to-air broadcasters are moving children's content online, relying on old library content, ditching children's content altogether, or spending most of their resources supporting their own struggling local sectors. This, combined with the consolidation of both streaming platforms and distributors, means there are fewer buyers, leading to the closure of several international markets and publications. Many of the remaining international distributors are not representing children's content or are declining to contribute distribution advances at the level required to fund a production. The ACTF's capacity and experience in distribution are therefore vitally important in the current market.

Our exposure to the international market also gives us invaluable insights into trends in international programming, which we apply to our development and investment decisions.

KPI 1.3 - International sales of ACTF supported projects

**Examples of data to be included in
'Report against Corporate 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 meet 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

Through our investments, we advise and guide producers through the development and 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 and screen agencies, with a view to encouraging and supporting the commissioning of high-quality Australian children's screen content across all 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.

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'

- *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.*
- *Case studies outlining how ACTF's assistance for producers and investment in projects can enable capacity across the industry, where available.*

Objective 3 – Education, Access and Distribution

Delivering educational outcomes using Australian children’s screen content 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. The 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 YouTube) 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

Examples of data to be included in ‘Report against Corporate Plan’

- *List resources developed by ACTF and where they are available.*

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

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'

- *Delivery of online teacher professional development.*
- *Delivery of student facing webinars.*
- *Student and teacher engagement with virtual events.*

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

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'

- *Details of feedback, usage, sales, licencing and endorsements, etc.*

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

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'

- *List of FTA and Pay TV screening, availability of programs on online streaming and catch-up services.*
- *Sales figures.*
- *Educational implementation.*
- *Include comparative performance over three-year period.*

3.5 Provide expertise on issues concerning Australian children's 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

Examples of data to be included in 'Report against Corporate Plan'

- *List policy submissions and achievements.*

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.

We seek and review feedback from producers who receive ACTF funding via acquittal surveys and reports.

We engage with academic research and researchers.

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.

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 as required 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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