

SBS INDEPENDENT:
PRODUCTIVE DIVERSITY AND
COUNTER-MEMORY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines SBSi as cultural institution from its establishment in 1994 through to its merger with SBS-TV in 2007. As a cultural institution SBSi functioned governmentally to effect neo-liberal reform, significantly reshaping labour processes within the independent film and public service sectors. This thesis argues that SBSi carefully manoeuvred within this neo-liberal regime allowing non-assimilative cultural practices to manifest. Using a creative labour approach this thesis demonstrates how SBSi cultivated the resource of productive diversity to shape new creative labour practices, allowing new filmmaking milieux to form, and new counter-memorial filmmaking strategies to flourish. It analyses SBSi in relation to cultural policy developments, linking its activities as a commissioning house for SBS, to productive diversity; a State policy for harnessing the cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD) of Australian citizens as a national economic resource. Drawing on original interviews and archival sources it elaborates creative management processes developed by SBSi to foster productive diversity, and demonstrates how these shaped labour processes to inaugurate mentorship and early career opportunities for Indigenous, regional and CALD filmmakers. It also demonstrates how SBSi rejuvenated an ailing independent production sector by developing new niche audiences for innovative local content. Finally, this thesis adopts a critical race and whiteness approach to analyse the SBSi catalogue, and demonstrate how SBSi manoeuvred within a governmental logic to give rise to a new counter-memorial genre. Consistent with the tradition of counter-memory, SBSi productions evidence innovations in formal, aesthetic and narrative techniques that de-naturalise white hegemony, and created representational spaces for non-white subjectivities. It argues that the content generated under the aegis of SBSi constitutes a coherent counter-memorial cycle, and its analysis in this thesis provides a template elucidating new possibilities for subversion within neo-liberal modes of governance.

DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

- i. the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD except where indicated in the Preface,
- ii. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,
- iii. the thesis is fewer than 100 000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices as approved by the Research Higher Degrees Committee.

Amanda Malel Trevisanut

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CHAPTER ONE

A CULTURAL INSTITUTION

There have been three distinct phases in Australia's postwar response to migrants. The first phase was characterised by an expectation that immigrants would fit into the dominant Anglo-Australian culture. The second was characterised by the encouragement of tolerance and respect for diversity, and the effort to ensure access and equity regardless of ethnic origin. And this effort will continue. But we now have the beginnings of a third phase. We now must take advantage of the potentially huge national economic asset which multiculturalism represents. That is what productive diversity is about (Paul Keating, Opening speech to the Productive Diversity in Business Conference, 28 October 1992).

In recognition of the importance of developing programming to reflect Australia's multicultural society, the Government will provide \$13 million over four years to SBS to commission high quality Australian programs...It will be administered separately from SBS's normal operating budget by SBS Independent...What it produces will have strong export potential, not least in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. With its experience in translation, subtitling and multicultural broadcasting SBS is perfectly situated to tap into these markets with high quality Australian product (emphasis in the original) (Creative Nation: Commonwealth Cultural Policy, October 1994).

Wow. "Harvie Krumpet" has been a film that's been in my head for over ten years and I'm so glad he's out. We'd like to congratulate everyone in Australia who have helped "Harvie" come to life, in particular the Australian Film Commission, Film Victoria and SBS Independent. "Harvie" will be screening on SBS television next Monday night at 9 pm. We'd also like to congratulate our fantastic cast and crew, especially our uncle Geoffrey Rush for lending us his most beautiful voice. Finally, we'd like to thank two very, very special people: my friend Juliet and my beautiful boyfriend Dan. Thank you (Adam Elliot, Acceptance speech at the 76th Academy Awards, 29 February 2004).

On 29 February 2004, Australian animator Adam Elliot and producer Melanie Coombs stood before an international television audience of approximately 2.4 billion people and accepted their Academy Award for *Harvie Krumpet*, 2003's Best Animated Short Film. This is a notable moment in Australian screen history

for a number of reasons. Not least of which were Elliot's innocently delivered thanks to his "beautiful boyfriend Dan" - an Oscar first – and his plug for SBS-TV – recognised by international audiences as Amsterdam's porn channel and not Australia's multicultural public broadcaster, the Special Broadcasting Service Corporation (SBS), to which Elliot was referring. While congratulations extended to SBS Independent (SBSi) has remained relatively unremarked, it was for the cultural institution, a significant moment. Elliot's commendation of SBSi on this most international of stages symbolised the ascension of the commissioning house to the critical, if not economic, heights envisioned for it by the Keating Labour government almost ten years earlier when it delivered its *Creative Nation* policy statement. Furthermore, that this short film, featuring a Polish immigrant with Tourette's Syndrome, was an unequivocal success with international film festival audiences, affirmed State productive diversity policy underwriting Australian economic and cultural policies.¹

SBSi operated as a commissioning house for the SBS television service (SBS-TV) between August 1994 and December 2007. The institution attracted State support as a vehicle for productive diversity, a policy program that identified Australia's cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD) as an economic resource that, properly harnessed, "improved international competitiveness, access to domestic niche markets and heightened productivity" (Pyke 1).² While the government anticipated "strong export potential" for the "high quality Australian" content

¹commercial In this thesis, the capitalised term "State" refers to federal forms of government. This enables a distinction from the lower case use of the term "state" to refer to provincial forms of Australian government, such as the NSW, Victorian or Queensland governments.

² In this thesis the acronym "CALD" means either "culturally and linguistically diverse" or "cultural and linguistic diversity" and is used to refer to "all of Australia's non-Indigenous ethnic groups other than the English-speaking Anglo-Saxon majority" (Sawrikar and Katz 2). CALD has gradually come to replace non-English speaking background (NESB) as the dominant term and acronym to refer collectively to Australia's ethnic groups. In 1996 the Ministerial Council for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (MCIMA) introduced the term and acronym as a more appropriate designation for differences arising from cultural or linguistic heritage. Reasons include negative connotations endemic to NESB, which designates what "others" are *not*, and recognition of barriers or disadvantage experienced as a consequence of cultural as well as linguistic difference. See Sawrikar and Katz for a detailed discussion.

commissioned by the institution (*Creative Nation*), for SBS, SBSi represented a hard won means to generate local multicultural content for the network's television schedule. Prior to SBSi the inhibitive cost of producing drama and documentary content, together with SBS's meagre operating budget, had resulted in a broadcast schedule heavily dependent on cheap foreign language imports to meet its charter. Local content screened on SBS-TV largely comprised news, current affairs and sports, and a nominal annual average of three hours of drama per year, all produced in-house. Although imported content and in-house factual programming remains fundamental to the SBS-TV schedule, with the inauguration of SBSi, the network became resourced to also *consistently* reflect and engage the particularities of Australian cultural diversity, through innovative and entertaining audio-visual content.

For the thirteen years that it operated, SBSi commissioned a number of nationally and internationally acclaimed productions that span a variety of formats and themes. Productions include the critically acclaimed feature films *Floating Life* (Clara Law), *The Boys* (Rowan Woods), *Radiance* (Rachel Perkins), *Beneath Clouds* (Ivan Sen), *Somersault* (Cate Shortland), *Look Both Ways* (Sarah Watt), *Ten Canoes* (Rolf de Heer and Peter Djigirr) and *The Home Song Stories* (Tony Ayres). Short films include *Feeling Sexy* (Davida Allen), *Jewboy* (Tony Krawitz), *Jammin' in the Middle E* (Kim Mordaunt), the Oscar nominated animation *The Mysterious Geographic Explorations of Jasper Morello* (Anthony Lucas) and *The Safe House* (Lee Whitmore). *Untold Desires* (Sarah Stephens), *After Mabo* (John Hughes), *Molly an Mobarak* (Tom Zubrycki), *The President versus David Hicks* (Curtis Levy and Bentley Dean), *Unfolding Florence* (Gillian Armstrong), *First Australians* (Rachel Perkins and Beck Cole) and *Night* (Lawrence Johnston) are only a few of the highly regarded documentaries and documentary series commissioned. Television series such as *QUADS!* (created by John Callahan), *The Colony* (created by Chris Hilton), *RAN: Remote Area Nurse* (David Caesar and Catriona McKenzie), *East West 101* (created by Steve Knapman and Kris Wyld), *Pizza* (Paul Fenech), *The Circuit* (created by Kelly Lefever) and *Wilfred* (created by Jason Gann and Adam Zwar) were also realised via SBSi investment. In total, SBSi commissioned approximately 804 separate titles, equivalent to 1500 hours of content.

The thematic and formal diversity characteristic of the SBSi catalogue suggests its contribution to improved employment opportunities available to Indigenous and CALD film and television producers.³ For instance, SBSi's investment in feature film production did not result in more feature films but rather, the redirection of existing public finance toward representation of Indigenous and CALD peoples. Screen Australia statistics show that since 1980 Australia's feature film output remained steady with an annual average of thirty films being produced in the decade to 1990, twenty-seven between 1990 and 2000, and twenty-nine between 2000 and 2010. Of the 346 Australian feature films produced between the 1994-95 and 2006-07 financial years SBSi commissioned approximately thirty, roughly eight percent.⁴ Furthermore, of the twenty-three titles made with an Indigenous Australian as a director, producer, writer or director of photography between 1970 and 2012, only two were produced prior to the 1990s and the advent of SBSi (Screen Australia).⁵ Of the 3370 total documentary hours produced by independent producers, commercial and public broadcasters between 1996-97 and 2006-07, SBSi commissioned 833 hours, almost twenty-five percent of Australia's total output.⁶ The number of Indigenous documentarians also grew significantly during this period, with 196 Indigenous filmmakers assuming key roles on 401 documentaries from the 1990s, compared with twenty-six filmmakers on twenty-four titles in the 1980s, and none in the

³ "Indigenous" is a shorthand term used to refer collectively to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. When capitalised it refers to the original inhabitants of Australia, the lower case version of the term is employed to refer, in a general sense, to original inhabitants of any country. This is consistent with the Monash University inclusive language style guide. See <http://www.monash.edu.au/about/editorialstyle/writing/inclusive-language.html>

⁴ Refer to Table 1 in Appendix one.

⁵ Unfortunately Screen Australia has not published similar data regarding CALD employment.

⁶ It must be acknowledged that the significant increase of the documentary hours commissioned by SBSi from 2003-04 coincides with "the generally high levels of production" in the sector reported by Screen Australia (refer to Table 2 in Appendix one). This suggests that the institution did not simply redirect existing financial resources but also contributed to an increase in production. As at 2012, Screen Australia reported that this increase in hours was attributable to an increase in the number of series produced rather than more titles, and that the production of single documentaries has remained at lower levels since 2003-04, while their total production value has increased since 2005-06.

1970s (Screen Australia). With regard to CALD the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reports a more moderate though steady increase of linguistically diverse employees born overseas working within the cultural industries, from 10.8 percent in 1996 to 13.5 percent in 2006.⁷ While it is generally accepted that SBS has remained peripheral to mainstream Australian media, this data indicates that SBSi successfully leveraged its nominal budget to progress Indigenous and CALD employment in film and television production.

The mandate to source independently produced local content for the multicultural broadcaster located SBSi as an agent of change within SBS *and* the independent filmmaking sector. SBSi was designed such that the institution provided filmmakers with funding on a pre-sale basis, contributing only a small percentage of a production's overall budget. SBSi relied upon federal agencies such as the Australian Film Commission (AFC), the Film Finance Corporation (FFC) and Film Australia, and state institutions such as the NSW Film and Television Office (NSW FTO), ScreenWest and Film Victoria, to co-finance commissioned content. Outsourcing and co-funding strategically overcame the prohibitive cost of in-house production, and dispersed its responsibility to represent and circulate Indigenous and CALD content among Australia's screen agencies and agents. SBS-TV availed itself to producers as a much-needed site for the exhibition of local content, and in return, benefited from the widespread circulation of commissioned content, via national and international film festivals, theatrical exhibition, video and DVD, the internet and international television broadcast. While the critical acclaim attracted by numerous productions is the most apparent example of SBSi's legacy, the structure and purpose of the institution indicates exceptional and enduring influence over public finance, production, distribution, exhibition and representational processes in the screen industry.

⁷ Increased numbers of Indigenous and CALD workers must not be confused with the achievement of equal employment opportunities. This is exemplified by available ABS data regarding employment of CALD peoples in film, radio, video and television. As at 1996 the ABC reported linguistically diverse employees born overseas comprised only five percent of the sector compared to 13.9 percent of the Australian workforce (Bertone, Keating and Mullaly 25).

This thesis explores SBSi as a cultural institution and establishes the first comprehensive account of the organisation from inception to its closure in 2007. As a cultural institution, SBSi was a publically financed organisation responsible for administering creative practice. This function situated SBSi to execute neo-liberal reform of labour processes in the film and television sectors, including at SBS. The creation of SBSi is first examined in relation to cultural policy developments to demonstrate how the organisation's structure, its objectives and management processes were fashioned to achieve productive diversity. *Productive diversity* refers to the State program formally introduced in 1992, which guided Australian businesses in key industrial sectors on strategies for harnessing CALD as a resource to enhance competitiveness in the global economy, for instance, by facilitating creation of innovative products and services for niche markets. Using a creative labour approach this thesis demonstrates how SBSi's governance of the economic resource of productive diversity shaped new practices of management, production and distribution in film and television. These practices include: mentorship and career development initiatives for Indigenous, regional and CALD filmmakers; new production regimes empowering public broadcasters to mediate independent production; and the gradual evolution from investment in innovation towards standardised and marketable products. This thesis also analyses content commissioned by SBSi, and argues that new production regimes incubated new counter-memorial narrative representations, which exposed, disrupted, critiqued and otherwise challenged the reproduction of white racial hegemony in Australian screen representations. *Counter-memories* are strategically subjective representations sharing personal histories, experiences and memories that intersect with and introduce inconsistency to officially sanctioned narratives of nation and/or community. Content generated under the aegis of SBSi constitutes a coherent counter-memorial cycle, and its analysis in this thesis forms a case study demonstrating how neo-liberal techniques of governance produce alternative opportunities to challenge hegemony. In the case of SBSi, this challenge was issued via the innovative manipulation of established formal, aesthetic and narrative conventions, creating new possibilities for the representation of non-white voices, histories and stories.

This analysis introduces a new account of SBSi, that implicates the institution in State-led neo-liberal refashioning of labour processes in the film and television sectors, previously obscured by the dominant multicultural approach and its focus on identity formation via consumption practices. This thesis defines neo-liberalism as a dominant mode of State “governance through the market,” which has been in ascendency in English-speaking Western nations since the 1970s (Flew, “Six Theories” 31). This thesis rejects the conceptualisation of “neo-liberalism as a dominant ideology of global capitalism” circumscribed “within binary oppositions of private and public, collective and individual, and state and market” (Flew, “Six Theories” 31). It instead subscribes to Michel Foucault’s understanding of neo-liberalism as historically produced via “a coupling of a set of practices and a regime of truth” that forms the “apparatus (*dispositif*) of knowledge-power” (*Birth of Biopolitics* 19). Neo-liberal reform is guided by a “regime of truth” touting the need for smaller government and *laissez faire* economics. It is however, achieved via practices that strengthen the role of government via its mediation of market relations (Melleuish 55). For example, neo-liberal interventions in Australia have attempted to engineer a viable film market, in the 1980s via generous tax concessions for private investors under Division 10BA of the Income Tax Assessment Act, and via the institution of the FFC in 1988 as a “film bank” providing subsidy for projects with proven market interest. In these examples taxation and public subsidy accompany the deregulation of national markets to *engineer* global competitiveness of local producers and products (Caust 52; Craik, McAllister and Davis 18). These interventions were also designed to ensure that mainstream content reflected a specific image of white national identity (Dermody and Jacka, *Screening vol.1-2*).⁸ This thesis posits that as a cultural institution, SBSi subjected non-

⁸ This thesis uses the term “white” in favour of “Anglo” or “Anglo-Celtic” to broadly refer to the ruling political and economic group. As extrapolated in chapter four, while power and privilege largely remains the province of those bearing phenotypical and cultural characteristics of Anglo- or European derived peoples, it is also an “an everchanging, composite historical construct” (Hage, *White Nation* 58). The rationale for this terminology is adopted from critical race and whiteness scholarship, which focuses on a definition of “white” that perceives it as open to

commercial modes of independent screen production to the logic of neo-liberal governance, giving rise to new production milieux and heterogeneous modes of national storytelling. As will be extrapolated in detail below, neo-liberal governance represents a decentralised form of power that imbricates citizens into the mechanisms of the State, allowing for non-assimilative elements to manifest. Using a critical race and whiteness framework this thesis demonstrates how SBSi manoeuvred within a neo-liberal regime to create new spaces for innovative, diverse and political representational practices to flourish. While studies have elaborated how SBSi productions intervened in mainstream representations of Australian identity and history, they are largely framed by dichotomies that position SBSi in opposition to the State, overlooking the emergence of these representations from within a State funded cultural institution.

In order to reframe SBSi as a neo-liberal cultural institution, this chapter will begin with an overview of Australian multiculturalism and its political erosion from the mid-1990s. The field of SBS and SBSi scholarship is then reviewed and the cultural institution approach established as an original contribution. In the third section, the key concepts *cultural institution*, *productive diversity* and *counter-memory* are defined, and their particular employment in this thesis extrapolated. The fourth and fifth sections detail the research design and the methodology developed to analyse and interpret research findings. The final section outlines each of the subsequent three chapters.

SECTION I

STATE MULTICULTURALISM FROM THE 1990s

As a cultural institution explicitly mandated to engage and reflect Australian multiculturalism, SBSi was inextricably linked to federal policies directed at the management of cultural diversity. From the mid-1990s, as a consequence of numerous global and national pressures, federal multicultural policy increasingly became subject to intense debate. The Persian Gulf War, led by the US against Iraq in response to the invasion and annexation of Kuwait (August 1990 to

similar analyses as race, nationality, ethnicity, etc. As such, the term also connotes its categorical mutability and contingency.

February 1991), the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001, and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan (2001-2013) and Iraq (2003-2011), are pivotal events that reconfigured cross-cultural relations across the globe, both internationally and intra-nationally. At a local level, politicians framed the related influx of refugees arriving unbidden on Australia's northern border as a challenge to white national sovereignty. Moreover, the landmark 1992 *Mabo* and 1996 *Wik* decisions ruling in favour of native title challenged the legitimacy of white claims to sovereignty.⁹ In 1996 independent Member of Parliament (MP) Pauline Hanson openly challenged continued federal support for multiculturalism. And in 1997 authoritative national histories were discredited by the *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* (HREOC). The following section outlines how these global and national events reshaped federal government approaches to multicultural policy. The aim is to draw attention to the complex, and the oftentimes contradictory, relationship between SBSi and contemporaneous federal governments, and in so doing, begin to identify key areas for analysis.

Although SBSi was administratively independent of SBS-TV, it was beholden to the SBS Charter: "to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians, and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society" (*Special Broadcasting Services Act 1991* sec. 6. par. 1.). The establishment of SBS radio and television in 1978 and 1980 respectively, was one of a slate of migrant and ethnic services inaugurated under the auspice of multicultural policy throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The federal policy of multiculturalism was made official by the Whitlam Labour government in 1973, and was adopted in recognition of the fact that previous policies were

⁹ The *Mabo* decision is the landmark ruling by the Australian High Court handed down in the 1992 *Mabo v Queensland (No.2)* case. This legal decision overturned the doctrine of *terra nullius*, on which British colonial rule over the Australian continent rests, by recognising the pre-existing property rights of Indigenous Australians for the first time. What is referred to as the *Wik* decision was delivered by the High Court of Australia on 23 December 1996, in the *Wik Peoples v the State of Queensland*. The court found that statutory pastoral leases do not bestow exclusive title rights to the leaseholder and therefore do not extinguish native title rights.

untenable. From 1901 to the 1940s the *Immigration Restriction Act*, known colloquially as the “White Australia Policy,” restricted immigration to British peoples, as a means of engineering a phenotypically-defined white nation. While immigration was opened up to non-English speaking Europeans from the 1940s to meet post World War II reconstruction needs, migrants were required to divest themselves of their cultural heritage, language and traditions, and fully assimilate to white Australian culture. The policy of assimilation was displaced by integration in the 1960s, which recognised the rights of migrants to maintain their cultural heritage. The subsequent policy of multiculturalism represented a more comprehensive policy for managing ethnic diversity, insofar as it also provided a raft of services to meet specific needs arising from a culturally and linguistically diverse citizenry. Successive governments displayed varying levels of commitment to multiculturalism throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This is evidenced by the numerous welfare and English language services, migrant settlement programs, advisory councils, enquiries, agendas, and departments, which have come and gone under its auspices (Jupp). SBS is one of the few multicultural institutions that have endured, and indeed, it has been a key force shaping and leading cultural change. Its longevity is attributable to the terms of the SBS Charter, which have proven to be extremely amenable; reinterpretation of what constitutes a multicultural television service has allowed SBS to accommodate evolving social, political and market pressures (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy). As this thesis demonstrates, the institution of SBSi, and its evolving objectives and its practices, are exemplary of this amenability.

That said, federal support of SBSi is compelling given the neo-conservative political context that coincided with its institution. For the thirteen years from 1983 to 1996, the federal Labour government remained in power, first led by Bob Hawke (1983 to 1991) and then Paul Keating (1991-1996). On 11 March 1996, roughly two years after SBSi’s establishment, the Liberal-National Coalition, led by John Howard, succeeded the Keating Labour government. They remained in power until 3 December 2007. The election of the Coalition is popularly remembered as a decisive break with the multicultural policies of its Labour predecessors. This is partially attributable to Howard’s initial refusal to censure or repudiate views expressed by independent MP Pauline Hanson. In her maiden

speech delivered on 10 September 1996, Hanson infamously called for the devolution of public support to Aboriginals on the basis of reverse racism, the radical review of immigration policy, and the abolition of multiculturalism to avert the “danger of being swamped by Asians” whose inability to assimilate threatened national cohesion (Hanson). Ongoing media backlash eventually compelled Howard to break his months-long silence, and distance his government from Hanson via a bipartisan motion against racial discrimination, and which reaffirmed support for non-discriminatory immigration programs. Howard’s initial tolerance for the views expressed by Hanson was however, indicative of his government’s ambivalence toward multiculturalism more generally. The polemic language regularly employed by the Coalition undermined the ideals of inclusivity and pluralism championed by proponents of multiculturalism, and extended to issues of Indigenous land-rights, self-determination, and reconciliation as well as well to asylum seekers.

The Howard government denied the possibility of a heterogeneous history for Australia, and instead characterised contentious and contradictory histories as incommensurable with the traditional tale of British settlement, and therefore an anathema to mainstream sentiment. For instance, in 1997 the Howard government refused the recommendations of HREOC to provide a parliamentary apology to the Stolen Generations. The *Stolen Generations* refers to the state sanctioned and enforced removal of Indigenous children from their families, a practice maintained from 1909 into the 1970s. At the 1997 Australian Reconciliation Convention, Howard justified his government’s refusal on the basis that “Australians of this generation should not be required to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control.”¹⁰ Here, Indigenous peoples are defined in opposition to the concerns of everyday Australians, and Howard’s rhetoric positioned Indigenous people as *not* Australian, or at least different from mainstream Australians. This is also

¹⁰ Although John Howard refused to offer a parliamentary apology, he did offer a personal apology, stating: “Personally, I feel deep sorrow for those of my fellow Australians who suffered injustices under the practices of past generations towards indigenous people. Equally, I am sorry for the hurt and trauma many people here today may continue to feel as a consequence of those practices.” See Howard.

reflected in Howard's repudiation of academics, social commentators, and activists at the same convention, who were accused of "grossly" distorting and "deliberately" neglecting the "overall story of great Australian achievement," to instead "portray Australian history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism, exploitation and racism." This position actively denied the currency of Indigenous histories, memories and experiences within national discourses, and was regularly reiterated by Howard throughout his prime ministership.

Immigration, particularly of asylum seekers, emerged as another contentious issue during this period; one where the limits of the Howard government's idea of cultural diversity, and the "particularly" Australian virtue of tolerance, was clearly articulated. Although the question of immigration and the management of "illegal" refugees loomed large in government policy from the time of their election, it was after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001, that their approach took a particularly insidious turn. Following the attack, the government moved to bolster support for its policy of mandatory and indefinite detention of "illegal" asylum seekers, including children, on the basis that those seeking to enter the country by unauthorised means could be terrorists, and therefore posed a threat to national security. Given that a vast majority of "illegal" refugees were escaping war in the Middle East, this assertion had the effect of collapsing the distinction between criminals, terrorists, people of Middle Eastern descent, and people of Muslim faith. Racial and religious profiling – which also had very serious ramifications for Arab-Australians who had resided in the country for decades (Hage, *Arab-Australians Today*) – was practiced in an even more overt manner during what is popularly referred to as the "Children Overboard Affair." In October 2001, the government falsely claimed that a boat of asylum seekers threw their children overboard to secure rescue and gain entry into Australia when intercepted by the HMAS Adelaide. Howard framed the incident as a counterpoint to those Australian family values that he often championed, when he stated that he did not "want in Australia people who would throw their own children into the sea" (qtd. in *John Howard*). Similarly, Minister for Immigration Phillip Ruddock regarded "these as some of the most disturbing practices" that he had ever seen (qtd. in *John*

Howard). Both Howard and Ruddock characterised the incident as a cultural “practice,” and is an example of how the government fabricated incommensurable difference between Australian cultural values and the values of those who would seek to become Australian.

The contemporaneity of SBSi and the Coalition is compelling given that the commissioning house was dependent for its continued survival upon the government for ongoing funding; a government whose actions and rhetoric appeared to be in direct conflict with the objectives that SBSi and SBS were mandated to achieve. Throughout its life SBSi commissioned a significant number of politically provocative films and documentaries. Most prominently John Hughes’ 1997 documentary *After Mabo*, chronicling illegal State amendments to Australia’s Native Title Act, informed United Nation’s ruling that Australia breached the 1966 Racial Discrimination Convention. Additionally, SBSi committed a minimum of five percent of its annual budget to commissioning work from Indigenous filmmakers. The concerted effort to support Indigenous filmmakers resulted in the production of feature films such as *Beneath Clouds* and the documentary series *First Australians*, both of which challenged the Coalition’s proclivity to represent the issues confronting Indigenous communities as separate from the concerns of “mainstream” Australians. Such films and initiatives indicate the inimical and thus “remarkable” (Collins and Davis 42-43) relationship between SBSi and the Coalition, and raise a number of questions: Why did the Coalition continue to fund a relatively new institution that publically challenged it on key ideological issues? Does this alliance indicate commensurate as well as paradoxical objectives? How did the funding arrangement influence the types of content commissioned?

As this section has demonstrated, federal government commitment to multiculturalism was severely diminished from the mid-1990s. Coalition sponsorship of SBSi, a new institution explicitly established to generate multicultural content, thus indicates a curious anomaly. This anomaly represents a significant gap in SBSi and SBS scholarship, which tends to approach the study of both institutions in relation to a multicultural policy framework. In order to understand how SBSi reshaped independent production and public broadcasting

practices, it is necessary to ascertain on what grounds the institution was an expedient investment for the Coalition. As indicated above, as well being designed by SBS to generate local multicultural content, SBSi was also characterised by its administrative independence from SBS and its establishment via the *Creative Nation* cultural policy. This thesis posits that independence from the SBS bureaucracy is significant factor often overlooked within scholarship. As an independent cultural institution, SBSi was able to embody policies articulating cultural programs to neo-liberal modes of governance, and thereby maintain State support. The study of SBSi as a cultural institution, operating within the logic of neo-liberal governmentality, represents an original approach. This is demonstrated in section two, which reviews the field of SBSi and SBS scholarship. Section three then elaborates the cultural institution approach with specific reference to the policies of productive diversity and creative industries administered by SBSi.

SECTION 2

APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF SBSi

Overall, scholarship is nominal with only four key studies having taken SBSi as an object of analysis. These studies are: Belinda Smaill's 2001 doctorate *Amidst a Nation's Cultures: Documentary and Australia's Special Broadcasting Television Service*, and her related essays; Felicity Collins and Therese Davis' 2004 *Australian Cinema After Mabo*; Ien Ang, Gay Hawkins and Lamia Dabboussy's 2008 *The SBS Story: The Challenge of Cultural Diversity*; and Trish FitzSimons, Pat Laughren and Dugald Williamson's 2011 *Australian Documentary: History, Practices and Genres*. SBSi is not the exclusive object of analysis in any of the studies, but has attracted the attention of scholars for the role the institution performed within the Australian film industry (Smaill, *Amidst*; Collins and Davis; FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson), and within the SBS Corporation (Smaill, *Amidst*; Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy). Across these four studies, the examination of SBSi and in particular, the content that it commissioned, has been conducted to achieve three key aims. First, to demonstrate how SBSi content has contributed to the evolution of SBS-TV's programming strategies, modes of address and the resultant construction of Australian multicultural identity (Smaill,

Amidst; Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy). Second, to demonstrate the historical revision of key cinematic tropes, motifs and narratives in the post-Mabo era (Smaill, “SBS Documentary,” *Amidst*; Collins and Davis). Finally, SBSi has been analysed to extrapolate how documentary genres have been shaped in relation to evolving infrastructure and practices (Smaill, *Amidst*; FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson). While each of these studies indicate the undeniable impact of SBSi on SBS-TV and screen production, it remains that to date, there is no comprehensive study of SBSi as a cultural institution. The following section reviews this scholarship to extrapolate the various approaches taken to analyses of SBSi and commissioned content, and identify the gaps in existing research.

In 2001, approximately midway through the commissioning house’s life, Smaill completed her doctorate *Amidst a Nation’s Cultures*; the only major study to date that has taken SBSi as a primary object of analysis. In this and her related essays (“SBS Documentary,” “Narrating,” “Commissioning”) Smaill foregrounds how SBSi insinuated itself into an established, politically motivated documentary making community, and thereby contributed to the reconfiguration of the Australian mediascape. Commensurate with the overriding tenor of existing research, SBS-TV is here identified as a principal site for the contestation and reconfiguration of Australian national identity, and this in spite of the broadcaster’s peripheral location within the Australian television landscape. SBSi effectively disrupted centre-periphery distinctions, with significant implications for how SBS-TV continues to participate in the production of a multicultural national identity into the present. Smaill’s study thus augments an established body of work that evaluates the various programming strategies employed by SBS-TV to honour its multicultural mandate (O’Regan and Kolar-Panov, “Television;” Jakubowicz *et al*; Jakubowicz and Newell; Cunningham; Lawe-Davies, “SBS-TV,” “After South Park;” Sinclair and Cunningham; Yue and Hawkins; Hawkins “SBS: Choice”). The ability of SBS-TV to garner locally produced content for the schedule through SBSi is thus posited as a pivotal shift that diversified programming strategies, and how SBS-TV was able to address its audiences.

Foremost among programming strategies, prior to SBSi, was narrowcasting, characterised by a schedule of linguistically and culturally distinct programs targeting niche segments of the nationally defined audience.¹¹ SBS-TV is historically distinguished by a schedule of imported content in original languages. As Audrey Yue and Gay Hawkins in “Going South,” and Sinclair *et al* in “Chinese Cosmopolitanism and Media Use” assert, the re-transmission of foreign news services on SBS-TV recognised and supported hybrid forms of cultural, linguistic and ethnic identification, by providing a nationally sanctioned space for migrants to engage with both home and host cultures. “Going South” and “Chinese Cosmopolitanism” are indicative of a number of studies that illustrate how SBS-TV’s provision of foreign language programming for ethnic and Indigenous communities, not only reflected, but also produced, hybrid and plural national identities that transgressed linguistic, cultural and national borders (O’Regan and Kolar-Panov “Television;” Cunningham; Cunningham *et al*; Cunningham and Sinclair; Sinclair *et al*; Yue and Hawkins; Smaill, *Amidst*; Hawkins and Ang; Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy). Significantly, narrowcasting practices at SBS-TV re-imagined the project of “nation-building” that has largely been the impetus for public service broadcasting, both in Australia and globally. A number of these studies have adopted the term *sphericules* to describe how SBS-TV’s narrowcasting strategies reconcile the ideals of a nationally prescribed public sphere with the responsibility to provide services for, and represent, Australia’s diverse cultures (Cunningham *et al*; Yue and Hawkins; Sinclair and Cunningham). Via narrowcasting, SBS recognised multiple axes of identification experienced by migrants, and helped to engender a sense of belonging to the nation. However, as the term *sphericules* implies, the aggregation of smaller, specialised and contained public spheres in a single media space has also placed limits on the opportunities for cross-cultural identification.

¹¹ Narrowcasting differs from broadcasting insofar as the latter term indicates a harmony between individual programs that comprise a single schedule. Broadcasting is common to commercial, free-to-air television stations that traditionally attempt to maximise their audience share by addressing a homogenously defined national community.

It has been the priority of a number of studies to foreground how SBS-TV's programming strategies has been determined by limited financial resources as well as its charter obligations (O'Regan and Kolar-Panov, "Television;" Jakubowicz and Newell; Hawkins and Ang; Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy). As indicated above, due to the prohibitive cost of in-house production, and prior to SBSi, approximately eighty percent of the content screened on SBS-TV was imported. Although in large part prescribed by the terms of the SBS Charter, SBS-TV initially sourced the majority of its imported content from Europe, and later (though to a lesser extent) from Asia, due to the significantly higher cost of content available from traditional sources like the US and the UK. The financial restrictions confronted by SBS-TV created the conditions for narrowcasting practices, and also, for another strategy often referred to as "dual purpose programming" (O'Regan and Kolar-Panov, "Television;" Webb; Hawkins and Ang; Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy). As former head of scheduling Rod Webb explains, English-subtitled foreign language films have been a feature of SBS-TV, enabling the broadcaster to meet twin objectives: to provide *ethnic* audiences with multilingual programming, and to provide entertainment for *all* Australians (107). The familiar conventions of film coupled with the provision of English-language subtitles cut across linguistic, cultural and social barriers without compromising the linguistic integrity of the program. Similarly, SBS-TV's "nascently international and cosmopolitan" evening news bulletin *World News Australia* (originally *Worldwide News*) developed out of financial limitations for producing even locally based news (Hawkins and Ang 9; Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy 178-9). The "creative exploitation of foreign news feeds" had the effect of generating a "very different perspective on the world," which had the reciprocal effect of constructing a cosmopolitan audience "interested in world events" (Hawkins and Ang 9; O'Regan and Kolar-Panov, "Television"). Dual purpose programming and narrowcasting are a response to financial circumstances, which has determined the possible ways of representing and shaping Australian multicultural identity. News services and feature films constructed a specifically cosmopolitan manifestation of multicultural identity in the 1990s, which, like narrowcasting strategies, constructed a national identity framed *within* an international context, rather than in opposition to it.

Smaill's foremost concern is to demonstrate how the interstitial location of SBSi between public broadcasting and independent documentary production, influenced greater formal and aesthetic variation within television documentary. Commissioning enabled SBS-TV to secure a greater proportion of local content for the television schedule by overcoming the prohibitive cost of in-house production. However, SBSi did not simply supplement traditional programming sources with local content. Outsourcing production to independent filmmakers situated SBSi as an active agent within the film production sector. Links to independent producers encouraged a greater diversity of content produced for the otherwise heavily institutionalised television industry. The "domination of established in-house filmmakers was breached and more funding opportunities, albeit limited, were open to the independent filmmaking community" (Smaill, *Amidst* 107). Diversity of content is also an outcome of collaborative funding with other film agencies and private financiers. Collaborative funding dispersed the risk of investment for any one project facilitating a culture of support for emerging filmmakers, innovative and experimental techniques, and controversial subject matter. The commissioning model was also however, a neo-liberal model of resource rationalisation that introduced insecurity to the industry. Although this system enabled greater diversity and innovation in the short term, it exposed independent filmmakers to irregular and contractual employment. Moreover, continuing federal and state support for both television and film was no longer guaranteed (Smaill, *Amidst* 105; "Commissioning" 108). The outsourcing and co-financing model emulated the corporate organisation of cultural production and circulation (Ryan), a significant characteristic, which will be elaborated in section three.

Smaill characterises the impact of SBSi in terms of the new *possibilities* created for cross-cultural identifications enabled by these new industrial, institutional and representational practices. Where institutional forms of television documentary investment and production have traditionally favoured an objective format and style, outsourcing to freelance producers introduced approaches common to independent film. For example, in the 1997 documentary *Exile in Sarajevo*, filmmakers Tahir Cambis and Alma Sahbaz employ various formal and stylistic techniques to situate themselves in a subjective relationship to the object of study,

and in a dialogic relationship with the audience (Smaill, *Amidst* 161-73). Strategies such as direct address, unconventional for television documentary, innovate modes of communication and exchange, and re-situate alterity as central subjectivities within texts. Axes of cultural inclusion and exclusion both intra-locally and internationally are thus destabilised. So too are the relationships of Indigenous and migrant communities to Australian history and identity (Smaill, *Amidst*). SBSi's links to independent producers created "the possibility for a relationship between the media and the social imaginary that shifts the way the nation structures social relations...one which provides the condition of possibility for future transformation and future identities" (Smaill, *Amidst* 121). The significance of SBSi for SBS-TV was the reconfiguration of social relations whereby culturally discrete communities were also addressed as part of a cohesive and national whole. Although narrowcasting strategies were not abandoned, SBSi transformed SBS-TV into a service that can also be accurately characterised as broadcasting. SBSi documentaries do not necessarily compromise transnational modes of address and axes of identification. Rather, the relationship between format and content in these productions promote multiple and fluid modes of inter-subjective and cross-cultural identification, without erasing or subordinating difference to the white mainstream. Smaill is thus directly concerned with the relationship between SBS-TV and multicultural national identity, and specifically, how the influence of independent documentarians re-configured this relationship.

What remains to be examined are the long-term effects of the outsourcing and co-funding model on labour processes, and how this reshaped the production and distribution of Australian content. As indicated above, SBSi emulated a corporate institutional model for production and distribution, characterised by project-based collaboration between producers of content, distributors, exhibitors and other investors. Did contracts brokered by SBSi equitably reflect the interests of both filmmakers and investors? Did SBSi continue to pursue a program of culturally diverse and formally innovative content, or did "corporate" preoccupations prevail? Significantly, Smaill identifies the SBSi model as potentially undermining the objectives it was conceived to achieve. The "economic rationalism of the out-sourcing system and the increasing conservatism of a new

generation of independent filmmakers,” Smaill observes, “must be considered in conjunction with the quest for difference” (“Commissioning” 115). While the long-term viability of the SBSi’s commitment to innovative formats and challenging subject matter is outside the scope of Smaill’s study, her observation signals an important avenue of investigation. A quantitative as well as a qualitative analysis of the content commissioned by SBSi, is necessary to assess its actual commitment to Indigenous and CALD representation, against possibilities and tendencies identified by Smaill. Does the catalogue of content commissioned from 1994 to 2007 consistently reflect the “quest for difference”? Were there any discernable trends or shifts in SBSi’s commissioning patterns? Are these patterns an effect of the SBSi model? How did the presence and evolution of SBSi impact upon the opportunities and finance available to independent filmmakers? Additionally, Smaill’s exclusive focus on documentary indicates a need to assess these concerns in relation to the variety of productions commissioned by SBSi, including animation, feature and short films, drama and comedy series, and the different formal and aesthetic strategies particular to each.

Since Smaill, there have appeared two key studies that have identified a conservative turn in the commissioning patterns at SBSi, *Australian Documentary* and *The SBS Story*. In *Australian Documentary*, FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson elaborate SBSi and SBS-TV as one of many agents and cultural institutions that have shaped and reshaped local documentary since the turn of the twentieth century. This is achieved via the close textual and production analyses of numerous SBSi documentaries throughout the study. It is also demonstrated via a discussion of the broadcasting culture at SBS-TV, and how this mediated documentary representation. They identify three distinct phases, each characterised by divergent generic and formal attributes: “the period up to the creation of SBS Independent in 1994-95; the work produced by SBS Independent until 2006; and works commissioned by SBS after 2006” (FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson 171). Commensurate with Smaill’s findings, FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson assert that the second period was “marked by a peculiarly and distinctively open-ended institutional voice,” and that the “broadcaster’s commitment to diversity,” coupled with “imperatives to collaborate with other public and private bodies, resulted in work embodying

great variation in form” (171). Furthermore, the third and final phase, which preceded the demise of SBSi by approximately 18 months, “resulted in material with a more consistent institutional voice and greater adherence to established generic conventions of televisual work,” reflecting a new ratings agenda (FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson 171-6). While the ascension of commercial values and objectives in the third period are partially attributed to the agenda of former SBS Managing Director Shaun Brown (2005-2011), the link between this turn in commissioning practice and the SBSi model remains unexplored.

In *The SBS Story*, Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy historicise SBSi within a larger narrative of the SBS Corporation’s evolution from a policy initiative to a fully realised broadcasting institution. The advent of SBSi is shown to be a response to SBS-TV’s need to maintain its relevance in the shifting media terrain. At issue was the impending competition from pay TV, and the threat posed to SBS-TV’s already nominal audience share. Although Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy do enumerate the pragmatic impetus for outsourcing and co-funding, their purpose is to extrapolate how these industrial practices changed SBS-TV. Commissioning “exposed the organisation to the work of experienced industry professionals” and “raised editorial expectations across the board at SBS, including for those productions made internally” (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy 146). SBSi also facilitated greater sophistication and quantities of multicultural programming:

What was notable about the evolution of SBS productions throughout the 1990s was the shift away from the ‘migrant’ narrative and label... This broadening marks a shift away from ethno-specificity towards a more outward looking and complex cosmopolitan understanding of identity, reflecting a general confidence and comfort with multiculturalism in Australia at the time (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy 143).

Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy identify three versions of multiculturalism represented by SBS-TV since 1980: *ethno-multiculturalism*, which characterised the broadcaster’s formative years; *cosmopolitan multiculturalism*, prominent throughout the 1990s; and *popular multiculturalism*, now in ascendency (19-

20).¹² In the third variant “the emphasis is no longer on actively promoting cultural diversity, but on treating it as an increasingly ordinary, taken-for-granted feature of everyday life” (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy 20). Like the third phase described by FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson, popular multiculturalism is characterised by an increase in generic television formats, commissioned to improve ratings and to more successfully negotiate the “limitations of the television medium” (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy 153). Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy also concur that it is since “2005, in the era of managing director Shaun Brown” that SBS-TV has consolidated its populist agenda (153). Putting the nominal temporal discrepancy aside, both studies identify a decisive shift in SBSi’s commissioning activity that warrants further investigation. While *The SBS Story* and *Australian Documentary* both implicate SBSi in broad representational shifts to the extent that it facilitated popular programming, the possible connection between mainstreaming at SBS-TV and the SBSi model is not explored in either.

The mainstreaming of the public broadcaster under the management of Shaun Brown (2005-2011) was only one of the most recent controversies, and it overlaps with long-term concerns regarding the commercial erosion of the only public, national space historically provided for CALD Australians (O’Regan and Kolar-Panov, “Symbolic;” Jakubowicz and Newell; Field; Lawe-Davies, “SBS-TV,” “After South Park;” Nolan and Radywyl; McClean). As David Nolan and Natalia Radywyl assert in “Pluralising Identity, Mainstreaming Identities,” the “agency exercised by key actors” such as Brown is limited, and attention must also be afforded to “the ‘policy systems’ in which they are institutionally located, which circumscribe the scope for (but do not determine) action” (41). As will be extrapolated in chapter two, *Creative Nation* was a policy initiative delivered in 1994 that sought to rationalise State resources and enhance the economic viability of the arts and cultural sector (Radbourne). The stated objectives of *Creative Nation* intersected with productive diversity policy initiated two years earlier,

¹² Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy qualify this three-phase model with the assertion that, while these three versions of multiculturalism have clearly been in ascendency at different periods, they always co-exist and are in constant tension with one another (20).

which similarly championed CALD as an economic resource amenable to the demands of globalised trade. The articulation of cultural diversity, cultural production and economic development via *Creative Nation*, is a significant development in cultural policy. While all analyses of SBSi canvassed above provide a cursory overview of the institution's establishment through *Creative Nation*, it appears beyond the scope of each of these studies (inclusive of that conducted by Nolan and Radywyl), to examine how the policy circumscribed agency at SBSi or SBS-TV. Consequently, SBS-TV's evolution remains largely apprehended via a multicultural paradigm. How cultural policy developments influenced SBSi's organisational structure and objectives represents a significant gap in the literature. Also in need of address is how management and staff exercised agency to realise the ambitions of the institution, and thereby affect neo-liberal reforms envisaged within productive diversity and *Creative Nation* policies.

The overriding imperative of Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy is to extrapolate how SBS *translated* the multicultural policy of the 1970s into a television service. Although they detail SBSi's origins in the Keating government's *Creative Nation* policy initiative, they are not concerned to show how this particular policy document defined multiculturalism, or how the objectives of the policy influenced the kinds of content that SBSi commissioned. This is attributable to imperatives to orient SBS scholarship away from an overriding concern with policy, which they claim, inhibits a balanced assessment of the broadcaster's achievements and failures. Hawkins and Ang similarly assert that historical "narratives framed by determinism... perpetuate an understanding of the policy of multiculturalism as an ideal against which historical reality is measured" (2). Both texts respond to SBS scholarship that tends to polarise around idealisations of multiculturalism and public service broadcasting expressed via four key issues. First, is the erosion of the public sphere by private, commercial interests as evidenced by the introduction of advertising to the schedule in 1989 (O'Regan and Kolar-Panov, "Symbolic;" Jakubowicz and Newell; Field; Lawe-Davies, "SBS-TV," "After South Park;" Nolan and Radywyl; McClean). Second, is the scheduling of popular English language content in primetime, and the concomitant compromise of multilingual services (O'Regan and Kolar-Panov,

“Television;” Jakubowicz and Newell; Field; Lawe-Davies, “SBS-TV,” “After South Park;” Nolan and Radywyl; McClean). Third, is the degree to which SBS has actually improved access and equity for CALD peoples seeking employment in the television sector (O’Regan and Kolar-Panov, “Symbolic;” Jakubowicz *et al*; Jakubowicz and Newell). Fourth, is whether or not the existence of a specialised multicultural broadcaster reinforces or transgresses racial, ethnic and cultural hierarchies that privilege racial whiteness in Australia (O’Regan and Kolar-Panov, “Symbolic;” Jakubowicz *et al*; Jakubowicz and Newell). The evolutionary paradigm deployed in *The SBS Story* and “Inventing SBS” is designed to reorient analysis away from these deterministic evaluations, which are seen to expose SBS to conservative attacks both in the popular media and in government.

Despite Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy’s desire to delineate their study from policy concerns, SBSi’s links to *Creative Nation* and productive diversity suggest that theirs is an artificial delineation. An investigation of how the terms of the policy shaped SBSi’s particular approach to multicultural representation does have significant implications for understanding how SBS-TV presently negotiates its public service responsibilities, and its commercial imperatives. As indicated above, *Creative Nation* promoted productive diversity as an economically valuable form of multiculturalism. This is a marked difference from earlier multicultural objectives that identified unmet needs particular to migrant groups, and funded SBS as part of a raft of services to meet those needs. *Creative Nation* was a Keating government initiative underwritten by a neo-liberal rationale to which the Howard government also ascribed. As highlighted above, the period during which SBSi operated, roughly coincided with the term of Howard’s Coalition government, in power between March 1996 and December 2007. This is a significant period in Australian federal politics, which is widely regarded as a time where neo-conservative ideals gained ascendancy to the detriment of minority communities, not least of which were Australia’s Indigenous peoples and recent immigrants. SBSi was mandated to commission content that contested those same homogenous understandings of national identity championed by the Howard government, at the same time as being deeply implicated in political processes through federal funding arrangements. A consideration of the changing

policy environment in which the institution was embedded offers an opportunity to develop a more nuanced understanding of the political currency of the institutional model, and the content that was produced through it.

To date, collaborations between SBSi and independent filmmakers have largely been characterised as instances of political resistance. Smaill, for example, conducts a close textual analysis of three documentaries - Jeni Kendall's *Cry from the Heart*, Frank Rijavec's *The Habits of New Norcia*, and Darlene Johnson's *Stolen Generations* - that were commissioned for the *Unfinished Business* season that screened on SBS-TV in May 2000.¹³ *Unfinished Business* was comprised of a "politically antagonistic body of texts" (Smaill, "SBS Documentary" 40) that challenged the Howard government's refusal to honour the key recommendation forwarded in HREOC; to issue a parliamentary apology to the generations of Indigenous people forcibly removed from their families by the State. Utilising theories of trauma Smaill argues that the films challenged the neo-conservative politics propagated by the Howard government, by attempting "to open out the conditions under which the [then] present political and social moment in Australia [was] signified and implicated by different descriptions of history" ("SBS Documentary" 36). Personal testimonies of forced removal from families, government documents, and the staging of a return to the site of removal, offer a "proliferation of voices and narratives which testify to the personal and communal truth of history," and that address the audience such that they are interpellated as witnesses (Smaill, "SBS Documentary" 37). Smaill's approach elucidates important new modes of national identification that emerged via the representation and consumption of Indigenous narratives on SBS-TV. A significant oversight is the complicity of government via funding, a consideration of which problematises the characterisation of these films as resistive.

¹³ *Unfinished Business* was a 10-day season of content screened on SBS-TV between 25 May and 3 June 2000. The initiative was co-ordinated by management at SBSi such that it coincided with Reconciliation Week, National Sorry Day on 26 May, and Corroboree 2000, a national forum that took place between 27 and the 28 May, and "at which the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation presented its final proposal for a national document for reconciliation" (Smaill, "SBS Documentary" 34).

Felicity Collins and Therese Davis have adopted a similar analytical approach in their analysis of SBSi commissioned feature films in *Australian Cinema After Mabo*. The study posits the Mabo decision as a watershed moment in Australian screen history. Films produced prior to the Mabo decision in 1992 participated in the erasure of Indigenous presence in the national memory. Collins and Davis assert that cinema of the post-Mabo era evidences an attempt to return to, and the revision of, dominant tropes, images and narratives, as a way of recognising and working through this violent erasure. Australian cinema is posited as a technology of cultural memory that allowed audiences to participate in the process of recognition, of testimony and witness, of mourning, and working through the traumatic legacy of Australia's colonial past. SBSi productions are exemplary of this revisionist tendency. For instance Paul Goldman's *Australian Rules* and Tony Ayres' *Walking on Water*:

were released in 2002 as a part of a reprise of a cultural-intervention strategy by the public sector in political circumstances that did not favour left-liberal initiatives. In partnership with the Adelaide Film Festival, SBS Independent (SBSi) initiated a package of feature films which contest neo-conservative ideas of national identity, recent history, and media memory" (Collins and Davis 42).

Like Smail, Collins and Davis illustrate how these and other SBSi productions both reflect and produce new opportunities for imagining an inclusive national history and identity. Although many of the SBSi productions analysed in the study are not identified as such, Collins and Davis specifically draw attention to SBSi as a significant agent within the post-Mabo filmmaking environment. Like Smail they regard *Unfinished Business* to be an "ambitious partisan moment of cultural intervention" (Collins and Davis 42). SBSi is also identified by both studies as reprising an independent filmmaking culture of "social activism, identity politics and personal experience," which was the legacy of the 1970s Sydney and Melbourne Filmmakers Co-operatives and other independent organisations (Collins and Davis 43). While the textual analyses conducted within both studies elucidate SBSi and SBS-TV as important sites of political resistance during the term of the Howard government, it raises two important questions. The first is a reprisal of the question posed earlier: Why did the Howard government continue to finance a relatively new institution that

propagated an ideological stance inimical to its own? The second question is, did SBSi's role as a mechanism of State governance shape production, distribution and representational practices within independent filmmaking sector?

These questions remain unresolved in existing literature that has tended to approach the analysis of SBSi via the rubric multiculturalism. Within this model SBS and SBSi are valorised as important public services, shoring up access and equity for Indigenous and CALD Australians to participate in the institutions of national culture. However, as Nolan and Radywyl assert in relation to Smaill's essay "Narrating Community," multicultural approaches have produced a "peculiar aporia." On the one hand they acknowledge SBS to be a product of State policy, and on the other they position "its practices as representative of 'everyday multiculturalism' *as opposed to state policy*" (44). This paradox is also a feature of cinema scholarship that illuminates clear genealogical links between the types of films produced under the aegis of SBSi, and counter-cultural independent film movements in the 1960s and 70s. For instance Collins and Davis suggest SBS's legislative charter, requiring it to "represent a diversity of voices, including Indigenous and non-Anglo voices," provided SBSi with a measure of protection (43). While it must be acknowledged that qualification of this claim is outside the scope of Collins and Davis' study, it is indicative of the inadequacy of multiculturalism as a basis for understanding: the top-down impact of State policy driving the convergence of public broadcasting and independent filmmaking from the 1990s; *and* the immediate bottom-up effect of independent filmmaking traditions on public broadcasting. Contiguous with the position forwarded by Nolan and Radywyl, this thesis adopts a neo-liberal governmentality approach, which is better able to reconcile entwined processes of neo-liberal reform and political resistance enacted via the mechanism of SBSi.

In summary, this thesis addresses three significant gaps in existing theoretical studies of SBSi, SBS-TV and Australian independent production. It asks: What were the political and industrial conditions shaping the creation of SBSi and how did these determine the organisation, purpose and practices of the institution? What were the principal strategies developed by SBSi staff to achieve its mandate? How did these strategies shape new practices in management,

production and distribution in film and television? In what ways did these practices enable counter-hegemonic modes of filmmaking to flourish and what were the strategies of these representations? These concerns have informed the approach developed in this thesis, outlined in the following section, which posits SBSi as a cultural institution characterised both by productive diversity and counter-memory. While *productive diversity* designates new manifestations of multicultural practice, circumscribed by a neo-liberal regime, *counter-memory* refers to subversive traditions of representation privileging marginalised subjectivities. Another important contribution of this thesis is the focused analysis on SBSi's fictional output. This productively augments major extant scholarship, which has focused on documentary. However, to understand the overall trajectory of SBSi, considerable reference to its documentary work will also be made. This thesis argues that, insofar as commissioning processes embodied neo-liberal modes of governance, productive diversity created a new cultural institution that independent filmmakers could inhabit and manipulate to their benefit. This gave rise to new filmmaking milieux, diverse and challenging content, new platforms for its distribution and exhibition, and new domestic and international audiences.

SECTION 3

NEO-LIBERAL GOVERNMENTALITY, PRODUCTIVE DIVERSITY AND COUNTER-MEMORY

The term *cultural institution* is in many respects over-used. It can refer to a variety of public and private organisations, or more generally to multifarious collections of practices, contexts, institutions and agents, such as encompassed by the term *national cinema*. While admittedly multivalent, this thesis deploys the term to refer to publically financed organisations, and more specifically, those organisations that administer creative, aesthetic and media practices such as film funding agencies and public broadcasters. Since World War II, national governments in English-speaking countries including Britain, the US, Canada and Australia have increasingly assumed responsibility for the arts and other cultural activities, setting up “various councils and commissions as the administrative instruments through which to channel and coordinate financial support” to the

sector (Stevenson 17-8). The shifting logics that have underwritten State support of diverse cultural institutions have been theorised in a variety of ways, one of which is pertinent to this thesis and the analysis of SBSi.

Within the field of cultural policy studies, initiated by Tony Bennett in his 1992 “Putting Policy into Cultural Studies,” cultural institutions are understood as apparatuses of government that administer a set of techniques, implemented to maintain or transform of the conduct of the population (27). Developed from Michel Foucault’s treatise on “Governmentality,” Bennett here proposes that “culture” has become the ends and the means by which the State *governs* individuals, and that cultural institutions are a technology for the management of cultural practices and people. In this section, Bennett’s model is detailed using examples from various Australian screen and cultural histories. The purpose is to foreground the key shifts in public programs instituted by SBSi. The conceptual development of productive diversity within multicultural, business management and creative industries scholarship is then reviewed to establish the objectives and methods that accompany the economic governance of cultural diversity. Productive diversity is an Australian policy that promotes cultural diversity as an economic resource capable of enhancing the competitive advantage of local business in the global market. It is part of a broader policy shift towards the creative economy, which disrupts the accepted wisdom that culture and the economy are diametrically opposed spheres. It departs from the view that the State should preserve the integrity of art and culture from market incursions. SBSi is understood within this framework as a cultural institution that governed the economic resource of productive diversity to condition new practices in management, production and distribution in the publically supported film and television sectors. Finally, counter-memory scholarship is briefly reviewed to foreground how SBSi fostered new counter-hegemonic representations challenging mainstream constructions of Australian identity as white. Counter-memory also derives from the scholarship of Foucault, and refers to the cultural representation of personal, community or popular memories and experiences, which were formerly elided or denied in official discourses and histories (“Film,” *Language*). Consistent with the historical constructivist tradition of institutional analyses (Dermody and Jacka, *Screening vol.1-2*; Moran, *Projecting Australia*;

Jacka; Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy; FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson) this thesis links SBSi's management of productive diversity to a counter-memorial cycle of film within the SBSi catalogue.

Cultural institutions are one means by which the State governs its national citizens. In his 1978 lecture "Governmentality," Foucault elaborates how institutions comprise a matrix of programs and techniques, "procedures, analyses and reflections...calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of" a "very specific albeit complex form of power" (102). This complex of power has as its target, the "population, as its principal form of knowledge the political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security" (Foucault, "Governmentality" 102). "Governmentality" designates a modern form of power that imbricates an ever-expanding network of individuals into "the mechanisms for intervening within the lives and conditions of both individuals and specific populations" (Bennett, "Putting Policy" 27). The conduct of individuals is both the ends and the means by which power is exercised; "individuals are the vehicles of power not its points of application" (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 98). Bennett draws on Foucault's concept of governmentality to suggest the increasingly instrumental role afforded "culture" in the governance of Western societies. "Culture" according to Bennett is most productively conceived:

when thought of as a historically specific set of institutionally embedded relations of government in which the forms of thought and conduct of extended populations are targeted for transformation-in part via the expansion through the social body of the forms, techniques, and regimens of aesthetic and intellectual culture ("Putting Policy" 26-7).

There are four key points to be drawn from this statement. First, aesthetic and intellectual work is inseparable from the "forms, techniques and regimens" of their regulation. This disrupts the somewhat ubiquitous distinction within cultural studies between an anthropological understanding of culture as "a way of life" and culture as a symbolic practice (Williams, "Culture"). Second, culture is both the means and the ends by which the conduct of the population is transformed by cultural institutions. Third, aesthetic and intellectual practices and canonical works do not possess any transcendental qualities but rather evidence an institutionally embedded set of relations that are historically specific. Fourth,

power is diffuse rather than imposed from above or resisted from below; all individuals are implicated, however unevenly, in the mechanisms of power. This section will now elaborate these points, and where relevant, it will do so by drawing examples from prominent Australian screen and cultural histories. This reflects a key aim of section three, which is to contextualise SBSi within the broader history of national screen and cultural production and the cultural institutions that have shaped it.

First, cultural institutions regulate aesthetic and intellectual practices, and the process of regulation circumscribes the form, content and function of these cultural products and services. The revival period of Australian cinema provides a pertinent example. State interventions between the 1970s and mid-80s, including the establishment of cultural institutions, funds, tariffs and tax breaks, consolidated bipolar currents of government support directed toward “culture” on the one hand, and “industry” on the other (Dermody and Jacka, *Screening vol.1-2*). For Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka in *The Screening of Australia*, this bipolarity manifested discursively via distinct, idealised models for a local industry, which they refer to as *Industry-1* and *Industry-2*. Broadly speaking, *Industry-1* refers to a State-based European model that regulates and subsidises an art cinema, which is heavily invested in representing social concerns and national culture via low budget productions. *Industry-2* is a Hollywood-based commercial model for the production of popular, entertaining and costly feature films (Dermody and Jacka, *Screening vol.1* 197-8). Neither of these models have ever been fully realised, however as discourses they have each been in ascendancy in different periods, shaping the objectives of cultural institutions and the aesthetic tendencies of the films they fund. For instance, the characteristics of *Industry-1* were clearly manifest in the AFC between 1975 and 1980, in the rigorous fiscal policies guiding funding decisions, and the types of films that it supported. A prominent type of film, referred to as “the AFC genre,” was moderately budgeted period dramas, which rendered Australian landscapes, characters and stories that privileged white perspectives, and featured narrative and stylistic techniques drawn from a European art house tradition (Dermody and Jacka, *Screening vol.1-2*). In his 1996 *Australian National Cinema*, Tom O’Regan posits that the industry-culture dichotomy has also manifested in a

broader sense, via financing patterns that has always privileged mainstream, commercial production, but which has also consistently directed a modicum of funding toward non-commercial production via “minor streams” (15). Streams of support, such as the Experimental Film and Television Fund (EFTF) (1970-8), the Women’s Film Fund (WWF) (1976-1988-9), and the Indigenous Drama Initiative (IDI) (1993-2007), are characterised as minor insofar as they complemented “mainstream” commercial support, were financed at considerably lower levels, and were targeted at experimental forms, inexperienced filmmakers and minority groups (*Australian Cinema* 15). This institutional infrastructure has shaped the products of the Australian industry, which has tended to privilege films about white Australian masculinity, but which also generated a modicum of content that formally, aesthetically and thematically challenged these representations.

As these and many other institutional studies have argued, a primary factor underwriting State support for a local screen industry, is the imperative to engender a cohesive national culture and identity. This exemplifies Bennett’s second point; that culture is both the ends and the means by which the population is governed. Bennett writes: “Rather, for example, than speaking of a contest of high culture *versus* low culture, the logic of culture viewed governmentally, organises a means for high culture to reach into low culture in order to provide a route from one set of norms of conduct to another” (*Culture* 79). The philosophy espoused by the BBC’s first director general, Sir John Reith, provides one such example of how the aesthetic and intellectual attributes of high culture were re-directed towards regulating, or rather “civilising” the conduct of the lower classes in early twentieth century Britain. An Australian example is the Commonwealth Film Unit (CFU), which between 1945 and 1953 produced and distributed documentaries that uniformly characterised ordinary people, communities and routines as explicitly Australian (Moran, *Projecting Australia* 36-7). In so doing the CFU mobilised the informational and educational cultures underwriting documentary, to engender a “civic consciousness” among local audiences, and overcome entrenched “ regionalism and parochialism by...building a national viewpoint” (Moran, *Projecting Australia* 36). The formal, aesthetic and narrative innovations common to SBSi content suggest a similar co-optation, whereby

fiercely political, independent filmmaking cultures (Smaill, *Amidst*) were incorporated into State-sponsored modes of multicultural representation. However, and as this thesis argues, rather than fostering a “civic consciousness” these professional, Indigenous and CALD cultures were tapped to engender productive citizenship via their contribution to the market economy. That is, SBSi’s administration of productive diversity organised a means for minority and independent screen cultures to “reach into” economic culture, and generate innovative, diverse and marketable products stimulating national economic growth (a point that will be explored in detail below). This thesis also argues that insofar as productive diversity incorporated political and marginalised filmmakers into SBSi, it also had the unintended effect of opening up the institution as a publically sanctioned space for counter-memory, which is understood as a set of representational techniques for political resistance.

If, as Bennett argues, culture is both the means and the ends for governing the population, then policy circumscribes the meanings that attach to the gamut of cultural artefacts and practices. Cultural institutions effectively mediate between practices of production and consumption via their policy implementations. A cultural institution is not:

external to power; it is the shape and organisation of power; it is the singularity, or specificity, of power. Importantly in Foucault’s work, the variables that constitute the multiplicity of the apparatus and of power are always weighted within the specificity and singularity of the empirical and the historical, at least in their genealogical form (Oswell 63).

Apprehended within a fickle policy terrain, neither elite nor popular cultural forms, artefacts or practices, for instance, possess any inherent or transcendental qualities, but are rather, the product of “a historically specific set of institutionally embedded relations” (Bennett, “Putting Policy” 26-7). In Australia for example, the principal arts funding body, the Australia Council, has long been critiqued for upholding an elitist, traditional Western European understanding of artistic excellence to the exclusion of creative and cultural practices that do not conform to this norm (Stevenson; Gallasch). These hierarchies have historically been reproduced via the devolution of support for “multicultural” arts and artists, to state cultural institutions supporting less valued community and folkloric arts

(Hawkins, Gunew, Stevenson, Gallasch). Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV) is one such institution, which evolved from a grassroots festival celebrating local cultural difference in suburban Melbourne in the 1970s (Clarkson). Notions of excellence are also geographically contingent. The short legacy of State patronage of the arts underwrites local contexts of production, circulation and meaning, that differ considerably from the US for example, and which was shaped by a tradition of private philanthropy forged in the nineteenth century (see DiMaggio). If different cultural practices are only temporally and spatially linked to a particular class or community, then it holds that popular culture, or even creative movements (e.g. the *avant-garde*, direct cinema) cannot be valorised as inherently resistive. As such, the establishment of SBSi signals a decisive shift within the Australian screen industry that disrupted distinctions between State-funded and commercial centres, between mainstream screen production and the independent periphery of filmmakers, and their respective representations of Australia as white and insulated, and as cosmopolitan and culturally diverse. An investigation of how SBSi governed screen production to facilitate productive diversity provides a means of understanding how cultural policy re-shaped Australian screen cultures between 1994 and 2007.

The practices and objectives of SBSi were primarily circumscribed by the institution's links to the federal policy of productive diversity. Productive diversity was a policy launched by Prime Minister Keating during an opening address delivered to the *Productive Diversity in Business* conference in 1992, organised by the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) (1987-1995).¹⁴ The concept of productive diversity defines the cultural and linguistic competencies of a diverse community or workforce *as resources*. Productive diversity claims that when properly managed, these resources have the capacity to meet the contemporary challenges of globalisation and migration, and to increase the economic dividends accrued by that community or business. The term was

¹⁴ The Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) operated between 1987 and 1996 and was a division of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The OMA was established to advise the Prime Minister on issues arising from the cultural diversity of Australian citizens. In 1995 the functions of the OMA were transferred to the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

retroactively applied to the “economic efficiency” pillar of the Government's 1989 *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, asserting “the need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians regardless of background” (Keating qtd. in PSC-OMA vii). Productive diversity is a concept genealogically linked to multicultural theories and policies, which variously critique, advocate or offset systemic disadvantage suffered by migrants as a consequence of their cultural and linguistic heritage (Galbally; Cope, Castles and Kalantzis; Castles *et al*; Jakubowicz *et al*; Stratton, *Race Daze*; Hage *White Nation*; Ang; Bertone and Leahy, “Social Equity”; Jupp). Productive diversity does however, differ from the earlier policy of multiculturalism insofar as it is consistent with the “techniques and regimens” of neo-liberal governance. It is a policy for governing CALD through the market; it intervenes in industry to optimise opportunities for economic participation in favour of financing State-based services that compensate for social, cultural and economic exclusion.

Key theorists of productive diversity, namely multicultural scholars Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis (*Productive Diversity*), and business scholars Santina Bertone, Alexis Esposto and Mary Leahy (Bertone and Esposto; Bertone and Leahy, “Social Equity,” “Globalization”), have also produced reports on the topic in collaboration with the OMA (Cope; Bertone, Esposto and Turner). The concept is often used interchangeably with the concepts *managing diversity*, *valuing diversity* and *diversity management*. These terms derive from business management scholarship produced by US academics (Cox and Blake; Cox; Prasad *et al*; Kirby and Harter) and feature in policies, reports and management manuals advising Australian business on the implementation and mutual benefits of productive diversity (Hay; Shaw; Bertone, Esposto and Turner). Government preoccupation with the management of CALD extended to industry specific policies including *Creative Nation*. While productive diversity is not a term common amongst creative industries and creative economy literature, work in the field reflects a refinement of the concept to accommodate objectives and industrial practices specific to the cultural production sector, of which SBSi was a part. The following section extrapolates the characteristics of productive diversity via engagement with multicultural and creative industries policies and scholarship.

Within a multicultural policy framework, the types of cultural diversity connoted by productive diversity are limited to the multiple ethnic, racial and national heritages of Australian citizens as a consequence of migration. Keating's address to the Productive Diversity conference foregrounded the cultural and linguistic resources particular to migrants, at the time excluding even the potentially lucrative competencies of Australia's Indigenous peoples. The characterisation of multiculturalism as antithetical to sound economic practice throughout the 1980s underwrote the OMA's conceptual development of productive diversity, and the impetus to put "a positive economic spin" on "a policy designed primarily to promote the welfare of immigrants" (Cope and Kalantzis ix). The OMA sought to combat rising anti-multicultural sentiment catalysed by Professor Geoffrey Blainey in 1984. Via a series of articles and media appearances, Blainey argued against the level of Asian immigration on the basis that cheap migrant labour exacerbated competition for limited employment, fuelling inter-cultural conflict and jeopardising national unity (Cope, Castles and Kalantzis 14). The pursuit of economic rationalism by the Hawke Labour government was another concern, exemplified by the sacrifice of many multicultural programs, institutions and resources by 1986 (Cope, Castles and Kalantzis 15; Jupp). The OMA also identified an opportunity to render multiculturalism relevant in a climate of economic deregulation (Hay 3-4; Cope and Kalantzis ix). Productive diversity policy was in part, a product of the OMA marketing strategy that framed migrant attributes as existing, abundant and readily exploitable resources, relevant to businesses confronting the removal of trade barriers and direct international competition. The ethnic, linguistic and national connotations of productive diversity were directly shaped by the OMA, which sought to maintain government investment in migrant welfare by highlighting the reciprocal economic benefits for the nation.

Within an academic context, the challenge of developing practical strategies to help Australian business realise productive diversity underpinned the influence of diversity management literature from the US, and the concomitant broadening of cultural diversity definitions. Diversity management scholarship largely advises private corporations on how best to amend business practices and accommodate the demands of increasingly diverse workforces such that profitability is

protected and maximised. Diversity management broadly defines culture as “an affiliation of people who collectively share certain norms, values, or traditions that are different from those of other groups” (Cox 5-6). Cultural diversity is “the representation, in one social system, of people with distinctly different group affiliations of cultural significance” (Cox 6). Cultural diversity encompasses differences of gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical ability or qualities, class, educational background as well as race, ethnicity and nationality (Cox and Blake; Cox; Woods and Sciarini). An individual employee’s professional competencies and experiences are also cited as valued forms of cultural diversity (Cox; Hay). These broad definitions of cultural diversity have shaped conceptual models for Australian productive diversity developed by Hay, Cope and Kalantzis and Bertone, Esposito and Turner. As will be extrapolated below, a concept of cultural diversity that incorporates professional expertise is particularly pertinent to the creative industries, which is characterised by the management of project-based collaborations between agents and agencies with a variety of skills and resources among them. The term productive diversity in this thesis refers to this expansive definition of cultural diversity, and is distinguished from CALD specifying ethnic, linguistic or national difference.

Productive diversity claims mutual benefit to employees and the organisation for which they work. Mutual benefit here refers to “planning and implementing organizational systems and practices to manage people so that the potential advantages of diversity are maximized while its potential disadvantages are minimized” (Cox 11). The mutual benefit argument asserts that increased productivity and competitive advantage flows from engendering a workplace environment that honours access and equity obligations, and respects and values the different cultural and professional competencies of all employees. Attending to the welfare of diverse employees, such as accommodating the childcare needs of female staff, combats absenteeism, increases productivity driving down overheads and enabling cheaper products (Cox and Blake; Cox; Hay; Cope and Kalantzis; Bertone, Esposito and Turner). Moreover, “maximizing the ability of all employees to contribute to organizational goals and to achieve their full potential, unhindered by group identities such as gender, race, nationality, age, and departmental affiliation,” facilitates the development of innovative products

and services, unique problem-solving strategies, and niche markets domestically and internationally (Cox 11; Hay; Cope and Kalantzis; Bertone Esposto and Turner). Management practices accompanying innovation strategies:

involve selecting highly skilled individuals and providing considerable discretion to employees in how they conduct their work with minimal controls. Considerable investments are made in recruitment, training, performance appraisal, team management, flexible workgroups and succession planning. Not only are the necessary resources made available without immediate payback, but failure may be tolerated. Employees exhibit a high degree of independent and creative behaviour with a longterm focus. They are engaged in considerable risk-taking and have a high tolerance of ambiguity and unpredictability (Hay 27).

As will be elaborated in chapter three, innovation strategies are consistent with styles of management employed by SBSi to foster productive diversity. While Commissioning Editors and General Managers carefully selected projects for investment to ensure adequate diversity, once commissioned producers were afforded a high degree of creative independence. Moreover, training and early career opportunities for Indigenous, regional and CALD filmmakers were prioritised over high production values in the earlier years of the institution. Innovation strategies at SBSi reflect mutual benefit claims insofar as cultural diversity was valued as a means for developing niche markets locally and internationally at the same time that they increased employment opportunities for Indigenous, regional and CALD producers. As will be extrapolated in greater detail below, innovation strategies are a defining feature of the creative industries.

Claims that productive diversity policy preserves access and equity imperatives of official multiculturalism are however, overstated. On the one hand, the promotion of migrants as the solution for businesses moving into a globalised marketplace opens up employment opportunities “as skilled and knowledgeable workers” (Bertone and Esposto 235). For Bertone and Leahy this is “a simplistic and uncritical approach to the management of ethnic diversity in the workforce, and overemphasises the business case, to the exclusion of other considerations such as equal employment opportunity” (“Social Equity” 115). Productive diversity drains multicultural policy of its “moral and philosophical commitment

to ethnic diversity” and becomes singularly valued “for its capacity to avert public discord and facilitate competitiveness in global markets” (Bertone and Leahy, “Social Equity” 115). Productive diversity suggests that multicultural programs are not worthy of support unless they benefit all Australians, not just the minority group in question. That State multiculturalism ever singularly privileged a “moral and philosophical commitment” to the welfare of CALD Australian’s is however, arguable. As Ghassan Hage argues, productive diversity is contiguous with official multiculturalism, which has always been a program that distinguishes between migrants as objects to be managed, and white employers as the managers and rulers who manage (*White Nation* 130). From this perspective, and insofar as access and equity was pursued to manage the negative effects of cultural diversity, and maintain the power of the ruling elite, multiculturalism and productive diversity are *ideologically* consistent. Productive diversity is differentiated from multiculturalism by the incorporation of neo-liberal *techniques* for managing cultural diversity. Thus, while SBSi’s commitment to productive diversity potentially improved career opportunities for some CALD citizens, it’s management of CALD labour ostensibly preserved the whiteness of Australia’s core institutions and political culture. Consistent with the field of critical race and whiteness scholarship, this thesis understands whiteness to be a construct, a set of discursive, social and material processes, which are adapted by its benefactors, “those who pass as white,” to maintain the “status of their power and privilege” (Bernardi, “Race” xvii; Frankenberg). As chapter three and four demonstrates, SBSi carefully manipulated these processes, and managed creative labour to generate production milieux and representations that disrupted the maintenance of white racial hegemony.

Productive diversity has also been shaped in relation to the concept of the creative industries, via cultural policy and cultural policy related scholarship. Thus far, productive diversity has been extrapolated as a pillar of multicultural policy that intervenes in business management practices across multiple and diverse industries. The following overview of creative industries policy and scholarship is an industry-specific extrapolation of productive diversity. The concept of the creative industries emerged from an Australian cultural policy context, with the launch of the Keating government *Creative Nation* policy in

1994. It has since been adopted by other nations including Britain, Canada, New Zealand, Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the principles of which are reflected in US rhetoric promoting the “new economy” (Volkering 10; Yudice 16; Flew, “Creative Economy” 344). The logic underwriting the creative industries is consistent with neo-liberalism and represents a paradigmatic shift regarding public support of the arts and cultural sector. There are five characteristics that distinguish creative from cultural industries policy and rhetoric that are relevant to SBSi. First, culture is valued for its expediency and is “no longer experienced, valued, or understood as transcendent” (Yudice 12). This undermines the traditional distinction between publically supported classical arts and the commercial cultural industries. Second, where protectionist cultural policies sought to preserve national culture and identity by insulating cultural producers from direct competition with the US, creative industries policies promote culture as a resource that can render local producers more competitive in the global economy (Yudice 1; Keane and Zhang 7). The third characteristic of the creative industries is the premium placed on creativity and innovation regarding the development of products and services for sale in the market. Fourth is the convergence of previously distinct sectors, such as between traditional arts, cultural production and the information and communication technology sector (ICT) (Yudice; Garnham; Flew *Creative Industries*). Fifth, is the emergence of project-based labour and management models shaping collaborative rather than artisanal, or competitive corporate relationships. The following overview of creative industries will draw attention to these features insofar as they coincide and intersect with productive diversity.

Consistent with the productive diversity paradigm, culture and cultural diversity functions within the creative industries as a resource appropriate to the demands of global capitalism. The cultural policies and institutions established in many Western nations from the mid-twentieth century to the 1970s, was underpinned by the view that classical arts held cultural value capable of civilising the masses and needed to be preserved where their survival was threatened by market failure (Bennett *Culture*; Flew *Creative Industries*). Programs implemented in the 1960s and 1970s, augmented existing policies to redistribute resources amongst CALD citizens and offset structural inequalities instituted by established systems of

government patronage (Yudice 12). In the contemporary period characterised by accelerated globalisation: “Art has completely folded into an expanded conception of culture that can solve problems, including job creation. Its purpose is to lend a hand in the reduction of expenditures and at the same time help maintain the level of state intervention for the stability of capitalism” (Yudice 12). Public support predicated on essential public good no longer suffice, and the viability of public service broadcasters, other national institutions and the facilitation of access and equity therein, became vulnerable to neo-liberal deregulation and the concomitant redirection of public expenditure.¹⁵ Policymakers, artists, administrators, critics, academics, distributors, advocacy groups, and minority groups who have traditionally attracted support on the basis of structural disadvantage, have adapted to this new policy paradigm to maintain access to public finance. This process was demonstrated above in relation to the OMA’s formulation of the productive diversity paradigm. While champions of the creative industries – and the “new economy” - infer mutual benefit to minority groups, rectification of structural disadvantage is subordinated to the demands of capital accumulation (Yudice 12). Agents representing cultural diversity are embedded within this policy context and as such become, inadvertently or otherwise, complicit with neo-liberalism regardless of their agenda. Insofar as cultural diversity does not prove itself to be productive, access and equity is an expendable component of the creative industries framework.

Creative industries policy is circumscribed by a productive diversity paradigm to the degree that existing programs of support for CALD practitioners are repurposed to enhance global competitiveness. Public support of the Australian film and television industries to the mid-1980s are indicative of cultural policies in Western nations, which traditionally insulate local producers from direct competition with the globally dominant US in the interests of preserving national

¹⁵ It must be acknowledged that the shift from patronage models of State support is not uniform and rarely completed. In Australia for example, certain art and cultural forms, such as film, have become increasingly subject to facilitation models, though a number of traditional art forms (ballet and opera for example) continue to be supported as an essential public good that must be protected against market failure (Craik, McAllister and Davis; Craik).

values and culture. In Australia, content “regulation in television, script development and production investment from state agencies, and a wholly (or almost wholly) publically supported film culture sector dependent on subsidy and investment,” underwrote ambitions for a commercially viable *national* audio-visual industry (O’Regan, *Australian National* 15). Infrastructure facilitating aesthetic and cultural diversity complemented this “national and ultimately more civic articulation of cultural identity” (Keane and Zhang 7). The institution of SBSi continued a tradition of lower budgeted “minor streams” of investment in film culture and ecology, that sit alongside higher budgeted forms of mainstream support underwriting commercial ambitions (O’Regan, *Australian National* 15). For example, the EFTF (1970-8), targeted subsidy towards original and innovative work by inexperienced filmmakers (Dermody and Jacka, *Screening vol.1*; Blonski, “Government;” O’Regan, *Australian National* 15), and Film Victoria’s Independent Film Fund (IFF) established in 1985-6, developed new talent for features and documentaries (French, “Short Circuit” 109). The WFF (1976-1988-9), the establishment of SBS-TV in 1980, the ABC-TV Indigenous Unit in 1987, and the AFC Indigenous Unit in 1993, all facilitated access and equity within the film and television sectors. Finally, the AFC Creative Development Branch (CDB) (1976-1999) facilitated both formal and cultural diversity, and “assisted low-budget, short and experimental films by way of loans, grants and investment,” assuming at various times, responsibility for the administration of the EFTF and the WFF (Dermody and Jacka, *Screening vol.1* 83-4).¹⁶ The institution of SBSi marks a shift towards a creative industries paradigm. It subjected minor streams of funding, supporting innovation and offsetting structural disadvantage, to neo-liberal governance, and redirected them to enhance national competitiveness within the global marketplace. Moreover, insofar as these changes to infrastructure instituted economic modes of valuing innovation and cultural diversity, SBSi also reflects a deliberate revision of mainstream representations of Australian identity and values.

¹⁶ In 1999 the AFC announced the formation of an integrated Film Development and Marketing Branch, which represents a shift in departmental focus from developing talent towards developing audiences for funded projects. This is also reflective of the creative industries policy turn described herein.

Innovation is valorised within the creative industries as a principal means to achieve competitive advantage. Consistent with productive diversity strategies elaborated above, Indigeneity and CALD are identified as key resources facilitating innovation and competitive advantage (Yudice 16). The creative industries also inherit from the traditional arts, the Romantic concept of the individual artist or auteur as the locus of new and original ideas (Keane and Zhang 7-8; Smith and McKinlay, “Creative” 3).¹⁷ Filmmakers and the like are afforded a high degree of autonomy with regard to the creative process, reflective of widely held assumptions that factory-style production is “inimical to the kinds of creativity necessary to make profits” (Hesmondhalgh, “Cultural” 68). This expanded definition of innovation dovetails with productive diversity, which as indicated earlier, includes within its purview work-related competencies and resources accrued by individuals and communities. Furthermore, while concepts of productive diversity and creative industries valorise creative independence, they are both fundamentally interested in the management of innovation to produce marketable commodities and services that facilitate competitive advantage. The entrepreneurial focus of creative industries policies is what distinguishes it from previous cultural policies, which always accommodated some measure of support for *art for art’s sake* (Yudice 12). Within the creative industries, artistic and cultural practices are supported mainly as drivers of innovation within the broader national economy.

The valorisation of innovation has created the conditions for industry convergence, both within the creative sector and between different industrial sectors in the broader market economy. Convergence of previously distinct industries was significantly aided by policies privileging entrepreneurialism. This is exemplified by the policy articulation of ICTs to screen production in Britain, the US and Australia for example, which anticipated escalating demand for

¹⁷ The concept of the arts is here invoked as a “sub-set of theatre, music and many branches of long-established creative expression with solo or ensemble production at its centre. An art also has the connotation of skill, talent or ability, thus drawing attention to the idea of an artist as a trained but also innovative person, with a gift or knack that might be innate, person-specific and hence not easily be learnable” (Smith and McKinlay, “Creative Industries” 3).

“symbolic goods” on the back of multiple new digital technologies, such as the internet, game consoles and portable devices (Yudice 17; Garnham 26; Pratt; Flew, “Creative”). Convergence here denotes processes of marketisation whereby policy induces arts and cultural practitioners to trade commercially (Lash and Urry; Bilton “Manageable”). Convergence also denotes converse processes, whereby “the creative industries are elements of the *innovation system* of the whole economy” (Keane and Zhang 11; Potts and Cunningham). The value of the creative industries is not “their contribution to economic value,” but rather, “to the *coordination* of new ideas or technologies, and thus the process of change” across all industries, thereby producing a creative *economy* (Keane and Zhang 11). In both modes of convergence productive diversity functions as a resource for creativity, that when effectively managed adds value to the economy.

The creative industries imperative to manage diversity and facilitate innovation has increasingly resulted in dispersed labour processes, characterised by networked relations between agents and agencies. In the creative industries and the greater creative economy, labour formations and practices increasingly emulate the organisation of US film production and distribution since the late 1940s.¹⁸ This model is variously labelled as “the complex professional form of cultural production” (Ryan; Hesmondhalgh, “Cultural,” *Cultural Industries*), the Hollywood Organizational Model (Rifkin), and the “Hollywoodization” of labour markets (McRobbie). Labour processes in the creative industries are characterised by temporary alliances between organisations and individuals on a project-by-project basis (Keane and Zhang 8-9; Ryan 124-34; Hesmondhalgh,

¹⁸ Prior to the late 1940s US film production and distribution was vertically integrated. Vertical integration refers to a hierarchical studio system whereby organisations oversaw and regulated every “aspect of the production process from scripts to distribution” (Rifkin 363). In the wake of US Supreme Court anti-trust legislation, and competition from television, from the late 1940s Hollywood studio giants began to amortise rising production costs and contract out for talent and services on a project-by-project basis. Independent production companies, made up of artisans and artists formerly under contract at the big studios, began to proliferate. Today, the remaining studio giants rarely produce films in-house. Instead, they act as financial investors, providing money to independent producers in return for the right to distribute the end product at movie houses, and later on television and video (Rifkin 363).

Cultural Industries 64). The temporary *project team* draws together labour and finance to fulfil six key roles: *primary creative personnel* such as musicians, screenwriters and directors and authors; *technical workers* such as sound engineers, camera operators and copy editors; *creative managers* who co-ordinate project-teams on a contractual basis; *marketing personnel* who match content to audiences; *owners and executives* who largely finance the production of symbolic goods for profit; and *unskilled and semi-skilled labour* who are involved in the creation, circulation and reproduction of products (Hesmondhalgh, *Cultural Industries* 64-5).¹⁹ Project-based modes of production initially evolved out of industrial market contexts as a means of the spreading risk of capital investment, and reducing costs by pooling resources. Within an Australian creative industries policy context, project-based modes of production and distribution have been governmentally manufactured to reduce government expenditures and inculcate more commercial practices in the private and public sectors.²⁰ As this thesis argues, SBSi was a key institution effecting this neo-liberal transformation; it assumed a creative management role linking institutional-bureaucratic and independent-artisanal production milieux, thereby transforming both.

Interestingly, labour processes here described find expression in productive diversity scholarship as an ideal to which businesses should aspire. For instance, Cope and Kalantzis develop productive diversity as a model for work and management, proper to the demands global capitalism. Within this model, the

¹⁹ As David Hesmondhalgh stipulates, these roles/functions are not intended to be prescriptive, but are “a heuristic way of dividing up the functions in the cultural industries” (*Cultural Industries* 66). Often, more than one task will be performed by a single person, for example a film’s director may also be a producer, and creative managers also often assume responsibility for marketing the product.

²⁰ As indicated by Dermody and Jacka, since the early days of the revival, independent production teams have regularly collaborated with government bodies for finance, and with commercial distributors and exhibitors to circulate their products (*Screening vol.1* 173). These forms of collaboration differ from project teams here described insofar as earlier collaborations lacked a cohesive creative management tier, which, as elaborated in chapter three, functions to synthesise creative and commercial aims, and cohere the different collaborators into a team with shared creative and/or commercial goals.

range of worker competencies that have evolved from day-to-day workplace negotiations, between culturally diverse employees, is identified as an existing skill-set that is transferable to trade with international partners (Cope and Kalantzis 16-19). This model is however problematic insofar as it fails to account for asymmetrical distributions of power among corporate owners, executives and their employees. The problem remains within a creative industries paradigm, whereby the interests of artisanal and local producers are often subordinated to investors, particularly where they do not coincide with principles of capital accumulation. For example, project-based work underwrites the devolution of competition from corporations to individuals who vie with one another for contracts (McRobbie). Furthermore, regulations protecting worker rights are sidestepped, for example, working hours are long due to the need to self-promote and network to secure ongoing work (McRobbie). Intermittent and insecure employment is another feature of the creative industries, which is also an effect of contractual employment, and the oversupply of creative labour underpinned by the education and training components of policy (Garnham 26-7; Flew, "Creative Economy" 345). Finally, media convergence has followed from an alliance between software producers, the major publishing and media conglomerates, cultural workers, and with small-scale cultural entrepreneurs "around strengthening of copyright protection" (Garnham 26). While the concomitant undermining of public use provisions have been defended in the "interest of 'creators,' and all the moral prestige associated with the 'creative artist,'" such claims have been critiqued as highly dubious (Garnham 26; Pratt 33). The effects of convergence reflects critiques of productive diversity (Hage, *White Nation*) as an intensification of existing power structures, whereby workers-as-resource are managed to expedite capital accumulation by an existing white political and economic elite.

The examination of SBSi in chapters two and three offer analyses that lend weight to the critique of productive diversity as a mechanism that exploits labour, and which consolidates the wealth and power held by a white political and economic elite. Productive diversity, also however, allows spaces for this power to be challenged. As explicated above, artists, filmmakers and the like are often afforded a high degree of autonomy in the interests of innovation and profit. As

will be elaborated in chapter four, SBSi commissioning patterns evidence the exploitation of artistic autonomy by Commissioning Editors, General Managers and producers that resulted in a catalogue of content that challenged white hegemony. In this thesis the term *white hegemony* refers to: “the dominant epistemological position within the Western world,” which has, since Enlightenment, “been the white Cartesian male subject whose disembodied way of knowing has been positioned in opposition to white women's and Indigenous people's production of knowledge” (Moreton-Robinson, *Possessive*). As demonstrated by scholars of critical race and whiteness, this position has been maintained as hegemonic via discursive, social and material processes that obfuscate whiteness as a racial category. As a hegemonic *position*, racial whiteness denotes processes of inclusion and exclusion enacted to confer power on those who pass as white, it is not meant to infer the existence of a stable social class (Frankenberg). Film and television are key cultural sites where whiteness is coded as pre-eminent, and where the power and privilege enjoyed by its benefactors is reproduced and mystified (Bernardi, “Race”). The formal, aesthetic and narrative innovations common within the SBSi catalogue constituted a challenge to white hegemony because they disrupted and exposed these codes.

Specifically, this thesis argues that the catalogue of content that survives SBSi is characterised by counter-memorial strategies of resistance. The concept of *counter-memory* derives from the work of Foucault in his 1971 essay “Nietzsche, Genealogy and History,” which identifies subjugated knowledge as a counter-hegemonic resource (Burlein 6). Subjugated knowledge is defined as popular or residual memories of individuals and collectives that are not identical with the political public sphere. Counter-memory is a form of public representation, and denotes the transformation of personal and community memories into cultural memories. Counter-memory can be expressed via a variety of representational forms including: film (Foucault, “Film;” Stevens); public monuments (Bold, Knowles and Leach; Bucur); architecture (M. Hall); literature (Berlant; Assman; Bernard; Plate and Smelik); theatre (Bixler); talkback radio (Burlein); graffiti (Zuber) and theoretical engagement with the concept (Quinn; Legg). Furthermore, counter-memories are reflexive. They foreground the means of their construction to affirm the knowledge transmitted therein as a single perspective,

circumscribed by social, cultural and corporeal positioning (Quinn 368). Counter-memorial expression seeks to undermine the conventions that lend official discourses, such as media, science and politics, a sense of objectivity and authority. This representational convention is the chief characteristic of counter-memory. That said, counter-memory is historically associated with its strategic use during the 1960s civil rights movement and thus, with left-leaning politics (Burlein; M. Hall). Academics continue to apply the concept to explicate strategies of political resistance by those who are marginalised, oppressed, misrepresented, or forgotten within national discourses (Assman; Bixler; Bold, Knowles and Leach; Legg; Zuber; Bucur). Consistent with this scholarship, this thesis develops a counter-memorial framework to analyse SBSi content, and demonstrate how filmmakers critiqued, subverted and challenged white hegemony by creating new images and narratives of Australian identity and history.

In summary, as a cultural institution SBSi was positioned to governmentally transform management, production and distribution practices and achieve neo-liberal reform within the independent film and public broadcasting sectors. This section has argued that the transformations wrought by SBSi must be analysed in relation to two State policy developments, productive diversity and the creative industries. Productive diversity represents an evolution in the techniques for managing cultural diversity, from the provision of bureaucratic services shoring up disadvantage among CALD communities, and towards industrial interventions that facilitate private businesses to exploit the cultural and linguistic competencies of labourers as a lucrative resource. Attendant to the program of productive diversity is broadened definitions of CALD to include gender, sexuality, disability, Indigenous and religious identities as well as occupation-related competencies and resources. Within a creative industries paradigm, productive diversity was implemented to transform the independent film and public broadcasting sectors into an economically viable screen industry. This transformation is characterised by the shift from national protectionist policies of support, and towards policies that facilitate industrial integration into global markets. Productive diversity intervenes in creative labour to diversify the workforce, stimulate innovation, create new niche markets and thereby add value

to the national economy. SBSi carefully implemented productive diversity policy to shape its outcomes, allowing new creative labour practices to emerge, new filmmaking milieux to form and new counter-memorial filmmaking strategies to flourish. The methodology developed to extrapolate this thesis is outlined in the following two sections.

SECTION 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was carried out in Australia between 2009 and 2012. A combination of three research methods was employed: archival research, semi-structured interviews with managers and independent filmmakers professionally involved with SBSi, and content analysis. This research design was influenced by a number of cultural institution analyses by Australian scholars, including Moran's *Images and Industry* and *Projecting Australia*, Dermody and Jacka's *The Screening of Australia*, Jacka's *The ABC of Drama: 1975-1990*, and FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson's *Australian Documentary*. These studies employ a dual approach that first, examines the programs pursued by a given institution. They pay particular attention to how political, social and industrial contexts directly and indirectly circumscribe the objectives, ideologies, financing and organisational structures, and the management styles and strategies that characterise an institution (defined variously as a single organisation or a larger film or television milieu). Second, these studies examine the institution via its outputs, establishing links between the activities of the institution and the formal, stylistic and thematic features of content produced. This dual approach is appropriate to the aims of this study, which seeks to: elucidate how SBSi's governance of productive diversity shaped new production and distribution practices in the independent filmmaking and public broadcasting sectors; and demonstrate how SBSi manoeuvred within a productive diversity policy paradigm to incubate a new counter-memorial narrative genre.

A principal source of data includes a broad range of records and documents written by staff on behalf of the institution, which directly impacted upon the institution, or served as a public record of the institution's activities (Bertrand and Hughes 132-8). These include cultural policy documents produced by successive

federal governments, SBS Annual Reports that include rudimentary lists of content commissioned and transmitted within each financial year, SBS press releases, records and documents kept and provided by former SBSi staff, including spreadsheets and promotional material, press kits for individual programs created and disseminated by production companies and filmmakers, production company websites, newspaper reports, journal and magazine articles. Numerous archives and databases have also been consulted, including those internet sources maintained by Screen Australia, the Australian Film Institute (AFI), the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), the National Library of Australia's online catalogue *Trove*, the web-based catalogue of educational programs distributed by the company Ronin Films, and the *Internet Movie Database* (IMDB).

Data generated from these sources has been rendered in three important ways. First, the content of government and SBS documents, newspaper, journal and magazine articles, and press releases have facilitated an analysis of the institution from a policy perspective. Federal cultural and social policy documents in particular, have been utilised to identify key features of SBSi and link these to productive diversity and creative industry policy programs. Second, documents and records have been analysed to identify key agents and agencies that influenced and were influenced by the cultural institution. This data was used to identify potential interviewees. Finally, archival sources have been analysed to compile a comprehensive database of content commissioned by SBSi. The SBSi content database aggregates a variety of information including title, working title, synopsis, key creative personnel, financiers, distributors, exhibitors, commission and release dates, awards received and library holdings.

For the purposes of this thesis, the SBSi content database has facilitated the organisation and categorisation of content chronologically, thematically and by format. This has facilitated the identification of commissioning and representational trends reflected in the quantitative as well as qualitative data reported. The generation of both qualitative and quantitative data has been informed by the study produced by FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson. As outlined above, FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson identify three distinct

phases in the history of SBSi and SBS-TV, each characterised by different types of documentary. Phase one (1980-1994) was characterised by an “open-ended institutional voice” and “great variation of form,” which intensified with the institution of SBSi in phase two (1994-2006). Phase three (2006-) was characterised by “a more consistent institutional voice and greater adherence to established generic conventions” of television (FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson 171). While this thesis largely subscribes to FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson’s periodisation, the three phases identified have been determined according to content release dates and incorporates programs generated by SBS-TV prior to SBSi. Consistent with the focus of this study, the periodisation has been amended to reflect dates when content was *commissioned* by SBSi; phase one (1994-1996), phase two (1996-2003), and phase three (2003-2007). Format has been retained as an organising principle, and the framework extended to examine fictional programs. In addition to one-off documentaries, documentary series, factual entertainment and reality television series are short film, feature film, short features, interstitials, animation, drama series, and comedy series. Statistics (for example the number of feature films commissioned annually or in a given phase) have been calculated using the SBSi content database. Where this figure is shown as a percentage of the national output, this thesis utilises national industry figures reported by Screen Australia as at 2012 and made available via their website (www.screenaustralia.gov.au).

The construction of the SBSi content database evolved from a need to identify and source relevant content, and constitutes a significant and original contribution to research. In late 2008, when this research project was initiated, the SBS Corporation maintained, on its webpage, a database of the productions commissioned and transmitted by SBSi. By March 2009 this database, the only comprehensive resource listing and describing SBSi content, was no longer active. Enquiries to SBS requesting access to the database were met with confusion and a considerable measure of evasiveness. Needless to say, this project has been conducted without the direct support of SBS, though various former staff provided invaluable assistance. Additionally, prior to the 1996-7 financial year, content commissioned by SBSi was not reported by SBS. This data was eventually ascertained via records provided by inaugural General

Manager of SBSi, Andy Lloyd James. While every effort has been made to reduce the margin for error through cross-referencing information, there remain inevitable gaps. For example, there are a few notable instances where the completion of a commissioned production could not be conclusively ascertained. These discrepancies are nominal and present little to no impact on quantitative data reported herein.

Qualitative data was also gathered in the form of interviews conducted with a variety of agents who were professionally involved with SBSi. Interviews have allowed “people at all levels within the institution to have a voice,” and “not just those decision makers whose names appear on the written record” (Bertrand and Hughes 141). Interviews have been conducted with former staff of SBSi including the SBS’s former Head of Television (1988-1994), the creator and first General Manager of SBSi (1992-1996), Andy Lloyd James, subsequent General Managers Bridget Ikin (1996-2000) and Glenys Rowe (2000-2005), former Commissioning Editors Barbara Masel (1996-1999), John Hughes (1998-2001) and Trevor Graham (2005-2008), and the former Head of Finance Julie Cottrell-Dormer (1995-2004). Interviews have also been conducted with former staff of SBS including former Head of Programming Rodd Webb (1995-2003), and former Head of Television (2003-2005) and Managing Director (2005-2011) Shaun Brown. Other interviewees include filmmakers who have had content commissioned by SBSi, including producer Michael McMahon and producer/director/writer Tony Ayres, both of Matchbox Pictures (formerly Big and Little Films), and documentarian Tom Zubrycki. Andrew Pike, who produced the SBSi commissioned documentary *Betelnut Bisnis* (Chris Owen), and continues to distribute over fifty SBSi commissioned titles on behalf of filmmakers via Ronin Films, was also interviewed. Together, the participants reflect the diversity of roles and areas of expertise required to realise the ambitions of SBSi.

Numerous sets of questions were developed so as to target the specificity of each participant’s experience and expertise, though these served to guide open-ended

discussion rather than as a script.²¹ Questions were designed to instigate discussion regarding each participant's particular role and relationship to SBSi, and also how their previous experience within the film and television industries informed their perception and objectives as staff members and filmmakers. Former SBSi staff proved to be an enthusiastic cohort of participants, eager to see their beloved institution inscribed into Australian screen history. The generosity with which former SBSi staff and other interviewees offered their time and memories engendered a considerable sense of responsibility to those participants. A central issue has thus become how to honour the spirit with which testimonies were volunteered and maintain a critical approach to analysis. The interviews have been used in two key ways. First, chapters two and three utilise interviews, together with archival records and documents, to reconstruct a general historical narrative detailing the evolution of SBSi. To achieve this, the tripartite evolutionary frameworks developed by Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy, and FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson (elaborated above), have been used. Second, where interviews are utilised to support original arguments, the transcripts have been analysed as texts, maintaining a distinction between the authorial voice of the thesis and the voices of interviewees.

The sample of participants interviewed has inevitably shaped the project. Research was commenced with a view to building a large sample of interviewees drawn from SBSi, SBS, other federal and state financing agencies, large and small production companies, commercial distributors and exhibitors, and independent filmmakers. While film and television producers invited to participate did overwhelmingly express gratitude for the opportunities provided by SBSi, interviews did not evolve into the sample originally imagined. The few filmmaker interviews that did eventuate were thus incorporated as case studies that counterpoint the institutional narrative. Also, it was especially difficult to attract participants presently employed by cultural institutions (SBS, ABC and Screen Australia for example), thus eliminating an entire cohort within the intended sample. Two notable exceptions were Shaun Brown, who remained with the broadcaster for only a few more months, and Rodd Webb, who at the time

²¹ See Appendix two for sample questions.

worked for the Australia Network. The attempt to build a varied sample of industry professionals was an approach quickly abandoned in favour of “convenience sampling” (Bertrand and Hughes 142). This form of snowballing facilitated access to a network of film and television professionals, most of whom were former staff members of SBSi. The thesis was thus redesigned and arguably strengthened by a more focused study of the institution from a creative management perspective.

The final source of data was gathered via the close analysis of a sample of SBSi commissioned programs. Of the 804 titles commissioned by SBSi during its lifetime, approximately 202 were viewed, roughly twenty-five percent of the catalogue. Notably, the process of viewing contributed to the database insofar as the credits provided invaluable information pertaining to the parties involved in the financing, production and distribution of content. Additionally, viewing content informed its thematic categorisation.

The sample of content viewed was in large part determined by availability. Videos and DVDs were sourced through a variety of avenues, including various tertiary institutions and public libraries, commercial video libraries, online via the SBS and ABC websites, on broadcast television, and privately purchased. Availability of texts was determined by two key factors: the curricula of tertiary institutions, which determine their library holdings, and the distribution and exhibition deals achieved and maintained by producers. A significant portion of content could simply not be sourced. An interesting development in this respect has been the launch of the SBS Indigenous channel NITV on 12 December 2012. Difficult to access Indigenous material has found a home on NITV, though unfortunately too late to impact upon the focus of this thesis.

Viewing content has helped to identify and extrapolate the formal, aesthetic and narrative interventions made by SBSi into screen constructions of white hegemony. Apprehending the legacy of SBSi via the close textual analysis of the content generated by the institution, is a familiar approach used by scholars of both SBSi and SBS-TV (Smaill, “SBS Documentary,” *Amidst*, “Narrating;” Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy; FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson). As extrapolated above, scholars such as Smaill, and FitzSimons, Laughren and

Williamson, have firmly established how outsourcing and collaborative financing at SBSi reshaped the form and content of television documentary from the 1990s. The contribution of this thesis differs from previous studies in two important respects. First, critical race and whiteness scholarship is drawn from, instead of the standard multicultural framework. This approach allows for the identification of commissioning practices that challenged the assimilative aspects of State multiculturalism. Second, the case studies and policy work within this thesis predominantly examines fictional content to extrapolate SBSi's legacy of counter-hegemonic representation. As such this thesis augments existing scholarship, which has focused on documentary, with an original contribution examining entertainment formats commissioned by SBSi.

SECTION 5

METHODOLOGY

As indicated, the principal research questions are: *What were the new management, production and distribution practices shaped by SBSi? How were these changes implemented? How did these new practices shape the content of SBSi commissioned productions?* To answer these questions this thesis applies a creative labour approach to analyse and interpret research data. Broadly speaking, creative labour scholarship studies cultural production and distribution in the creative industries via the examination of “the material structures of labour markets and labour processes” (Thompson, Jones and Warhurst 52-3). It is an approach centred on the “actuality of work from the perspective and orientation of the direct producers, those who provide the service or make the product,” and is “especially concerned with *control, resistance* and *consent* elements in work” (Smith and McKinlay, “Creative Industries” 11). A commonly identified feature structuring labour markets and processes in the creative industries is indeterminacy of outcome, referred to as the “nobody knows” dilemma. “Nobody knows” is the inability of industry professionals to predict whether a product or service will appeal to consumers, and sell in sufficient quantities to result in profit (Hirsch, “Processing,” “Revisited;” Miège, “Cultural,” “Logics;” Caves; Thompson, Jones and Warhurst). Indeterminacy underwrites four interrelated processes that are relevant to the analysis of SBSi. These are: State interventions

shaping labour markets; management of tensions inside and outside the employment relationship; *reflexive capitalism* defined as corporate adaptation to market conditions to offset risk and maximise profit; and genre as an organising principle of production labour. This section will now elaborate each of these factors in relation to the subsequent study of SBSi.

The State is a key agent shaping national labour markets and processes in the creative industries. A key function performed by State interventions is to offset risk endemic to cultural production. As indicated above, justification for, and forms of public support are historically and geographically specific. Commodities produced by the cultural industries are what “economists call ‘public goods’ - goods where the act of consumption by one individual does not reduce the possibility of consumption by another” (Hesmondhalgh, “Cultural” 554). Traditional forms of public support including subsidy, tariffs and content quotas, protect the continued viability of cultural production against market failure. Within this framework public goods attract support for their alleged educational, national or cultural value, and their protection may be directed toward “internal purposes of social or ideological control, and also for inter-country competition and prestige” (Smith and McKinlay, “Creative Industries” 8). The stimulation of sector profitability has also been an objective; copyright regulations for instance, bolster industry impositions of artificial scarcity via careful control of release schedules (Hesmondhalgh, “Cultural” 554). As suggested above, traditional measures of support to the screen industry is consistent with neo-liberal governance insofar as they intervene in markets to engineer commercial viability, protecting producers from international competitors and amortising production expenses via subsidy. Likewise, minor streams of funding facilitating (non-profitable) experimental forms, as well as access and equity, initially targeted production, which supported an adjacent community of artisanal filmmakers. As will be elaborated via the analysis of policy in chapter two, State interventions under the rubric of the creative industries instituted a shift from artist-centred strategies that subsidised creators, towards audience-focused strategies improving economic viability via demonstrated market interest. The creative industries turn, of which SBSi was a part, indicates a fundamental reconfiguration of creative labour across the independent film and public broadcasting sectors. This

reconfiguration was consistent with neo-liberal governance insofar as all forms of production became subject to a commercial logic, which was ensured by the insertion of cultural institutions, such as public broadcasters, into labour processes.

In order to ascertain how SBSi reshaped creative labour, it is also necessary to examine external and internal pressures shaping the employment relationship between investors, creative managers and producers. The risk associated with indeterminacy of outcome is an important external factor shaping the labour market. The dominant form of buying and selling labour in the creative industries is the project-based “short-term, one-off or temporary” contract between investors and creative labourers, which is brokered by creative managers (Smith and McKinlay, “Creative Labour” 38; Ryan; Caves; Hesmondhalgh, *Cultural Industries*; Thompson, Jones and Warhurst). The specific function of creative managers varies according to whose interests they represent. Commissioning Editors for example, represent the interests of investors who employ them and “have to be primarily interested in profit (or, at the very least, prestige),” whereas film producers may represent the interests of key creative personnel “who will want to achieve success and/or build their reputation by producing original, innovative and/or accomplished works” (Hesmondhalgh, *Cultural Industries* 64). Ultimately, short-term contracts offset risk of investment and increase dividends by maximising output. This is ensured by a surplus of skilled and unskilled creative labour underpinned by a number of factors, including corporate and bureaucratic downsizing, and outsourcing positions that were previously contracted on a wage-labour basis (Smith and McKinlay, “Creative Labour” 41; Caves).²² Insecure and intermittent employment, fierce competition between creative workers for limited contracts, and lack of formal training and industry apprenticeships for new entrants, underwrite asymmetrical power relations between buyers and sellers of labour power, in favour of the former (Florida;

²² Corporate and bureaucratic downsizing are processes that have affected different sectors at different times. For example, while project-based contracts came to characterise Hollywood film from the 1950s, the “marketisation of the BBC or ITV companies has involved this process” from the 1980s (Smith and McKinlay, “Creative Labour” 41).

Smith and McKinlay, “Creative Industries,” “Creative Labour”). Hierarchical forms of production management (e.g. Fordism, studio-era Hollywood) are displaced by *reputation*, whereby successful contract delivery by creative labourers is rewarded with access to future contracts (Caves; Smith and McKinlay, “Creative Labour” 39; Thompson, Jones and Warhurst 57). This underpins uneven employment conditions among creative labourers. Only a minority attract high remuneration for their services, reflective of their “star” status, whilst most are unable to attract wages that consistently support living costs (Caves; Smith and McKinlay, “Creative Labour” 39; Thompson, Jones and Warhurst 57). Star, like genre (elaborated below), offers creative managers a measure of predictability based on past experience.

Creative management objectives and strategies are significant factors shaping creative labour processes, and the types of goods and services produced therein. As indicated above, labour processes in the creative industries are characterised by the perceived tension between the artist or craftsperson as the wellspring of creativity, and the imperative to manage creativity, reduce risk of investment and maximise potential for return on investment. A common assertion shaping scholarly approaches is that creative management predominantly targets the “contract, the product portfolio, or the distribution sphere rather than the labour process” to offset indeterminacy (Thompson, Jones and Warhurst 57). As Paul Thompson, Mike Jones and Chris Warhurst contend however, the dispersal of labour processes does not automatically translate as creative autonomy. To amortise the risk of investment, industries evolve “multiple points of management” in the value chain, including “the supply of talent, the division of labour in the production process, the control of distribution, or the shaping of consumption” (Thompson, Jones and Warhurst 57-8). For example, musicians “may *self-manage* their own creativity, but within a framework where production and business managers set the terms of access to resources, and ultimately, to the market-place” (Thompson, Jones and Warhurst 67). Examination of creative management must attend to the industry specific managerial environment moderating creativity, from the conception to the consumption of a given product (Thompson, Jones and Warhurst 68). Issues for consideration include, for example, structural changes in industry and institutional contexts, State policy

and new technologies.²³ Another factor determining creative management is the interaction of structure and agency, and the tensions and conflicts that arise between “the producers of creativity and the company or its agents, and between temporary alliances of particular agents and acts against others” (Thompson, Jones and Warhurst 69). Applying a creative management approach to the analysis and interpretation of interview transcripts, archival sources and the content database, this thesis will extrapolate how SBSi intervened in screen production and distribution practices. Chapter two details the political and institutional changes circumscribing creative management objectives and strategies. Chapter three extrapolates the thirteen-year evolution of creative management in response to tensions between the objectives of SBS-TV, financial collaborators and independent producers.

The *evolution* of creative management practices at SBSi has also been determined via a second paradigm that draws attention to the adaptation of labour processes and production strategies over time. Susan Christopherson produces a case study of the contemporary US film industry to evidence processes of “reflexive capitalism,” whereby the management strategies of organisations “adapt to new forms and levels of risk” (74-5). The pattern of adaptation identified by Christopherson evidences a movement “away from a diverse portfolio of films for national and global markets to a more exclusive focus on global ‘blockbusters’ aimed at a young male market” (74). The global appeal of such films is deemed less risky than mid-sized films aimed “at less predictable niche markets” (Christopherson 74-5). At the other end of the spectrum are independently produced and financed films distributed by conglomerates, and which are aimed at more limited markets (Christopherson 74-5). Exclusionary employment practices favouring white men for more prestigious projects are shown to coincide with greater standardisation of output. There are two points to be drawn from the work of Christopherson. First is the directional movement

²³ This thesis discusses impending technological changes, including digital and pay television, and the proliferation of portable devices, only insofar as these shaped creative industries policy, or directly motivated the actions of SBSi staff. This omission is attributable to the need to delimit the scope of the research project.

towards standardised and thus more marketable products within a commercially oriented system. Second, genre is a key indicator of evolving labour processes. Genre, while an unstable category, variously used to refer to differences in format, theme or cycle of films, is a principal means by which the cultural industries (such as film, television and publishing) attempt “to match audiences to texts” (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 14). This thesis applies the reflexive capitalism approach to identify dominant commissioning trends across the database, and to link shifts in commissioning patterns to shifts in managerial objectives and strategies. Findings are reported in both chapters two and three, to support analyses of SBSi in relation to policy and industry respectively.

As will be elaborated in chapters two and three, the reflexive capitalism approach reveals the adaptation of management strategies, which latterly favoured standardised television formats characterised by a consistent institutional voice. It also however, illuminates a strong and enduring commitment by SBSi to innovative formats and themes characterised by counter-memory. Counter-memorial narrative representations exhibit a strong authorial voice that challenges the authority of established epistemologies. They are linked to a variety creative management strategies fostering innovation via productive diversity, detailed in chapter three. These strategies include creative autonomy afforded to experienced producers, commissioning content from established independents with a strong political oeuvre, and training and mentorship schemes targeting aspiring filmmakers from Indigenous, regional and CALD backgrounds. In chapter four, this thesis shifts from a diachronic to a synchronic mode of analysis to exclusively examine the counter-memorial cycle of films. While close analysis of content is atypical of creative labour approaches, it dovetails with the imperative to examine “genre as an important mediator of creativity-commerce tensions” (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 19). In so doing this thesis augments creative labour scholarship to illuminate how the creative management strategies developed by SBSi generated a coherent cycle of films. Specifically, the early program of productive diversity, which focused its intervention on employment practices as well as content, is connected to counter-memorial narratives of whiteness via the categorisation and close analysis of exemplary productions.

SECTION 6

CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis is divided into three core chapters investigating: 1) the policy context shaping the institution's productive diversity objectives; 2) the creative management of labour processes, steering the implementation of productive diversity and generating new modes of production and distribution; and, 3) common strategies of counter-memory developed within commissioned content. This section elaborates the core concerns explored in each of these chapters.

Chapter two examines SBSi, from inception in 1992 through to the retirement of the label and the integration of its activities into the SBS Corporation in 2007, from the perspective of cultural policy studies. The evolution of the institution is divided into three distinct phases: phase one (1980-1996) encompassing the policy context that gave rise to SBSi and the institution's first two years of operation; phase two (1996-2003); and phase three (2003-2007). First, this chapter draws on Jim McGuigan's *Culture and the Public Sphere* to examine policy developments in phase one (1980-1996), and elaborate how the neo-liberal turn gave rise to the commissioning model for content acquisition. It links the proposal to outsource and co-finance production to the "new managerialism" and "value for money ethos" espoused within policy (McGuigan 54), and argues that SBSi was designed to embody these characteristics as a means of winning State sponsorship for the institution. It demonstrates that while the core function of the institution was to meet SBS-TV's multicultural programming ambitions, the form of the institution also positioned it governmentally to achieve neo-liberal transformation of creative labour processes. Second, this chapter draws on George Yudice's *The Expediency of Culture* to demonstrate that SBSi was also an expedient mechanism for the State insofar as it was ideally positioned to cultivate the resource of productive diversity. As indicated above, productive diversity refers to inclusion of economic efficiency as a core principle of multicultural policy, which effectively redefines CALD as an "exploitable resource in the form of hitherto untapped potential" (Hage, *White Nation* 128). The expediency of SBSi is demonstrated via the close analysis of policy documents discerning core objectives of productive diversity, and the elaboration

of funding campaigns throughout phase two (1996-2003) evidencing the achievement of those objectives. It also foregrounds how the economic focus of productive diversity produced a policy blind spot that the institution exploited to also pursue more political and adventurous filmmaking endeavours. Finally, this chapter details processes achieving organisational restructure resulting in the merger of SBSi and SBS-TV between 2003 and 2007. It argues that this merger was a counter-productive development insofar as neo-liberal rationalisation was implemented to achieve new mainstreaming objectives, objectives that baldly rejected productive diversity responsibilities.

Chapter three uses a creative labour approach to extrapolate how SBSi's governance of productive diversity shaped new modes of production and distribution in the independent production and public broadcasting sectors. First, it draws on Australian institutional scholarship to analyse creative management processes developed in phase one (1994-1996), and demonstrate the consolidation of SBSi as a new centre of creative management in the independent production sector. It examines early management processes fostering innovation, and how these consolidated a bifurcated approach, targeting new filmmakers for development and improving distribution opportunities for practicing filmmakers. It argues that via these processes, SBSi was quickly established as a valued member of the independent production community. Second, this chapter draws on Hesmondhalgh and Baker's *Creative Labour* to analyse creative management processes developed in phase two (1996-2003), and elaborate productive diversity as a key condition enabling SBSi to pursue creativity as a pre-condition of successful commerce. It demonstrates how, consistent with the neo-liberal impetus toward cross funding, resource sharing and productive partnerships (Radbourne), SBSi co-ordinated mutually beneficial collaborations with other cultural institutions to realise creative-commercial aims. This is achieved via the analysis of themed strands and development pathways, two types of inter-firm alliance that explicitly invested in early career and culturally diverse producers, whose difference from white-centric media was valued for its potential to tap into new niche markets. Also analysed are distribution alliances, a type of inter-firm alliance linking production and distribution regimes via project-based collaborations, again adding commercial value to the sector by connecting

audiences to content. Finally, this chapter draws on Christopherson's "Working in the Creative Economy" to analyse the maturation of creative management processes, and demonstrate the movement away from a diverse and innovative portfolio of content in phase three (2003-2007). It elaborates how the reflexive adaptation of management strategies to amortise investment risk, privileged the commercial objectives of SBS-TV to the detriment of creative labourers, increasingly dependent on capital provided by public broadcasters. It argues that these developments are exemplary of neo-liberal governance, which is characterised by intensified modes of State intervention into the screen industries.

Chapter four uses a critical race and whiteness approach to examine content commissioned between 1994 and 2007, and demonstrates how SBSi staff manoeuvred within a governmental logic to also generate a cycle of counter-memorial films. Counter-memory is a practice of political resistance whereby subjective memories and experiences contradicting dominant histories and discourses are spoken, or otherwise represented, within the public sphere. Chapter four thus pursues an analytical avenue initiated in chapter three which links creative management of productive diversity, particularly in phases one (1994-1996) and two (1996-2003), to the development of content with a strong authorial voice. To identify the counter-memorial strategies that characterise the SBSi cycle, this chapter begins with a review of counter-memory scholarship deriving from the scholarship of Foucault including "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" and "Film and Popular Memory." It then reviews the international field of race and critical whiteness scholarship, and elaborates screen conventions that contribute to the naturalisation and domination of white perspectives. Finally, this chapter develops three broad categories of counter-memorial intervention performed within SBSi programs: 1) *counter-memorial re-membering*, defined as films that represent past events from the perspective of those marginalised and silenced within official histories of Australia; 2) *counter-memorial (re-) appropriation*, whereby films invest racist tropes, icons and symbols with new meanings that invite critical reflection; and 3) *counter-memorial polyphony*, films that expose paradoxes in myths and tropes of nation through multi-lingual, multi-voiced, and multi-accented storytelling. Each of these categories are defined and supported via the close analysis of exemplary films. In so doing this thesis

identifies the SBSi counter-memorial cycle as important means by which the institution manoeuvred within a neo-liberal regime to challenge white racial hegemony.

While acknowledged by many scholars as having been an important organisation, this study is the first to attempt a comprehensive history of SBSi as a cultural institution. This represents a significant contribution to Australian screen scholarship for a number of reasons. First, the institutional framework allows an examination of SBSi in relation to multiple policy developments that have circumscribed its activities. This opens a space to explore the expediency of SBSi for the State, as well as for SBS, and reconcile the theoretical paradox that has positioned its multicultural activities in opposition to the State. As elaborated, the expediency of SBSi was its administration of productive diversity, which contributed to economic growth by creating new employment opportunities for professionally and culturally diverse filmmakers, and new pathways of distribution and exhibition generating new niche markets for local content. In other words, this thesis elucidates how SBSi's commitment to innovation and cultural diversity also satisfied the neo-liberal ambitions of the State. This argument is underpinned by a governmental logic that re-contextualises debates, which tend to frame the commercialisation of SBS as an incursion of external market forces into the democratic public sphere. The continuing misapprehension of State and market as oppositional forces is dangerous and only serves to confound the development of viable solutions for more equitable and ethical society.

That the legacy of SBSi is significant within Australian screen history is backed up by original research in the form of interviews and the SBSi production database, which illuminates inordinate scale of SBSi's involvement in production activity at the time. Another original contribution is the application of a creative labour approach to analyse this data. This has allowed for a detailed examination of how agents envisaged and enacted productive diversity, giving rise to new production milieux and counter-memorial modes of storytelling. Thus, at the core of this study is an exciting case study demonstrating innovative strategies for

circumventing neo-liberalism from within. Hopefully this study provides an instructive template for creative labourers into the future.

CHAPTER TWO

NEO-LIBERALISM & PRODUCTIVE DIVERSITY

This chapter details the history of SBSi from its inception in 1992, through to its merger with SBS-TV in 2007, from the perspective of cultural policy studies. It examines the objectives and strategies developed by SBS and SBSi managers to increase local programming, and how these evolved to embody the new neo-liberal rationale underwriting State cultural and multicultural policies. It demonstrates how the form and function of SBSi systematised “pseudo-capitalistic” (McGuigan 63) policy ambitions to attract government investment, and gave rise to a version of multicultural practice referred to as productive diversity. Productive diversity is characterised by the management of culturally diverse peoples with the aim of generating innovative products, thereby enhancing the economic competitiveness of a business or sector. This chapter argues that while explicitly created to strengthen the broadcaster’s commitment to multicultural representation, a pivotal function of SBSi was the governance of productive diversity in Australia’s independent film and television industries. Furthermore, it argues that SBSi also functioned to expedite neo-liberal reforms within the SBS Corporation.

To reconstruct the history of SBSi this chapter loosely adopts the periodical framework developed by Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy in *The SBS Story*. As elaborated in chapter one, Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy identify three phases in the evolution of SBS: *ethno-multiculturalism*, which dominated throughout the 1980s, *cosmopolitan multiculturalism*, ascendant in the 1990s, and *popular multiculturalism*, increasingly favoured from the early 2000s. These versions of multiculturalism represent divergent philosophies “of what SBS should do, whom it is for, and how it should deliver on its charter” (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy 20). For Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy, these philosophies evolve out of the need to adapt to changing social and technological circumstances. Within this framework, a cosmopolitan philosophy reflects the general comfort of

Australians with their national diversity. It also coincides with the advent of SBSi, which contributed to the thematic and formal sophistication of local multicultural programs. This chapter augments the scholarship of Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy, and contends that cultural policy developments also circumscribed cosmopolitan and popular manifestations of multiculturalism via SBSi. This is achieved via textual analysis of policy documents and interview transcripts, which links the commissioning model of content acquisition to the neo-liberal rationale underwriting government investment in the cultural sector since the 1980s. As such, this thesis interjects familiar public debates that characterise commercialisation at SBS as an abdication of public service responsibility, and instead connects these changes to State policy interventions.

Each of the three phases of institutional evolution are characterised by different approaches to the management of SBS and SBSi. For the thirteen years that SBSi operated, the institution had four different General Managers: Andy Lloyd James (1994-1996), Bridget Ikin (1996-2000), Glenys Rowe (2000-2005), and Ned Lander (2005-2007). The approach to the management of SBSi by James, Ikin and Rowe (for the first three years of her term) sought to mediate between the needs of the independent filmmaking community and SBS-TV. As will be elaborated in chapter three, this period was characterised by the establishment of accords and initiatives, the provision of training opportunities and mentorship programs for early career filmmakers, and an openness to innovative formats not traditional to broadcast television. An objective common to all three General Managers was the development of a generation of filmmakers from Indigenous, regional and CALD backgrounds, and the facilitation of innovative content for niche audiences. These objectives reflect productive diversity policies that identify Indigenous, regional, CALD and professionally diverse peoples as an economic resource.

The third phase (2003-2007) in the evolution of SBS began midway through Rowe's term as SBSi General Manager, when in 2003 Shaun Brown was appointed SBS Head of Television. In 2005 Brown was appointed Managing Director of the SBS Corporation. From the outset Brown demonstrated a direct interest in the management of SBSi, which had, under previous Heads of

Television (Sawsan Madina, 1994-1996, Peter Cavanagh, 1996-2002) and Managing Directors (Malcolm Long 1993- 1997, Nigel Milan, 1997-2005), largely been left to the discretion of General Managers. From 2003 the objectives of SBSi became increasingly aligned with SBS-TV, and reflected mainstreaming ambitions to attract a larger and more consistent audience, as well as generate more revenue through advertising. Under the guidance of Brown, Rowe came to view her role from the perspective of a broadcaster rather than a filmmaker (Rowe), adopting a more concerted approach to content acquisition. Rather than mediating between the needs of filmmakers and the broadcaster, SBSi now looked to filmmakers to provide conventional television content (series rather than feature films for instance), sought out experienced filmmakers that could accomplish higher production values, and also often secured greater editorial control by investing more money per program. The mainstreaming objectives set by Brown continued to guide the commissioning objectives of SBSi under the management of Lander, whose relatively short term is characterised by a marked increase in formatted and light entertainment series.

This chapter examines the management of SBSi in relation to cultural policy developments to demonstrate how evolving organisational objectives and systems were circumscribed by neo-liberalism. It is divided into three sections, each engaging with a distinct phase in the evolution of SBSi, and closely adhering to the periodisation outlined by Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy: the cultural policy context throughout the 1980s and early 1990s that gave rise to SBSi, including its inaugural phase (1994-1996); phase two (1996-2003) characterised by productive diversity; and phase three (2003-2007) characterised by mainstreaming. Section one draws from Jim McGuigan's *Culture and the Public Sphere*, to link the commissioning model to the new neo-liberal rationale underwriting State policy. It argues that SBSi attracted government investment because it was a financially efficient institutional model, ideally situated to govern productive diversity within the film and television sectors. Section two uses George Yudice's *The Expediency of Culture* to conduct a textual analysis of *Creative Nation* in relation to the organisational characteristics of SBSi, and demonstrates how throughout phase two (1996-2003), SBSi gave expression to productive diversity ambitions via the development of loyal professional networks. It details how productive

diversity was translated into strategies that optimised conditions for innovation via the management of people, rather than through the regulation of program content. It also analyses the institution in relation to subsequent Coalition government policies and argues that SBSi's approach to administering productive diversity vouchsafed bipartisan support for the institution. Section three assesses the merger of SBSi and SBS-TV in phase three (2003-2007), and argues that rationalisation strategies freeing resources for more expensive, popular and locally produced English-language programs was underpinned by neo-liberalism insofar as it targeted bureaucratic forms of management for reform. However, it also appraises the new mainstreaming logic to demonstrate repudiation of productive diversity responsibilities, ostensibly placing the broadcaster at cross-purposes with State cultural policy. The principal purpose of this chapter is to foreground how neo-liberal cultural policies circumscribed the rise and fall of SBSi, creating possibilities for new modes of film and television production (detailed in chapter three), which were characterised by new counter-hegemonic narrative representations (detailed in chapter four).

SECTION I

1980-1996: A NEW CULTURAL POLICY RATIONALE

In 1994, after many years of unsuccessful lobbying, SBS secured additional federal investment required to pursue local programming ambitions. This section details how the multicultural broadcaster finally won Keating government support by adapting its proposal to reflect the neo-liberal regime newly underwriting cultural policy. This section begins with an overview of the shifting rationale for Australian government interventions in the arts and cultural sector from the 1970s. Labour government recalcitrance to increase SBS's federal allocation throughout the 1980s is linked to the movement away from the access and equity imperatives, which underpinned its initial establishment in 1978, and towards economic objectives. This section then details how SBS managers negotiated conflicting government and institutional agendas to craft a proposal capable of attracting *Creative Nation* funding to SBS. It argues that the practice of outsourcing and co-financing content embodied State objectives to improve the economic efficiency of film and television production and distribution, and

also broadcaster objectives to progress multicultural representation in the Australian media. It extrapolates how the form and function of the commissioning house, what will be referred to as *the SBSi model*, positioned it as a cultural institution vital to the successful delivery of policy. The aim of this section is to establish the SBSi model as an embodiment of neo-liberal policy objectives.

1.1. From Access and Equity to Economic Efficiency

Consistent with developments in many Western nations including Britain, the US and Canada, the rationale guiding Australian government interventions in arts and culture has been subject to considerable revision throughout the twentieth century. This sub-section is principally concerned with cultural policy developments from the mid-1970s that re-oriented cultural institutions toward entrepreneurial rather than bureaucratic approaches to institutional management. Entrepreneurship was valued as a means to cultivate new employment opportunities and larger audiences, and thereby contribute to the economic growth of the nation. This sub-section provides a broad overview of these cultural policy developments in Australia, and contextualises the federal marginalisation of SBS throughout the 1980s in terms of its limited utility delivering these new neo-liberal objectives.

Jim McGuigan identifies four distinct logics in the history of British cultural policy loosely applicable to the Australian context. The first is “*social control* (from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century),” characterised by the imperative to “cultivate the masses” through exposure to elite cultural forms via institutions like museums and public broadcasters (McGuigan 54-5). Second is “*national prestige* (from 1940s to early 1960s),” promoting investment in arts and culture to inculcate a sense of national pride, allegiance and identity (McGuigan 54-8). *Social access* is the third logic, ascendant between the mid-1960s to late 1970s, and was directed towards shoring up inequitable funding practices that tended to privilege elite cultural forms and white practitioners, according to Western hierarchies of excellence (McGuigan 54-9). Each of these three logics conforms to a *welfare model* of State intervention, whereby unprofitable arts and cultural activities are subsidised because they are perceived

to enhance the overall welfare of the population (Cunningham and Potts; Keane and Zhang 9). The fourth logic underwriting State support from the late 1970s and into the foreseeable future, is “*value for money*, characterised by increasingly pervasive *market reasoning* and *managerialist rhetoric*” (McGuigan 54). What McGuigan terms value for money is co-extensive with what this chapter refers to as a *neo-liberal rationale*. Neo-liberalism must not be misapprehended as a rolling back of the State and State related programs. It is, rather, an ideological refashioning of the cultural sector and cultural institutions. Objectives that exemplify neo-liberalism include: the rationalisation of resources and reformation bureaucratic processes such that cultural institutions are economically efficient; measures improving economic viability of cultural institutions such as through audience development and marketing; and delivery of programs facilitating the future self-sufficiency of various cultural and creative industries. SBS was established at the cusp of welfare-based and market-based logics, directly and negatively impacting its relevance to government throughout the 1980s.

The institutionalisation of SBS as the second national and fully State funded public broadcaster was discursively rationalised on the basis of social access and equity. SBS’s establishment was predicated on the need to correct mono-cultural representational practices that characterised commercial networks, and the nation’s original public broadcaster, the ABC. The pre-eminence of white faces, voices and thinking on and behind Australian television screens at the time, was simultaneously seen as the symptom and cause of a broad range of social inequalities confronted by various migrant communities and their children, which ultimately, exacerbated their sense of disenfranchisement from the national imaginary. Although the expressly multicultural remit of SBS legitimised a public space for plural axes of cultural identification, its establishment was underpinned by a traditional impulsion towards shaping and managing ethically incomplete national subjects (Miller and Yudice 12). This is reflected in the Hawke Labour Government’s 1989 *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, which describes the purpose of official multiculturalism as “a policy for managing the consequences of cultural diversity in the interests of the individual and society as a whole” (vii). The three dimensions that underpin State multicultural intervention are defined in this document as:

- cultural identity: the right of all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion;
- social justice: the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender or place of birth; and
- economic efficiency: the need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background (*National Agenda* vii).

These three pillars clearly resonated with SBS's mandate to provide services that encouraged broad acceptance of, and identification with, Australia's cultural diversity, and improved opportunities for CALD peoples to equitably participate in society. That the government took more than ten years to clearly explicate a national agenda regarding multicultural policies, inaugurated in the 1970s, indicates the lower priority afforded social access imperatives and cultural institutions overseeing their delivery. Also noteworthy is the third pillar, indicating the ascendancy of an economic rationale for intervention, and affecting all government portfolios throughout the 1980s.

It is worth taking a moment to acknowledge that SBS was, and arguably still is, the nation's only cultural institution *dedicated* to improving CALD representation and participation in the cultural industries. As indicated in the introduction, SBS directly challenged dominant valuing of parochial and mono-cultural media representations via regular transmission of foreign language programs, the development of a world-class subtitling department, and a globally focused news service. In contrast to other cultural institutions whose implementation of multicultural policy developed as an adjunct to their core business, the network privileged CALD identities, voices and perspectives. For example, in 1989 the nation's arts funding and advisory body, the Australia Council – formerly the Australian Council of the Arts (1968-1975) released its *Arts For a Multicultural Australia* policy document. Formulated fourteen years after the Council's establishment as a statutory authority, the policy sought to: “1) support artistic activities of persons of non-English speaking background; 2) support activities promoting intercultural understanding and interaction; and 3) encourage major organisations to increase their support for NESB artistic activities” (Blonski, *Arts*

42-3).²⁴ While the policy did improve CALD access to some resources, it did not result in a fundamental transformation of institutional practice. The Western European derived commitment to “a universal hierarchy of aesthetic value” remained the basis for criteria, determining the distribution of funds amongst artists and clearly disadvantaging CALD applicants (Stevenson 69, 168; Gunew). Additionally, the 1998 Council document entitled *The World is Your Audience* evidences strategies for improving CALD participation as consumers rather than producers, which again, reinforced rather than challenged white standards of excellence (Stevenson 169). It also neatly dovetailed with State set imperatives toward economic efficiency via the cultivation of new audiences (Stevenson 170). While the Australia Council was concerned to develop strategies for assimilating CALD constituents into its established slate of activities, SBS attempted to pioneer a service that interpellated ethnic peoples as a valued part of the national community.

The social access rationale lost considerable traction throughout the 1980s precisely because cultural diversity was increasingly tolerated as an everyday Australian reality. This is also reflected in the Australia Council’s approach to its social access responsibilities. While the Council continued to reproduce elitist assumptions of value and excellence, an important consequence of the 1989 policy was that CALD artists were no longer bracketed off as a separate concern within the Council: “the issue became the role of arts practice and administration in a society which itself was ethnically diverse” (Stevenson 168; Hawkins, *Nimbin* 87). This shift coincides with the shift at SBS from the early 1990s whereby multiculturalism slowly became disarticulated from an explicit association with migrants and ethnicity, and was increasingly represented as a defining cultural characteristic of the nation as a whole (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy). In this context where multiculturalism was increasingly conceived of as an ordinary and everyday reality for *all* Australians, reasons for the State to

²⁴ As indicated in the introductory chapter, while CALD is used as the preferred acronym referring to “culturally and linguistically diverse” peoples, quoted texts often use the now-outdated “non-English speaking background” and its acronym NESB.

invest in social access were considerably diminished, and cultural institutions dedicated to multiculturalism far less relevant.

The concomitant ascendancy of a neo-liberal policy rationale was the other key factor undermining the broadcaster's relevance as a cultural institution. Prior to the establishment of SBS, the 1976 Industries Assistance Commission (IAC) report on the performing arts sector initiated a gradual though permanent redefinition of the value of government investment in arts and cultural production. The report rejected assumptions that elite cultural forms constituted a fundamental public good as an anachronism, which reinforced the sector's exclusivity (Stevenson 60-2; Craik). Recommendations that support be shifted from the traditional and elite arts towards the facilitation of popular cultural forms challenged State reproduction of class-based definitions of value, and pushed the "discourse of *social access*" to "logical conclusions" (McGuigan 59, Craik). Although the report did not result in the recommended abandonment of federal patronage, it did lay the groundwork for bureaucratic reform and investment in more popular cultural activities throughout the 1980s. Institutions such as the Australia Council and SBS became subject to this new logic, which "centred on measures such as the application of performance measurement, the introduction of market incentives and corporatisation" (Craik). Cultural institutions had to prove their relevance to the masses by demonstrating increased audience engagement in their activities. As will be extrapolated in the next subsection, SBS's ability to grow audiences was significantly impeded by technology that the State forced it to use. In 1986 the federal government proposed the amalgamation of SBS and the ABC on the back of poor performance, which was only narrowly avoided by SBS with the support of a very vocal public (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy). In 1989, rather than increasing the meagre budget of the network, the Hawke government approved SBS's proposal to supplement its public funding base with advertising revenue. Shortly after, in 1991, the broadcaster was incorporated.

Despite a demonstrated commitment to multicultural representation, SBS was not able to shore up government support and develop an increased presence of local programming for its television service prior to 1994. As elaborated in chapter

one, governments value cultural institutions insofar as they are an expedient means for achieving their own various and shifting objectives. The disinterest of government reflects the general decline in the currency of social access as a rationale for intervention in the arts and cultural sector, and the concomitant ascendancy of neo-liberalism. SBS was unable to bolster government support because existing and planned services did not further neo-liberal objectives. Focused on its own independently set agenda, SBS failed to present itself as an expedient means by which the government could realise emergent cultural policies, including the dissolution of bureaucratic models of cultural management, and the facilitation of commercially viable forms of cultural production. The next sub-section elaborates how the advent of *Creative Nation* provided SBS with a clear understanding of the incoming cultural agenda, and the steps taken to develop a funding proposal that accommodated them.

1.2. Designing a Relevant Cultural Institution

This sub-section establishes SBSi as an embodiment of neo-liberalism characterised by value for money, market reasoning and new managerialism. This is demonstrated via an account of how the SBSi model was honed through ongoing consultation with parliamentary ministers, independent producers and community representatives, in the lead up to the delivery of *Creative Nation*. Using McGuigan it extrapolates how explicitly pseudo-capitalistic logics and processes directly shaped the form and function of the commissioning house. It argues that while the SBSi model did facilitate institutional objectives to better govern multiculturalism (and facilitate social access), it attracted government support because it also manifested the commercial agenda expressed in *Creative Nation*.

In 1992, the Keating Labour (1991-1996) government began the process of industry consultation and negotiation for its landmark *Creative Nation* policy initiative. While Labour lost power to the Howard Coalition government in 1996, before much of *Creative Nation* had been implemented, it is widely regarded as a landmark document. This was because *Creative Nation* was Australia's first coordinated approach to cultural policy, which had, since federation, tended to be "ad hoc and episodic" (Craik). It also represents the first comprehensive

explication of the new neo-liberal approach to cultural intervention in Australia. The finance made available via the policy targeted “under-performing or under-resourced areas by shoring up national cultural organisations as well as facilitating citizen engagement with culture,” and sought the reformation of the sector “in industry terms stressing the capacity to generate export growth in the global cultural marketplace” (Craik). A controversial element of this vision was the imperative to grow markets by forging strong cultural and economic ties in the Asia-Pacific region.²⁵ Congruent with McGuigan’s summation of cultural policy discourse from the late 1970s, *Creative Nation* was not about privatising public institutions or even profitability. Rather, the program’s stress on value for money was ensured by the insertion of “the *new managerialism* and *market reasoning* into the state and state-related agencies of the public sector, in effect calling upon organisations that are not themselves private businesses to think and function as though they were” (McGuigan 62). In addition to improving the economic efficiency of bureaucratic institutions, *Creative Nation* also conformed to the neo-liberal impetus toward strengthening, or at least maintaining, “the level of State intervention for the stability of capitalism” (Yudice 12). This is borne out by the promise of a substantial \$252.71 million injection into the arts and cultural sectors. This funding boon presented SBS with the long sought after opportunity to finance local drama.

The proposal to establish SBSi represents the culmination of two years of careful planning that aimed to negotiate two key objectives. James recalls when appointed Head of Television in 1988, SBS sought to capitalise on its unique remit to deliver dynamic and vital multicultural content with which *all*

²⁵ The Keating Labour government catalysed a significant and lasting shift with regard to the pursuit of cultural and economic ties in the Asia-Pacific region. The most recent manifestation of this shift has been the October 2012 release of the *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* by Julia Gillard’s Labour government (June 2010 to June 2013), commissioned to guide Australian business to meet the demands and opportunities presented by accelerating economic growth in China and India. The *Creative Australia* cultural policy document released in March 2013 also talks to this Asian moment, and outlines State mechanisms for developing markets for Australian content in Asia, as well as outlining the broader social role of the arts and cultural sector strengthening formal and informal relationships in the region.

Australians could identify and engage. At this stage, management and staff had successfully pioneered a narrowcasting service that met the cultural and linguistic needs of ethnically distinct communities. Hamstrung by its small allocation of federal funds, the predominance of cheap imported multilingual programs within the schedule had firmly established SBS at the margins of the public imagination as “the ethnic channel” (O’Regan and Kolar-Panov, “Television;” Smaill, *Amidst*; Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy). However for James and his colleagues, including former Managing Director Brian Johns (1987-1992), as the sole broadcaster with a remit to address and reflect a culturally diverse population, SBS bore a clear responsibility to expand its service and purvey the relevance of multiculturalism to the broader national community. To realise this objective the broadcaster needed to redress the considerably low presence of *domestically* produced English language programming, and the conspicuous absence of local CALD faces, voices, and thinking on Australian screens.

Second, it was absolutely imperative that the institutional model overcame the government’s reluctance to invest further in the broadcaster. As indicated above, annual submissions to federal government requesting an increase in base funding to facilitate more in-house production were, prior to *Creative Nation*, all rejected (O’Regan and Kolar-Panov, “Symbolic;” Smaill, *Amidst*, “Narrating;” Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy). James explains that for all intents and purposes, it was difficult to rationalise greater investment in a broadcasting service that remained peripheral to the core viewing habits of the general public. The irony was that SBS seemed condemned to occupy the fringes of the Australian mediascape precisely because of its technological and political marginalisation. Whilst all other broadcasters transmitted on VHF, SBS Television was allocated a UHF band that was only available in capital cities. Transmission on the UHF band did not simply preclude SBS’s inability to reach a significant segment of the national audience (O’Regan and Kolar-Panov, “Symbolic;” Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy); it also meant the broadcaster had very little political weight behind it. A significant portion of politicians represented non-metropolitan constituencies that did not receive the UHF signal and were simply not familiar with the broadcaster. Throughout the 1980s, SBS management was incapable of garnering the broad based political support for additional funding precisely

because the value and potential of the service was not apparent to the majority of politicians.

The two-year process formulating a proposal that would tick all the boxes and enhance the potential success of SBS's *Creative Nation* bid required extensive consultation with community groups, the filmmaking sector and politicians. Internally, within SBS, there was a strong sense that an improvement in the quality and range of English language programming would benefit the network by attracting a larger segment of the audience. James' vision for the future of programming on SBS-TV secured the support of Johns (1987-1992) well before the prospect of *Creative Nation*. The plan was also supported by Johns' successor Malcolm Long (1993-1997), in preparation for the bid. It was also however, detrimental to communicate and ensure the mutual benefits of SBSi for the communities whom SBS served. James together with Long, and Head of Policy Robert Stokes (1987-1995), consulted regularly with the Federation of Ethnic Councils Australia (FECA), and in some cases with individual ethnic communities. Also assuming a key role was Director of Radio Quang Luu (1989-2006), who reassured radio audiences that proposed changes to the television service did not threaten SBS-TV's long term commitment to multilingual programming. It was imperative that various ethnic communities realised in SBSi, the potential for enhanced employment opportunities in film and television for CALD Australians. James also consulted extensively with the independent filmmaking community. Gaining their support would substantially bolster SBS's prospect of success, however such support was dependent upon an understanding amongst producers that they themselves would have something to gain from this new institution. The support of the community and the backing of independent producers were both crucial to securing requisite political support. Concomitantly, intense competition for *Creative Nation* finance underwrote the need for Long and Stokes to make regular trips to Canberra. In addition to the formal pathway that one took to submit the application, the process inevitably required a great deal of unofficial consultation with a range of bureaucrats, staffers and politicians.

The political impasse between SBS and successive Labour governments was overcome with James' proposal for SBS Independent: an institution that commissioned locally produced content from Australia's independent filmmaking industry for the SBS-TV schedule. Investment in these productions would largely take the form of pre-sale or licensing agreements, which would make up anywhere from 10 to 35 percent of a production's overall budget, and leave copyright in the hands of filmmakers. Filmmakers could then leverage this seed funding to attract further investment from other public agencies such as the FFC, the AFC, and Film Victoria, or from private sources.²⁶ This approach to funding content would spread the risk of investment and enable SBS to overcome the prohibitive cost of drama production in particular. SBSi was obligated to uphold the SBS Charter principles, however the organisation would be administered independently of the network. This funding structure represents just one key difference from the Britain's Channel 4, with which SBSi is often likened (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy; Smail, *Amidst*, "Narrating"). Unlike SBSi, Channel 4 is a broadcaster as well as a commissioning house. Although they would share a similar public service remit to source culturally diverse and innovative content from the independent marketplace, Channel 4 is an autonomous institution that generates its substantial revenue from the sale of advertising time. While the cost of commissioning content was to be supplemented by a portion of the advertising revenue generated by SBS-TV, the potential level of funding available to SBSi through either public or commercial sources was never going to be sufficient to facilitate investment in an acceptable quantity of local productions. The proposal to institute a commissioning house that would work co-operatively with other public agencies would strategically redirect existing financial resources toward SBS. This is a key point of difference from Channel 4. Where Channel 4 has always been financed to a level where it has the capacity to fully finance some

²⁶ Within academic and industrial contexts the term "seed funding" is typically used to refer to investments in the development stages of a given production, rather than pre-sale investments. The term has however, been used in the context of this thesis, to also refer to the pre-sale investments made by SBSi. This is consistent with the common use of the term by former SBSi staff when interviewed for this study, and which reflects their strategy of directing pre-sale investment to stimulate and *develop* diverse production milieux and a culture of innovation.

programs commissioned, SBSi was by design, always dependent upon other cultural institutions and investors. The clear advantage of this proposal in the bid for finite federal funds was the promise to maximise the generation of programming relative to government investment. To operate for the first four years SBSi required of federal government a mere \$13 million contribution, clearly demonstrating value for money.

The SBSi model realised value for money, the new managerialist ethos, and market reasoning espoused within *Creative Nation*. First, SBSi was designed to intervene in current screen production and funding practices in a manner that neatly dovetailed with the specific programming objectives of SBS. Outsourcing production to independent producers would generate more Australian productions that engaged, either directly or indirectly, with multiculturalism. It had the capacity to draw on Australia's significant (multi-) cultural capital and provide opportunities for the representation of the nation's cultural diversity, both in front of and behind the camera. In addition to increased employment opportunities to both emerging and established filmmakers, particularly of Indigenous, regional and CALD background, commissioning content on a pre-sale basis guaranteed an exhibition platform, and thus audiences, for independently produced content. Commissioning would, concomitantly, generate additional niche markets for multicultural representation as it left producers free to pursue additional avenues for the distribution and exhibition of their work. In short, SBSi would manage independent production to add value to the film and television industries by improving employment opportunities, and in a manner that would maximise distribution opportunities and potential profitability.

Second, the SBSi model stressed economic as well as cultural value, promising to meet the local programming objectives for a fraction of the cost of in-house production. Crucially, the requirement that producers source the balance of their budget from established federal and state agencies, promised to generate a greater institutional investment in culturally diverse content. Furthermore, in line with the policy push toward cross funding, resource sharing and productive partnerships (Radbourne), it would capitalise on the country's regulatory and institutional infrastructure to redirect existing sources of public finance towards

SBS. The outsourcing and co-funding model delivered on the promise of economic value, generating approximately \$20 million worth of production from a total investment of only \$4 million in its first year of operation. It also delivered cultural value with individual productions garnering a significant number of international and national awards from the first year of SBSi's operation. The outsourcing model was attractive to government because it gave the *appearance* of improving employment in the sector, and contributing to national economic growth. While the value of production generated relative to investment is significant, this does not automatically translate as more jobs and more productivity. For instance, as reported in chapter one, SBSi did not contribute to an increase in the annual number of feature films produced. Furthermore, Screen Australia statistics show (as at 2013) that between 1970 and 2011, only seven percent of producers, six percent of directors, and three percent of writers of feature film have more than five credits, indicating little opportunity for long term and sustainable employment within the sector. Figures for documentary production also indicate limited long-term employment opportunities, with only twelve percent of producers, eleven percent of directors and eight percent of writers, boasting more than five credits each between 1980 and 2011. This indicates that SBSi did not increase employment, but instead added another level of administration to existing production activity.

Third, neo-liberalism was also reflected by the proposal that SBSi operate with administrative and financial independence of SBS-TV, ensuring the established bureaucracy would not hamstring decision-making. The advantage of independence was an institution committed to the realisation of culturally diverse content – in keeping with the objectives of SBS-TV and *Creative Nation* – that could also remain responsive to the vicissitudes of the audience and the film industry. This is exemplified by the official establishment of SBSi as a distinct and autonomous organisation in August 1994, two months prior to the delivery of the *Creative Nation* and any guarantee of federal funding.²⁷ From the outset the commissioning house received finance via two distinct revenue streams. The first

²⁷ SBS received confirmation of funding during the official delivery of the *Creative Nation* statement to the public in October 1994 (James).

revenue stream, known as the General Production Fund, was provided by SBS. These monies represented a portion of the advertising revenue generated by SBS-TV, and over the first four years equated to approximately \$2 million per annum (SBS Independent, *Filmmakers*). In accordance with the administration of the SBS Corporation's revenue, it was required that the General Production Fund be expended and reported annually. From the outset this fund was utilised to cover SBSi overheads and to fund pre-sales for FFC accord documentaries. As explicated in chapter three, under the accord system, the FFC provided the balance of funds to a pre-determined number of documentaries with approved pre-sale funding from SBSi.

The second revenue stream was the Special Production Fund and was a federal allocation initially delivered via *Creative Nation*. The purpose of the Special Production Fund was to generate a slate of locally produced programs that were previously unavailable to SBS-TV, namely drama and innovative documentary, with eighty percent of funds being directed towards the former. The federal funding awarded to SBSi was, up until 2006, "absolutely quarantined from the rest of the SBS budget," with every cent directed towards "production because all overheads" were covered by the SBS General Production Fund (Sharp qtd. in SBS Independent, *Filmmakers*). There were two factors underwriting the separate administration of the Special Production Fund. First it was a rolling fund awarded triennially, which meant that the allocation did not have to be expended within each financial year. Former Business Affairs Manager, Julie Cottrell-Dormer (1995-2004), stresses how the ability to accumulate funds from one year to the next was a most unusual luxury within the public service, which is required to expend its annual allocation in its totality. The rolling fund enabled Commissioning Editors to fund projects according to the perceived quality and appropriateness of proposals, rather than decisions being dictated by the need to spend money within a designated time frame. The separate administration of the Special Production fund was also enforced to protect the integrity and future of the allocation, by ensuring it was expended on filmmaking communities as intended, and not re-directed to subsidise activity within the broadcaster. In effect, autonomous administration of SBSi maintained a clear identity as an efficient and economically valuable institution, and maintained a clear

demarcation from unfashionable bureaucratic forms of management traditionally associated with public service broadcasters.

In summary, SBSi was an attractive option for Keating government investment because the form and function of the model reflected the neo-liberal aims promoted by *Creative Nation*. The proposal to outsource and co-finance production represented value for money and market reasoning, insofar as it maximised the level of production relative to the level of State investment. The higher number of titles generated by a commissioning house would contribute to the appearance that government had significantly improved employment and productivity within the film and television sector, thereby fuelling the perception of policy stimulating national economic growth. SBSi also represented a particularly expedient means for inculcating business-like managerial practices within the public service. Not only would SBSi limit its activities to administration, considerably minimising its own overheads, the need to share resources and collaborate with other public agencies helped to spread the risk of investment and share opportunities for involvement in successful titles. Further, SBSi promised to improve the economic efficiency of screen production by mutually benefiting two traditionally distinct communities. Commissioning content would accommodate SBS-TV's demand for local content, and at the same time, enhance finance and distribution opportunities for independent producers. Section two will now demonstrate how multicultural programs envisaged and delivered by SBSi, were also circumscribed by neo-liberal ideology.

SECTION 2

1996-2003: THE EXPEDIENCY OF SBSI

This section establishes that SBSi was also an expedient investment for government because it actively cultivated the resource of productive diversity for the economic benefit of the nation. Building on the argument developed in section one, the introductory tract of *Creative Nation* is first examined to establish the policy's promotion of productive diversity as a neo-liberal revision of official multiculturalism, consistent with new global economic objectives. It also demonstrates that the principal directive of productive diversity was the "planning and implementing of organizational systems and practices to *manage*

people” (Cox 11, emphasis added) for the mutual benefit of government, industry practitioners and SBS. A textual analysis of Coalition policies is then conducted to illustrate the continuance and refinement of productive diversity, as the dominant approach to multicultural policy, again targeting the management of people *not* the regulation of content. The final sub-section examines SBSi throughout phase two (1996-2003) to illustrate how SBSi gave expression to State productive diversity objectives. This is exemplified via managerial strategies cultivating industry networks, development of strong institutional presence and identity, and federal funding campaigns. The aim of this section is to clearly explicate how productive diversity circumscribed SBSi’s governance of cultural diversity.

2.1. *Creative Nation*, Cultural Diversity and the Global Economy

The introductory tract of *Creative Nation* exhibits a pre-occupation with multicultural identity and heritage that, at face value, indicates ideological harmony with the social access and equity function of the SBS Corporation. On closer inspection however, the concept of multiculturalism is made to work for the economic vision promoted by the policy. Exemplifying the argument forwarded by Yudice, *Creative Nation* identifies the diverse cultural heritage of Australians as an advantageous characteristic for the arts and cultural sector in a rapidly globalising economy. However, where Yudice identifies a phenomenon whereby culture is a resource harnessed to solve an impossible range of problems, including job creation and crime reduction (12), multiculturalism is in *Creative Nation*, targeted as a resource specifically enhancing the economic viability of the cultural sector. This sub-section argues that such a claim constitutes a redefinition of multiculturalism, and rescinds State responsibility for established social access objectives. Furthermore, this revision of policy required SBSi to implement systems for managing culturally diverse people to create innovative products for niche markets, in contradistinction to SBS-TV’s established function regulating the content of programs transmitted.

Official multiculturalism was in *Creative Nation*, historicised and redefined such that the new economic rationale for State intervention appeared as a natural

evolution of previous social access and equity objectives. The policy introduction and preamble engages in a discursive acrobatics that attempts to synthesise associations between traditional Australian values, a culturally diverse heritage, and recasts this particular definition of cultural capital in terms of economic capital (Craik). This is evident only a few short paragraphs into the introduction of the policy statement, which asserts:

In recent years we have learned that there is much to gain and little to fear from being open to the world. It is as true of the culture as it is of the economy. In fact the meeting of imported and home-grown cultures have massively enriched us. Relatively few manifestations of the old xenophobia and insecurity remain. Multicultural Australia – a society which is both diverse and tolerant of diversity, which actively *encourages* diversity – is one of our great national achievements. It is important to remember that the achievement was built upon the traditional democratic strengths of Australian society – and these should never be neglected (*Creative Nation*).

While *Creative Nation* does outline an expressly economic approach to policy, this passage evidences how the language of access and equity has not been wholly abandoned. Rather than informing policy objectives, the access and equity imperative of previous policies is implicitly historicised via claims that the nation's cultural diversity, and its tolerance of that diversity, has been encouraged and enabled by the "traditional democratic strengths of Australian society." The document discursively revises the relation between official and everyday multiculturalism. The turbulent and multifaceted political and social histories of Australian multiculturalism are remembered as a teleological narrative of "great national achievement," a statement that carries with it a number of implications.

First, the passage evidences a complex discursive process of allusion and elision whereby the distinction between the "past" interventions made by official multiculturalism, and the contemporary experiences of everyday multiculturalism, are collapsed to assert a cohesive national identity. The slippage between the defining characteristics of each are elided by the consistent use of the pronoun "we" and the possessive "our," for example "*we* have learned" and "*our* great national achievements." Concomitantly, prejudiced social and institutional practices that gave rise to the need for multicultural policy are alluded to by way of reference to an "*old* xenophobia and sense of insecurity", which are attributed

to no-one in particular. It is an allusion that attempts to cash in on the political currency of previous multicultural policies, by connoting the particular imperatives of social justice and cultural identity with which such policies are traditionally associated. What is interesting is that only two of the three tenets of multicultural policy (outlined above) are here signified: cultural identity and social justice. Xenophobia and a general sense of insecurity are old manifestations; the right to express individual cultural heritage (a society which is culturally diverse) and social justice (tolerance of that diversity) have been achieved. Previous policies directly concerned with social access are maintained as a referent, however, the reference to these policies in the past tense creates a slippage between the signifier – multiculturalism – and the signified – social access. That the passage is structured by a past tense enables Labour's new cultural policy to be imbued with, and benefit from, the meanings traditionally signified by the term "multiculturalism," in the same movement that it implies that the social access impetus does not need to be carried forward by policy; these objectives have been achieved. In this way, everyday multiculturalism, the experience of living in a culturally diverse society, is appropriated as evidence of the success of multicultural policy.

The passage is structured using a past tense which foregrounds the imminent revision of the term "multicultural" within the document. The passage explicates the past achievement of a diverse national identity, and the collective overcoming of Anglo-centric and prejudiced behaviours and practices – also in the past – to allude to one more obstacle for cultural policy to overcome. The contemporary relevance of "multiculturalism" for policy is distilled to a single remaining objective, described in the 1989 *National Agenda* as "economic efficiency," and defined as "the need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background." That economic efficiency has not been achieved by multicultural policy is not stated explicitly by the document but rather, is inferred by omission. For example, the continuing imperative toward economic efficiency is signalled in the first two sentences of the passage by way of the intriguing and somewhat enigmatic claim that: "In recent years we have learned that there is much to gain and little to fear from being open to the world. It is as true of the culture as it is of the economy." This

statement is not directly followed up with an explication of why “it” is as true. The lack of qualification indicates that the purpose of the statement is to prefigure subsequent passages by inferring “common sense” equanimity between cultural and economic capital. It is a claim that serves to substantiate – and obscure – the document’s redefinition of multiculturalism as a shared economic asset, rather than social, cultural and historical attributes of Australia.

The paragraph quoted above discusses the achievements of official multiculturalism in the past tense, such that it situates story of post World War II immigration as a lesson informing the contemporary concerns of *Creative Nation*: “there is much to gain and little to fear from being open to the world.” Previous concerns of access and equity, stemming from migratory flows of people into the nation, are characterised as analogous to the contemporary threat to the national culture posed by globalisation, and proposed cultural and economic linkages with Asia: “It is as true of culture as it is of the economy.” However, it is not until a latter paragraph that it becomes clear that reference to the economy specifically refers to the impending effects of globalisation on the nation:

The lesson is that, so long as we are assured about the value of our own heritage and talents, we have nothing to fear from being open to other cultural influences. Yet many Australians say that just now Australian culture is under unprecedented threat. And they have good cause for saying it. The revolution in information and technology and the wave of global mass culture potentially threatens that which is distinctly our own. In doing so it threatens our identity and the opportunities this and future generations will have for intellectual and artistic growth and self-expression. The measure we have taken in this cultural policy are substantially designed to meet this challenge (*Creative Nation*).

It is in this extract that the document renders explicit the developing analogy between post-war immigration and globalisation, and consequently, infers as contiguous, the impetus of *Creative Nation* and the objectives of previous multicultural policies. This is achieved through a rhetorical process of repetition, with some key differences. For example, the first sentence of the above quoted paragraph, repeats the sentiments communicated in the first sentence of the multicultural passage, though in the present rather than the past tense: “[w]e *have learned* that there is much to gain and little to fear from being open to the world,”

becomes “[t]he *lesson* is that, so long as we *are* assured about the own value of our own heritage and talents, we have nothing to fear from *being* open to other cultural influences” (emphasis added). That Australia faces an imminent threat precipitated by external forces is not qualified with evidence, the process of repetition reinforces the claim as self-evident.

The Keating government did not repeal multicultural policy as such, however, through *Creative Nation*, began a process of redefinition that expanded possible representations of national identity and history. By discursively situating cultural diversity as an under-exploited cultural asset, Labour developed the 1989 *National Agenda* tenet, asserting State management of cultural diversity as necessary for ensuring the “economic efficiency” of the nation. In line with the *National Agenda* and the 1992 opening address to the Productive Diversity in Business conference (detailed in chapter one), *Creative Nation* foregrounded the economic and social benefits that flow through to the nation when individuals are given equal opportunity to “maintain, develop, and utilise effectively” their skills, “regardless of background”. The tract within *Creative Nation* that explicates the grounds upon which SBSi merits funding, concomitantly recognised “*the importance of developing programming to reflect Australia’s multicultural society.*” However, it did not prescribe *what* about multicultural society SBSi was to reflect; this is subject to the creative vision of the individual whose work SBSi commissioned. Rather, in keeping with the priorities of the policy entire, the passage explicated that the “new injection of funding will provide major employment opportunities for people of non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people” (*Creative Nation*). The only restriction placed on possible representations was that priority “be given to those which can be sold to the international broadcasting market” (*Creative Nation*).

SBSi was funded not on the basis that it augment SBS-TV’s mandate to represent multicultural Australia, but on the promised ability to develop and implement organisational systems that capitalised on already existing knowledge, experience and talent of Indigenous and CALD filmmakers, as well as those of SBS staff. As established in section one, this capacity was built into the SBSi model, which relied upon collaborative relationships with industry practitioners to generate all

content. *Creative Nation* also identified SBS-TV as a resource capable of enhancing Australia's competitive advantage in the global film and television sectors. SBS-TV's "experience in translation, subtitling and multicultural broadcasting" served to rationalise federal funding for SBSi, on the basis that it promised "strong export potential" for commissioned content (*Creative Nation*). As a narrowcaster SBS-TV had a strong reputation for developing niche markets for diverse and innovative content domestically. As indicated, the development of niche markets via innovative content was a key objective underwriting the impetus to develop organisational systems for managing productive diversity. All of the reasons forwarded to rationalise funding for SBSi, reflect a concern with the development and implementation of organisational systems and practices, which could extract economic value from the national resource of productive diversity.

In summary, *Creative Nation* represented a significant ideological closure with regard to the utility of multiculturalism for the State. This is reflected in the introductory tract of the policy, naturalising the new delimited focus on economic efficiency in the cultural sector via a narrative lauding the national achievement of access and equity objectives. While the term is not explicitly employed, *Creative Nation* details a productive diversity approach to governance, reflected via the valuation of Indigenous and CALD as an economic resource enhancing the competitive advantage of Australian business in the era of globalisation. A foremost feature of productive diversity was that aesthetically and culturally diverse content was facilitated via the administration of labour and financial resources, rather than direct regulation of content. The reasons forwarded for awarding SBSi funds under *Creative Nation*, recognised the capacity for the institution to effectively govern productive diversity. Before demonstrating how SBSi translated productive diversity principles into organisational systems and practices, it is first necessary to establish the continuance of productive diversity under the Coalition government.

2.2. Strange Bedfellows? SBSi and the Coalition Government

The conceptual explication of productive diversity in Coalition multicultural policy is genealogically linked to *Creative Nation*, and the identification of cultural diversity as a potentially lucrative national resource. This sub-section draws from Colin McLeay's essay "Inventing Australia" to demonstrate how disparate depictions of national identity in *Creative Nation*, and the 1996 Coalition cultural policy *For Art's Sake – A Fair Go*, ultimately masked congruous economic objectives. Working from McLeay's observation, this sub-section then analyses the conceptualisation of multicultural management in the Coalition's 1999 *New Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, and demonstrates its consistency with productive diversity principles in Labour policies. The purpose is to demonstrate how *Creative Nation* objectives shaped SBSi into a cultural institution relevant to the policies of the Howard government, thus equipping it with the tools to survive a political era remembered for the repeal of multicultural policy.

Coalition support for SBSi challenges the popular perception that their election constituted a decisive break with both the cultural, and the multicultural policies of previous Labour governments. As elaborated in chapter one, the rhetorical acrobatics displayed by Coalition ministers clearly signalled "a tendency to see 'diversity' and 'unity' in terms of binary opposition and not, as in the multiculturalist slogan of 'unity-in-diversity', as mutually reinforcing" (Ang and Stratton 110). While the everyday reality of cultural diversity was regularly cited as evidence of Australian tolerance, ministers often assessed the issues and concerns confronting minority groups, like refugees and Indigenous peoples, against the national interests of an ill-defined mainstream. Disparate constructions of Australian national identity are borne out in the respective cultural policies of Labour and the Coalition. Where *Creative Nation* embraced multiculturalism as a means to successfully promote Australian cultural products in the global market, Coalition policies reflect an earlier period of protection from external influences, and promoted traditional "European-derived" national values transmitted therein (McLeahy 45). *For Art's Sake* also however, explicated strategies for realising the "full commercial and export potential" of arts and culture, for example, via copyright protection, and mainstreaming art and cultural consumption. In this sense *For Art's Sake* shared *Creative Nation's* fundamental

interest in economic viability (McLeay 42). The key difference was that *Creative Nation* fostered cultural development that was not “confined to the usual exclusive domain of fine arts and culture,” while the Coalition’s ad hoc approach to arts and cultural policy resulted in a pattern of funding that privileged “national cultural institutions that were visible, elite-oriented and represented by effective lobbyists” (Craik). Furthermore, continued federal funding became dependent upon a triennial review process, which required organisations to seek additional funding from the private sector. As extrapolated in the next sub-section, Coalition support for SBSi is partially attributable to demonstrated ability to rationalise resources, diversify its sources of revenue, and deliver audiences to producers and products.

The logic underwriting Coalition endorsement of SBSi is also contained within the government’s *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*. A significant feature of the revised agenda is the clear genealogical link to Labour policy, indicated by the terminological and conceptual adoption of *productive diversity*. As indicated, while productive diversity was a term coined by Labour in 1992, to refer to existing policies harnessing cultural diversity for the economic benefit of all Australians, it does not feature in the *National Agenda* or *Creative Nation*. Coalition adoption of the term is however, indebted to Labour policies. For instance, *Creative Nation* is echoed in the “Forward” of the *New Agenda*, which implicitly historicises the “achievements” of multicultural policy, and in a manner that elides continuing inequities experienced by ethnic communities and individuals:

We are an open and tolerant society that promotes a celebration of diversity within the context of a unifying commitment to Australia. Our diversity is a source of competitive advantage, cultural enrichment and social stability...We cannot take what we have achieved for granted (*New Agenda* 3).

Multiculturalism, or rather “cultural diversity” – the preferred synonym in the *New Agenda* – is here characterised as a historical achievement. As in *Creative Nation*, this achievement is a “source of competitive advantage” on the world stage, and echoes *Creative Nation*’s attempt to engender productive citizenship by interpellating CALD national subjects via their economic contribution. The

term *productive diversity* has been appropriated and liberally employed throughout the Coalition document.

Coalition policy only valued multiculturalism for the economic dividends that flowed through to the nation. This is reflected in the addition of productive diversity to the four pillars of the *New Agenda*, which revised and expanded the three tenets outlined in the 1989 *National Agenda* (explicated above):

- **Civic Duty**, which obliges all Australians to support those basic structures and principles of Australian society which guarantee us our freedom and equality and enable diversity in our society to flourish;
- **Cultural Respect**, which, subject to the law, gives all Australians the right to express their own culture and beliefs and obliges them to accept the right of others to do the same;
- **Social Equity**, which entitles all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity so that they are able to contribute to the social, political and economic life of Australia, free from discrimination, including on the grounds of race, culture, religion, language, location, gender or place of birth; and
- **Productive Diversity**, which maximises for all Australians the significant cultural, social and economic dividends arising from the diversity of our population (*New Agenda* 8).

These four principles revised 1989 agenda and erased any reference to multicultural identity and social justice. In so doing, the Coalition policy rejected Labour's assertion that the right to "express and share" individual cultural identity nurtures cross-cultural identification, and coheres otherwise culturally diverse national subjects. In the absence of a shared multicultural identity, there is little said within the first three principles that engendered in CALD peoples a sense of obligation or belonging to the nation.

The fourth principle, productive diversity, develops the idea of cultural diversity as an economic asset and national resource, to reinforce identification with the nation on the basis of economic contribution and activity. It is this fourth tenet that informs and structures the Coalition's key strategies for cultural management, extrapolated throughout the document. The *New Agenda* states that:

Australian society has gained breadth and depth through the many benefits of our multicultural population...We thus have a reservoir of talent, energy, skills and knowledge which facilitates the way we do business with the rest of the world,

especially given the reality of modern life and the ‘global village’...The Government’s Productive Diversity strategy aims to capitalise on the linguistic and cultural skills, business networks and market knowledge of individuals in our diverse population and to remove any impediments to their effective contribution to the workforce. This is the advantage of all Australians and is yet another example of the benefits of our multicultural policy (7-8).

Commensurate with the argument forwarded in *Creative Nation*, the *New Agenda* identifies a set of valued skills that arise from cultural difference, such as linguistic and cultural literacy, that can bolster Australia’s ability to trade in the global marketplace. SBSi was ideally situated to meet these policy objectives because, and as will be elaborated below, it was already administering productive diversity and “removing any impediments to effective contribution” by Indigenous and CALD filmmakers. As such, *Creative Nation*’s neo-liberal redefinition of multiculturalism produced the very possibility for SBSi’s continuance under a Coalition government. Though, on the surface, the Coalition’s restitution of a proud British heritage appears to be diametrically opposed to Labour’s and SBSi’s championing of Australia’s multicultural heritage, the disparity between each government’s construction of national identity within these various policies is, as McLeay argues, a rhetorical phenomenon more so than it is an ideological one.

In summary, the Coalition did not depart from multicultural policies developed by their Labour predecessors. Examination of policy documents demonstrates the co-option of Labour terminology and discursive strategies, to similarly promote productive diversity as the logical evolution of State multiculturalism that had already achieved social access and equity for CALD Australians. The Coalition continued and refined Labour’s concern with the management of CALD peoples in the interests of national economic growth. As such the succession of Labour by the Coalition was not an imminent threat to the future of SBSi. Providing SBSi fulfilled its governmental function, the cultural institution remained valuable to any government pursuing a policy of productive diversity. Having established policy continuity under the Coalition government, the next sub-section will explicate the organisational systems and practices developed by SBSi to realise productive diversity objectives.

2.3. Productive Diversity as Practice

From 1996 to 2003, SBSi developed and implemented organisational systems and practices, which successfully governed the economic resource of productive diversity on behalf of the government. This sub-section examines those systems and practices to demonstrate how productive diversity shaped SBSi's expression of multiculturalism. It examines interview transcripts, budget announcements, and SBSi campaign materials to illuminate how vague policy claims circumscribed organisational objectives, and were translated into administrative practices. It is argued that the ideological work of productive diversity is achieved governmentally via the imbrication of film and television producers of diverse heritage and expertise, into industrialised modes of production. Furthermore, it posits that policy pre-occupation with the management of people, and not representation, conditioned a context in which SBSi could direct public finance towards the production of counter-hegemonic content without risking government support. The period under consideration, from 1996 to 2003, largely coincides with the period of cosmopolitan multiculturalism extrapolated by Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy. The goal is to augment, not contest their research findings, and demonstrate how SBSi developed organisational systems and practices under the aegis of productive diversity, giving rise to a cosmopolitan approach to multicultural representation.

The first two generations of SBSi General Managers, James (1994-1996) and Bridget Ikin (1996-2000) closely adhered to James's vision of an institution that challenged audiences to engage with issues stemming from the nation's cultural diversity. That politically challenging content came to be closely identified with SBSi is the consequence of an entrepreneurial approach to considerable funding limitations, as well as intent. The decision to maximise production relative to investment by providing producers with pre-sale funding, rather than the entire budget of a given production, positioned SBSi such that it could exploit the formal and stylistic skills developed by an independent sector that was

accustomed to working with extremely small budgets.²⁸ SBSi also worked with established directors and producers closely associated with a tradition of political activism, beginning in the 1960s and including filmmakers such as Albie Thoms, David Bradbury, Pat Fiske, Chris Owen, Nick Torrens and Tom Zubrycki. Such filmmakers not only produced films for SBSi, but also acted as mentors for emerging directors from whom the institution wanted to commission work. For instance, Tom Zubrycki worked as a consultant to SBSi and produced Tahir Cambis and Alma Sahbaz's award-winning documentary *Exile in Sarajevo*, and Darlene Johnson's documentary *Stolen Generations*. Additionally Zubrycki produced and directed a number of documentaries for SBSi, including *The Diplomat* (2001), *Molly and Mobarak* (2003) and *Vietnam Symphony* (2005). Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy have described this period of multicultural representation as *cosmopolitan multiculturalism*. This is because it expanded upon the close association of multiculturalism with ethnicity to also reflect multiple axes of cultural diversity spanning gender, sexuality, religion, race, disability, as well as allowing for sub- and transnational identifications to proliferate. While the SBSi model did allow cosmopolitan programming to thrive, commitment to formal, aesthetic, as well as narrative diversity, hinged on the objectives of management and not the model itself. To paraphrase Nolan and Radywyl, the policy system within which SBSi operated circumscribed but did "not fully determine" the action of agents located within the institution (41). Indeed, while the SBSi model created the very possibility for an institutionally sanctioned form of counter-hegemonic film practice, as I will illustrate in section three, it also catalysed the slow transition towards more conservative commissioning practices in phase three (2003-2007).

The period of cosmopolitan multiculturalism was enabled by two key factors. First, under the direction of SBS Managing Directors Malcolm Long (1994-1997) and Nigel Milan (1998-2005), and Heads of Television Sawsan Madina (1994-

²⁸ As will be elaborated in chapter three, the decision to invest in local productions on a pre-sale basis was also shaped by changes to government subsidy, which became contingent on proven market interest, either via pre-sale investment by the ABC, SBSi or another commercial and/or international broadcaster, as well as by commercial distributors.

1995) and Peter Cavanagh (1995-2002), SBSi was afforded a considerable degree of autonomy from SBS-TV. Commissioning decisions were formally approved at a monthly meeting of the Board of Managers, which comprised: the SBSi General Manager, the SBS Head of Television and Managing Director, as well as two non-voting attendees, SBSi's Business Affairs Manager and the SBS Network Programmer.²⁹ Throughout the month, Commissioning Editors for Drama and Documentary would select candidates for either pre-sale or equity investment, and prepare a one-page proposal for each project for the Board of Managers meeting. While the appropriateness of each proposal was subject to vigorous debate, each one was invariably approved. In effect, the function of the meeting was to inform SBS-TV of projects, and as a formality, obtain the approval of management. While for James and Ikin this process meant that the commissioning team were not hamstrung by bureaucratic process, as elaborated in chapter three, it was a process that created considerable challenges for the Network Programmer. The second key factor was the appointment of experienced film producers and directors to key commissioning and managerial roles. Subsequent to the departure of James in 1996, all General Managers were seasoned independent film producers. For example, Ikin produced *Kitchen Sink*, *An Angel at My Table*, and *Floating Life* prior to her term as General Manager between 1996 and 2000. Glenys Rowe (General Manager, 2000-2005), produced *Dogs in Space*, *Bodywork*, *Greenkeeping*, and *Idiot Box*. Ned Lander (General Manager 2006-2007, Senior Commissioning Editor for Documentary, 2004-2005) produced *Dirt Cheap*, *Passionately Single*, *Bachelor Girl*, *Radiance*, and produced/directed *Wrong Side of the Road*, prior to assuming the role of Commissioning Editor of Documentary in 2001. Highly regarded independent filmmakers who worked as Commissioning Editors for SBSi include John Hughes (*Film-Work*) and Trevor Graham (*Mabo Life of an Island Man*).

Cosmopolitan multiculturalism is identified by a strong culture of innovation, experimentation and social intervention (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy 145). This culture emerged from SBSi's strong ties to the established filmmaking community, and was underpinned by a program of productive diversity

²⁹ See Appendix three for timeline of key SBSi and SBS staff between 1994 and 2007.

channelling filmmakers towards the exhibition opportunities and audiences provided by SBS-TV. Ikin recalls that the SBSi:

mandate was to connect with people who were independent content generators who lived all round the country, so we were the kind of the middle people in a way between that community and the corporation. Unless we maintained an excellent rapport within the corporation so that the work that the filmmakers made was loved by SBS, screened well, marketed well, publicised well, then the whole of the SBSi project would have floundered. You know, we weren't Screen NSW or Film Victoria, we weren't a funding organisation, we were a broadcaster. We had to attend to both of those communities.³⁰

Ikin's comments articulate SBSi's core function, as an administrative mechanism responsible for co-ordinating "funding sources and artists and/or communities" (Yudice 12). Staff shaped SBSi into a vital agency by actively forging new, mutually beneficial, and productive relationships between SBS-TV and the independent production sector. SBSi nurtured strong working relationships with filmmakers who either participated in, or worked in the tradition of various counter-cultural movements including the Sydney and Melbourne film co-operatives during the 1970s (Smaill 2001, 108). Consequently, SBSi became closely associated with the values and traditions characteristic of independent sector, an association that was symbolically reified under Ikin's management. Close ties with the sector were utilised to build a strong organisational identity embodied by the design of the SBSi logo. The SBSi logo was the SBS logo with *independent* scrawled across it in a lowercase, handwritten-style font (see figure 1). Ikin elaborates how the logo was intended to convey a "handmade, painterly feel," which was a "deliberate riff on the very staid logo that SBS" had. The logo connoted the characteristic aesthetics of film that has been produced at the margins of the global film economy, and films that deliberately undermine the ideological effects of classic formal and aesthetic techniques. Concomitantly, the handwritten appearance of the word *independent*, looked as though the SBS logo has been tagged in much the same way that people graffiti political messages on public spaces. As such the logo signalled the reclamation of public broadcast space for independent filmmakers, and the public whom they represented. The

³⁰ The NSW Film and Television Office was renamed Screen NSW in the 2009-10 financial year.



Figure 1. The SBS Independent logo. [Print] SBS Independent.

development of the SBSi logo reflects business-like practices proper to the corporate sector insofar as it forged a distinct identity for SBSi within the international marketplace. This identity traded on the political, economic and aesthetic heritage of independent filmmaking, and aligned it with SBS-TV, the Australian broadcaster that shared with the independent community a marginal status in relation to mainstream media.

Coalition support was attributable to the strategic demonstration of benefits accrued by the Australian film economy, as a consequence of SBSi's commissioning activities. This is evident in the 1998 campaign launched to renew federal funding under the Coalition government. Together with SBS Policy Manager Chris Sharpe, and lobbyist Virginia Gordon, Ikin liaised with independent filmmakers and federal politicians to secure the future of the institution. A component of the campaign was a complement of materials that communicated to government the strength of the relationship between the commissioning house and the independent filmmaking sector. For instance, the Screen Producer's Association of Australia (SPAA), the Australian Writer's Guild, and the Screen Directors Association issued their support in the form of a letter to parliament. There was also a celebrity endorsement component to the campaign that included a promotional trailer on DVD and a printed brochure, which were distributed throughout parliament house (see figure 2). The campaign

SBS Independent has



JANE CAMPION, DIRECTOR, *THE PIANO*
SBS Independent is there, at the forefront of innovative production, always taking risks and surprising audiences.

committed

its \$13m

BAZ LUHRMANN, DIRECTOR, *ROMEO & JULIET*
The Australian imagination is capable of making television that is exciting, different and unique in the world and SBS Independent plays an important part in making this happen.



GILLIAN ARMSTRONG, DIRECTOR, *GINGER & LUCINDA*
It's incredibly important that SBS Independent is there to help filmmakers, especially documentary makers, get their projects made and shown on television.



federal grant

to the production of 280

hours of quality



GARY SWEET, ACTOR
It's great what SBS Independent has achieved in such a short time.

programs worth more than



TRISTRAM MIALL, PRODUCER, *STRICTLY BALLROOM*
It's an incredibly small team and in terms of bang for the bucks, it's exceptional.

\$60m.

These programs,



RACHEL PERKINS, DIRECTOR, *ROMANCE*
SBS Independent is crucial in realising the visions of indigenous filmmakers, so as to keep our culture alive.

reflective of multicultural

Australia, have won 55



JAN CHAPMAN, PRODUCER, *THE PIANO*
A lot of really original exciting films are connected to SBS. It's hard to imagine how the film industry would cope without SBS Independent.

national and

international awards and have

been sold to



BILL BENNETT, DIRECTOR, *KISS OF KILL*
SBS Independent is now playing a critical role in the output of Australian films and documentaries. We need such a place to allow us the movies which will truly define who we are as Australians.

40 countries. All productions



JOHN POLSON, ACTOR & DIRECTOR
SBS Independent kick starts so many distinctive films and programs. We need it!

are outsourced

to the independent

film industry,

CHRIS NOONAN, DIRECTOR, *BARF*
SBS Independent has the potential to revitalise the Australian film and television industry, just as Channel 4 has done in the UK.



CATE BLANCHETT, ACTOR
With the exciting growth of the Australian film industry it is vital to maintain and encourage diversity. SBS Independent does just that.

generating

thousands of jobs.



Figure 2. The 1998 celebrity endorsement brochure. [Print] SBS Independent.

featured prominent Australian filmmakers such as Gillian Armstrong (*Oscar and Lucinda*) and Chris Noonan (*Babe*), stating why SBSi was important to the future of Australian film and television. For instance, producer Jan Chapman (*The Piano*) stated: “A lot of really original exciting films are connected to SBS. It’s hard to imagine how the film industry would cope without SBS Independent” (SBS Independent, *SBS Independent*). Celebrity endorsements were utilised to bolster two key threads to the campaign. The first was the argument that SBSi represented exceptional “bang for the bucks” (Miall qtd. in SBS Independent, *SBS Independent*) expended by government: “SBS Independent has committed its \$13m federal grant to the production of 280 hours of quality programs worth more than \$60m” (SBS Independent, *SBS Independent*). Key to this argument was the claim of significantly increased employment opportunities for filmmakers: “All productions are outsourced to the independent film industry, generating thousands of jobs” (SBS Independent, *SBS Independent*). The second thread foregrounded SBSi’s uncanny ability to simultaneously meet its chartered responsibility, and to nurture a culture of Australian exceptionalism: “These programs, reflective of multicultural Australia, have won 55 national and international awards and have been sold to 40 countries” (SBS Independent, *SBS Independent*). Significantly, the delivery of these arguments in a slick promotional package also reflected business-like practices valued by government.

Another thread to the campaign was Ikin’s national screening tour, funded by the AFI, which helped to strengthen SBSi’s industry presence. A key role performed by Ikin as General Manager was actively nurturing mutually respectful relationships between SBSi and independent producers. When Ikin assumed the role in 1996 she travelled around Australia, particularly to key regional towns, to build alliances that would generate a body of content representative of Australia’s diversity, and which breached the dominance of the Sydney-Melbourne filmmaking nexus. Another component to building loyal production milieux was returning to communities who had generated content, to conduct screenings and debrief. Ikin describes this process as “adding value to the content,” which was achieved by facilitating ongoing discussion and learning from the experiences of producers. Ikin regards the time invested in building a rapport with independent producers as a demonstration of goodwill that proved absolutely vital to the 1998

funding campaign. This is because many Coalition MPs, with whom Ikin, Sharp and Gordon liaised, represented regional constituencies for whom a key priority was the delivery of public services. It must therefore be acknowledged that SBSi's campaign was also indebted to the growing availability of the SBS UHF signal to an ever-increasing number of remote communities.

Ikin and Sharp strategically aligned SBSi with the independent community and promoted the commissioning house's contribution to the industry. The campaign emphasised productive diversity practices providing employment opportunities for Indigenous, regional and CALD filmmakers, and successful exhibition of independent content, to attract Coalition support throughout their twelve-year term. The success of the strategy is reflected by Senator Richard Alston's 1998-99 budget announcement, which granted SBSi \$19 million over four years in light of the organisation's: "outstanding success over the last four years, in terms of the quality and quantity of the work produced, and because of the employment opportunities it has generated" ("Government Delivers"). Alston made no mention of multiculturalism or cultural diversity, instead citing the unprecedented success of SBSi content and employment opportunities generated, as the basis for continued government support. This omission reflects SBSi's careful and selective approach to reporting commissioning practices to MPs. On the one hand, Ikin insists on the importance of taking recently completed films to Canberra to screen to politicians, such as Rachel Perkin's feature *Radiance*, to ensure that the organisation and its successes remained visible. On the other hand, the provocative nature of many SBSi documentaries – in terms of form, aesthetics and narrative – precluded careful selection of content to showcase, and reliance on other campaign materials such as the celebrity endorsement approach employed in 1998.

Glenys Rowe (General Manager 2000-2005) utilised similar strategies in her dealings with Canberra. Rowe worked closely with SBS Head of Policy Julie Isenberg on the 2001-02 campaign, which sought an increase to the Special Production Fund. Like Ikin before her, Rowe carefully selected content to forward to MPs, and together with Isenberg committed a significant portion of her time lobbying politicians. As a consequence of the 2001-02 funding

campaign, Alston announced that “the highly successful SBSi” would be extended to 2005-06 and as: “well as extending its existing funding of \$4.9 million a year (indexed), SBSi will receive an additional \$2 million in 2002-03, rising to \$3.5 million from 2003-04, bringing its total funding to \$8.6 million per year (indexed)” (“Budget”). Again, in this budget announcement no mention was made of multiculturalism or the content that was produced. Presumably “success” referred to the fact that the content generated by SBSi was highly regarded within the film industry, evidenced by the significant quantity of national and international awards and nominations received. The Special Production Fund enjoyed a successive increase in the 2005-06 budget. In May 2005, Senator Helen Coonan announced the continuance of the Special Production Fund at an increased level of \$37.6 million over four years distributed thus: “\$9.1 million in 2006-07, \$9.3 million in 2007-08, \$9.5 million in 2008-09, and \$9.7 million in 2009-10.” In the media release, Coonan claimed for SBSi the honour of fostering “the careers of many significant filmmakers and actors,” including “Deborah Mailman and Rachel Perkins (*Radiance*), Adam Elliot (*Harvie Krumpet*)...and John Safran (*John Safran vs. God*).” Coonan rationalised strengthened financial support to SBSi because they “reflect Australia’s multicultural society and add diversity to the Australian content in the domestic and overseas markets” (Coonan). This statement reflects a key characteristic of productive diversity, whereby the representation of multiculturalism is valued only insofar as it improves the performance of cultural sector within the global marketplace.

The commissioning activity of SBSi is here appropriated by Coonan into a narrative of the Coalition’s own prudent investment in the film and broadcasting sectors. The names of individual directors, actors and films are, within this context, nouns that signify the aggregate success of SBSi commissioned content, and thus, the value of the commissioning house to “domestic and overseas markets.” Named films and filmmakers are not exceptional but exemplary. SBSi does not engage with or produce a multicultural identity, it “reflects” an already existing “multicultural society,” and the value of multicultural diversity is here remembered as a market value. Coonan’s comments thus foreground how the currency of SBSi, within the political economy, was not derived from the substance of the programs that it commissioned, but rather, from its demonstrated

ability to exploit the nation's Indigenous, regional and CALD resources and generate marketable content. Campaign strategies substantiating SBSi's contribution to productive diversity, such as industry endorsements, reportage of awarded Indigenous and CALD producers, and careful selection of content for ministers to view, were choreographed to attract federal support on such grounds. SBSi's concerted investment in controversial topics was judiciously obscured to protect the future of the organisation, and maintain a stream of investment for innovative and challenging content.

In summary, between 1996 and 2003 SBSi fulfilled its function as a cultural institution and governed the resource of productive diversity. SBSi management actively forged relationships with independent producers and other cultural institutions around the country, meeting the policy push toward cross funding, resource sharing and productive partnerships. The Coalition declared SBSi successful on the back of numerous industry accolades for commissioned content, and the institution's careful rationalisation of resources resulting in a high volume of production relative to investment. SBSi's campaign practices evidence selective reporting of those achievements, which manifested productive diversity ambitions. The success of funding campaigns reflect critiques of productive diversity, outlined in the introduction, as a policy valuing cultural diversity of non-white individuals only for the cultural and economic dividends that may be accrued by *all* Australians (Hage, *White Nation* 128-33; Bertone and Leahy, "Social Equity" 117). Concomitantly, careful selection of titles screened for federal ministers evidence how SBSi exploited the policy blind spot with regard to the content of products. While the rest of this thesis explores how SBSi's governance of productive diversity conditioned new labour processes and representational practices, the final section of this chapter will extrapolate why, in phase three (2003-2007), SBSi slowly abandoned productive diversity objectives and practices.

SECTION 3

2003-2007: MERGER AND MAINSTREAMING

This chapter has thus far demonstrated how the neo-liberal rationale for State policy influenced the form and function of the SBSi model, and how productive diversity was a specific manifestation of neo-liberal objectives that shaped its organisational practices throughout phases one (1994-1996) and two (1996-2003). This section examines the third phase of SBSi (2003-2007) and details the implementation of new organisational systems to achieve revised programming objectives, resulting in the neo-liberal refashioning of the broadcaster. First, the SBSi and SBS-TV merger is detailed to demonstrate how the commissioning house was expedited to rationalise resources available to the broadcaster. It elaborates how rationalisation measures were generally consonant with cultural policies requiring bureaucratic organisations to optimise their economic efficiency. Second, it examines mainstreaming objectives and strategies driving the merger, and demonstrates an abandonment of productive diversity responsibilities. The aim of this section is to complete the history of SBSi, and demonstrate how bureaucratic reform compromised the expediency of the SBSi model for government and for industry.

3.1. Rationalising Financial and Labour Resources

By most accounts, the appointment of Shaun Brown as SBS Head of Television in 2003, inaugurated a substantial shift in philosophy and objectives at the broadcaster. This shift was, according to Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy, characterised by the ascendancy of what they term *popular multiculturalism*. Programs typical of this approach include the police drama series *East West 101* (created by Steve Knapman and Kris Wyld), the courtroom drama series *The Circuit* (created by Kelly Lefever), reality series such as *The Colony* (created by Chris Hilton) and the Lonely Planet travel series *Going Bush*.³¹ Such programs are described as *popular* because they conformed to generic formats with mass appeal. Popular multiculturalism was also characterised by the ambition to

³¹ While SBSi maintained a commitment to commissioning challenging and innovative work that represented cultural diversity, such as the short film *Jewboy* (Tony Krawitz), the emphasis was on commissions that treated multiculturalism as ordinary and everyday rather than something that needed to be actively promoted (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy 20).

improve the quantity and quality of *local* English language programs transmitted on SBS-TV. According to Brown, SBS-TV would be better positioned to reach more Australians more often with the message of multiculturalism, if the broadcaster strengthened its focus on local stories. It is a view that contrasted sharply with that of previous generations of SBS management and staff who regarded local content to be a complement, and not a preference to, imported foreign language programs (James; Webb). The scale and expense of Brown's local programming ambitions required a substantial increase in the SBS and SBSi budgets.³² This sub-section details the staggered implementation of new organisational systems to rationalise resources and achieve more popular and local programs. It argues that while these changes resulted in the demise of SBSi, they emulated the neo-liberal impulsion toward economic efficiency, embodied by the commissioning house.

When Brown joined SBS, he immediately identified SBSi as the vehicle through which he could achieve an increased presence of local programming on SBS-TV. However, the ability of the commissioning house to achieve the scale of production that Brown envisaged, first required the rationalisation and consolidation of resources available to both institutions. The first change instituted was organisational. Between 2004 and 2005 the in-house production unit, which also had a commissioning arm, was merged with SBSi. SBSi became responsible for all commissioning decisions and for the in-house productions with the exception of sports, news and current affairs. The purpose of the change was to eliminate the duplication of financial resources and labour, and thus liberate a greater proportion of the budget for investing in local content (Brown). In 2006 Brown further increased value of production relative to investment, and ceased all in-house production that had become the responsibility of SBSi. In-house production funds were folded into the SBSi budget to increase its

³² For instance, the cost to the broadcaster for one television hour of locally produced documentary programming might cost around \$75,000 (twenty-five percent of a production budget totalling \$300,000), significantly more than an imported program of similar production values, which could cost as little as \$7,000 (Brown).

commissioning capabilities. SBS remains the only Australian broadcaster that has completely outsourced all local production.

In-house production staff most keenly felt the consequence of this organisational change. Producers such as Paul Fenech (*Pizza; Swift and Shift*) and Maeve O'Meara (*The Food Lover's Guide to Australia; Food Safari*), who had been on a wage at SBS, effectively became independent producers who had to sell their ideas and work to the network (Rowe). For Rowe, the success enjoyed by O'Meara, since SBS-TV commissioned the *Food Safari* series, stands as a testament to the substantially improved quality of the local content as a result of the restructure. Another clear advantage for the network was that responsibility for the content of programs devolved to the filmmaker: when Paul Fenech "defames, he defames, SBS doesn't defame" (Rowe). As intended, outsourcing all production freed up financial resources enabling SBSi to commission substantially more expensive genre and new format series.

The second major change pursued by Brown was the folding of the Special Production Fund into the SBS Corporation's base funding. According to Brown there was two key problems with the existing Special Production Fund. First, it was a terminal funding arrangement, and at the discretion of government whether this stream of funding would continue in the following period. Each funding allocation remained uncertain until the budget announcement. In contrast to Ikin and Cottrell-Dormer, Brown and Rowe assert that the terminal funding arrangement made it difficult to plan future programming. The difference of perspective is reflected by the use of the term "rolling fund" by the earlier generation of staff, as compared to "terminal funding" by the latter generation. As stated earlier, under the direction of Ikin and Cottrell-Dormer, available funds were managed frugally and as a consequence, projects were selected carefully. Money was dispersed across as many projects as possible, and the allocation rolled over from one period to the next if necessary. Furthermore, funds were diligently administered and avidly protected from erosion by SBS-TV. Rather than preserving a pool of funds to ensure the ability to fund projects as they arose, Rowe would find the funds that she needed to see a project through; her enthusiasm for a particular project "provided the impetus to get the money." In

the absence of funding partners Rowe was willing to provide one hundred percent of a budget to a program that was considered really important to do. Sometimes, as in the case of *First Australians* (Rachel Perkins and Beck Cole), “the head of the whole SBS Corporation, Nigel Milan took money from his own personal delegation to get it going” (Rowe 2). With regard to protecting the Special Production Fund from SBS-TV, Rowe would always – strategically – “spend the money” before they had the opportunity to ask. As will be discussed in the next sub-section, Rowe’s approach to financial management suggests that downsizing and outsourcing of the broadcaster’s resources were at odds with contemporaneous cultural policy, insofar as it did not achieve economic efficiency.

The second problem with maintaining the Special Production Fund as separate was the duplication of administrative and legal resources. As elaborated earlier, as a triennially allocated fund, the use of Special Production Fund monies were reported separately from the SBS annual base allocation. Rolling the Special Production Fund into the base allocation would save both labour and financial resources that could subsequently be re-directed to boost the presence of local content. A consequence of this change was all finance would be received as a part of the annual allocation, and consonant with public service protocols, SBSi would no longer be able to accumulate funds from year to year. The Rudd Labour government (2007-2010) finally agreed to make the fund ongoing, and fold it into SBS’s base allocation in 2009 on the back of SBS-TV’s “commitment to the local production sector” (Brown). Brown’s campaign to roll the Special Production Fund into SBS’s base allocation came to fruition almost two years after the official merger of SBSi and SBS-TV. The newly merged entity was named the SBS (Television and Online) Content Division. Official steps taken to dissolve the SBSi name, and absorb of its activities into the content division, will be elaborated in the next sub-section.

The final important source of revenue was generated from the sale of advertising time on SBS-TV. The introduction of mid-program advertising in late 2006 and investment in more popular programs to improve ratings, were two key strategies employed to boost the value of SBS-TV for advertisers. The problems arising

from the pursuit of commercial revenue through advertising and popular programming is exemplified by SBSi's investment in *Top Gear Australia*. To maintain broadcast rights to the British version of *Top Gear*, SBS was required to invest in a local version of the program. SBS acquiesced on the basis that British *Top Gear* was extremely popular with audiences, and generated a substantial level of advertising revenue. Brown also contends that the remit to reflect "all Australians" was justification enough for further investment in the franchise. It is worth noting that the logic - positing the representation of white Australian men driving fast cars, as worthy of broadcast hours reserved for increasing the visibility of CALD within the persistently white Australian media - is, generously speaking - flawed. That said, the substantial, and since unmatched, level of advertising revenue generated by the *Top Gear* franchise, was ultimately, justified on the basis that all commercial revenue was used to bankroll resolutely multicultural programs, and allowed programs such as *East West 101* to enter an unprecedented (on SBS) third season, and *The Circuit* to garner a second.

The rationalisation of labour and financial resources available to SBSi and SBS-TV, together with systems implemented to generate more commercial revenue, substantially increased monies available for local commissions. When Brown assumed the role of Head of Television, SBSi spent approximately \$4.5 million per annum on content. At the time he was interviewed for this research (8 July 2011), the SBS (Television and Online) Content Division had \$25 million annually to commission local content. In previous years that figure was as much as \$30 million. The fluctuation was attributable to annual variations in advertising revenue, which suffered as a result of the loss of the *Top Gear* franchise to the commercial network, Channel 9, in 2010. Clearly, the various strategies implemented to raise revenue to pursue mainstreaming ambitions reflected neo-liberal policy objectives. Downsizing the institution by eliminating duplication of labour resources, and outsourcing all production labour to increase output relative to investment, was consistent with value for money ethos, achieved via new managerialism. The imperative to generate more popular, generic and local programs reflects market reasoning insofar as it improved ratings, raised revenue from the sale of advertising, and which was used to further enhance the quality and quantity of local programs. To the degree that its merger

with SBS-TV enabled the rationalisation of resources, SBSi represented an important, if expendable mechanism, by which the neo-liberal refashioning of SBS was achieved.

The final subsection re-evaluates the SBSi-SBS merger in relation to productive diversity objectives, and argues that the organisational objectives and systems implemented by Brown jeopardised the future viability of SBS, precisely because it undermined the *specific* neo-liberal function that SBSi was designed to achieve.

3.2. The Abdication of Productive Diversity

Sections one and two of this chapter established that the SBSi model proved an expedient investment for successive governments, insofar as the form and function of the institution effectively governed the resource of productive diversity. SBSi attracted funding because, as an established multicultural *narrowcaster*, it was well positioned to harness the diverse cultural and linguistic competencies of Australians, develop innovative products and niche markets, and thereby contribute to the economic growth of the nation. SBSi acceded to expectations insofar as organisational practices improved employment and distribution opportunities in the sector, which was mutually beneficial for the loyal network of industry practitioners. This sub-section argues that the changes to organisational objectives, systems and practices in phase three (2003-2007), constituted an abdication of the State sanctioned responsibility to govern productive diversity. This is demonstrated via an assessment of Brown's objectives for merging SBSi and SBS-TV into a single department of the SBS Corporation.

Between December 2007 and January 2008 SBSi was officially merged with SBS-TV to form the SBS (Television and Online) Content Division. Oddly, no former or current employees of SBS and SBSi interviewed for this study (including Brown) could illuminate the date that the organisation ceased to trade as SBSi. The exact nature of SBSi's merger/ dissolution/ retirement/ termination is even more difficult to ascertain. This thesis thus utilises the term *merger* tentatively as shorthand, referring to organisational restructure resulting in the abandonment of the SBSi label, and the absorption of the institution's activities

by SBS-TV. For Shaun Brown perception that SBSi was ever a separate institution was, for all intents and purposes, an illusion. The perspective offered by Brown is worth quoting at length:

It is true that some staff in SBSi might have wished that and probably would have preferred to stay as a small unit operating on the edge of the SBS service. But the fact is that SBSi General Managers, Commissioning Editors and other staff were all directly employed by the SBS Corporation and they reported into the Television Division of the SBS Corporation. The staff of SBSi were bound to the Charter, the SBS Act and the SBS Corporate Plan to the same degree as any other staff. Whatever separate status existed was due to the fact that SBSi was the unit within SBS which was charged with administering the separate stream of funding from the federal government known as the Special Production Fund.

Brown insists that SBSi was never an autonomous entity. However, steps taken by Brown to actively “streamline” the two institutions, both organisationally and financially, indicate otherwise.

Prior to 2003 the commissioning house did operate with a high degree of autonomy from the broadcaster. As elaborated above, SBSi’s independence from SBS-TV was, in part, a consequence of federal funding processes. The Special Production Fund allocation, together with the explicit mandate to commission content, required the development of a tailored administrative system that effectively delineated SBSi from SBS (Cottrell-Dormer). SBSi funds were solely directed towards pre-sales and equity investment in independently produced content, and was not utilised to supplement the broadcaster’s impoverished in-house production, despite their common remit to generate programming. It was only after SBSi assumed responsibility for in-house production that it became more difficult to “justify a separate brand identity:”

While on the one hand the name carried a proud history, on the other there was evidence that the separate title was generating confusion for SBS staff, as well as filmmakers, production companies and co-financiers entering into pre-sale agreements with SBS and SBSi. That is, it was not always clear from the outset – for those individuals and companies – whether they were entering into a contract with SBS or SBSi. Furthermore, there was a duplication of legal and labour resources to create these contracts from both departments (Brown).

Brown insists that the redundancy of a separate label does not evidence a take over by SBS but rather that the: “small band of commandos with their different shoulder badge had taken over the army! And although the name had gone, the spirit and character that had defined it had been adopted and enlarged on by the whole organisation” (Brown). As established in the previous sub-section, the merger does evidence the “takeover” of SBS-TV by SBSi in an administrative and organisational sense. This is reflected in the outsourcing of in-house production (with the exception of news, sports, and current affairs), and downsizing via the elimination of duplicated legal and administrative resources. However, the “spirit and character” deriving from productive diversity, and which had become closely identified with SBSi, proved expendable during the process of restructure.

Insofar as SBS-TV sought to expand audiences via popular programming, it marginalised investments in innovative and diverse products. As established in chapter one, productive diversity is characterised by investment in innovative and diverse products as a key means of achieving competitive advantage, generating multiple niche markets domestically and abroad. Ambitions to compete for a larger share of the mainstream audience evidences diminished commitment to independent producers, which was achieved via the administration of productive diversity. For Rowe the new financial freedom to commission more expensive series was more beneficial for both SBS and producers. The clear advantage of series was the ability to adequately promote programs and attract mass audiences to a particular time slot on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, before the shift toward popular multiculturalism, independent filmmakers:

weren't making a living from their work. You can't make a living making one documentary film every three years...all the filmmakers had second jobs...But if you make a ten episode drama series you've got a living. And so we had a gang of people, you know, John Safran, Penny Chapman, who had some sort of assurance about where they'll be in the next two years (Rowe).

The perception that contractual employment introduces a measure of job security is, of course, contingent on whether the producer in question comes from an independent filmmaking background, as in Rowe's example, or from an in-house production background where employment was ongoing. That said, there is

substantial evidence demonstrating the negative impact of mainstreaming for independent producers.

First, the negative effect of mainstreaming is reflected by fluctuations in the number of titles commissioned per annum. For instance, from the 1995-96 to 2003-04 financial years, SBSi commissioned an average of fifty-eight titles per annum.³³ In the 2004-05 and 2005-06 financial years, that figure reached eighty-three and ninety respectively. This sudden spike in commissions coincides with the outsourcing of in-house production, and as such does not indicate that the institution generated more projects. In 2006-07 the annual figure decreased to sixty-four titles, and in 2007-08 to forty-one titles; included in the 2007-08 slate was the *2007 Ethnic Business Awards*. What this data indicates is the increase in revenue did *not* translate to an increase the number of employment opportunities for producers or local productions commissioned. Rather, it appears that rationalisation measures financed a smaller quantity of more expensive productions. Indeed, the newly introduced practice of investing in award ceremonies indicates a further erosion of monies earmarked for independent producers.

While commissioning popular formats should not be dismissed as inherently negative, Brown's assertion that SBSi's merger with the corporation proper left commissioning objectives and practices unchanged, is misleading. In April 2008, when industry magazine *Screen Hub* reported the death of SBSi, it also reported the concomitant abandonment of the "idea that content could be produced independently of strict network requirements" (Tiley). The value of creative independence and innovation to the institution had however, already diminished considerably as a direct consequence of the restructure that began in 2004-5. The

³³ The fluctuation from year to year within this period was limited, with yearly figures ranging from a low of fifty-one in 1995-96 and a rare high of seventy-two in 1996-97. The one exception was 1998-99 when only thirty-three titles were commissioned. As will be extrapolated in chapter three, the marked decrease in this financial year is attributable to commissioning around a themed strand entitled *Unfinished Business* (2000), which co-ordinated a significant political intervention into national debates around the Stolen Generations, and which required careful planning of financial resources.

organisational systems implemented to generate more popular programs and improve ratings facilitated greater involvement by broadcasting staff in commissioning decisions. For instance in 2004 the Network Programmer Matt Campbell (2004-2006) was given decision-making power at the Board of Management meetings, enabling synthesis of commissioning and programming decisions. An important consequence of this change was that Commissioning Editors were no longer committed to attending to the respective needs of independent producers. Moreover, while SBS-TV remained dependent upon independent filmmakers for content, it no longer looked to these content producers for the particular skill sets traditionally associated with independent production, for instance a strong authorial voice, political engagement and innovative form and aesthetics.

This more prescriptive approach to commissioning effected filmmakers, because securing pre-sale investment from SBSi and the ABC was all but mandatory to trigger investment from other state and federal film agencies (FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson 2011). As will be extrapolated in chapter three, the pre-requisite for public subsidy had become demonstrated market interest via investment by distributors and exhibitors. Achieving distribution in a highly competitive and globalised market was difficult, and as such, pre-sales had become *the* primary means by which filmmakers accessed subsidies. The long term implications of SBSi and the ABC's insertion into Australia's film financing infrastructure was conveyed by Tom Zubrycki, in his 2010 Stanley Hawes Award acceptance speech:

It's my impression the ABC and SBS documentary slots are becoming more proscribed and rigid. Programs are tending to be format-driven, and lighter in content...I also feel that the range of subjects, viewpoints, and ideas is becoming narrower, while styles like the creative authored documentary and the character-driven social documentary are almost becoming extinct (*Stanley Hawes*).

SBSi's changed policy of actively seeking and initiating popular formats for the schedule contributed to a shift in dominant film funding practices, such that generic programming for the television industry became favoured over innovative and diverse works. Mainstreaming ambitions transformed independent producers into a pool of contract labour for broadcasters, and directly contributed to the

immediate decline in funding opportunities for artisanal projects that were perceived as risky or not profitable. As elaborated in chapter one, risk is endemic to innovation strategies and thus, productive diversity. Developments amortising risk suggest that mainstreaming displaced innovation objectives, thereby undermining the expediency of SBSi for the State with regard to the governance of productive diversity.

While reflective of the neo-liberal policy rationale promoting business-like practices, the new organisational objectives and systems initiated by Brown failed to deliver to government value for money. Perhaps drawing false hope from successive though modest increases to SBSi's budget, in 2009 Brown coordinated a budget proposal requesting a \$70 million increase to SBS's base allocation to facilitate more local programming. This proposal reflects a significant failure to acknowledge the history of federal recalcitrance to increase support to SBS, and indeed, craft a proposal that demonstrated economically efficient institutional procedures. In addition to the fact that this request was wildly excessive, it was not backed up with an acceptable level of performance. In April 2009, SBS Head of Production and Development for Television and Online, Denise Erikson (2008-2010), declared that all commissioning activity had ceased pending the (ill-fated) May budget announcement citing a shortage of funds (qtd. in Jackson 2). This shortage is attributable to poor financial management described above, and the failure to build audience share beyond six percent contributing to the drop in commercial revenue. Brown's constant search for more money to mainstream SBS-TV contrasted sharply with previous approaches to the delivery of services, which as Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy argue, worked with available resources to innovate new programming strategies and target niche audiences, rather than compete directly with commercial networks. SBSi and SBS-TV were never equipped to generate the level of local content envisaged by Brown, and what they were equipped to achieve was hard won. It is for this reason that many other interviewees regard Brown's employment by the Coalition appointed SBS Board, as an attempt to sabotage the organisation from within. This is understandable given that the only other interpretation for the direction taken by the institution is managerial incompetence.

In summary, this section has detailed Brown's identification and utilisation of SBSi as a mechanism to expedite rationalisation of labour and financial resources within the broadcaster, and finance the production of expensive programs with broad appeal. In so doing it has linked neo-liberal refashioning of the SBS Corporation to SBSi's embodiment of State cultural policy objectives. Brown's actions also however, evidence an ambivalent relationship to cultural policy responsibilities. On the one hand, the merger of SBSi and SBS-TV facilitated downsizing, introduction of contractual employment for previously full-time positions, and increased commercial revenue, which embodied the cultural policy impetus toward neo-liberal governance, characterised by new managerialism, market reasoning and value for money. On the other hand, reliance on a massive public funding boost to compensate the contraction of commercial revenue contravened each of these three principles. Moreover, SBSi's governance of productive diversity was severely compromised by mainstreaming ambitions. The SBSi model was explicitly designed to accommodate productive diversity policy and serve a range of agents working across the film and television sectors, not only SBS. As a cultural institution, SBSi was responsible for co-ordinating the production of innovative and diverse content by targeting Indigenous, regional and CALD filmmakers for investment, and thereby developing existing and new niche markets domestically and globally. In short, SBSi was obliged to work co-operatively with, and facilitate competitive advantage of, Australian producers and products. The Rudd Labour government's snub of SBS in the May 2009 budget reflects the failure of SBS to fulfil productive diversity responsibilities, which was the principal reason successive governments ever directed investment to local programming via SBSi.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has employed a cultural policy approach to elucidate how neo-liberal policy developments shaped the form and function of SBSi, giving rise to a unique and vital cultural institution that rejuvenated ailing State commitment to multiculturalism, and independent modes of production. It achieved this by first linking the form and function of the SBSi model to the emergent neo-liberal rationale for cultural intervention. It was demonstrated that the form of SBSi was

diligently designed to enable cross funding, resource sharing and productive partnerships, characteristics that were promoted by the Keating government in the *Creative Nation* policy. It was also demonstrated that the function of SBSi, co-ordinating production by professionally and culturally diverse filmmakers, corresponded with new manifestations of multiculturalism as productive diversity. As elaborated, the emergence of productive diversity within policy discourse represents a significant shift from earlier multicultural policies, implemented to achieve access and equity, and towards neo-liberal governance of Indigenous and CALD *labour* to fuel national economic growth. A key finding was that the SBSi model remained relevant under the subsequent Coalition government, because the Coalition had adopted and expanded the Labour policy of productive diversity. Moreover, the Coalition continued to fund SBSi because the institution efficiently achieved productive diversity. SBSi annually generated critically acclaimed programming by diverse filmmakers, allowing the government to demonstrate market reasoning in the form of job creation, as well as value for money relative to public investment. The second key finding was the successful implementation of productive diversity was almost exclusively measured according to economic criteria. This was demonstrated via the 1998 funding campaign, which incorporated celebrity endorsements to accentuate industrial output, job creation, critical success, and the development of new niche markets. The content of productions was extraneous to policy concerns. This represents a significant policy blind spot that enabled SBSi to pursue, and omit reference, to more challenging works, and also maintain bipartisan political support.

Finally, this chapter assessed how the SBSi model impacted upon the evolution of the SBS Corporation. It examined the merger of SBSi and SBS-TV, and argued that SBS management exploited the commissioning house, as a mechanism facilitating neo-liberal reform and mainstreaming objectives within the broadcaster. As demonstrated, this merger was initiated in 2003 with the appointment of Shaun Brown to Head of Television. The merger was symbolically completed by the end of 2007 with the dissolution of the SBSi name, and was finalised in 2009 with the incorporation of the Special Production Fund into the SBS Corporation's base funding. A key finding was that the merger

absolutely did not represent the adoption of the “spirit and character” (Brown) of SBSi by the whole organisation. Rather SBSi was used as the means to achieve very different mainstreaming objectives. While this merger was consistent with a neo-liberal rationale insofar as it rationalised labour and financial resources, it concomitantly undermined SBSi’s governance of productive diversity. This was demonstrated by distinguishing rationalisation measures from the mainstreaming ambitions driving the merger. It found that mainstreaming compromised SBSi’s fundamental responsibility to add value to the film and television sector via investment in moderately budgeted, innovative projects, and the development of niche markets. Moreover, it found that inefficient fiscal management and regressive reliance on State monies to achieve mainstreaming, absolutely undermined the expediency of SBS for government, and its relevance as a cultural institution.

CHAPTER THREE

MANAGING CREATIVITY & COMMERCE

So far this thesis has established how productive diversity policy circumscribed the form and function of SBSi as a cultural institution. This chapter will now use a creative labour approach to examine processes developed by SBSi to achieve productive diversity, and demonstrate how these initiated new modes of production and distribution in the independent film and public broadcasting sectors. Recall, the principal objective of productive diversity was to develop new niche markets via the generation and circulation of innovative content. This chapter demonstrates how these commercial aims were achieved by co-ordinating new project-based labour processes linking independent filmmakers and public broadcasters into production teams. These project-based forms of labour were new, insofar as they consolidated Australian public broadcasters as the new centre of creative management to ensure market interest in publically subsidised content. Creative managers exercise considerable power over the creative stage of production, and are responsible for coordinating the efforts of “all employees into a production unit by having them work concurrently, in the same direction and to common standards” (Ryan 126). This chapter argues that SBSi fulfilled the function of creative manager, co-ordinating collaborations between investors and independent producers, and thereby increasing the level of State and commercial intervention into independent audio-visual production. It also demonstrates how, for the first ten years of operation, SBSi worked within neo-liberal constraints to negotiate new spaces for innovative and diverse modes of filmmaking.

As elaborated in chapter one, creative labour scholarship examines labour processes as a key force shaping production and distribution of cultural goods and services. Within this field, creative management is posited as a key role moderating labour processes in the creative industries. The term creative management, and its derivative creative manager, have been adopted from the scholarship of Ryan in *Making Capital from Culture*, Hesmondhalgh in *The Cultural Industries*, and Hesmondhalgh and Baker in *Creative Labour*, to refer to

a managerial tier of production labour, which emerged from within the Australian public broadcasting sector to mediate the creative stage of independent screen production.³⁴ To elaborate how SBSi transformed independent production, it is helpful to distinguish between Commissioning Editors as a type of creative manager operating on the side of public broadcasters, and producers working independently of institutions within film and television production sectors. Producers are a type of creative manager that serve as “head of a project team” and mediate between independent producers including the director, writer, cast and crew, and senior management including the Commissioning Editor (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 96). In contrast, Commissioning Editors are principally responsible to broadcasters by whom they are employed, work within or act as the head of a department usually defined by genre, such as drama or documentary, and often manage large numbers of programs at any one time (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 96). Where producers optimise opportunities for creativity to flourish, Commissioning Editors intervene in the creative stage of production to maximise the commercial potential of content (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 96). The convergence of the public broadcasting and independent production sectors is thus characterised by a tension between “creativity and

³⁴ The concept of independence within theories of cinema, as well as within the film industry, are geographically and historically contingent, and subject to considerable debate. There is however four criteria employed to assess the independence of a given film or filmmakers: aesthetic, political, economic and/or institutional criteria. First, independent cinema has often been defined aesthetically as a deviation from classic Hollywood conventions through innovation of form, style and/or narrative (Herd; Martin “Indefinite”). Second, film can be classified as independent when themes and/or content pursue political ends. Experimentation with form and narrative is also regarded as political to the degree that it subverts of classic narrative conventions and dominant ideologies propagated therein (Camolli and Narboni). Third, films and filmmakers have traditionally been deemed independent if production, distribution and/or exhibition have been financed *outside* of the established owners of Hollywood capital (Holmlund; Tzioumakis). Australian film production has however, largely been sustained by the State via public subsidy since the 1970s. Though most films would qualify as independent when assessed according to commercial criteria, they would not when assessed in relation to institutional criteria. As such theorists of Australian cinema have tended to favour aesthetic and political criteria (Herd; Martin “Indefinite”). This thesis defines production as independent insofar as these creative decisions are made by film and television makers and not by those capitalising production.

commerce” (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 96). This tension is exemplified by the evolution of documentary production in the British public broadcasting sector since the 1990s. As a part of the neo-liberal refashioning of British public broadcasters, Commissioning Editors were installed as the “‘centre’ of creative management in the industry” (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 98-9; Born). New commercial imperatives favouring “popular factual television” programs were achieved via Commissioning Editors who directly intervened in labour processes, either in an editorial capacity, or by allocating a smaller percentage of funds toward traditional forms of documentary.³⁵ In this scenario, commissioners represent the interests of broadcasters and intervene in production to negotiate the tension between creativity and commerce in favour of the latter.

Original statistical data demonstrates discernable shifts in the types of content commissioned by SBSi, and clearly indicates a similar influence upon labour processes within the Australian independent production sector. For example,

³⁵ Documentary is a heterogeneous category that refers to diverse types of audio-visual content that represents real people, places, things and events. In relation to the British context John Corner elaborates four broad types of documentary characterised by different formal, narratological and aesthetic conventions, which have evolved from different cultural environments. First is “democratic civics” encompassing films promoting citizenship, and generally sponsored by the State via cultural institutions. Second is “journalistic inquiry and exposition,” exemplified by forms of news and current affairs reportage on television collating and presenting evidence an eyewitness testimony. Third is “radical interrogation and alternative perspective” such as *cinema verite*, which has developed via independent filmmaking. This is the “traditional” type of documentary to which Hesmondhalgh and Baker appear to be referring. It is a documentary discourse closely associated with formal, narratological and aesthetic experimentation, a strong authorial voice and often implicitly or explicitly “attempts a criticism and a correction of other accounts in circulation” rather than the establishment of objective facts (Corner 260; Nichols). The fourth category, “documentary as diversion,” has also developed within both national and international broadcasting contexts. It represents a hybridisation of these three “classic” modes of documentary with entertainment-based genres of “popular factual television,” to build new and substantial markets (Corner 259-61; FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson 10-1). As will be explicated in section three, such programs are generally in a series format because they encourage appointment viewing and can build network audiences around a particular time slot. Documentary as diversion is referred to in this thesis as *factual entertainment*, encompassing cooking and lifestyle programs and game shows, and also as *reality television*.

between 1994 and 2003, forty-one documentary series, and 289 one-off documentaries were commissioned. Between 2003 and 2007 the ratio shifted markedly, with sixty-two series and 146 one-off documentaries commissioned. While one-off documentaries continued to comprise almost sixty percent of non-fiction titles commissioned from 2003, this does represent a significant decline from phases one (1994-1996) and two (1996-2003), during which time approximately eighty-eight percent of documentaries commissioned were one-off titles. In phase three (2003-2007), SBSi also *began* commissioning factual entertainment and reality television series, which have a much broader appeal than traditional forms of documentary, and reflected the broadcaster's new mainstreaming objectives. There were thirty-seven factual and reality series commissioned in phase three (2003-2007). This data is consistent with the findings of FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson reported in chapter one, demonstrating a shift from diverse content "embodying great variation in form" and towards series, new formats and factual entertainment "with a more consistent institutional voice" shaped by established generic conventions" (171).

Similar shifts towards conventional television programs are evident with regard to drama. For example, sixty-seven short films, including animated shorts, were acquired in phase two (1996-2003), while only two were commissioned in phase three (2003-2007).³⁶ The short film is widely associated with formal and stylistic experimentation and has historically been utilised within the Australian film industry as a training mechanism for early career filmmakers (Martin, "Hold;" French "Short," "Poetry"). The abandonment of the form in phase three (2003-2007), indicates a shift away from strategies facilitating early career development and formal experimentation. With regard to feature films, twenty-five were

³⁶ There is exists considerable academic debate regarding the defining characteristics of short film. Duration is often the base line criteria, however, whether a short film is defined as under the standard ninety minute feature length (Ross 1), under sixty minutes (French, "Short" 107) or a maximum of thirty minutes (Else and Kelly 2), is subject to debate and is largely contingent on the context of definition. This thesis distinguishes between three different types of short film using terms employed by SBSi, and which are distinguished by different standards of duration. The term *short film* is defined as films with a running time of ten to thirty minutes, *short features* have a running time of approximately fifty minutes, and *interstitials* run for less than ten minutes.

commissioned in phase two (1996-2003) (an average of 3.5 per annum), compared to ten features in phase three (2003-2007) (an average of two per annum). In its last three years SBSi commissioned only two features, both of which were in the style of mainstream genre categories: the Indigenous road trip/stoner movie *Stone Bros* (Richard Frankland); and the horror film *Lake Mungo* (Joel Anderson). The decline of film formats and the rise in factual entertainment series, are indicative of mainstreaming strategies encouraging appointment viewing as a means of building SBS-TV audiences and ratings.

While commercial imperatives favouring popular formats came to be emulated by SBS, neo-liberal marketisation was also a key condition *enabling* SBSi commissioners to co-ordinate mutually beneficial collaborations with the filmmaking sector, and to generate quite innovative and diverse productions. This is because productive diversity objectives aligned SBSi with producers insofar as the institution valorised and pursued “creativity” as a *pre-condition* for successful commerce. The term *commerce* is employed in this chapter as a shorthand term, referring to the development of niche markets via innovative programming in phases one (1994-1996) and two (1996-2003), as well as mainstreaming processes pursued in phase three (2003-2007). While, as a public broadcaster, SBS-TV did not pursue profit, ambitions to build new audiences for Australian content, and thereby add value to the economy, can be loosely described as commercial. It is also worth reiterating that the term *creativity* signifies little more than a set of assumptions that valorise the artistic individual as the locus of innovation. Creativity is otherwise an ill-defined concept mainly apprehended in terms of its conceptual opposition to commerce. Creative management processes developed by SBSi evidence two broad ways of conceptualising creativity. First, creativity was perceived as synonymous with new ideas and new products, achieved via investments in early career and culturally diverse producers, whose difference from white-centric media was regarded as innovative. Second, creativity was defined in terms of craft, reflected by collaborations with reputable independent film and television makers. Craft is here a prerequisite of innovation to the degree that mastery of filmmaking techniques allowed room for experimentation, that is, deviation from tradition without compromise of quality (Smith and McKinlay, “Creative” 33). These pathways for generating diverse and

innovative content conceive of creativity as the deviation from white perspectives, and from established conventions of filmmaking respectively. Consistent with the definition of productive diversity in policy, new perspectives and new forms were pursued in the interests of opening up new audiences for Australian content.

To demonstrate how SBSi's governance of productive diversity co-ordinated new modes of production and distribution, this chapter examines creative management processes developed by the institution. To reconstruct this history the chapter is divided into three sections, which largely correspond with the periodical framework elaborated in chapter two: phase one (1994-1996), phase two (1996-2003) and phase three (2003-2007).³⁷ Section one examines phase one (1994-1996), and explicates how new systems of public subsidy installed SBSi and ABC Commissioning Editors into the independent production sector as the new centre of creative management. It examines early management processes fostering innovation, and how these consolidated a bifurcated approach for targeting new filmmakers for development, and which improved distribution opportunities for practicing filmmakers. It argues that via these processes, SBSi was quickly established as requisite and valued member of project teams.

Section two demonstrates how early strategies were augmented in phase two (1996-2003) to cultivate a diverse production community loyal to SBSi, and better accommodate SBS-TV programming requirements. The term *diversity* is used in the widest possible sense, referring to cultural forms of diversity including Indigenous, CALD, regionality, gender, sexuality, and physical ability, as well as professional diversity encompassing various the types of filmmaking practiced by independent producers (e.g. animation), and their varied levels of expertise. Section two demonstrates how cultural and professional heterogeneity

³⁷ Recall, in chapter two phase one was dated between 1980 and 1996, beginning from the establishment of SBS-TV in 1980 rather than the establishment of SBSi in 1994. This reflected the aims of chapter two, detailing the ascendancy of neo-liberalism in policy, which preceded and influenced the formation of SBSi. While this chapter also provides some historical context that predates the establishment of SBSi, it dates phase one from 1994 because the principal focus of the chapter is the creative management practices developed by SBSi beginning from this time.

was valued as innovative insofar as it gave rise to the representation of multifarious forms, aesthetics and narratives that differed markedly from white mainstream media. It details how SBSi achieved productive diversity via the coordination of *themed strands*, which shaped new commercially viable and innovative modes of filmmaking and storytelling for SBS-TV, and *drama enterprises*, which cultivated commercial distribution opportunities for independent production, via project-based collaborations with other cultural institutions and private organisations. It argues that in phase two (1996-2003), SBSi adroitly manoeuvred within a governmental logic to build niche markets for innovative content.

Section three examines dominant creative management processes in phase three (2003-2007), and demonstrates how these reflected a philosophical reconceptualisation of the creativity-commerce nexus as a source of tension. The broadcaster's new mainstreaming objectives (outlined in chapter two) were fundamental to this conceptual shift. Mainstreaming dictated a need for popular television programs capable of attracting mass audiences, displacing earlier innovation strategies devised to develop multiple niche markets. This reflects developments in British broadcasting elaborated above, insofar as SBSi commissioners privileged the commercial objectives of SBS-TV over the creative objectives of independent producers. This section applies a reflexive capitalism (Christopherson) approach to analyse new creative management in phase three (2003-2007), and demonstrates how these new objectives and processes repudiated productive diversity responsibilities. It argues that mainstreaming in phase three throws into sharp relief the significant contribution made by SBSi, for most of its life, which manoeuvred within a governmental logic to seed new production milieux, and shape new formally, aesthetically and narratively innovative modes of filmmaking and storytelling.

SECTION I

1994-1996: FACILITATING INNOVATION, PRODUCING DIVERSITY

It is the contention of this thesis that SBSi was a formidable influence shaping the convergence of independent production and public broadcasting into a single

screen industry. This convergence marks a shift away from old modes of creative labour, characterised by the clear demarcation of production milieux working within independent film and institutional television contexts. Old labour processes were also characterised by the lack of involvement of distributors and other commercial interests within the project team, particularly at the creative stage of production. This section examines SBSi in phase one (1994-1996) and identifies two key factors that helped this small, and seemingly peripheral institution, to assume central role linking independent production and commercial distribution. First was the establishment of new criteria for public film subsidy, which empowered SBSi to assume the role of creative manager within the independent production sector. The second factor was the development of creative management strategies, which aimed to cultivate the commercial viability of innovative and diverse content for the mutual benefit of SBS-TV and independent filmmakers. These strategies include: pooling resources with independent filmmakers and other film financing agencies via project-based modes of collaboration, and the exploitation of non-commercial funding mechanisms to develop new, culturally diverse talent.

1.1. Project-Based Labour in the New Creative Industries

The institution of SBSi in 1994 completed a network of state and federal film agencies whose funding criteria had been evolving for a number of years, and which naturalised broadcast television as an exhibition platform for publically subsidised content. As demonstrated in chapter two, this evolution was circumscribed by the *Creative Nation* policy, which actively promoted industry convergence as a means of rationalising public resources, and improving commercial opportunities for Australian cultural products. This sub-section outlines how State-led convergence privileged SBSi as the new centre of creative management shaping Australian independent production. It then examines creative management strategies pursued in phase one (1994-1996), and demonstrates how SBSi assiduously utilised its decision-making power to co-ordinate mutually beneficial project teams, and cultivate commercially viable opportunities for innovative and diverse filmmaking.

Australian filmmaking has traditionally been deemed independent when produced without financial contribution from production and/or distribution companies, including both commercial organisations and cultural institutions such as public broadcasters. Prior to the 1970s and the revival of the national film industry, almost all local filmmaking occurred within the Commonwealth Film Unit (CFU) and the ABC (Moran, *Projecting*; Jacka).³⁸ What little production was achieved independently of these two institutions, such as within the collective of “underground” filmmakers known as Ubu Films (1965-69), had negligible access to public or private capital (Moran, *Projecting*; Mudie 8). Patterns of public subsidy from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s consolidated dominant perceptions of independent filmmaking as antithetical to commercial mainstream and public institutional forms of production. As established in chapter one, public infrastructure and finance was bifurcated, directing lower budgeted minor streams of funding toward experimental, independent or otherwise non-commercial film projects, and higher budgeted mainstream support toward commercially promising productions (O’Regan, *Australian National* 15). Somewhat paradoxically, minor streams of public subsidy have insulated a modicum of “independent” production activity from the influence of private and public investors, distributors and broadcasters. It is for this reason that lower budgeted, publically subsidised modes of filmmaking remain synonymous with independence, creative autonomy and aesthetic innovation.

From the mid-1980s public infrastructure evolved to naturalise public broadcasters as an exhibition avenue for publically subsidised, independently produced content. The trend towards outsourcing production at the ABC and SBS, while considerably influenced by the advent of the UK’s Channel 4 in 1981,

³⁸ The Commonwealth Film Unit was a public organisation responsible for making films deemed to be of national importance. The CFU was responsible for generating the category of documentary referred to by John Corner as “democratic civics” (elaborated above), providing “publicity and propaganda for dominant versions of citizenship” (259). The Unit operated from 1945 to 1973 when it was renamed Film Australia and placed under the direction to the Australian Film Development Commission (ADFC). Film Australia was distinguished from the ADFC insofar as it had filmmaking facilities, and filmmakers were employed by the institution rather than having individual projects financed by it. See Albert Moran, *Projecting Australia*.

evolved in relation to a range of factors particular to the Australian context. Similar to those circumstances that underpinned the establishment of SBSi, and under pressure to exhibit a greater proportion of locally produced content at no extra cost to the network, the ABC began commissioning drama content from local producers as early as 1986, and documentary content from approximately 1988 (Jacka 30; Inglis 188; FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson 174). A key condition for the shift in production practice at the ABC and SBS was the restructure of support mechanisms to the film production sector in the late 1980s. The establishment of the FFC in 1988 served to correct the significant shortcomings of the 10BA tax system (elaborated in chapter one), and ensure “at least a modicum of audience exposure/distribution” for publically supported films (FitzSimons 129). From the time of its establishment until 2008, the FFC’s remit was to support projects that could prove financial commitment from the market, either in the form of distribution deals, or pre-sale agreements with broadcasters (Maddox 78; FitzSimons; FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson). The corporatisation of Film Australia, which occurred at roughly the same time, similarly led to a greater emphasis on “pre-sales and co-productions with local broadcasters, alongside structures to work regularly with local producers rather than relying on permanent employees” (FitzSimons 174). From 1994, SBSi was a key institution within this new infrastructure, which remained in place until the merger of SBSi and SBS-TV at the close of 2007, and the merger of the FFC, the AFC and Film Australia to form Screen Australia in 2008.

The institution of SBSi also consolidated a shift towards a creative industries policy paradigm expediting the convergence of disparate screen production sectors. A key objective of Australia’s 1994 *Creative Nation* policy (detailed in chapter two), was to exploit economic opportunities promised by the imminent proliferation of ICTs, such as the internet, pay and digital television, game consoles, mobile phones and other portable devices, as well as taking advantage of traditional exhibition platforms like free-to-air television. Independent filmmakers were, under the aegis of the creative industries, repositioned in relation to this burgeoning sector such that they would become an important source of content, which was vital to the profitability of these new technologies and platforms (Yudice 17; Garnham 26). SBSi served a vital function within the

new creative industries, delivering independent content to SBS-TV, and delivering new and relatively large television audiences to independent producers. The convergence of the independent production and public broadcasting sectors was also consistent with State creative industries objectives, insofar as innovative and experimental forms of filmmaking was seen to add-value to public broadcasting by enabling it to develop new niche markets. The institution of SBSi further multiplied opportunities for both sectors, by facilitating productive diversity via investment in producers of Indigenous, regional and CALD backgrounds (a point that will be resumed in the next subsection).

Creative management strategies in phase one (1994-1996) embodied the assumption that independent producers are a wellspring of innovation with the capacity to add-value to the public broadcasting sector. These strategies valorised the creative autonomy of commissioned filmmakers and are consistent with innovation strategies facilitating productive diversity. As elaborated in chapter one, a key characteristic of innovation strategies is the selection of “highly skilled individuals” for investment, and the provision of “considerable discretion to employees in how they conduct their work with minimal controls” (Hay 27). This is demonstrated by the circumstances that gave rise to SBSi’s investment in Rolf de Heer’s 1996 feature film *The Quiet Room*. SBSi’s first collaboration with de Heer evolved from an informal conversation, whereby de Heer relayed to Andy Lloyd James a range of ideas he had for future projects. Considerably impressed by de Heer’s 1993 feature *Bad Boy Bubby*, James encouraged the director to come to SBSi once he had developed an idea that he wished to pursue. James recalls that de Heer:

rang me up one day and said I’ve got this idea. He described the idea, and, we obviously went through an exchange of some notes and this that and the other, but basically we were committed to a pre-sale within the week. That was really how we were trying to operate. And most of those punts either worked well on air, or they worked well through the international screening system [as evidenced by] the list of prizes in the first two years, the AFI awards and Logies (James).

This is exemplary of the premium SBSi placed on independent producers as a source of innovation. It is also exemplary of streamlined investment processes

that efficiently assisted filmmakers to realise *their* ideas. SBSi left editorial control to filmmakers, and only intervened to ensure adequate finance and timely delivery of content that was transmittable. Where inexperienced filmmakers proposed promising ideas, SBSi teamed them with seasoned industry professionals to help see the project through to completion. Commissioning decisions were made independently of scheduling considerations, and “primetime” slots were made available to all content commissioned (James). Filmmakers were afforded a high level of creative autonomy, which contrasts considerably with the publisher-broadcaster model common to the BBC and Channel 4 in Britain (Born 778; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 96-9), and the ABC and SBS (since 2007) in Australia. Publisher-broadcasters typically reduce risk of investment by adopting an integrated approach to content acquisition, whereby scheduling, production, marketing and programming considerations all inform the commissioning process. In contrast, filmmakers commissioned in phase one (1994-1996) were targeted for their existing skills and were trusted to deliver quality work without institutional intervention. This innovation strategy, respecting creative autonomy, situated SBSi as an attractive new investor and exhibitor for independent producers.

SBSi also circumscribed the convergence of distinct independent production and public broadcasting sectors by developing collaborative relationships with film financing institutions. Motivating these collaborations was SBSi’s need to optimise production opportunities for more innovative and diverse content. An example is provided by SBSi’s earliest collaboration with Film Australia, co-financing the six-part comedy series *House Gang* (created by Gaby Mason). *House Gang* centres on three young people with intellectual disabilities, who are forced to share their rented house with their bankrupt landlord and his daughter. The program was groundbreaking, first, for its portrayal of issues confronting people with intellectual disabilities in a fictional rather than documentary format, and second, for starring actors with disabilities. The series, which ran for two seasons (1996 and 1998), was the brainchild of producer Gabby Mason, who in 1995 pitched the idea to James at SBSi. James was extremely enthusiastic about the concept as it fit with ambitions at SBSi to broaden its representation of cultural diversity, to include axes of difference other than race and ethnicity, and

to do so through a fictional format. However, SBSi's financial limitations required another agency to come on board before they could risk committing to the project. Thus, James took the idea to his colleague Chris Oliver who, at the time, worked as an Executive Producer at Film Australia. Oliver was also keen to get involved with *House Gang*, because it presented Film Australia with the long sought after opportunity to tackle the theme of disability through drama, as opposed to documentary.

The series was produced as a Film Australia National Interest Program (NIP) with production company Alfred Road Films.³⁹ Oliver shared the role of Executive Producer with SBSi Commissioning Editor for Drama, Barbara Mariotti, who both actively sought additional finance from a range of other institutions. Production assistance was provided by the AFC, and production and development assistance by the NSW FTO. Other institutions that became involved in the project at different stages include, the peak body in NSW for promoting and providing opportunities for people with disability to participate in the arts and cultural sector, Accessible Arts Inc, the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, and the Department of Human Services and Health. Additionally, the UK's Channel 4 purchased the broadcast rights for the first series, and pre-purchased the rights for the second. *House Gang* provides a pertinent example of how SBSi actively co-ordinated project-based investment teams, to facilitate new and groundbreaking representations of Australian cultural diversity, without actually intervening in creative decisions. These collaborations conditioned integrated production and distribution practices that emulated the Hollywood Organisational Model (Rifkin). As established in chapter one, within the Hollywood Organisational Model, film and television producers generate the budget for their project via the pre-sale of reproduction, distribution and/or exhibition rights to multiple investors. SBSi's active co-ordination of investment

³⁹ The National Interest Program was triennially funded by the federal government and administered by Film Australia from 1989. The purpose of the program was "explicitly civic" in that it directed funds towards projects that dealt with matters deemed to be of "national interest", regardless of genre, and was a "curious linchpin of an organisation whose new structure was ostensibly commercial" (FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson 148).

partners constitutes a fundamental shift in local independent production practice as it installed SBS-TV into “an otherwise independent labour process” (Ryan 127). Throughout phase one (1994-1996), SBSi intervened in investment processes to co-ordinate financial collaborations with other public and private corporations, to protect the network’s investment and ensure completion of commissioned projects. This process also bolstered opportunities for the production of innovative content by spreading the risk of investment. The other key intervention performed by SBSi was ensuring adequate multicultural representation within each project-team. Such interventions reflected productive diversity responsibilities insofar as it ensured employment for culturally diverse persons in primary creative roles, as well as amongst technical workers including sound engineers, camera operators, and lighting technicians.

In summary, this sub-section has outlined how the Australian film and television infrastructure evolved from the 1980s, such that independent filmmakers were required to seek pre-sale finance from distributors and exhibitors to trigger public subsidy for projects. It argued that SBSi was successfully established as a requisite and valued component of this new infrastructure via two key innovation strategies, which were accepted by the filmmaking community as mutually beneficial. The first strategy targeted independent filmmakers as a key source of innovative content with the capacity to develop new niche audiences and add value to SBS-TV. Producers valued SBSi in turn, on the basis that the institution respected their creative autonomy, and added value to content by developing new primetime television audiences for it. The second strategy was the active co-ordination of investment from additional sources to optimise opportunities for the completion and dissemination of innovative content. As demonstrated via the example of *House Gang*, SBSi actively co-ordinated project teams, enabling all collaborators to spread risk, guaranteeing exhibition and thereby rendering formally, aesthetically and narratively challenging content a more commercially viable investment. The next sub-section examines a third innovation strategy, also developed in phase one (1994-1996), which utilised the FFC documentary accord to cultivate the resource of productive diversity, and improve employment opportunities for aspiring and culturally diverse filmmakers.

1.2. Fresh Talent and New Voices

In the previous sub-section it was established that SBSi achieved productive diversity via investments in highly skilled professionals. This added cultural value to the SBS name via the exhibition of innovative content, which in turn added economic value to the independent sector via exposure to television audiences. SBSi was also however, required to generate innovative content by directing investment toward culturally diverse filmmakers. This sub-section details how SBSi exploited the FFC documentary accord system in phase one (1994-1996) to overcome structural disadvantage and create new employment opportunities for female, Indigenous and CALD producers. The success of this strategy is assessed via the comparison of FFC accord and non-accord documentaries, the analysis of personnel credited in key creative roles, and the examination of the formal and thematic characteristics of content. It argues that while this strategy only marginally improved employment opportunities for Indigenous and CALD filmmakers, it was fruitful insofar as it secured the future of the institution.

Documentary was the dominant format commissioned in phase one (1994-1996). This was largely determined by the professional experience of the inaugural staff. In addition to General Manager Andy Lloyd James and his assistant Sue Finch, the organisation was initially staffed with only three Commissioning Editors (then referred to as Executive Producers). Geoff Barnes, David White and Barbara Mariotti were all experienced documentary producers who had been a part of the SBS in-house production team for a number of years. Franco di Chiera, who had independently produced documentaries and series for SBS from 1985 (*A Change of Face*, *Under the Skin*), joined the commissioning team in 1995, and assumed the role of Executive Producer for Drama (1995-1997). It was also in 1995 that Julie Cottrell-Dormer was appointed Business Affairs Manager (1995-2004). The appointment of a small staff steeped in SBS culture was expedient and enabled an immediate start to commissioning documentary content. It was not until 1995, when di Chiera joined the team, that SBSi was able to acquire fictional content, at which point Mariotti also became responsible for

drama as well as documentary commissions.⁴⁰ All seventeen programs commissioned in the initial year were one-off documentaries.

The second important factor circumscribing SBSi's strong focus on documentary was the accord already established between SBS-TV and the FFC. Documentary accords between the FFC and Australia's public broadcasters were initially established in 1991-92 as means of regulating pre-sale agreements, and provided a measure of certainty to all parties involved. Under the accord system the FFC provided the balance of finance to a pre-determined number of one-off documentaries that had attracted a pre-sale from a public broadcaster.⁴¹ The first accord was forged between the ABC and the FFC in 1991 for twenty documentaries per year, and by 1992 SBS had entered into an accord for ten documentaries per year (FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson 172). From 1994, SBSi assumed responsibility for the accord between SBS-TV and the FFC. To trigger FFC funding under the mechanism, broadcasters were required to commit between twenty-five and thirty-five percent of a project's budget in the form of pre-sale for transmission rights. This percentage was considerably smaller than the pre-sale usually required by the FFC outside of the accord system, and the additional expectation that producers secure international distribution was waived. The second requirement was that documentary budgets not exceed a funding cap. Of the nine accord documentaries commissioned in the first year, six had a budget of less than \$195,000. The most expensive accord documentary funded between 1994 and 1996 was *Raskols* (Sally Browning and Anou Borrey) with a budget of \$253,000. The final criterion was that subject matter be of cultural relevance to Australians, which again distinguished the accord from other FFC financing processes which approved investment according to demonstrated market interest (Maddox 77). Having met these three criteria the FFC was obliged to approve finance for any documentary proposed by SBSi.

⁴⁰ See Appendix four for full list of documentary commissions for 1994-95 financial year.

⁴¹ The only commercial network that has entered into documentary accords with the FFC has been Channel 7, though these have regularly lapsed. Free to air commercial networks have not been required by regulation to develop a pre-determined quantity of independently produced documentary, and as such, the accord model has not presented itself as an attractive model of finance (FitzSimons 176).

The FFC accord presented a unique opportunity to support fresh talent and new voices, as well as diversify the thematic and narrative concerns addressed by television documentary. From the outset SBSi staff endeavoured to provide inexperienced and culturally diverse filmmakers with the opportunity to make content for broadcast television, and to help them develop their craft and careers. By nurturing a new generation of content producers, who would have otherwise been excluded from participation in Australia's white-centric media, SBSi distinguished itself as a vital pathway for aspiring and culturally diverse documentarians. Inexperienced filmmakers did however represent a high-risk investment. The accord system helped SBSi to circumvent problems attracting co-investors to these projects because FFC funding was automatically triggered when the three criteria (cultural pertinence, funding cap and pre-sale contribution) were met. Despite the low potential for financial recuperation, the FFC, then under the direction of John Morris, fully supported SBSi's utilisation of the accord as an unofficial means of developing a new generation of filmmakers.

The tendency toward high-risk investments in new filmmakers and controversial content was also underpinned by the need to swiftly develop a formidable reputation, and secure the future of the institution. As established in chapter two, the Special Production Fund was a terminal funding arrangement, and its renewal was contingent on the performance of SBSi in its first years of operation. Attracting audiences to the network via advertising was beyond the financial reach of SBSi, and so the institution had to create a buzz around its product: "We knew that it didn't really matter necessarily if program X wasn't of the highest quality, just as long as the conversation that took place in it was of the highest quality" (James). To compensate for uneven production values, SBSi generated publicity by selecting projects with strong and oftentimes controversial subject matter. In this respect, creative management processes diverged from innovation strategies elaborated above, which generally make long-term investments in "recruitment, training, performance appraisal, team management, flexible workgroups and succession planning" (Hay 27). In this scenario "failure is tolerated" because investment in personnel will eventually result in a highly innovative and commercially successful products, and thereby offset the

considerable losses accrued (Hay 27). While SBSi similarly invested in promising talent, it lacked the time and resources to develop that talent. By selecting projects on the strength of their ideas, SBSi optimised its capacity to attract publicity toward the institution and the content it commissioned. As established in chapter two, this strategy was successful insofar as government recognised critical acclaim received, and renewed the Special Production Fund on that basis. This sub-section will now consider the success of the strategy in terms of productive diversity ambitions.

Of the nine documentaries commissioned in 1994-95 via the SBSi-FFC accord, a minimum of five provided funding to early career filmmakers: producer/director Sally Browning, writer/director Sarah Stephens, writer/director Jacquelynne Willcox, producer/director/writer Sally Ingleton, and director/producer team Iain and Jacqueline Gillespie. *Raskols*, a 53-minute documentary commissioned from Browning, detailed the rise of “raskol” gangs in Papua New Guinea that emerged in response to the economic and political exploitation of the nation by a small government elite. *Raskols* was the first documentary directed and produced by Browning. *Not a Nice Job for a Jewish Girl*, about a young woman who gives up a career as a lawyer and moves to Jerusalem to study to become a Rabbi, was the first of two documentaries written and produced by Jacquelynne Willcox in 1994. Sally Ingleton, who had been active as a producer, writer and director from the late 1980s delivered her documentary *The Isabellas: The Long March* to SBSi in 1995. The film recounted the desert journey undertaken by a group of refugees that landed on the shores of far north Western Australia, and their subsequent detention at Port Hedland. The 1994 *Untold Desires* explored the struggle of people with disability to be recognised as sexual beings. It provided Sarah Stephens with her first opportunity to write and direct a documentary for television. Finally, the 1994 documentary *Empty Arms, Broken Hearts* explored the international issue of parental child abduction from the perspective of producer and narrator Jacqueline Gillespie. In 1992 Gillespie’s two young children were smuggled out of Australia by their Malaysian father. This appears to be the only film ever produced by Jacqueline Gillespie, and the second of two written and directed by Iain Gillespie.

While SBSi utilised the FFC accord to achieve productive diversity ambitions, there is little evidence to suggest that this provided Indigenous and CALD peoples with more employment opportunities. The first round of SBSi-FFC accords does however, evidence overwhelming support for inexperienced and female documentarians. The slate of accord documentaries produced in this first year also evidences the successful realisation of content that addresses diverse themes, including gender, sexuality, religion, and disability. The quality of the content commissioned via the accord mechanism was however, uneven (James). This is attributable to the relative inexperience of many filmmakers. Although SBSi did aim to build experienced filmmaking teams around new talent, the FFC accords were not explicitly structured to provide support in the form of training. Despite this shortfall it was an important first step allowing SBSi to finance some break-through productions, and develop a reputation for bold commissioning decisions. Most significantly, it represents the first *formal* mechanism by which SBSi involved other cultural institutions in productive diversity processes. As will be demonstrated in section two, new workshops and mentorship programs were co-ordinated by SBSi throughout phase two (1996-2003), to better accommodate productive diversity ambitions.

While the accord system represents an important intervention into institutional cultures of funding and production, greater engagement with ethnic and racial diversity is evidenced in documentaries acquired outside of the accord system.⁴²

⁴² While some of these commissions did attract FFC finance they must not be confused with the category of “non-accord” documentaries. Non-accord documentaries within the context of the FFC refer to those documentaries that are co-financed with public broadcasters outside of the accord agreement. The category arose in the mid-1990s and designates an avenue for funding projects that do not meet the criteria stipulated within the accord, for instance, films may exceed the budget cap or the issues being treated may not be deemed of cultural relevance to Australians (FitzSimons 176). To qualify for funding under the non-accord category, documentaries must demonstrate market interest, primarily by securing international distribution as well as a (higher) pre-sale from a local broadcaster, thus at least providing the opportunity for the FFC to recoup some of its investment via the distribution of content on multiple platforms (Maddox 77; FitzSimons 176). The documentaries discussed in this section were not commissioned as part of the FFC non-accord category unless otherwise stipulated.

Over the first two years of operation, SBSi used a substantial portion of its SBS appropriation to commission another sixteen documentaries (eight per annum), though it appears not all were completed. Documentaries funded independently of the accord includes Barbara Anna Chobocky's 1994 *The Raid*. This film offers an alternative perspective to that provided by the mainstream Australian media, regarding the "attack" by Iranian refugees on their embassy in Canberra in 1992. Thematically, it explores the complex experience of trauma, identity and belonging experienced by political exiles. Another example is the award-winning documentary *Hell Bento!* directed by Andrew Sully and Anna Broinowski. This film deploys a range of formal and stylistic techniques to engineer a confronting encounter with the Japanese counter-culture portrayed. Another three of the sixteen commissions are by, or about, Indigenous people, and the challenges faced by communities as a consequence of colonialism. Cathy Eatock's 1995 documentary *Speak Quiet, Speak Strong*, opens out a space for cross-cultural discussion regarding domestic violence in Indigenous communities. The 1996 *Dhuway*, written by Noel Pearson and directed by Lew Griffiths, tells of the struggle of the Yidhuwarra people to deal with the effects of dispersal, dispossession and exile from their tribal land, and the legal battle to have it returned to their community. Finally, Frances Calvert's 1997 *Cracks in the Mask* follows Torres Strait Islander, Ephriam Bani, on his quest to European museums to have cultural artefacts returned to pacific communities. While *Speak Quiet, Speak Strong* attracted investment from both the AFC and the FFC, SBSi appears to be the sole investor in the other two films. This suggests that SBSi encountered difficulties attracting co-investors to Indigenous productions in phase one (1994-1996).

Though formal innovation was not a dominant characteristic in phase one (1994-1996), all documentaries commissioned by SBSi evidence a strong commitment to representing a diversity of cultural identities and topics. The culture of privileging bold ideas over demonstrated craft was a risk, though one rewarded from the outset. For instance, *Untold Desires* garnered a number of local and international awards including an AFI for Best Television Documentary, a Logie and an International Human Rights Award for Best Documentary. *Raskols* was nominated for three AFI awards in 1995. Other awarded documentaries include

The Raid, Hell Bento! and *The Hillmen* (Steve Thomas). In the 1996-97 financial year, SBS reported that SBSi content had won an aggregate of thirty-two prizes, commendations and nominations (12). While some of these awards were local television awards, many were won via participation in film festivals. The perceived importance of critical acclaim to the early survival of SBSi underpinned the value that staff placed upon participation in film festivals through to the end of the phase two (1996-2003), a point that will be resumed in section two.

In summary, section one argued that in phase one (1994-1996), SBSi carefully manoeuvred within a neo-liberal regime to improve distribution opportunities for established independent filmmakers on the one hand, and to cultivate new employment opportunities for aspiring Indigenous and CALD filmmakers on the other. Both creative management strategies were circumscribed by a creative industries policy context, which promoted cross funding and resource sharing between content creators, investors and distributors. These strategies were also shaped by a productive diversity policy, which endowed SBSi with a very specific role within the creative industries; to add value to the mainstream economy by developing niche markets via the exhibition of innovative and diverse products. As demonstrated, SBSi achieved these aims by actively co-ordinating project teams, thereby shaping a culture of collaboration amongst independent producers, film financing agencies and SBS-TV. Financial collaboration enabled innovation because it spread the burden of investment reducing potential losses accrued by any one collaborator. Collaboration also linked production finance to a guaranteed platform of exhibition via SBS-TV, delivering audiences to producers and adding value to the production sector. Insofar as SBS-TV gained access to accomplished productions, collaborations with independent producers also added value to the broadcasting sector. The central role performed by SBSi, co-ordinating project-based production, evidences an extremely important development whereby public broadcasters evolved into a key decision-making bodies shaping independent filmmaking. This creative management function was ordained by the State in the interests of improving the commercial performance of the sector. It was however, ratified by industry practitioners who mutually benefited from SBSi, which, in phase one

(1994-1996), actively supported bold and risky projects. The creative exploitation of the FFC documentary accord to seed new generation of producers was also a significant demonstration of good faith. While the use of the accord to improve employment for Indigenous and CALD filmmaking yielded mixed results, it was an important learning curve highlighting important gaps in the industry with regard to training and early career development. The next section examines initiatives developed in phase two (1996-2003) to address these gaps, and better facilitate productive diversity.

SECTION 2

1996-2003: SEEDING AN INNOVATIVE AND DIVERSE PRODUCTION ECOLOGY

In phase two (1996-2003), SBSi developed more sophisticated creative management processes, significantly improving productive diversity within the independent production sector. These processes aimed: to improve the quality and range of training opportunities for early career filmmakers from Indigenous, regional and CALD backgrounds; develop larger, more consistent SBS-TV audiences for commissioned content; and generate substantially more drama content. Moreover, the processes devised to achieve these objectives were specifically designed to benefit other agents and agencies operating within the screen industry. This section argues that, via these objectives and processes, SBSi seeded a diverse and innovative production ecology. To demonstrate this argument, this section begins with an examination of how new staff utilised their independent production experience to develop inter-firm alliances, new modes of filmmaking and new financing pathways. This section then examines numerous themed stands, a specific mode of filmmaking favoured by SBSi, to demonstrate how staff worked collaboratively with other institutions to develop culturally diverse talent, and generate marketable content for SBS-TV. Finally, this section examines drama enterprises, a type of financing pathway, to demonstrate how SBSi also co-ordinated commercial distribution opportunities to generate new audiences for innovative content. Both strategies are exemplary of how SBSi manoeuvred within a governmental logic to seed diverse production milieux, and innovative modes of filmmaking and storytelling.

2.1. Co-ordinating Inter-Firm Alliances

This sub-section argues that the appointment of experienced independent producers to senior positions at SBSi in phase two (1996-2003), underwrote the development of more sophisticated processes to achieve productive diversity. These objectives and processes refined those initiated in phase one (1994-1996), which cultivated productive diversity by developing new culturally diverse filmmakers on the one hand, and improved distribution opportunities for independent filmmakers on the other. It demonstrates how independent production experience equipped staff with the skills and resources to tailor common creative management strategies, known as *inter-firm alliances* and *formatting*, and harmonise creativity and commerce objectives. Successful realisation of productive diversity goals via these strategies is demonstrated in the following two sub-sections via examples.

As stated in the introduction, SBSi commissioners were in phase two (1996-2003) unique among broadcasters, insofar as creativity was nurtured as a pre-condition for developing new SBS-TV audiences. A key factor underwriting creativity and commerce as mutually reinforcing was the strong representation of independent producers amongst SBSi staff. All General Managers, subsequent to James' departure in early 1996, were experienced independent producers, including Bridget Ikin (1996-2000), Glenys Rowe (2000-2005) and Acting General Managers Tristiam Miall (1996) – producer of *Strictly Ballroom* - and Franco di Chiera (2000). Commissioning Editors for Documentary Claire Jager (1996-1998), John Hughes (1998-2001), and Ned Lander (2001-2005), as well as part-time consultants to SBSi, Pat Fiske, Nick Torrens and Tom Zubrycki, were all experienced documentarians. Commissioning Editors for Drama were similarly experienced independent producers. Barbara Masel (1996-1999) was a script editor, and Debbie Lee (1999-2005) was a series producer for the SBS experimental shorts program *Eat Carpet*, and also had experience as an independent producer. Finally, Miranda Dear (2000-2005) had previously worked for the UK's Channel 4 as Senior Film Buyer, and in Australia as Film Four's Acquisition and Production Consultant. The few commissioners that came to SBSi from an exclusively broadcasting background include Courtney Gibson

(1998-2003), who had worked as an Executive Producer within SBS-TV, and Marie Thomas (2002-2005), who had worked with the UK's Channel 4 as a Commissioning Editor.

Independent producers brought to their roles as General Managers and Commissioning Editors access to professional networks, and an intimate knowledge of film production and financing processes. In this respect, the appointment of independent producers, to key positions within SBSi, transposed those labour processes and knowledge flows identified by scholars as typical within other national public broadcasting sectors. For example, downsizing of State-bureaucratic institutions, such as the BBC from the 1990s, saw a rise in the number of former employees working as “infomediaries” or “knowledge brokers” within the British independent production sector (Bilton, *Management* 56). *Knowledge broker* is a term used by Bilton to refer to freelance creative managers, whose principal function is to negotiate complex and dispersed labour networks, and connect creative personnel to sources of finance and a means of distribution. Former broadcasting “insiders” are particularly well placed within the network to “connect independent productions with the commissioning editors of the major broadcasters” (Bilton, *Management* 57). In this scenario, creative managers position themselves as “switching centres...where ideas and synapses of the total system are filtered and processed” (Bilton, *Management* 57). While the process of actively mediating between the distinct creative objectives of independent producers, and the commercial objectives of broadcasters, reshapes production and distribution practices by introducing a new tier of administrative labour, it is a role that does little to disrupt the accepted wisdom that commerce is antithetical to creativity. Conversely, the appointment of independent producers to senior positions within SBSi opened up the possibility to work *with* the production sector and develop a culture consistent with the ethos and objectives of productive diversity, whereby creativity and commerce are mutually reinforcing. This is not the product of a natural pre-disposition of independent producers toward creativity. Rather, it is a product of the extensive experience and contacts accrued by SBSi staff as independent producers. This experience allowed staff to identify and develop opportunities for mutually beneficial collaborations.

Consistent with assumptions prevalent in phase one (1994-1996), new talent was identified by SBSi staff as a key source of innovation capable of revitalising the industry and adding value to SBS-TV. For Ikin the generation of independent producers who had established themselves in the 1970s, such as documentarian Dennis O'Rourke, were well served by institutions such as the ABC. Indeed, the ABC had trained many of filmmakers, "had nurtured their work and had screened it, and would continue to commission new work from them" (Ikin). By the 1990s, such "cadetships and formal apprenticeships" had become an "anachronism" within the industry (FitzSimons 178). It is within this context that Ikin identified the emerging generation of producers, particularly of Indigenous and CALD heritage, as those for whom SBSi could become an indispensable resource. Ikin sought to:

look beyond the obvious and, find ways of making SBS ... support their work, love their work, present it well on the channel, and ... having had one good experience with SBS that they would tend to come back and offer the channel more (Ikin).

Ikin also aimed to address the lack of support for filmmakers located outside of the Sydney-Melbourne nexus. When appointed General Manager, Ikin travelled Australia, including to key regional towns, to meet, and strengthen relationships, with filmmakers and state film financing agencies such as ScreenWest and the South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC). The trip helped to inform processes for generating more work from regional areas, which was for Ikin, an important role for a national broadcaster to perform. The other goal was to revive the institution itself. It appears that little commissioning activity had occurred between James' departure and Ikin's appointment. Ikin recalls that when she came onboard, SBSi was in a "moribund spot:" there was "a draw full of unattended applications that had just kind of languished there." The trip around Australia served to re-sell the idea of SBSi to producers, to reassure them that SBSi was back in business and would respond to their applications. The trip thus consolidated a strong network of independent producers around the institution.

Creative management processes devised to achieve these objectives drew on the extensive production experience of new staff to target gaps in existing institutional support systems, and tendered SBS-TV as an effective solution for

these industrial problems. To build new and innovative production milieux, loyal to SBS-TV, staff strategically exploited industry contacts and developed inter-firm alliances with state and federal film financing organisations. *Inter-firm alliances* is a term that refers to contractual relationships developed between different organisations to achieve a range of goals, including the reduction of production costs, dispersal of investment risk, and accessing the complement of labour skills necessary to ensure efficient production and distribution of content (Hesmondhalgh, *Cultural* 176-7). SBSi was ultimately ill equipped to independently resource career and craft development programs, thus a key imperative underwriting participation in inter-firm alliances was accessing those resources within other institutions. The AFC was for instance, a particularly attractive partner for SBSi. This was because of its industry function supporting and developing new talent, its emerging focus on Indigenous filmmaking, as well as being a key source of revenue for experimental and innovative projects (O'Regan, *Australian National* 15). As indicated above, state agencies such as the SAFC, also represented ideal funding partners to support new talent, because of their mutual interest in developing local filmmakers and regional filmmaking hubs. SBSi vaunted SBS-TV as a much needed exhibition platform, through which these institutions could showcase their investments and demonstrate to government market performance. In so doing SBSi challenged the common perception amongst independent producers that television represented a crass commercial medium, inimical to their creative ambition (Rowe).

The inter-firm alliances developed between SBSi and other institutions also generated new modes of filmmaking. A key factor shaping these modes of filmmaking was the conventions of television exhibition, which required creative management interventions known as “formatting” (Ryan 114-23; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 14). *Formatting* is broadly defined as categories devised by creative managers to guide investment decisions, and match audiences to texts at the conceptual stage of production (Ryan 114-123; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 14). These categories encompass recognisable *formats* such as feature film, short film, short feature, interstitials, feature documentary, comedy series, drama series, factual entertainment and reality television series. It also refers to genre categories that reflect thematic, narrative or emotional *content*, that are not

exclusive to any one format such as horror, comedy, and drama. *Formatting* may also refer to categorisations based on style or technique such as animation, experimental or avant-garde.⁴³ The dominant type of formatting developed in phase two (1996-2003), is referred to as *themed strands*, and represented a concerted approach to conceiving, planning, commissioning, producing, promoting and scheduling multiple packages of programs via inter-firm alliances. SBSi devised themed strands to commission series' comprised of one-off programs, approximately twenty-six minutes in length, from different filmmaking teams, all addressing a single and very broadly defined topic (FitzSimons 178).⁴⁴ As will be elaborated in the next sub-section, the restrictions placed on duration and theme allowed SBS-TV to schedule one-off productions in a series format, and thereby build regular audiences around the strand. Moreover, it provided early career filmmakers with the opportunity to develop their skills through short form filmmaking.

Drama enterprises represent another strategy developed via inter-firm alliances to increase the presence of local drama on the network. Unlike themed strands, *drama enterprises* is not an industry term, but has been coined within this study. As will be elaborated below, drama enterprises are a type of financing pathway insofar as they attempted to develop systematic connections between production finance and distribution opportunities. Drama enterprises were ultimately failed attempts to build accords with the AFC and with distributors, referred to respectively as *development pathways* and *distributor alliances*. As

⁴³ The term *formatting* is used within creative labour scholarships to describe the broad categories developed by creative managers to match content to audiences, and must be distinguished from the concept of *new format* programs. *New format* refers to specific types of programs that deliver informational content in more entertaining styles, for instance, programs that combine traditional documentary and reality TV conventions (Keane and Moran 158-9). New format programs represent a distinct formatting strategy, which was also pursued by SBSi in phase three (2003-2007), and which will be elaborated in greater detail in section three of this chapter.

⁴⁴ Consistent with the conventions of the standard television schedule, programs with a duration of approximately twenty-six minutes were commissioned to fit into the television half hour, which is several minutes short of thirty minutes to allow some time for advertising. Likewise, programs commissioned for the television hour averaged a duration of approximately fifty-two minutes.

elaborated in section one, accords are ongoing collaborative agreements between organisations, and stipulate set criteria for co-funding a set number of projects per annum.

In summary, creative management objectives and processes were, in phase two (1996-2003), shaped by the appointment of new SBSi staff steeped in independent production culture. Independent filmmakers inhabited SBSi and moulded the institution into a relevant creative management service. This service worked with independent producers and other cultural institutions to create much needed training and distribution opportunities, and thereby cultivate a culture consistent with the ethos and objectives of productive diversity. Processes, developed to nurture a new community of producers, aimed to replenish the screen industry with fresh, diverse and loyal talent, and germinate an ongoing source of original content with which SBS-TV could target new audiences. The strategic development of inter-firm alliances to achieve these aims similarly addressed unmet needs within the industry, namely the lack of exhibition platforms available to other cultural institutions to showcase their investments. A key process developed to pool resources and achieve mutual aims was the themed strand, a new mode of filmmaking devised to train and mentor aspiring producers, particularly from Indigenous, regional and CALD backgrounds. The second key process was drama enterprises, a type of financing pathway that attempted to integrate production and distribution processes. These two processes are examined in the next two sub-sections.

2.2. The Themed Strand

The themed strand was the single most effective strategy developed by SBSi to improve productive diversity in the Australian screen industry. This was because the themed strand successfully pooled resources with partner institutions to harmonise creativity and commerce objectives, to mentor a new generation of culturally diverse producers, and generate marketable content for SBS-TV. To demonstrate this argument, this sub-section first provides a comprehensive definition of the themed strand, identifying those features that strategically accommodated twin imperatives toward creativity and commerce. It then

conducts an analysis of four different strands and how they contributed to the productive diversity of the screen industry. These strands are: *Hybrid Life* developing CALD producers, *Australia by Numbers* targeting regional producers, the *Indigenous Drama Initiative (IDI)* diversifying career opportunities for Indigenous producers, and *Unfinished Business*, which represents a unique and multi-directional intervention into the production and broadcast of Indigenous content. As this sub-section demonstrates, SBSi made a considerable contribution to Indigenous film and television in particular, the legacy of which persists into the present via the vibrant milieu of filmmakers that it helped to train.

The themed strand represents a mode of filmmaking that accommodated the different ambitions of SBS-TV, SBSi, allied investors and independent producers. The themed strand was first developed by SBS-TV in 1989 when it commissioned the series *Australian Mosaic* (FitzSimons 178). It was devised as a variation of both the time slot and the television series, and was “designed to incorporate the work of several individual independent film-makers in a format that nevertheless encourages an audience to tune in weekly for programming with a known theme” (FitzSimons 178). Consonant with the scheduling demands of television broadcast, content was required to comply with a duration set by SBS-TV, which was ordinarily twenty-six minutes, though some strands varied according to need (FitzSimons 178). As a commissioning strategy, the themed strand was an important development for SBS-TV. It allowed programmers to schedule and market content as a loosely connected series, and thereby build regular audiences over consecutive weeks. Themed strands were also beneficial for SBS-TV insofar as the quality of content commissioned from early career filmmakers was more consistent. An important feature of the themed strand was the training opportunities provided to emerging filmmakers, who were typically teamed with established producers, and provided with workshops prior to production (FitzSimons 178). For the AFC, strands represented an opportunity to link exhibition opportunities to their own filmmaker development programs. Similarly, for state agencies, strands provided early career opportunities for local filmmakers, which benefited local industries. SBSi predominantly utilised themed strands to channel existing resources available via other institutions,

toward aspiring filmmakers systematically disadvantaged as a consequence of cultural background, and regional location.

What is notable about the themed strand is that it optimised the commercial potential of content without sacrificing its commitment to creativity and innovation. For example, the standardised duration of roughly twenty-six minutes neatly dovetailed with established film practice, which earmarked the short film category to support experimental forms, and provide career stepping-stones for new filmmakers (Martin, “Hold:” French, “Short,” “Poetry”). Moreover, the requirement that producers address a predetermined theme enabled programmers to develop niche audiences around otherwise diverse slates of content. The predetermined theme directed filmmakers to engage with issues around identity and history, themes were however, sufficiently broad so as to ensure a diversity of form, aesthetic and narrative.

Hybrid Life (2001)

Hybrid Life was a themed strand developed in the 1999-2000 financial year, and was comprised of seven documentaries and four dramas. Each of these documentaries was commissioned from a different production team, and conformed to a twenty-six minute duration, allowing them to be screened as a series, in the same weekly slot and over consecutive weeks. *Hybrid Life* specifically invited emerging filmmakers to produce content that thematically and formally engaged with their experiences of growing up as second and third generation migrant Australians, that is, with a culturally hybrid identity (for an analysis of content see Smail, “Narrating” 401-6). The strand embodied hybridity in several ways: via the subject matter of the films; the hybridity of documentary and drama content that compromised the series; and the hybrid documentary form, which was filmic insofar as it encouraged filmmakers to experiment with form and aesthetics, and televisual in terms of its adherence to prescribed duration and idea.

An important influence on the kinds of content commissioned via the scheme was Hughes’ agenda to reintroduce highly authored and experimental documentary content to the SBS-TV schedule. As an experienced independent documentarian,

Hughes exhibited a preference for “highly authored works,” described as formally innovative essay films, and more properly categorised as “creative documentary” rather than the formulaic and excessively signposted forms of factual entertainment (Hughes). Hughes recalls that around the time he took up the position as Commissioning Editor in 1999, the late night slot for feature length documentary was withdrawn from the SBS-TV schedule. This change made it difficult to commission creative documentaries that tended to be feature length. Where Hughes did commission feature length films, filmmakers were required to provide SBSi with a fifty-two minute version that could be scheduled in an existing documentary slot. This approach was particularly unsuitable for creative documentary, as it disrupted the formal integrity of the commissioned work. *Hybrid Life* represented a much more satisfactory marriage of creativity and commerce objectives, and invited filmmakers to both thematically and formally express experiences of cultural hybridity, using a short film form specifically tailored to the television half hour.

To fund the strand, Ikin crafted a submission for finance via the Centenary of Federation Fund. The fund was a federal initiative that made additional public finance available to various industrial sectors, including to cultural practitioners, interested in producing work celebrating Australia’s one hundred year anniversary as a nation. The theme of cultural hybridity strategically positioned SBS-TV as likely candidate for funding, as it explicitly spoke to the legislated mandate of the broadcaster, and contributed a CALD perspective to celebrations planned for 2001. Funding via the Centenary of Federation Fund precluded that this strand would only be funded for a single round, unlike other strands such as *Australia by Numbers*, which was an ongoing strand that eventually evolved into a regular slot. *Hybrid Life* stands out as an important scheme fostering productive diversity, insofar as it afforded CALD filmmakers considerable creative latitude at the same time that it catered to the scheduling demands of television exhibition.

***Australia by Numbers* (2001-2)**

Australia by Numbers was a themed strand originally developed in 1999-2000, to generate content from aspiring filmmakers in regional Australia. Consistent with

other themed strands, *Australia by Numbers* was developed to commission a slate of one-off twenty-six minute documentaries from different production teams, each of which addressed a single broad theme. Originally entitled *Space Stories*, content commissioned via the strand was united by the representations of different towns and cities rudimentarily delineated by postcode; hence titles such as *Adaminaby 2630* (Jeannine Baker) and *Boulia 4829* (Jason Webb). This extremely broad theme represented diversity through the rubric of place, and was specifically developed to attract state agencies into a formalised agreement with standard criteria for collaborative funding.

In contrast to *Hybrid Life*, *Australia by Numbers* evolved directly from scheduling difficulties encountered by SBS-TV. Prior to establishing the strand, documentaries co-financed with individual state agencies comprised an odd assortment of one-off programs that varied in length, and as such, were extremely difficult to program. It was however important to maintain alliances with state agencies. As indicated above, new talent from regional Australia was also strategically targeted to achieve innovation by diversifying perspectives. These alliances were also lucrative insofar as state institutions valued the exhibition platform provided by SBS-TV, and were thus a reliable source of finance. The solution developed by SBSi was to streamline existing, informal inter-firm alliances with different state bodies, and create a single strand united by a theme broad enough to still facilitate innovation and diversity. Consistent with the features of *Hybrid Life*, *Australia by Numbers* harmonised creative and commercial objectives by linking different one-off documentaries via the theme of place, and via standardised duration allowing schedulers to build audiences for the content. A considerable shortfall of the strand was that neither SBSi nor state agencies were resourced to help emerging filmmakers to hone their craft.

The following year the strand was evolved into the slot *Inside Australia*, which again, broadened the theme beyond specific locations, though it was still geographically bounded by the idea of nation. While productions funded via alliances with state organisations were now channelled into *Inside Australia*, so too were all other locally produced twenty-six minute documentaries. The scheduling of all documentaries about Australia and Australians, as a part of a

niche category, was only plausible on a broadcaster such as SBS-TV, which still sourced the majority of its content from international producers and distributors. The evolution of *Australia by Numbers* demonstrates a strong focus on commercial objectives, to the degree that it aimed to secure a regular slot for innovative and diverse content, and around which a stable niche audience could be built via the theme “Australia.” This is an important point, because like *Hybrid Life*, the strand/slot worked with commercial imperatives to generate and aggregate diverse constructions of Australian-ness.

National Indigenous Documentary Fund and the Indigenous Drama Initiative

The *National Indigenous Documentary Fund (NIDF)* and the *Indigenous Drama Initiative (IDI)*, were themed strands that specifically targeted aspiring filmmakers of Indigenous background. While SBSi was an important collaborator other institutions initiated both strands. The *NIDF* was originally established in 1996 in conjunction with the ABC, to produce five twenty-six minute documentaries, and achieve primetime exposure for films about, and produced by, Indigenous people. The National Indigenous Media Association of Australia (NIMAA) were appointed to manage the project in consultation with Indigenous media groups and individuals, and the Central Australian Media Association (CAAMA) were appointed series producer to supervise production. The state film agencies also participated in the scheme, some more consistently than others. Though SBS-TV and SBSi were not partners in the funding scheme during its early years, during his tenure as Commissioning Editor, Hughes successfully campaigned to have SBS-TV replace the ABC as the associated broadcaster. SBSi collaborated with the *NIDF* to produce four series: the fifth series, *Unsung Heroes*, was comprised of five, twenty-six minute documentaries; series six, *Loved Up*, comprised four twenty-six minute shorts, including *Yellow Fella* (Ivan Sen) and *The Dream of Love* (Lawrence Johnston); SBSi contributed four, twenty-six minute shorts as part of series seven; and two, fifty-two minute shorts

as part of series nine.⁴⁵ Both the *NIDF* and the *IDI* qualify as themed strands, on the basis that the individual films commissioned as part of each series engaged with a single broad theme as indicated by titles like *Loved Up*, each targeted emerging filmmakers of Indigenous background, and the films generated under their aegis were short or interstitial forms.

SBSi was a key collaborator in the *IDI* from the first series of the strand, which was developed by the AFC Indigenous Branch in 1993. Once the country's premier film funding organisation, after 1988 the AFC assumed a complementary role to the FFC. The organisation continued to support innovation and development, though "by funding novel industry structures and formats rather than films" (FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson 134). The *IDI* is exemplary of this altered approach to film development. The core function of the program was to provide early career producers of Indigenous heritage with the opportunity to develop their craft, through the production of short dramas. Another important objective of the program was to dissipate the concentration of Indigenous producers in the field of documentary (French, "Poetry" 88). SBSi became associated with the initiative in 1995 after being approached by Wal Saunders, Director of the Branch, and filmmaker Rachel Perkins. SBSi very quickly committed to *From Sand to Celluloid*, along with a slew of other agencies including: the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS); and the state agencies, The Pacific Film and Television Corporation (PFTC) in Queensland, the NSW FTO, and ScreenWest in Western Australia. In total, SBSi supported seven individual series: *From Sand to Celluloid* in 1996, comprising six films, ranging from ten to sixteen minutes in length; *Shifting Sands* in 1998, comprising six films between ten and twenty minutes; *Crossing Tracks* in 1999, which supported three films, roughly thirty minutes long; *On Wheels* in 2000, which again, was comprised of three, thirty minute films; *Dreaming In Motion* in 2002, comprising five, ten to fifteen minute films; *Dramatically Black* in 2005, comprising five, twenty-six minute films; and *Bit of Black Business* in 2007,

⁴⁵ Data reported by SBS in the Annual Reports regarding the *NIDF* is incomplete. The data that is provided in this thesis has been extrapolated from SBS reportage of what SBSi commissioned, and not what was completed and/or transmitted.

comprising thirteen, five-minute interstitials.

The purpose and significance of the *IDI*, like the *NIDF*, was the professional development of Indigenous filmmakers. Workshops were an integral component of the scheme and were organised and implemented by the AFC. The *IDI* was designed to provide inexperienced Indigenous producers with a career “stepping-stone” (French, “Poetry” 84). It provided a “carefully mentored and monitored” opportunity to filmmakers to develop their craft via the short form, before moving on to more popular and demanding entertainment formats such as feature film (AFC, *Dreaming 2*; French, “Poetry” 84). The realisation of this ambition is exemplified by the careers of Darlene Johnson (*Two Bob Mermaid*) and Warwick Thornton (*Payback*), who have gone on to make a variety of films since their participation in the inaugural *IDI*, *From Sand to Celluloid*. Other producers of note who participated in the *IDI* include: Ivan Sen who produced three films via the scheme, *Tears*, *Wind* and *Dust*, before writing and directing his first feature *Beneath Clouds* also for SBSi; and Catriona McKenzie who directed *Road for On Wheels*, before co-directing the drama series *RAN* with David Caesar, and directing the second series of the courtroom drama, *The Circuit*.

It was the ambition of SBSi to lead an intervention, offsetting white-centric employment and representational practices in the national screen industry. Change was, however, already well under way, as indicated by the establishment of the AFC Indigenous Branch, and the completion of several series of the *NIDF*. Moreover, support offered by SBSi was largely limited to financial and editorial support, and via the exhibition of completed films on SBS-TV (Masel). This was however, an important function with regard to the continuation of such schemes. The steadfast commitment of the commissioning house to the *IDI* for over ten years helped to create an unprecedented demand for Indigenous content. *Shifting Sands* was for example, screened in primetime, on a Monday evening in the 9.30pm slot on the 6 July 1998. Furthermore, filmmakers who participated in this and other strands were provided with opportunities to build upon their careers and produce other work for SBSi. This ensured continued audience exposure for a new generation Indigenous filmmakers. An example from the *NIDF* strand is filmmaker Lawrence Johnston, who after writing and directing *The Dream of*

Love for series six, wrote and directed the fifty minute documentary *Once a Queen*, and the feature length essay film *Night*, both for SBSi. While the AFC was a pivotal cultural institution developing the talent of Indigenous producers (other institutions include AFTRS, NIMMA and CAAMA), the vital and complementary function performed by SBSi and SBS-TV was the primetime broadcast of Indigenous content, and the support of filmmakers beyond the early career stages of their career and craft.

SBSi's involvement in the *NIDF* and the *IDI* went much further than did *Hybrid Life* and *Australia by Numbers*, because it inaugurated ongoing mentorship and early career development for filmmakers. In this way SBSi seeded a production community that survived the temporary life cycle of the project-based strands. Like other strands, the *NIDF* and *IDI* invited Indigenous filmmakers to engage broad topics like *Shifting Sands* and *Crossing Tracks*. *IDI* themes are however, particularly notable, insofar as they suggested cultural change and encouraged producers to explore the experience of being Indigenous, during what was an extremely volatile period for Australian race relations.

Unfinished Business (2000)

The apotheosis of the themed strand was the *Unfinished Business* season of programming, which screened on SBS-TV between Thursday 25 May and Saturday 3 June 2000. Like the *IDI* and the *NIDF*, *Unfinished Business* explicitly commissioned content from Indigenous producers.⁴⁶ A feature that distinguished *Unfinished Business* from other strands was that all content commissioned as part of the scheme explicitly engaged with the contentious issue of Indigenous reconciliation, and conducted an “ambitious and partisan” intervention into the national debate (Collins and Davis 42). In this respect, *Unfinished Business* represents a refinement of the themed strand as a political mechanism, and was utilised to intervene in racist discursive, as well as employment, practices.

⁴⁶ Some of the content screened as part of *Unfinished Business* such as *Confessions of Headhunter* (Sally Riley) *Dust* (Ian Sen) and *Road* (Catriona McKenzie), were also commissioned as part of the 2000 *IDI* series *On Wheels*.

Content acquired as part of this strand conformed to durations of either twenty-six minutes or fifty-two minutes. Content was predominantly commissioned from early career writers and directors, who were mentored by more experienced producers. Despite the lack of consistency with regard to duration, *Unfinished Business* qualifies as a themed strand on the basis that all content addressed a single theme. The reason for various durations was that content was screened as a themed *season*, a scheduling practice that fills many primetime slots in a single week with a variety of content, broadly addressing a single theme. Strands are ordinarily scheduled over many weeks within a regular weekly slot to encourage appointment viewing. *Unfinished Business* also represents a unique broadcasting event, insofar as SBSi strategically co-ordinated and programmed content in collaboration with SBS-TV, rather than with externally located film funding agencies. The season was scheduled to coincide with Reconciliation Week, Corroboree 2000 (a national forum held on the 27th and 28th May at which the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation presented its final proposal for a national document for reconciliation), and National Sorry Day on the 26th May. Reconciliation Week evolved into a particularly significant event in the year 2000, following the Howard government's refusal to honour the recommendations of HREOC (detailed in chapter one) and issue a formal national apology to the Stolen Generations. The drama and documentary content commissioned as a part of *Unfinished Business* engaged with national debates, and provided multiple and personal stories detailing the long history of forced removal of Indigenous children from their families. Together these films constitute a significant intervention that challenged the narrative of non-violent white settlement.

The idea for a season of programming about Indigenous reconciliation was both a response to institutional limitations, with regard to commissioning, and the identification of a unique opportunity to meaningfully contribute to an important socio-political event. Hughes encountered a number of issues regarding the quantity and quality of proposals received, regarding the stolen generations in particular. The imperative towards a diversity of content precluded an inability to fund more than one or two films through the accord system. Furthermore Hughes was unable to funnel projects through the non-accord system because it was

difficult to attract international finance to Indigenous projects at this time. Deciding which proposals to fund was further complicated by the quality of the proposals:

How do we decide which one we're going to do? We've got a policy that we don't support non-Indigenous people taking up the speaking position of Indigenous people...So that's a factor, we can apply that...some of these are a bit suspicious, and some of them are strong, but they're all a bit limited and how can we evaluate these one against another and so on. So I thought what we need is to do them all, but I can't just say I think we should spend all our accord money on them. So I thought I know what I'll do, I'll try and use the model of *Far From Vietnam* (Hughes).⁴⁷

Hughes proposed that the problem be turned into a solution and a way be found to commission as many of the proposals as possible. Rather than searching for the exemplary project, many different perspectives could be generated filling particular slots within the SBSi schedule over the course of a week:

character driven stories for *About Us*... investigative stories about racism for *Cutting Edge*, we'll have the historical account [for] *As It Happened*...and we'll say that SBS is representing the Australian film and television industry's response to the problem of the stolen generations (Hughes).

In 1998, Ikin organised a staff meeting to formulate a viable approach to commissioning and scheduling multiple programs around a single theme. Linda Burney, who was at the time an executive member of the National Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, was invited to the meeting as a consultant. Burney revealed plans by the Council for a walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge to close Corroboree 2000 (a protest in which 250,000 Australians participated to show their support for a formal apology). It was here that a themed week of programming was conceived as a complement to Reconciliation Week, including the live telecast of the Bridge walk, pending transmission rights.

⁴⁷ *Far From Vietnam* was a hybrid documentary-drama feature released in 1967, and to which a number of French New Wave directors contributed to produce a multi-perspectival response to the Vietnam War. Those who each directed a segment of the film are: Joris Ivens, William Klein, Claude Lelouch, Agnès Varda, Jean-Luc Godard, Chris Marker, Alain Renais.

In total nine original programs were commissioned for the season, which was an enormous feat for such a small institution. The documentaries commissioned were: *Stolen Generations* (Darlene Johnson), *Cry From the Heart* (Jeni Kendell), *Land of the Little Kings* (Des Kootji Raymond) and *The Habits of New Norcia* (Frank Rijavec), all of which ran for one television hour. The short dramas commissioned were: *Confessions of a Headhunter* (Sally Riley), *Dust* (Ian Sen), *My Mother, My Son* (Erica Glynn), *Road* (Catriona McKenzie), and *Where the Two Rivers Meet* (Ken Kelso).

While the idea for *Unfinished Business* was itself extraordinary intervention in terms of national debate, the means by which SBSi eventually realised the season constitutes a similarly remarkable negotiation of the structures for public subsidy. Planning for *Unfinished Business* began as early as 1998, and the lead-time required to co-ordinate that much original content for a single week was substantial. Moreover, the task was difficult for SBSi to accomplish with the resources that were available to it. The resource intensive nature of the strand is reflected by the severe drop in the number of titles commissioned by the institution in the 1998-99 financial year; a mere thirty-three titles, which was less than half of the sixty-nine titles commissioned the previous year in 1997-98, and the sixty-eight titles commissioned the subsequent year in 1999-2000. As well as committing a larger percentage of resources to programs commissioned as part of the strand, a high level of secrecy had to be maintained, particularly with regard to the FFC. Ikin recalls that, had the FFC known that such a high proportion of accord documentaries were being commissioned for a single season, SBSi would likely not have attracted their support. In this respect, *Unfinished Business* constituted a significant institutional and industrial intervention, as well as the political and representational intervention identified by scholars (Smaill, "SBS Documentary," *Amidst*; Collin and Davis). In order to significantly contribute an acceptable quantity of content to the national reconciliation debate, SBSi, together with SBS-TV, strategised for two years. While the themed season had long been a feature of the SBS-TV schedule, *Unfinished Business* represents the only time an idea for a season of programming originated with SBSi and was then embraced by SBS-TV. Because the season was an inter-departmental scheme within SBS, it was extremely resource intensive, and as a consequence,

Unfinished Business represents the only themed strand of its kind.

In summary, SBSi used themed strands to manoeuvre within commercial restraints and guide producers toward creative representations of identity, history and place, whilst also ensuring considerable latitude for variation in form, aesthetics and narrative. Commercial imperatives were a baseline requirement for SBS-TV, shaping the development of the themed strand as a series format, comprised of one-off documentaries that conformed to the television half hour or hour. This format was commercial insofar as it conformed to standard broadcasting practice, allowing the development of a predictable schedule and the development of regular audiences. Themed strands gave rise to new modes of filmmaking and storytelling because these commercial constraints provided an empty framework amenable to a broad range of institutional and producer objectives. This was exemplified via *Hybrid Life*, which was explicitly conceived by Hughes to revive institutional support for the essay film and train new filmmakers in this tradition. As a new framework, the themed strand also reshaped the essay film into a new mode of filmmaking and storytelling. With regard to *Australia by Numbers*, the strand was utilised to streamline alliances with state institutions, and to more efficiently develop sustainable pools of talent in regional industries. The cohesion of diverse films was achieved via the broad theme “Australia,” which contributed to the diversification of stories and perspectives that signified Australian-ness. The themed strand was also a principal means by which SBSi helped to seed a new Indigenous filmmaking milieu and offset systematic disadvantage within the screen industry. This was demonstrated via *Unfinished Business*, which surreptitiously exploited institutional funding mechanisms to generate a season of content that intervened in reconciliation debates. SBSi’s commitment to Indigenous filmmaking also manifested via its primetime exhibition of the *NIDF* and the *IDI*, which utilised SBS-TV as a platform to cultivate market demand for Indigenous content, and via long-term career support for producers trained via the strands, including Ivan Sen, Catriona McKenzie and Lawrence Johnston. Via the themed strand, SBSi made a significant contribution to the productive diversity of the industry, it replenished the screen industry with fresh and diverse talent, and seeded an ongoing source of original content with which SBS-TV could target new

audiences. The next sub-section will examine a second creative management strategy referred to as *drama enterprises*, developed to improve the distribution of independently produced content and thereby achieve productive diversity.

2.3. Drama Enterprises

In phase two (1996-2003), SBSi also actively developed new opportunities for innovative and diverse fictional content to reach cinema and film festival audiences. This was principally achieved via drama enterprises, a type of inter-firm alliance that developed niche markets for innovative drama, by linking production support to theatrical distribution at the development and financing stages of production. Drama enterprises were characterised by support for *professional* diversity, defined in terms of the type of craft practiced, such as animation, as well as varying levels of filmmaker experience. Drama enterprises also respected the creative autonomy of producers, and continued the tradition of non-intervention established in phase one (1994-1996). This sub-section examines two types of drama enterprises, development pathways and distributor alliances. Development pathways were prevalent from the beginning of phase two (1996-2003) and were forged with the AFC; the AFC assumed responsibility for developing new talent and innovative projects, and SBSi assumed responsibility for co-ordinating distribution and exhibition of content. Distributor alliances, which emerged in the latter years of phase two (1996-2003), co-ordinated investment from film distributors and television exhibitors, linking production finance to guaranteed forms of film distribution, and establishing market interest from the pre-production stage. This sub-section analyses multiple drama enterprises in rough chronology, elucidating how the financing pathway was continuously re-adapted to improve opportunities to distribute and exhibit independent productions. It argues that insofar as SBSi co-ordinated commercial distribution for innovative content outside of the SBS-TV context, it made a vital contribution to the sustainability of independent modes of filmmaking and storytelling in Australia.

Drama enterprises are a type of inter-firm alliance brokered by SBSi to generate fictional programs, and they encompass a broad range of formats and styles

including feature film, short film and animation. As elaborated in chapter one, local drama had always represented a significant gap in the SBS-TV schedule. Despite being explicitly instituted to address this gap, generating an acceptable level of drama content remained a challenging task for SBSi throughout phase two (1996-2003). Drama *series*, while considered to be the most appropriate format for broadcast television, proved an exceptionally difficult form to acquire. Up until phase three (2003-2007), a culture of funding *film* and not television prevailed within the core financing institutions. Without access to the resources of the AFC or the FFC, efforts to commission substantially more expensive drama series were severely curtailed. To overcome this obstacle SBSi took the unusual step of investing *development* finance in a number of drama series. The lack of success achieved via this approach is reflected by the fact that, while SBS reported that fifteen drama series were commissioned in phase two (1995-2003), only two are listed on the Screen Australia production database as completed; *Bondi Banquet* (Ray Argall, Stuart McDonald and Kay Pavlou) and *RAN* (David Caesar and Catriona McKenzie).⁴⁸

Drama enterprises represent an alternative strategy that tried to emulate accord processes, and which aimed to balance the agendas of allied organisations in much the same way as themed strands. The term *drama enterprise* has been coined by this study to refer collectively to a range of inter-firm alliances coordinated by SBSi, which aimed to integrate production and distribution processes, and thereby create new pathways for innovative content to reach audiences. The first type of drama enterprise is a development pathway. Again, this term has been coined by this study to refer to programs of support providing early career filmmakers with opportunities to gain valuable on the job experience. Development pathways are also characterised by the imbrication of established producers into the SBSi milieu, both in mentorship roles and as primary creative personnel. As indicated above, drama enterprises evidence an expansive definition of productive diversity that exceeds cultural diversity, to also support a range of skill levels, techniques, styles and formats. As a creative management

⁴⁸ See Appendix four for list of dramas commissioned. Please note that there is a margin of error as not all completed productions are registered on the Screen Australia database.

approach, development pathways accorded with innovation strategies in phase one (1994-1996), and themed strands in phase two (1996-2003), which also fostered innovation by nurturing a loyal community of new and experienced producers. Distributor alliances are second type of drama enterprise, whereby SBSi allied itself with other distributors and exhibitors to ensure that the projects commissioned, had guaranteed access to audiences via multiple platforms. While this appears to be a gratuitously commercial approach to commissioning, as demonstrated below, it afforded SBSi greater decision-making power than did development pathways, and better facilitated productive diversity objectives targeting culturally diverse filmmakers.

Before elaborating different drama enterprises, it is first necessary to identify key features distinguishing the category from themed strands and accords. First, formatting for drama enterprises demonstrates greater flexibility than do themed strands. Content commissioned for themed strands cohere individual productions into a series-like format by standardising duration, and linking them via a pre-determined theme. Content commissioned as part of drama enterprises were only linked insofar as they conformed to pre-determined formats or techniques, for example *Million Dollar Movies* (elaborated below) was an enterprise targeting feature films, and *Swimming Outside the Flags* (elaborated below) was an enterprise financing short animations. Also, content commissioned as part of drama enterprises were not scheduled as series, that is, in the same weekly time slot over consecutive weeks. This difference reflects alternative objectives pursued by SBSi when brokering drama enterprises, than when brokering themed strands. As established in chapter two, the function performed by SBSi was bifurcated between its function as a cultural institution, governing the resource of productive diversity to improve commercial viability of the independent production sector, and its role as a commissioning house generating new local content for SBS-TV. The role assumed by SBSi within drama enterprises was connecting innovative films and filmmakers to distributors, exhibitors and audiences across *multiple platforms*, and as such, reflects State productive diversity obligations. SBSi still served SBS-TV, insofar as it gained exhibition rights by inserting SBS-TV into an established distribution chain, however it often stopped short of moulding productions to accommodate the vicissitudes of

television scheduling and spectatorship. The second difference between drama enterprises and accords is that the latter are ongoing agreements between two or more organisations. While drama enterprises represent attempts to establish drama accords, none were continued beyond a second round. As will become apparent, a key factor mitigating the evolution of drama enterprises into accords, was the inability to adequately achieve an acceptable level of mutual benefit for all participating agencies.

Development Pathways

Development pathways were the most common type of drama enterprise and were ordinarily established between the AFC and SBSi. Development pathways assisted filmmakers from the development stage of their project through to production and distribution. One agency, namely the AFC, assumed the role of principal investor, providing development, and often production, finance to a given project. SBSi's role was as a distributor, providing seed funding at the post-development/pre-production stage, to trigger finance from additional investors not formally affiliated with the scheme. These agencies include the FFC, state agencies like ScreenWest and the SAFC, and international broadcasters like Channel 4 in Britain. The AFC invested with a view towards early career support and lifting the standard of Australian production. SBSi participated with a view to developing emerging talent, accessing innovative and quality productions, and finding audiences for content. Throughout phase two (1996-2003) there were a number of development pathways brokered between the AFC and SBSi, three of which will be analysed to demonstrate how drama enterprises were adapted to better accommodate productive diversity objectives. These are: the feature film enterprise *Million Dollar Movies*; animation enterprises such as *Swimming Outside the Flags*; and the short feature scheme that ran for several series between 2000 and 2005, and includes the *Family Matters* and the *Fresh Australian Drama* series.

Development Pathway I: *Million Dollar Movies*

Million Dollar Movies (MDM) was a development pathway negotiated in 1997-98 by Bridget Ikin, Barbara Masel and AFC Project Co-ordinator, Philippa

Bateman. *MDM* represents an attempt to formalise the funding relationship developing between the AFC and SBSi, in the form of an accord supporting producers in their first or second attempt to make a feature length film. Prior to *MDM*, SBSi and the AFC had co-financed *The Boys* and *Radiance*, the first features directed by Rowan Woods and Rachel Perkins, respectively. Another factor driving SBSi's pursuit of a feature film accord with the AFC was a shared interest in developing new talent and supporting innovative content. As stated above, the AFC was by 1988, a key institution developing new filmmakers, and supporting boutique and non-commercial filmmaking (O'Regan, *Australian National* 15; FitzSimons, Laughren and Williamson 134). This neatly dovetailed with Ikin's vision for SBSi, at the forefront of "developing new and innovative talent", and for SBS-TV, as a natural home for "adventurous, innovative, low budget filmmaking of a culturally diverse nature" (Ikin qtd. in "Scene" 7). While SBSi had cannily identified emerging filmmakers as the means to generating innovative and diverse content, it was insufficiently financed to invest in the development of new talent. *MDM* was conceived as means by which SBSi could source content from a pool of projects that had already received development assistance from the AFC, and which were ready to look for other investors and move into pre-production.

Under the scheme, SBSi and the AFC financed five feature films with a budget capped at one million dollars. As with the documentary accord system, the AFC assumed the role of principal investor and SBSi provided pre-sale funding, in this instance approximately \$200,000 per film, which was part equity and part licence fee (Katsigiannis 6). The five feature films commissioned as part of the initiative were: *City Loop* directed by Belinda Chayko, *Fresh Air* written and directed by Neil Mansfield, Scott Patterson's *A Wreck*, *A Tangle*, Vincent Giarrusso's *Mallboy*, and the 2002 Spanish-Italian language *La Spagnola*, directed, written and produced by husband and wife team, Steve Jacobs and Anna Maria Monticelli. Each of the participating directors, writers and producers had been working within the industry for a number of years, and the enterprise provided them with the opportunity to realise their first or second feature film. For example, *City Loop* director Belinda Chayko had produced an episode for the SBS series *Under the Skin* (1993) entitled *Grandma's Teeth*, which was

nominated for two AFI awards, as well as producing a number of other dramas for SBS-TV before directing this, her debut feature. Producer of the film Bruce Redman had worked within the industry for fifteen years, and had previously produced the short film *Blackman Down*, for the *From Sand to Celluloid* strand, as well as writing and directing the short film *Seed*. An important component of the enterprise was its provision of practical support in the form of mentorship. For example, while making *Mallboy* Vince Giarrusso was mentored by Rowan Woods, Fred Schepisi (*The Devil's Playground*) and Ana Kokkinos (*Only the Brave*), who assisted with casting, performance and visual design (Croyden 56).

There were two key factors that rendered *MDM* untenable as an accord. First, SBSi lacked the decision-making power to effectively utilise the scheme to support culturally diverse filmmakers. Films supported under the scheme were sourced from a pool of projects that had already received development funding from the AFC. As elaborated in section one, the advantage of the FFC accord was that SBSi staff determined which projects would receive funding, and the FFC only weighed into decisions to ensure pre-sale and cultural relevance criteria was met. The capacity for SBSi to conduct a similar intervention, via a feature film accord, was severely curtailed by the fact that the majority of projects in development with the AFC did not exhibit the diversity required to be “at home on the broadcaster” (Masel). Furthermore, the enterprise tied up finance and seriously compromised SBSi’s ability to support more suitable feature film proposals independently of the scheme. *La Spagnola* represents the only *MDM* that originated with SBSi. After seven years of unsuccessful lobbying for finance to produce the film, Anna Maria Monticelli and Steve Jacobs pitched *La Spagnola* directly to Masel at SBSi. It was a project that Masel “passionately wanted to see made” and “fully believed that an Australian film completely in Spanish was exactly what [SBSi] ought to be doing.” Unable to raise enough capital to meet the proposed budget, Masel pushed the AFC to approve the film as a *MDM*. *La Spagnola* stands out as the only *MDM* that directly engages with issues stemming from migration and cultural diversity, though *Mallboy* does represent important intersecting issues stemming from class disadvantage.

The other key factor that contributed to the discontinuation of the initiative was poor planning around distribution and exhibition of the films financed. Britain's Channel 4, Australia's subscription movie channel the Premium Movie Partnership (which trades as Showtime Movie Channels), and local distributor Beyond Films, were all associated with the initiative in a *first look deal*. SBS-TV had access to free-to-air television rights in Australia, Beyond Films was given the international sales rights (excluding Australia), Showtime given Australian pay TV rights, and Channel 4 the UK rights including theatrical release. The key problem was participating organisations were not obliged to distribute or exhibit any of the films, but rather had the flexibility to choose from the five films ("Film joint initiative" 1997). The failure to secure theatrical distribution as a part of the financing model undermined the overall success of the initiative; only *La Spagnola* and *Mallboy* garnered theatrical release. Feature film success was, at this time, dependent upon the "downstream" movement of content through the distribution chain, beginning with film festival and/or theatrical exhibition, video or DVD release, followed by exhibition on pay television and then free-to-air television. The success of other SBSi commissioned films, such as *The Boys*, *Radiance*, *Yolngu Boy* (Stephen Johnson) and *Mullet* (David Caesar), was achieved only through the commitment of a theatrical distributor at the financing stage.

Another factor contributing to the discontinuation of *MDM* was the failure to efficiently yoke together the disparate agendas of the AFC, SBSi and SBS-TV. Ultimately, established pathways of distribution and exhibition for feature film rendered the format an extremely inefficient investment for SBS-TV. With regard to conventions of television exhibition, investment in feature film is not cost effective. While requiring a substantially greater proportion of investment than other formats like documentary, there was very little payoff for SBS-TV, which had to wait up to three years for films to cycle downstream before being able to broadcast them (Webb). Furthermore, publicity tended to be generated early in the distribution cycle, which compounded difficulties building television audiences for feature films. While *MDM* did go some way towards fulfilling SBSi's agenda to support new talent and innovation, investment in feature film did not accord with the commercial imperatives of SBS-TV. Despite this SBSi

invested in a total of twenty-five feature films throughout phase two. This suggests that objectives underwriting SBSi's investment in *MDM* was motivated by its responsibility governing the resource of productive diversity within the filmmaking sector, not the programming objectives of SBS-TV. Indeed, reasons offered by Masel for withdrawing from the scheme cite lack of theatrical distribution and lack of opportunities for supporting cultural diversity. Ultimately *MDM* was a failure for SBSi, because it fell short of ambitions to cultivate commercially viable and culturally diverse modes of filmmaking and storytelling.

Development Pathway 2: *Swimming Outside the Flags* and *Home Movies*

Swimming Outside the Flags (SOTF) was a development pathway formulated in 1997-98 to generate animation content. *SOTF* was instigated by Masel and developed in partnership with the AFC. The enterprise was conceived to meet a gap in the free-to-air television market, whilst also directing support toward an innovative community of animators working at the periphery of the filmmaking sector. Masel recalls:

SBS at that time had had some success running a program which they had purchased called *South Park*, ... which now nobody would think of as a particularly bold piece of programming because it's been such a popular hit. But at the time there was no history of adult animation on a broadcaster in Australia. It was really serendipitous, I could see that there was a whole group of independent animators working out there who had no way of having their work reach a wide audience. They weren't making animated films for children – although some of them were – but I could see that there was an audience for that kind of work.

The success of the US series *South Park* (Trey Parker and Matt Stone) illuminated the fact that there was a market for adult animation. Concomitantly, Masel identified an existing community of practicing animators as a source of content to meet this new demand, and who otherwise lacked opportunities to distribute and exhibit their work. For example, when producer Deborah Szapiro approached Masel for funding for the animated short *Darwin's Evolutionary Stakes*, she had already secured the interest of Film Australia, and was seeking a strategic partnership with a broadcaster to ensure that the short film reached an audience. Targeting animation for investment and exhibition was consistent with

productive diversity objectives insofar as it diversified the types of content and professionals in which SBSi invested. Adult animation represented a new frontier for Australian broadcasters, and embodied the mandate to develop new niche audiences via innovative content.

The central concern was how to curate original animation in a manner that adhered to the demands of the broadcast schedule. The time and resource intensive nature of animation precluded the acquisition of shorts with brief and inconsistent durations, which presented a problem in terms of programming and marketing. *SOTF* pioneered a new format for animation broadcast. The enterprise was designed to provide one broadcast hour of programming, which was comprised of thirteen individual short films. A second series of *SOTF* was commissioned soon after in the 1997-98 financial year, to create a single twenty-six minute program from multiple shorts. Twelve short animations were commissioned in 1999-2000 as part of a similar animation enterprise called *Home Movies*, which were screened as three, twenty-six minute episodes in 2001. It is worth noting that subsequent animation enterprises did not conform to this model.⁴⁹ In 2001-02 three, three-minute animation pilots were commissioned with a view to developing a series. Only one animation enterprise was commissioned in phase three (2003-2007), a series of thirteen, one-minute interstitials, also supported by the AFC Development Branch, in 2004-05. This latter enterprise reflected the proclivity to schedule films with a running time of less than five minutes as interstitials. Interstitials were largely screened in natural advertising breaks after twenty-six minute and fifty-two minute programs.

Animation initiatives represent a particularly interesting approach to commissioning amongst the stable of strands and enterprises developed in phase two (1996-2003). While devised to develop content for a clearly defined niche audience, the enterprises collectively generated very few hours of content. They did, however, serve the very important function of generating publicity for the institution, and identifying new talent for future investment. For example, of the

⁴⁹ SBSi also commissioned the adult animated series *QUADS!*, an Australian-Canadian co-production about a motley crew of physically disabled characters, created by John Callahan and which ran for two seasons between 2001 and 2002.

shorts commissioned for *SOTF*, three filmmakers received critical acclaim and several awards. Bruce Currie's short animation *Love Song* won a Dendy award for Best Short Film in 1999, as well as being screened at the prestigious Annecy International Animated Film Festival in France in 1999. Andrew Horne won two awards, including Best Animation at the Nashville Film Festival in 2000, for his short *Darwin's Evolutionary Stakes*. Adam Elliot attracted multiple national and international awards for *Cousin*, the second instalment in his series of three short films including *Uncle*, acquired by SBS-TV after completion, and *Brother*, commissioned by SBSi independently of an enterprise. As indicated in chapter one, Elliot is very closely associated with the success of SBSi, having won an Academy Award for *Harvie Krumpet*. Finally, Sarah Watt was commissioned by SBSi to write and direct her first feature film *Look Both Ways*, following the critical success of her animated short *Living With Happiness*, commissioned as part of the *Home Movies* initiative.⁵⁰

What *SOTF* demonstrates, is that where development pathways were deemed successful, this did not necessarily translate to ratings success for SBS-TV. Drama content was often celebrated as successful when it enjoyed a film festival life, received industry awards and when endowed with critical acclaim (Rowe). Both Ikin and Rowe claimed an active interest in the festival life of commissioned content, which is reflected by extensive reporting of film festival exhibition and awards in the SBS Annual Reports. In this respect development pathways were consistent with SBSi's objectives to develop productive diversity, and thereby add value the independent production sector and not just to SBS-TV. As indicated in chapter two, the publicity generated via festivals and awards, was a primary means by which SBSi demonstrated to government that it had achieved its mandated objectives, and secured the future of the Special Production Fund. Beyond proving its utility to government, SBSi was in phase two (1996-2003),

⁵⁰ Anthony Lucas is another animator closely associated with SBSi though he was not involved in any of these schemes. Lucas created the BAFTA award winning short *Bad Baby Amy* as a part of the international co-production *Animated Tales of the World II*, and was nominated for an Academy Award for 2004's Best Animated Short for *The Mysterious Geographic Explorations of Jasper Morello*, also commissioned by SBSi.

fundamentally interested in nurturing a filmmaking community with a strong culture of innovation, and which was internally diverse, both in a cultural and professional sense. Productive diversity strategies supported culturally diverse filmmakers like Monticelli, early career filmmakers like Elliot, experienced filmmakers like Watt, and a variety of filmmaking styles, techniques, forms and genres. Despite its shortcomings, this was also demonstrated by the *MDM* insofar as it was a producer-focused enterprise, similarly designed to help filmmakers develop their craft and enrich the Australian screen ecology.

Development Pathway 3: The Short Feature Scheme

The short feature scheme was a development pathway pursued between SBSi and the AFC between 2001 and 2005. The term *short feature* refers to one-off dramas that have a running time of approximately fifty-two minutes. Fourteen out of the fifteen short features ever commissioned by SBSi were acquired during this period, a term that coincides with Rowe's tenure as General Manager.⁵¹ The single exception was the 1998 *Feeling Sexy*, which was directed by Davida Allen and produced by Rowe years before her tenure at SBSi. The short feature scheme represents an interesting anomaly with regard to SBSi's evolution, and serves to foreground the shifting institutional objectives and processes, as SBSi transitioned from phase two (1996-2003) to phase three (2003-2007). As will be more fully explicated in section three, the revised objective in phase three (2003-2007) was to generate content that more appropriately conformed to the twenty-six minute and fifty-two minute time slots within the television schedule. For Rowe, a significant oversight with regard to previous development pathways, was that aspiring filmmakers were provided with training as *filmmakers* and not as makers of television. Though important in the absence of industry training schemes, these initiatives failed to provide SBS-TV with the kind of content that satisfies and attracts a broadcast audience (Rowe). Short features represent an early attempt to better negotiate the requirements of the network and those of early career producers: "SBS Independent started to look for one hour stories as a way of bringing exciting filmmaking talent to television" (Dear qtd. in SBS,

⁵¹ See Appendix four for list of all short features commissioned.

“New Australian Drama”). The fifty-two minute drama conforms to the convention of the one-hour television slot (plus of advertising time), and as such, represented negotiation between cinematic and television formats.

Another characteristic that reflected broadcast conventions was the first eight films completed under the scheme were exhibited in a series-like format. They were programmed over eight consecutive weeks between 17 October 2003 and 5 December 2003, in the Friday 8.30pm slot. Different schemes also commissioned content around broad themes, for example the *Family Matters* series. In this respect the initiative emulated formatting strategies proper to the themed strand, and constructed a series from one-off productions loosely related via theme, so as to build a consistent viewership around a time slot. The reason that short features have been classified as drama enterprises rather than themed strands, is the themes do not encourage engagement with issues of cultural diversity, though some programs like *Jewboy* (Tony Krawitz) and *Jammin' in the Middle E* (Kim Mordaunt) certainly did represent these themes. Also, short feature schemes did not specifically target one cultural group for development, for example, Indigenous, regional or CALD peoples.

The alliance forged between the AFC and SBSi via this development pathway also corresponded with themed strands, insofar as it did not sacrifice creativity to achieve commercial viability. For the AFC, the scheme provided early career filmmakers with a “stepping stone between short films, most of which run less than 15 minutes, and feature films, which average about 100 minutes” (Zion 25). Films funded under the scheme averaged a reported budget of between \$300,000 and \$800,000 (Maddox, “Not too long” 18). The initiative was, for the AFC, about the “creative development of emerging filmmakers” and was not intended as a commercial venture (Sklan qtd. in Maddox, “Not too long” 18). The career trajectory of Melanie Coombs corresponded to this stepping-stone function. After producing *The Glenmore Job* under the scheme, Coombs went on to produce *Harvie Krumpet*. Likewise, Matt Saville directed *Roy Hollsdötter Live* as part of the scheme, and then went on to direct the SBSi commissioned feature film *Noise*. While SBSi shared the AFC’s interest in developing new talent and innovative work (Rowe qtd. in Maddox, “Not too long” 18), it did so in the

interests of helping producers develop skills for making *television* programs. In other words, the fifty-two minute duration accommodated the distinct agendas of the AFC (as a stepping-stone for developing film careers) and SBSi (as a format for training television producers). Insofar as SBSi invested in new talent to improve the quality and marketability of independent productions into the future, the initiative was consistent with the productive diversity strategies that characterised phase two (1996-2003).

The short feature scheme does however represent a substantial shift with regard to SBSi's philosophical aims when entering into drama enterprises. For Rowe, the initiative represented a concerted shift away from film as a priority for the commissioning house:

SBSi *was* all about film. And that was the word we used to describe the work that we invested in, and we spent a lot of time...entering the work that we'd invested in into film festivals...what became apparent to me was that we were ... investing in work that actually was not of particular value to the people that we were meant to serve, which was the television audience. Equally we were making life quite difficult for the filmmakers as well, because it was disappointing to them that their work didn't get more attention on television...The, great gapping hole that no-one saw, was that we were making film and trying to force it into the television exhibition medium and it didn't sit there well. And so the filmmakers were often deeply distressed by the fact that few people saw the work on TV; it was on one night and gone.

The philosophical shift was reflected in Rowe's withdrawal from promoting films across other exhibition platforms. For instance the second batch of films produced via the short feature scheme was screened theatrically as part of a four city, one day film festival tour in February 2006. By this time cinema release was of no interest to SBSi, and the institution did not participate in the co-ordination of this event (Rowe qtd. in Maddox, "Not too long" 18). Also noteworthy, was that while some short features did enjoy a successful festival life, the prestige that flowed to SBSi from festival circulation was no longer a priority for the

institution.⁵² The new agenda pursued by SBSi was to commission content that was a better “fit” for the conventions of television exhibition, and thus, for audience expectation. While SBSi was happy to support new talent and innovation insofar as it generated marketable content for SBS-TV, it was withdrawing from its industry role brokering theatrical and festival distribution for commissioned content.

Distributor Alliances

Distributor alliances represent a minor type of drama enterprise, and refers to inter-firm alliances formalised between SBSi and other distributors and exhibitors, to generate feature films. This type of inter-firm alliance emulates the Hollywood Organisational Model insofar as *distributors* collaborate to co-finance independent productions to spread the risk of investment (Rifkin 363). There were two prominent examples of distributor alliances formally negotiated by SBSi in phase two (1996-2003). The first was with the organisers of the 2002 Adelaide Film Festival to collaboratively commission four feature length productions, and the second was a First Look Feature Film Alliance negotiated with the Premiere Movie Partnership in 2002. These distributor alliances are both outlined to demonstrate how creative management processes were adapted to achieve productive diversity, and correct the significant shortcomings of development pathways.

Distributor Alliance I: 2002 Adelaide Film Festival

Under SBSi’s distributor alliance with the Adelaide Film Festival (AFF), three feature films and one feature length documentary was commissioned to premiere in Australia at the 2002 festival, and which would later screen on SBS-TV. The initiative represents the first time that the AFF invested in the production of film. The films commissioned as part of the initiative were: the features *Walking on Water* (Tony Ayres), *The Tracker* (Rolf de Heer), *Australian Rules* (Paul

⁵² Tony Krawitz’s internationally awarded and critically acclaimed *Jewboy* is one such short feature, and screened at the Cannes and Sundance Film Festivals. This film is analysed in chapter four.

Goldman) and the documentary *Kabbarli* (Andrew G. Taylor). Ivan Sen's first feature, *Beneath Clouds*, also premiered at the festival, and though commissioned by SBSi, was not acquired as part of the alliance. The budget of the films reportedly ranged from \$1.5 to \$3.5 million (Nunn 7), with a number of other federal and state financing agencies contributing finance, including the SAFC, NSW FTO, AFC and the FFC.

This distributor alliance is notable for the fact that it addressed the two key issues that undermined the success of *MDM*. First, the films all engaged directly with cultural diversity, and three of them explored the history and consequences of Australia's violent colonial history. *Australian Rules* examined insidious forms of racism against Indigenous Australians in rural areas. *Kabbarli* dramatically rendered the life of anthropologist Daisy Bates as she recorded – and intervened in – the culture of Australia's “dying” Aboriginal race. *The Tracker* revisited and revised the cinematic trope of the Indigenous tracker. Finally, *Walking on Water* represented the grief and guilt of a group of friends who helped to euthanize a friend dying of AIDS. While it is unclear if SBSi was afforded greater decision-making power in this initiative, the commissioning house evidently benefited from the fact that between 2000 and 2002, Ikin transitioned from her role as General Manager of SBSi to assume a position as the Associate Director for Film for the 2002 AFF. The second important issue redressed by the alliance was collaboration with an exhibitor, which underwrote a transnational festival life and theatrical distribution for the films commissioned. The shift from development pathways to distributor alliances generated commercially viable feature films, however it did not accrue any more benefits to SBS-TV. Regardless of new financing strategies it remained that feature films rate poorly when broadcast. Insofar as the enterprise supported culturally diverse producers and disseminated challenging subject matter, it corrected the shortcomings of *MDM* by contributing to the productive diversity of the independent production sector.

Distributor Alliance 2: *First Look Feature Film Alliance* with Premiere Movie Partnership

A second notable distributor alliance was negotiated with Premium Movie Partnership (PMP).⁵³ Unlike the first look deal negotiated for *MDM*, this drama enterprise was not attached to a specific slate of production. Rather, where one participating institution found a feature film project they wished to support, the other participating institution would be the first organisation approached for potential co-investment. On the 10 May 2002, SBS issued a press release announcing the alliance. It framed the deal as a logical progression that formalised a fruitful and ongoing alliance, as evidenced by their mutual involvement in a number of successful feature films, including *The Boys*, *Radiance*, *Feeling Sexy*, *Mullet*, *The Tracker* and *Australian Rules* (“Premium”). Films funded under the scheme include *You Can’t Stop the Murders* (Anthony Mir), *Travelling Light* (Kathryn Millard), *Somersault* (Cate Shortland) and *The Illustrated Family Doctor* (Kriv Stenders). All feature films commissioned within two years of the agreement (2002-03) received investment finance from PMP, as well as additional finance from either the AFC, or in the case of *Somersault*, from the FFC. This indicates the maturation of creative management strategies that now ensured all commissioned feature films secured exhibition on at least two platforms, pay television via PMP, and free-to-air television via SBS-TV. It appears the corollary of this model was that films were commissioned only insofar as they satisfied the commercial imperatives of PMP. This is not to suggest that commercial imperatives are inherently negative, but rather, to foreground the fact that PMP was not obliged to support any proposals forwarded SBSi, nor was it beholden to SBSi’s productive diversity mandate. As such, the PMP-SBSi distributor alliance can be seen to portend a shift in commissioning objectives, whereby investment was less often directed towards adding value to the screen industry via innovative content and diverse producers, and towards buttressing established, mainstream modes of commercial production.

⁵³ PMP is a pay television movie service that operates in Australia, and which was formed in 1994 via a partnership between Australis Media, Columbia TriStar, MCA, Viacom and Tele-Communications Inc. At the time of forming the agreement with SBSi in 2002, it owned and operated a number of *Showtime Movie Channels* as a joint venture with Sony Pictures Entertainment, NBCUniversal, Viacom, News Corporation, and Liberty Global.

In summary, via the drama enterprise, SBSi pioneered new integrated production and distribution practices to optimise opportunities for independently produced, and innovative content, to reach audiences across multiple platforms. Drama enterprises, from early development pathways such as the *MDM* and *SOTF*, through to latter distribution alliances with the AFF and PMP, demonstrate a concerted commitment by staff to preserve a culture of innovation, diversify screen industry outputs, and cultivate the commercial viability of these products. Adaptations to each successive enterprise attempted to rectify the shortcomings of the previous scheme, and bring each of these objectives into harmony with one another. This was demonstrated via the AFF and PMP distributor alliances, which explicitly collaborated with exhibitors to ensure distribution across multiple platforms, improving the possibility for commercial success. Insofar as drama enterprises attempted to multiply platforms for the dissemination of commissioned content, they clearly demonstrate SBSi's contribution to the productive diversity of the Australian screen industry. This was demonstrated via the examination of the *MDM* development pathways, which was a low yield investment for SBS-TV, but which was latterly adapted into distributor alliances, and pursued to improve commercial opportunities for innovative and diverse feature films. Drama enterprises thus substantiate two key proposals forwarded in this thesis. First, via its co-ordination of project-based teams, SBSi was a formidable institution that forged new integrated production and distribution processes in the Australian screen industry. Second, the critical role performed by SBSi, co-ordinating project-based modes of production and distribution, clearly demonstrates the successful installation of public broadcasters as the new centre of creative management in the independent production sector.

Via the analysis of themed strands and drama enterprises, this section has also demonstrated how, in phase two (1996-2003), SBSi also consolidated and extended the bifurcated approach to cultivating productive diversity, initiated in phase one (1994-1996). Drama enterprises principally centred on the quality of the deal brokered between participating agents and agencies. It experimented with these contractual relationships to overcome a long-standing disjunction between innovative production and commercial distribution. SBSi worked through this disjunction via the mechanism of the project-team, involving

distributors and exhibitors in commissioned productions from the pre-production phase, and thus improving commercial viability without compromising creativity and innovation. In other words, it developed new niche markets for innovative content. Conversely, the themed strand utilised commercial constraints, dictated by the television schedule, as a formal framework to innovate new modes of filmmaking and storytelling. This enabled SBSi to pass on independent filmmaking traditions and skills to new generation of Indigenous, regional and CALD filmmakers, and to cultivate audiences for what was groundbreaking and challenging content. In this way SBSi was a formidable force that worked within the logic of neo-liberal governmentality to seed new filmmaking milieux, and new modes of filmmaking and storytelling.

SECTION 3

2003-2007: RATINGS AND REFLEXIVE CAPITALISM

In phase three (2003-2007) SBSi developed new creative management processes, which were designed to increase the presence of popular programming on SBS-TV, and significantly improve the ratings of the network. These processes reflected new mainstreaming objectives at SBS-TV (elaborated in chapter two), which aimed to transform SBS-TV into a broadcast service that competed directly with the commercial networks for mass audiences. As indicated in section two, a key characteristic of themed strands and drama enterprises in phase two (1996-2003), was that the local programming objectives of SBS-TV were not consistently privileged. Four new creative management processes were implemented in phase three (2003-2007) to rectify this shortfall, and improve network ratings: the reduction of documentary slots, investment in genre and new format series, pro-active commissioning, and investment in international co-productions. This section argues that insofar as SBSi implemented these processes for the sole benefit of SBS-TV, it abdicated its responsibility to productive diversity and the broader independent production sector. To demonstrate this argument, this section applies the rubric of *reflexive capitalism* (Christopherson) to analyse new creative management strategies developed in phase three (2003-2007), and extrapolates how these processes singularly accommodated the objectives of SBS-TV. This section then develops two brief

case studies to demonstrate how these creative management processes exploited SBSi's relative power within the industry, to the detriment of independent producers. It argues that the development of creative management objectives and processes in phase three (2003-2007) is broadly consistent with neo-liberalism, which ultimately stifles the innovations it purports to facilitate. Moreover, it argues that this serves to highlight the significant contribution made by SBSi, which for most of its life, manoeuvred within the strictures of neo-liberalism to allow new modes of filmmaking and storytelling to flourish.

3.1. Commissioning for Exhibition on Television

As demonstrated in chapter two, a series of organisational changes were implemented in phase three (2003-2007), which resulted in the merger of SBSi and SBS-TV and the introduction of mainstreaming objectives. This sub-section details the development of new creative management processes to achieve mainstreaming. It begins with an examination of commissioning trends in phase three (2003-2007), and demonstrates a clear movement away from a diverse portfolio of content and towards genre and new format series. This sub-section then uses a reflexive capitalism approach to analyse four key creative management processes that underwrote this shift. It argues that, insofar as creative management processes evolved to privilege the commercial demands of television exhibition, SBSi diminished its commitment to independent production and abandoned its productive diversity responsibilities.

The types of content commissioned by SBSi in phase three (2003-2007) was characterised by an increased focus on popular television formats. During this period, the "documentary" category was expanded to "factual and documentary" to also include factual entertainment and reality programs. As detailed below, factual entertainment and reality television are exemplary of *new format* programming. These programs deliver informational content in more entertaining styles, combining classic documentary forms with reality television conventions, "injecting adventure, novelty and the element of surprise" (Keane and Moran 158-9). Factual entertainment series range from cooking and lifestyle programs like *Food Safari* (Toufic Charabati and Maeve O'Meara) and *Vasili's Garden*, franchises such as *Who Do You Think You Are?* and *Top Gear Australia*, and

game shows like *RockWiz*. Examples of reality series commissioned by SBSi include *The Colony* (created by Chris Hilton), *The Nest* and the franchise *Nerds FC*. Factual and reality programs represented thirteen percent of all non-fiction commissions in phase three (2003-2007), prior to which time SBSi commissioned no such programs. Documentary *series* (programs comprising two or more episodes, excluding factual entertainment and reality programs), increased from seven percent of documentary commissions in phase two (1996-2003) to twenty-seven percent in phase three (2003-2007). With regard to drama series, SBSi commissioned fifty-four percent of all titles in phase three (2003-2007), including *East West 101* (created by Steve Knapman and Kris Wyld), *The Circuit* (created by Kelly Lefever) and *Carla Cametti PD* (Ian Watson).⁵⁴ With regard to comedy series, sixty-one percent of programs were commissioned in this period including *Wilfred* (created by Jason Gann and Adam Zwar), season five of *Pizza* (created by Paul Fenech), and *Bogan Pride* (created by Rebel Wilson). The remaining thirty-nine percent of comedy series were commissioned across both phases one (1994-1996) and two (1996-2003). From 2005, SBSi also began financing television events, ten in total, including the IF Awards and the Ethnic Business Awards. As explicated in the introduction, increased investment in genre and new formats was accompanied by a decrease in film formats favoured in phase two (1996-2003). Most noteworthy was the cessation of short film commissions including the *IDI* strand, and concomitant increase in interstitial series, eighty-one percent of which were commissioned in phase three.⁵⁵ While the rise in the number of interstitials evidences continued investment in programs that provide training and experience to emerging film and television producers, as a significantly shorter format, it suggests a substantial decrease of support for new talent in the form of transmission time and the development of niche audiences. This is evidenced by the fact that the final *IDI*, *Bit of Black Business*, was comprised of thirteen films in the five-minute interstitial format, rather than the

⁵⁴ See Appendix four for list of drama series commissioned.

⁵⁵ Two exceptions are the animated short *One of the Lucky Ones* (Wendy Chandler, 2007) commissioned in 2004-05, and the animated short *Chainsaw* (Dennis Tupicoff, 2007) commissioned in 2005-06.

fifteen and twenty-six minute durations that characterised earlier strands, and which were broadcast in primetime.

An important factor that catalysed new commissioning patterns was a change in key management positions within the network. Most prominent was the appointment of Shaun Brown to Head of Television in 2003, and then to Managing Director of SBS in 2005. Another appointment of note was Matt Campbell as Network Programmer of SBS-TV, between 2003 and 2005, replacing Rodd Webb who had held the position since 1995. Campbell later assumed the position of Director of Content, Television and Online, replacing Brown as Head of Television in 2005. These two appointments inaugurated a new set of network objectives with which SBSi became increasingly aligned. Commissioning Editors were still drawn from a pool of producers, writers and directors, however the skill sets of experienced independents were no longer a key factor shaping creative management processes. Independent producers working for SBSi in phase three (2003-2007) include Ned Lander, who formally replaced Glenys Rowe as general manager in July 2006 (Lander served as acting general manager between 2005-2006). Lander was replaced as Commissioning Editor of Documentary by Trevor Graham (2005-2008), Marie Thomas by Jennifer Crone (2004-2008), and Commissioning Editor for Drama Miranda Dear, was succeeded by former Director for Film Development at the AFC, Carole Sklan (2005-2010). Debbie Lee continued as Commissioning Editor of Drama until 2008, when she joined the ABC. While Commissioning Editors did exercise decision-making power, in contrast to phase two (1996-2003), they were now required by SBS management to achieve new mainstreaming objectives. This is reflected in the new creative management processes (elaborated below) which reconceived of creativity and commerce as mutually exclusive and conflicting objectives, and which explicitly realigned Commissioning Editors with commercial imperatives of the network.

The key commercial failure that SBS sought to redress was the disjunction between commissioning from *filmmakers* for television exhibition. Up until 2003 SBSi largely functioned like other film financing organisations. Staff responded to proposals conceived and forwarded by producers, developed schemes to

provide early career producers with training and experience, and took an active interest in the festival and theatrical distribution of content. In this respect SBSi was a “producer based” and a “director focused” organisation (Rowe). As demonstrated in the previous section, while this approach fostered productive diversity within the independent production sector, it predominantly generated one-off programs that failed to accommodate the specific conventions of television exhibition, and thus, to build loyal audiences. Television audiences have come to expect familiarity and repetition from television, and this is, in part, provided by the familiar conventions of genre and new formats, and by the predictable rhythms of series which are programmed at a consistent time each week (Ellis 18-9). Feature films provide a particularly pertinent example of the difficulties encountered by programmers. As indicated above, the circulation of features conform to a downstream distribution model beginning with theatrical release, and ending with free-to-air television up to three years later. Films, whether screened on commercial or public broadcasters, rarely attract significant ratings. Generating publicity was complicated by media outlets rarely willing to promote the television exhibition of films that had already been promoted during an earlier phase of distribution (Webb). Also, network promotion of feature films was too resource intensive for the short period of time that they were on screen (Webb; Rowe). Similar problems were also encountered with the scheduling of themed strands. While strands represented a concerted attempt to build audiences around a weekly slot, success was limited by the fact that they only ran for a few weeks and were then discontinued (Webb).

Four new creative management processes were devised and implemented to improve ratings, and thereby minimise the risks associated with investment in local productions. The first was the development of two slots into which the majority of locally produced documentary content could be channelled: the half hour slot *Inside Australia* established in 2001, and the one hour slot *Storyline Australia* established in 2000. Prior to 2003, SBSi documentaries were commissioned for, and scheduled within, a variety of primetime slots including the history slot *As It Happened*, the slot for more character-driven documentaries *About Us*, and the investigative current affairs slot *Cutting Edge*. As indicated in section two, reference to “Australia” in both the *Inside Australia* and *Storyline*

Australia slots facilitated the cohesion of an otherwise irreconcilable diversity of content, and reflected the need to maintain continuity across the schedule for television audiences (Webb). In this sense, the two slots maintained an important space for the broadcast of challenging content. That said, the elimination of the other documentary slots also reduced space available for such content by liberating the primetime schedule for more popular genre series and new formats. Space for innovative and challenging documentary was further reduced in 2007, when both slots were retired. The abandonment of the *Inside Australia* slot was a particularly significant blow for the industry, as it had been an important mechanism that “gave many a filmmakers a break to establish a career” (Zubrycki, *Stanley Hawes*). The long and drawn-out demise of this twenty-six minute primetime documentary slot, evidences reduced commitment to early career filmmakers, as well as to innovative and diverse content.

Second, creative management prioritised investment in series, including documentary, comedy, drama, reality, variety, lifestyle and game show series. This thesis defines series as programs that are comprised of more than a single episode.⁵⁶ Prior to 2000, series were not a common “vehicle for independent production” (FitzSimons 179). This was largely a consequence of SBSi’s heavy reliance on film financing agencies, which were reluctant to invest in television forms. A small number of independently produced documentary series did, however, emerge from the early 1990s via the non-accord mode of FFC financing, usually underpinned by the involvement of multiple broadcasters, both local and international, and sometimes by more than one production company” (FitzSimons 179). While SBSi was an important avenue of pre-sale finance for some of these programs, they were largely co-ordinated by production companies such as Essential Media and Entertainment, a private organisation that has grown to specialise in the co-ordination of large-scale, multi-investor, international co-

⁵⁶ Many SBSi documentary series have very few episodes for instance, *Liberal Rule* (Nick Torrens) had three fifty-two minute episodes, and drama series such as *RAN*, *The Circuit*, and *East West 101* were comprised of six fifty-two minute episodes. Conversely, a game show like *RockWiz* was much cheaper to produce and by its sixth season comprised twenty-six episodes, each twenty-six minutes long, per season.

productions like *The Colony*. A key factor inducing increased investment in series was the allocation of the SBS-TV in-house production budget to SBSi, following the institutional restructure in 2006 (detailed in chapter two). The seventy-three percent increase to the Special Production Fund in the May 2005 budget also helped to fund more expensive series.

Series represented a desirable form of investment as it promised to deliver a larger segment of the television audience to SBS-TV. Unlike one-off programs, network promotion of all types of series represented better value for money. Promotional advertisements could be run for longer periods of time, and thus, could attract more and more people to the time slot over the course of the series (Rowe; Graham). The main types of series sought out by SBSi were those with proven popularity amongst television audiences, namely genre and new format programs. Genre has been a staple of broadcast schedules since early television. Genre series such as the cop drama *East West 101*, and the court drama *The Circuit*, conform to standardised and agreed *narrative* conventions; these conventions provide audiences with the familiarity and repetition that they have come to expect from broadcast television (Keane and Moran 158). Genre series are however extremely expensive, and with the rise of new media, their ability to attract and sustain audiences has become less predictable. Since the 1990s, broadcasters have increasingly favoured new format programs because of the lower levels of risk associated them. *New formats* are program templates that can be customised for different national markets, and is a category that encompasses game show hybrids featuring celebrities such as *RockWiz*, and international franchises like *Top Gear Australia* and *Who Do You Think You Are?* Franchises are a type of new format whereby the rights to re-make a specific program for a different market is licensed to a franchisee, such as a broadcaster or a production company. Often the franchisee outsources production to third party, independent producers (Keane and Moran 157). Franchises represent less risky investments because they adapt program templates successful with audiences in other national markets (Keane and Moran 157). Studies have demonstrated that the rise of new formats have led to new combinations of old genres, diversifying rather than homogenising content available, because international formats are customised to appeal to different local markets (Griffin; Keane and Moran; Moran, “Global;”

Mikos and Perrotta; Hogg). While this is ostensibly the case, by privileging genres and new formats, SBSi eroded opportunities for independent Australian producers to pursue their own original ideas. This is because public broadcasters were now firmly established as the centre of creative management in the independent production sector, and producers were dependent upon broadcaster pre-sales investment to trigger funding from other cultural institutions.

Another problem with commissioning genre and new formats was that it positioned SBS-TV to compete directly with the commercial networks, and the ABC, for mainstream audiences. Genre and new formats were all readily available on the country's other free-to-air channels, and their growing dominance within the schedule risked popularising SBS "into irrelevance" (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy 158). Furthermore, as indicated above, the privileging of such series led to the demise of documentary slots for diverse and innovative one-off documentaries. Believing series, such as *Who Do You Think You Are?* had a greater capacity to build and sustain larger audiences, the *Storyline Australia* slot was abandoned in 2007:

From week to week there wouldn't be any consistency. We fine-tuned it [*Storyline Australia*], we'd try and bunch all the history programs together or we'd try and bunch all the science programs. If there were some stories about Iraq, we'd bunch those together. So we'd try and create themed blocks. That sort of worked; sometimes you got really high ratings, like 400,000 plus...and other weeks...you'd be lucky to get 200,000 people (Graham).

Ultimately however, genre and new format programming only marginally improved ratings. The network share of the Australian audience in 2005 was between 5.9 and 6.4 percent across all capital cities. While a considerable improvement from 1996, when the audience share was between 2.4 and 3.0 percent, and from 2004 when the share was between 4.4 and 4.9 percent, it fell short of network ambitions to triple ratings (Webb).⁵⁷ As indicated in chapter two, the inability to grow audiences much beyond six percent was a significant

⁵⁷http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Australian_television_ratings_for_2005. Web. 19 Nov 2012
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Australian_television_ratings_for_1996. Web. 19 Nov 2012
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Australian_television_ratings_for_2004. Web. 19 Nov 2012

complication for SBS-TV. As franchise programs like *Top Gear* rose in popularity, SBS had to compete with cashed up commercial networks to retain licensing rights. In turn, loss of such programs compromised the ability to sustain advertising revenue, and the ability of SBSi to honour contractual commitments to the slate of productions it had commissioned. By 2009, two years after the dissolution of SBSi, the SBS content division had run out of money. During what was to be an unsuccessful campaign to increase the State allocated budget by thirty-seven percent, SBS announced that it would be “scaling back local production...cancelling two planned series and postponing three others,” and that “commissioning has stopped until after the May 12 budget” (Jackson 2). SBS-TV had, in effect, ceased to provide a financing or distribution pathway to independent producers.

The third process developed to generate more commercial content for the broadcaster, was pro-active commissioning. Pro-active commissioning describes a practice common to most broadcasters, whereby Commissioning Editors approach a producer to produce a program that conforms to criteria pre-determined by the network (Hughes). SBSi staff who participated in this study, and who worked under Ikin’s management during phase two (1996-2003), expressed considerable reservations with the practice. As public broadcaster with a remit to engage issues arising from cultural diversity, it was agreed that SBSi should not be setting the agenda, but rather, responding to those issues raised by filmmakers and the general public (Hughes).⁵⁸ For Rowe, pro-active commissioning was a necessary means to “find people who were happy television makers, whose content fitted our charter and the format of whose work fitted television.” For example, in 2000 Rowe identified comedy as a significant gap in the SBS-TV schedule, which in turn led to Debbie Lee approaching John Safran to create a series for the network. After the success of the initial ten-part series *John Safran’s Music Jamboree*, Safran went on to do *John Safran vs God*, and *Speaking in Tongues with John Safran and Father Bob*, both for SBSi. Another

⁵⁸ A notable exception was when Ikin approached Indigenous filmmakers Erica Glynn and Ivan Sen to produce content for *Unfinished Business* (Ikin). This exception was made for *Unfinished Business* to ensure acceptable quantity and quality of content that comprised the strand.

example of pro-active commissioning was *East West 101*. Having unsuccessfully pitched an idea for a different program, Steve Knapman and Chris Wyld were encouraged by Rowe to develop a police genre series that engaged with Australian cultural diversity. Genre series “that acknowledged the different kinds of lives being lived in Australia” was the kind of programming that Rowe wanted SBSi to commission, however “there was no-one in the SBSi kind of world at that stage who could do genre.” *East West 101* wasn’t developed as part of a scheme, nor was there money ear-marked for such a program: “but it just seemed like the right time...genre’s what TV loves...and then when Steve Knapman walked in and the light bulb just went on” (Rowe). Pro-active commissioning evidences a changing relationship with the independent sector. While SBSi continued to exhibit independently produced content, SBSi increasingly moved away from the “SBSi kind of world,” the filmmaking milieu it helped to nurture, and instead sought out television makers willing to work for hire as service and content providers. SBSi exploited its decision-making power as creative managers, to singularly accommodate the mainstreaming ambitions of SBS-TV.

The final creative management process implemented from the beginning of Rowe’s term as General Manager was the pursuit of international co-productions, a small but important feature of the annual slate. International financing partnerships were another means to improve production values and finance the more expensive series format (Rowe). Australian producers and networks have, historically, experienced difficulty attracting international investors and distributors to Australian productions (Graham, *Making* 27). A considerable hurdle is, where proposals aren’t too parochial for an international audience, most broadcasters would prefer to make the program locally for their own national audiences (Milne and Johnston qtd. in Graham, *Making* 28). Internationally co-produced programs, such as *The Colony*, *Sydney at War* (Claude Gonzalez) and *Hula Girls* (Trevor Graham), required strategic partnerships with broadcasters located in nations who “shared stories” and a history with Australia (Rowe). Like SBSi’s establishment of domestic inter-firm alliances, SBSi’s interest in international co-productions was underpinned by the need to pool resources, and attract more money to fund series of greater quality than had previously been produced. Sometimes SBSi attended international markets, such as MIPCOM in

Cannes, to seek international partners for locally conceived programs it wanted to commission. Mostly however, SBSi was the last to commit to projects that had already secured commitment from foreign investors, for example *The Home Song Stories* (Tony Ayres).

It is worth reiterating that from the outset SBSi content always had enjoyed an international presence. Films such as *The Quiet Room*, *Floating Life* (Clara Law) and *Beneath Clouds*, reached international audiences throughout phases one (1994-1996) and two (1996-2003), and largely and did so as a consequence of their distribution via the festival circuit, including at the Cannes, Berlin and Toronto International film festivals. This was underpinned by systems of public subsidy requiring the involvement of an international distributor, such as the FFC non-accord outlined above. Australian film agencies such as the FFC and the AFC required filmmakers to seek international distribution deals as well as a pre-sale with a local broadcaster to trigger public finance. Additionally, SBSi had contributed finance to a small number of international co-productions including: the documentary series *The Irish Empire*, also financed by the BBC, RTE Ireland, the FFC and the NSW FTO; *Winds of Change*, which received funding from the BBC, RT Hong Kong as well as the AFC, the FFC, ScreenWest and the Lotteries Commission; the animation series *QUADS!* (created by John Callahan), also funded by Teletoon Canada, CAVCO, ScreenWest and the Lotteries Commission; and *Animated Tales of the World*, two separate series of short animations coordinated by the Britain's Channel 4, and to which SBSi contributed the BAFTA award winning *Bad Baby Amy* (Anthony Lucas). The shift from promoting the international circulation of local content, towards supporting more international co-productions, indicates a movement away from productive diversity ambitions seeking new international audiences for innovative Australian content.

The four new creative management processes implemented in phase three (2003-2007) were consistent with the practice of reflexive capitalism elaborated in chapter one (Christopherson 74-5). *Reflexive capitalism* refers to the adaptation of creative management objectives and processes over time, to ameliorate risks associated with cultural production. A key adaptive strategy in the US film

industry, identified by Christopherson, is the movement away from investments in a diverse portfolio of films in favour of films that have proven appeal with the largest possible audience. This process seeks to reduce the risk of investment by predominantly supporting genres popular with mainstream audiences. Reflexive capitalism is also evident in the documentary commissioning patterns of the BBC elaborated in the introduction of this chapter, which since the 1990s, has favoured formulaic factual television programs designed to entertain audiences more so than inform them (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 98-9). Similar trends are evident in SBSi's commissioning patterns in phase three (2003-2007), which, as elaborated above, evidence a marked increase in genre and new formats. Insofar as investment in these popular programs standardised production, it also represented an abandonment of productive diversity ambitions. The pursuit of formal, aesthetic and narrative diversity up to the end of phase two (1996-2003), generated a lot of unique content in the hopes of opening up a few new niche markets. Innovation strategies like these afforded producers a high degree of creative autonomy, because they were designed to tolerate a considerable level of failure in the search for those few successful programs. Conversely, the processes of reflexive capitalism identified types of programs particularly successful with audiences, and actively generated more programs that conformed to this type. In so doing, the risk of investment was reduced, but so too was space for future innovation and diversity.

In summary, creative management evolved in phase three (2003-2007) to singularly privilege the mainstreaming objectives of SBS-TV, which represents a concomitant abandonment of productive diversity responsibilities. As this chapter has argued, throughout phases one (1994-1996) and two (1996-2003), SBSi cultivated productive diversity by generating innovative content. It achieved this by improving distribution opportunities for independently produced content, thereby developing new audiences for existing modes of production. SBSi also invested in culturally and professionally diverse talent, enriching the production ecology with fresh perspectives and vouchsafing future innovation. The steady decline in the number of dedicated, primetime documentary slots, and the concomitant rise in the number of genre and new format series in phase three (2003-2007), clearly demonstrates a diminished commitment to cultivating *new*

niche audiences for innovative content. Consistent with processes of reflexive capitalism, this commitment was displaced by the prospect of attracting *already existing* mainstream audiences for popular programming to SBS-TV. This is an abdication of productive diversity because SBSi ceased to add value to the mainstream screen industry, and indeed, displaced phase two (1996-2003) processes that did. Pro-active commissioning from producers outside of the “SBS world,” to generate this content, also represents the abandonment of productive diversity, insofar as the institution scaled back investment in the culturally and professionally diverse filmmaking milieux that it had cultivated. This is corroborated by statistics that demonstrate a marked increase in the number of genre and new format series, and the concomitant decline in one-off documentary, short film and feature film commissions. In phase three (2003-2007) SBSi exploited its relative power as creative managers, and treated its privileged access to public monies as a right, and not a responsibility. The next sub-section will explore some implications of mainstreaming for independent producers via case studies.

3.2. Some Implications of Mainstreaming for Independent Producers

As demonstrated, creative management processes were, in phase three (2003-2007), characterised by a tendency to view creativity and commerce as mutually exclusive objectives, rather than mutually reinforcing. This sub-section argues that this shift eroded the creative autonomy of independent producers, and reduced opportunities to produce innovative and diverse work that challenged white mainstream representations. First, it produces two brief case studies demonstrating increased intervention by SBSi in the creative stage of production, and the withdrawal of the institution from the production milieux it helped to cultivate. Second, it reflects on mainstreaming developments in phase three (2003-2007), and extrapolates how these are indicative of a fundamental paradox in the policy of productive diversity, which installed extra levels of bureaucracy to facilitate innovation. It concludes by extrapolating how SBSi’s previous commitment to innovation was achieved by adroitly manoeuvring within this (otherwise stifling) neo-liberal regime.

As this chapter has demonstrated, SBSi cultivated the resource of productive diversity by co-ordinating project-based modes of production and distribution. To achieve this SBSi assumed a creative management role, which empowered staff as key decision-makers within the Australian screen industry. In phases one (1994-1996) and two (1996-2003), SBSi used this power to generate innovative content. This was achieved by cultivating a diverse production ecology through training, and the development of new niche markets creating demand for innovative content. The corollary of mainstreaming in phase three (2003-2007) was the withdrawal from the culturally and professionally diverse milieu that SBSi had diligently nurtured. This is demonstrated by the changing relationship between SBSi and Big and Little Films. Big and Little was a small production company incorporated in 1990, and established by producer Michael McMahon and writer/director/producer Tony Ayres, primarily as a vehicle for the films of Ayres. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s McMahon produced, and Ayres wrote and directed, a number of programs for SBSi, including: the documentaries *Sadness* (Tony Ayres), *Man Made: Two Men and Two Babies* (Emma Crimmings); the telemovie *Call Me Mum* (Margot Nash); the features *Walking on Water*, *The Home Song Stories* (Tony Ayres); the drama series *Saved* (Tony Ayres); and the comedy series *Bogan Pride*. For McMahon there was clear affinity between his own objectives as a producer, and SBSi's commitment to innovative, challenging and culturally diverse programming: "The sort of work we were making in those days was the sort of work which had its natural home at SBS, and therefore working with SBSi to make that work was important for us in terms of a way into the broadcaster" (McMahon). This affinity diminished considerably as SBSi pursued programs that could improve network ratings. As the presence of advertising on SBS-TV increased, so too did pressure to make programs that would rate well (McMahon). In phases one (1994-1996) and two (1996-2003), SBSi adroitly co-ordinated the needs of different capital investors with those of independent producers, providing the latter with an important buffer from commercial considerations. Conversely, to achieve mainstreaming objectives in phase three (2003-2007), SBSi simply sought out different producers willing to make content that would rate well.

That mainstreaming processes also led to an erosion of producer autonomy is demonstrated by the production of the 2004 feature documentary *Betelnut Bisnis*, directed by Chris Owen, and produced by Andrew Pike. *Betelnut Bisnis* was commissioned Glenys Rowe, who in 2001 (pro-actively) approached Owen and Pike to produce a feature documentary for SBSi. Owen was, and remains, an experienced and highly regarded filmmaker, who specialises in the production of ethnographic film about PNG and the country's inhabitants. On the basis of his reputation, Owen was given *carte blanche* to make a film "about his life and experiences in Papua New Guinea" (Pike). The film that resulted from this commission portrays the daily life of a betelnut vendor in PNG. Via this personal narrative, the film explores the financial and physical dependence of PNG communities on betelnut, the most widely used narcotic in the world. The production period for the film spans the period of transition at SBSi, from phase two (1996-2003) to phase three (2003-2007), and demonstrates how mainstreaming compelled SBSi staff to intervene in creative decisions. Pike's account is worth quoting at length.

Chris put together a few thoughts and they were all approved very quickly...and then we went to the Film Finance Corporation, and got their top up. So the budget came together at quite a rapid pace and Chris was able to start working. He'd had to spend quite a bit of time trying to identify his subject and then shoot over an extended period of time. So, from the original commission until the point where we were able to start showing rough cuts to SBS quite a bit of time had elapsed; probably the better part of two years, or a year and a half at least.

By then things had started changing at SBS ... But it was very clear that she [Rowe] was under pressure to tighten up and do things in a much more commercial, mainstream way. So, in actual practice, Chris was given a fantastic *carte blanche* to begin the production, but ended under very, very tight supervision from SBS.

We ran out of budget very early on in post-production and then after that Chris and I both sort of fed our fees back into the production to keep it going. And then Ronin [Films, Pike's distribution company] fed money in to keep it going too, until it was finally finished. But, our Commissioning Editor who took over responsibility for the project was Marie Thomas. We really felt Marie just didn't have a clue what we were trying to do... We wanted her to look at something like an 80-minute assembly, just to see if we were on the right track with the story and she refused to look until we had it down to around 60 minutes. And then she came and looked at it

and, she basically hated what she saw. Her demands really came from another paradigm of filmmaking; they wanted a lot more narration, a lot clearer structure, what she called signposting...it just went on and on and on, it must have been about a year, the editing of this film. And numerous versions; Chris delivered another one hour version which again Marie didn't like, and so it went back a third time. And then Marie left to go – her contract finished – back to England and Glenys took over the project as Commissioning Editor (Pike).

From phase two (1996-2003) to phase three (2003-2007), SBSi altered its set of expectations in line with new mainstreaming objectives, which privileged conventional forms of television documentary. These new expectations incurred substantial labour and financial costs, which were born by the director and producer of the film. This is consistent with scholarship demonstrating the exploitative effects of project-based production. Within this model, the buyer of creative labour services offers a fixed sum in return for a product to be delivered to investors upon completion. While the open-ended contract often allows a degree of autonomy not enjoyed in wage labour, any additional and unforeseen costs must be born by independent producers (Smith and McKinlay, "Creative" 39). In the case of *Betelnut Bisnis*, SBSi exercised its right as a creative manager to conduct an editorial intervention into creative decisions, *and* exploited the open-ended contract such that the director and producer bore the cost of those interventions. This evidences the substantially greater power held by SBSi as creative managers within project-based system of production.

Another important point demonstrated by Pike's testimony is how editorial interventions made by SBSi helped to consolidate, rather than undermine, white racial hegemony. The different paradigm of filmmaking to which Pike refers is a type of ethnographic representation that evolved from the Direct Cinema movement of the 1960s. Broadly speaking, Direct Cinema and its antecedent formations (elaborated in chapter four), sought to counteract ethnographic traditions of filmmaking, which objectify and otherwise disempower the ethnographic "object of study" (Catalán Eraso). It does this via innovation of new formal and stylistic strategies to represent other cultures. It also rejects traditional conventions, such as voice-over narration, that fabricate a sense of scientific objectivity, at the same time that they frame other cultures via "the filmmaker's

own categories and values” (Catalán Eraso). A key characteristic of Direct Cinema is that the form and content of a given film are inextricable from one another. This is an extremely important point, because it demonstrates how creative decisions made by filmmakers are also often philosophical decisions. SBSi clearly pursued Owen to produce a documentary in phase two (1996-2003), because his innovative approach to representing different cultures was consistent with the objectives of the institution at that time. Changes to creative management processes were detrimental to the philosophical integrity of the production. The insistence that *Betelnut Bisnis* be re-edited into a conventional narrative, to make it more palatable for mainstream consumption, undercut Owen’s life long project of developing more equitable modes of cross-cultural communication. New mainstream definitions of commercial viability now required direct interventions into the creative stage of production, to standardise the formal composition of films.

Managerial interventions into creative decisions contrast considerably with processes develop in phase two (1996-2003). As demonstrated in section two, the commercial demands of scheduling were manipulated by SBSi in phase two (1996-2003) via mechanisms like the themed strand; a development that maintained a broadcast space for formally innovative content, without the need for excessive editorialising. As a consequence, independent producers valued SBSi as an important mechanism that safeguarded creative autonomy. For example, McMahon recalls that:

Sadness would not have happened without the support of SBSi. It had been passed on by the ABC, after an attempt to reformulate it, which was something we didn’t want to do. We simply wanted to document a performance piece, which had proven incredibly popular. So *Sadness* would never have been made, and that’s a project which I take particular pride in, because I think it’s one that has actually withstood the test of time ...another one, *Call Me Mum*, just simply wouldn’t have been made without the support of SBSi. Trying to pitch a story about a disabled Torres Strait Islander boy and his white foster mother just wouldn’t fly (McMahon).

Both *Sadness* and *Call Me Mum* are formally innovative programs challenging white hegemony via monologues that directly address audiences. Network attempts to increase ratings in phase three (2003-2007) compromised the ability

of filmmakers to conduct such challenges, because the conventions of genre and new format disallowed formal and aesthetic innovations capable of representing non-white perspectives. Another key factor inhibiting the sustainability of innovative and diverse production was that productive diversity programs were never targeted at upper management, either within the SBS Corporation or other cultural institutions. Consistent with the critique forwarded by Ghassan Hage, productive diversity represents a program for managing culturally diverse peoples who are distinguished from the white employers by whom they are managed (*White Nation* 130). Thus any positive changes achieved by SBSi could only ever be temporary insofar as they failed to change the political culture, and diversify upper management within Australia's core institutions, including the SBS Corporation.

Theoretical models explaining why project-based labour processes consolidate existing asymmetrical power relations largely examine commercial contexts. Corporate models of project-based production detailed by Ryan for example, demonstrates how power imbalances are produced because the "imperatives of [capital] accumulation are *built into* functional relations between the different types of workers which comprise" the project team (Ryan 127; also see Hesmondhalgh *Cultural*). Investors hold the power over what does and does not get produced because they control the distribution of capital, and these decisions are motivated by profit. Insofar as SBSi assumed a creative management role, the institution co-ordinated project-based modes of production and distribution that subjected independent producers to greater interventions by investors. However, in Australia, the commerce-corrupts-creativity thesis is complicated by the fact that investors and creative managers are often agents of the State, albeit operating at an "arms-length" from government departments. Ultimately, the institution of SBSi installed an extra level of bureaucracy into the creative stage of production in the form of creative management. Power already exercised by cultural institutions via investment decisions was extended from this time, insofar as these institutions became part of the project team. As SBSi matured, its allocation of federal finance was increased *not* decreased indicating an expansion of State involvement in independent productions. Furthermore, the financing infrastructure consolidated such that independents were heavily reliant on public

broadcaster pre-sales to trigger investment from other agencies. This highlights the fundamental paradox of neo-liberal policies, which embed cultural institutions within labour networks as a means of deregulating trade, liberating the industry from its dependence on the public purse and achieving commercial viability. If a key premise of *Creative Nation* holds true, that bureaucratic process stifles innovation, then it also holds that as the institution grew in size and influence, its involvement in independent production is precisely what stifled already existing forms of innovation and diversity.

In summary, section three has argued that in phase three (2003-2007), SBSi abandoned its productive diversity responsibilities in favour of developing the mainstream appeal of SBS-TV. This was demonstrated via an examination of commissioning patterns and creative management processes, which intervened in creative decisions to ensure the delivery of standardised genre and new format programming with broad audience appeal. Processes developed to achieve these objectives include pro-active commissioning, the reduction of primetime documentary slots freeing broadcast space, and investment in international co-productions. These developments evidence processes of reflexive capitalism, whereby investment in innovative and diverse content is sacrificed in favour of more marketable and conventional programs. Arguably, the pursuit of popular programming was a viable strategy for reaching a greater number of people with the message of multiculturalism. However, as demonstrated via the case study of Big and Little Films, popular programming resulted in the disenfranchisement of producers committed to culturally diverse representation. Moreover, the case study of *Betelnut Bisnis* evidences how interventions dictated formal attributes, impeding the ability of filmmakers to meaningfully challenge racist ideologies. This is consistent with scholarship reviewed in chapter one, critiquing productive diversity as a program for managing diversity, and reinforcing white hegemony. The second key finding was that SBSi's transition toward mainstreaming was consistent with neo-liberalism, which ultimately, stifles innovative production by subjecting it to the logic of capital accumulation *and* bureaucratic atrophy. This throws into sharp relief the scale of the contribution made by SBSi, which, for most of its life, successfully worked within these strictures to seed a vital, innovative and diverse production ecology.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has employed a creative labour approach to explicate SBSi as a formidable force within Australian screen history, which in the wake of neo-liberal reform, rejuvenated a vibrant independent production ecology. This was demonstrated in section one via the analysis of creative management objectives and processes developed in phase one (1994-1996), which consolidated a bifurcated approach to cultivate innovation and achieve productive diversity. Early collaborations with reputable independent producers, like Rolf de Heer, and film funding agencies, such as Film Australia, yielded bold productions that met a demand for innovative and diverse representations, and helped to consolidate SBSi as a valued asset within the screen industry. Exhibition of this content in primetime was an early distribution strategy for cultivating niche audiences. Concomitantly, the entrepreneurial exploitation of the FFC documentary accord aimed to cultivate innovation by investing in a new generation of culturally diverse filmmakers. While the successes of these processes were limited, they were foundational to more the sophisticated approaches that were developed in phase two (1996-2003).

As demonstrated in section two, the appointment of new staff steeped in independent production culture, underwrote the development of new processes in phase two (1996-2003), which skilfully harmonised creative and commercial imperatives, and achieved productive diversity. The first of these processes was the themed strand, which developed new modes of filmmaking that conformed to the conventions of television exhibition, enabling the development of regular audiences for content and thus meeting commercial imperatives. Themed strands also allowed for innovation insofar as they were used to develop new and culturally diverse talent, seeding an innovative production ecology, and shaping new modes of storytelling that challenged traditional perceptions of Australian identity and history. This was most forcefully exemplified via the explication of the *NIDF*, the *IDI* and *Unfinished Business*, which all contributed to the unprecedented investment in, and exhibition of, Indigenous content. These themed strands gave rise to an important new Indigenous production milieu, including producers like Ivan Sen, Lawrence Johnston, Warwick Thornton and

Catriona McKenzie, who are still active as filmmakers. Drama enterprises were the second of these processes, which explicitly developed commercial opportunities for independent producers, and created a demand for innovative content. This was demonstrated via the elaboration of various enterprises, including development pathways such as *MDM*, *SOTF* and the short feature scheme, and distributor alliances including with the AFF and PMP. The chronological explication of drama enterprises evidenced a strong commitment to securing future opportunities for innovation in filmmaking, by pooling resources with other agents and agencies, and linking together development, production and distribution finance. This was achieved via the mechanism of the project team, which SBSi carefully co-ordinated to ensure mutual benefit to participating parties, and to shape integrated production and distribution processes.

Finally, section three examined creative management processes developed in phase three (2003-2007) to achieve mainstreaming objectives. These processes were the reduction of documentary slots, increased investment in international co-productions, as well as genre and new format series, and pro-active commissioning. Using the rubric of reflexive capitalism it argued that these creative management processes represent a fundamental shift that re-aligned SBSi with SBS-TV's mainstreaming ambitions, and against the creative ambitions of independent producers. Moreover, it argued that this shift constituted an abdication of productive diversity responsibilities, insofar as it aimed to attract existing mainstream audiences via popular programming, and ceased to add value to the production economy by developing new niche audiences for innovative content. The shift from innovative to conventional content also represented an abandonment of productive diversity, insofar as it disenfranchised a community of producers, who were committed to culturally diverse representation, and creative to interventions, which challenged the philosophical integrity of white mainstream media. These developments are indicative of the effects of neo-liberal "deregulation." Via SBSi, the State increased its regulatory reach, building on already established financial involvements and insinuating itself into creative labour processes, *not* reducing government. What the case of SBSi demonstrates is that while neo-liberal governmentality is a relentless force, it is a logic that can be inhabited,

manipulated and tweaked to create new and temporary spaces for dissent, if not resistance.

CHAPTER 4

COUNTER-MEMORIES OF WHITE AUSTRALIA

So far this thesis has argued that SBSi was a formidable institution, which adroitly manoeuvred within the logic of neo-liberal governmentality to seed new production milieux, and shape new modes of filmmaking and storytelling. This was achieved in chapter two, which demonstrated how the form and function of the institution was designed to embody productive diversity policy, such that steps taken to generate local multicultural programming for SBS-TV also expedited economic reform in the Australian screen industry. Chapter three examined creative management processes, and demonstrated how SBSi subverted the neo-liberal co-option of creative labour, to instead cultivate the commercial viability of innovative and diverse filmmaking. A key strategy developed to achieve this was investment in both culturally and professionally diverse talent, which replenished the independent production ecology and gave rise to new modes of storytelling. This chapter examines the content shaped by these practices, and demonstrates how SBSi inadvertently created a new counter-memorial cycle of films that challenged white Australian hegemony. Counter-memorial narratives are political modes of representation that draw from personal experience and memory to construct meanings that are “not identical with the official meanings of the political public sphere” (Berlant 6). As a consequence of their inconsistency with dominant ideology, counter-memories expose, disrupt, critique and otherwise challenge the discursive maintenance of hegemony. This chapter examines content commissioned by SBSi between 1994 and 2007 and elaborates the strategies of these counter-memorial challenges. Using a critical race and whiteness approach, it demonstrates how the SBSi cycle of productions contested dominant representations of Australian identity and history, which naturalised white racial hegemony within State institutions.

SBSi productions constitute a coherent counter-memorial cycle within the history of Australian film and television. The common thread that runs through the SBSi

cycle is the centrality of non-white perspectives, which provide audiences with multifarious new ways to identify with the nation, the world and each other. Prominent examples include Indigenous films and documentaries including: the feature films *Radiance* (Rachel Perkins), *The Tracker* (Rolf de Heer) and *Ten Canoes* (Rolf de Heer and Peter Djigirr); the tele-feature *Call Me Mum* (Margot Nash); the drama series *RAN* (David Caesar and Catriona McKenzie); and the documentaries *Kabbarli* (Andrew G. Taylor), *Yellow Fella* (Ivan Sen) and *First Australians* (Rachel Perkins and Beck Cole). Productions that refract national narratives through CALD and émigré perspectives include: the feature films *Floating Life* (Clara Law), *La Spagnola* (Steve Jacobs) and *The Home Song Stories* (Tony Ayres); the short films *Harvie Krumpet* (Adam Elliot) and *Jewboy* (Tony Krawitz); the documentary *Sadness* (Tony Ayres); and the comedy series *Pizza* (Paul Fenech). A significant number of productions undermine the discursive construction of white Australian sovereignty via representations of its political and colonial ties to international regions, such as in: the documentaries *The Irish Empire* (David Roberts, Dearbhla Walsh and Alan Gilsean), *Since the Company Came* (Russell Hawkins), *The Diplomat* (Tom Zubrycki), and the animated documentary *The Safe House* (Lee Whitmore). The representation of different types of white identities is another important strategy counter-memorialising the erasure of bodies and behaviours that are inconsistent with the image of a robust, virile and thus sovereign nation. This includes the representation of whiteness marked by class and gender differences, such as in the comedy series *Wilfred* (created by Jason Gann and Adam Zwar); and films like *The Boys* (Rowan Woods), *Mallboy* (Vince Giarusso) and *Somersault* (Cate Shortland). It also includes the representation of “deviant” sexualities, of disability, illness and death, such as in the comedy series’ *House Gang* (created by Gaby Mason) and *QUADS!* (created by John Callahan); the documentaries *Untold Desires* (Sarah Stephens) and *Sexing the Label* (Anna Broinowski); the feature films *Walking on Water* (Tony Ayres), *The Illustrated Family Doctor* (Kriv Stenders), and *Look Both Ways* (Sarah Watt); and the short animation *The Mysterious Geographic Explorations of Jasper Morello* (Anthony Lucas). As will be explicated in section two, these and many other SBSi programs reflexively utilise a myriad of formal, aesthetic and narrative techniques to render familiar

themes and topics, but from the perspective of alterity. They are counter-memorial because they foreground cultural processes by which white racial hegemony is reproduced and naturalised.

To demonstrate how SBSi films counter-memorialise white racial hegemony this chapter is divided into two sections.⁵⁹ Section one reviews counter-memory scholarship, deriving from the work of Michel Foucault, to identify and elaborate the principal characteristics of counter-memorial practice. It then moves on to review critical race and whiteness scholarship, and establishes how mainstream film and television representations authenticate white perspectives of Australian identity and history. The adoption of a critical race and whiteness approach represents a significant deviation from the multicultural paradigm traditionally employed to analyse SBS and its representations. There are three important reasons for this approach. First, critical race and whiteness scholarship provides the theoretical tools to identify how the discourse of multiculturalism reifies and obscures “whiteness” as a racial category and marker of privilege. Second, race and critical whiteness scholarship is better equipped to analyse how counter-memorial representations of disability, gender, sexuality, faith, as well as race and ethnicity, subvert the maintenance of white hegemony via political, historical and media discourses. Third, where multiculturalism is circumscribed by national prescriptions of identity, critical whiteness better reflects post-national experiences of identity represented within many SBSi productions. This final point is significant insofar as the themes and narratives represented across much

⁵⁹ The organisation of this chapter differs markedly from chapters two and three, which were structured chronologically with each of the three sections corresponding with a distinct phase in the evolution of SBSi. The chronological organisation of data was appropriate to the objectives of both chapters and elaborated how commissioning practices changed in relation to new institutional philosophies and managerial objectives. This chronological model is not suitable to the ambitions of chapter four, which extrapolates the counter-memorial legacy of SBSi as it is expressed in the extant catalogue of content, which the institution commissioned throughout its thirteen-year life. The reason for this is that counter-memorial strategies, while certainly more prevalent in phases one (1994-1996) and two (1996-2003), still characterised some SBSi productions in phase three (2003-2007). Indeed some of the programs commissioned in these final years, such as *Jewboy* and *The Safe House*, are exceptional examples within the cycle, and deserve equal recognition.

of the work commissioned by SBSi traverse national borders. Section two analyses the SBSi database to identify common counter-memorial strategies used to challenge white racial hegemony. These strategies are: 1) *counter-memorial re-membering*, defined as films that represent past events from the perspective of those marginalised and silenced within official histories of Australia; 2) *counter-memorial (re-) appropriation*, whereby films invest popular icons, stereotypes and symbols of nation with new meanings that invite critical reflection; and 3) *counter-memorial polyphony*, films that expose paradoxes in myths and tropes of nation through multi-lingual, multi-accented and multi-voiced storytelling. The formal, aesthetic and narrative techniques that characterise each of these strategies will be extrapolated via the close textual analysis of an exemplary production. Insofar as SBSi shaped these counter-memorial narrative representations via creative management objectives and processes, this chapter argues that the commissioning house issued a sustained challenge to white supremacy within the Australian national imaginary.

SECTION I

RE-MEMBERING WHITE AUSTRALIA AND HIS OTHERS

In the tradition of Benedict Anderson, this chapter defines the nation as “an imagined political community” (6). The “nation” is an idea, a construct that is brought into being and sustained through discourse via the re-telling of historical narratives, through literature, the media, and tropes and symbols circulated in popular culture (S. Hall 293). National discourse is an important means by which people come to identify with, and experience, a sense of belonging to a given nation, which is “always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship,” irrespective of “the actual inequality and exploitation” that actually prevails within the national “community” (Anderson 7). What is referred to as the “national imaginary,” is an ideological process of *identification* with the nation that erases experiences of inequality, subordination, prejudice and discrimination from cultural memory. Similarly, the phrase “official discourse,” collectively references the various discursive sites – media, politics, cinema, legal and so on – where national ideologies are propagated. It is both the national imaginary and

official discourse that is the target of counter-memorial intervention. This section develops this theoretical framework, which will be used in section two to establish SBSi productions as a counter-memorial cycle. First, it reviews the field of counter-memory scholarship and outlines the counter-hegemonic politics that underpins the practice of counter-memory. It then enumerates some representational conventions that characterise its strategies. It argues that the films comprising the SBSi catalogue proliferate irreconcilable experiences and perspectives about the shared history of all Australians, such that the authority of official discourse is disrupted. Second, this section reviews critical race and whiteness scholarship to establish how normative Australian identity and history is, in official discourse, constructed as white, masculine, Christian and heterosexual. It foregrounds the mutable and plastic quality of national tropes, stereotypes and narratives, and how these have sustained the synonymy of racial whiteness and ideal Australianness up to the present day. In so doing, it lays the foundation for the argument that SBSi content de-naturalised white racial hegemony by exposing and undercutting the discursive conventions utilised to reify and disguise it.

1.1. Theorising Counter-Memory

Broadly speaking, the core objective of counter-memory scholarship is to develop a praxis for the contestation of official discourse, which secures the power and privilege enjoyed by the ruling elite within a prescribed territory. Counter-memory is a political practice that is staged through representational and performative means. This sub-section engages with literature detailing the concept, politics and practice of counter-memory, to establish the defining characteristics of counter-memorial practice. As a field of academic enquiry counter-memory derives from the theoretical writings of Michel Foucault, particularly his questioning of the relationship between power and knowledge in his essay “Nietzsche, Genealogy and History.” This sub-section begins with an overview of the key concepts developed in this essay, namely the deployment of subjective memories to counter officially sanctioned discourse. Second, it examines counter-memory literature deriving from Foucault, to identify three defining characteristics of counter-memorial practice, referred to in this thesis as:

re-membering, *(re-) appropriation*, and *polyphony*. These three terms have been coined to categorise and group techniques of counter-memory applicable to screen formats. Section two further develops these categories via close textual analysis, to establish common formal, aesthetic and narrative techniques for screen representations of counter-memory.

The concept of counter-memory derives from Foucault's theorisation of Western epistemologies as having manifested genealogically rather than being representative of objectively ascertained truths. In "Nietzsche, Genealogy and History," Foucault posits that natural, social and discursive entities, such as "the nation," are ultimately abstract concepts that are given meaning by how they come to be practiced by innumerable and uniquely situated agents. The term *effective history* is mobilised by Foucault to designate how knowledge is accrued by corporeal beings whose bodies are "molded from a great many distinct regimes ... broken down by the rhythms of work, rest and holidays ... poisoned by food or values, through eating habits and moral laws" (Foucault, "Nietzsche" 153). Foucault's elaboration of effective history insists that there is no objective vantage from which to produce knowledge. Rather, *all* knowledge is subjective insofar as it is produced by individual and collective agents; agents who by virtue of their corporeal existence, are temporally and spatially situated in relation to multifarious physical, social and discursive regimes and practices. Conversely, Foucault extrapolates the concept of *traditional history* as a discursive regime, whereby historiographical conventions are utilised by agents to reify the authority of certain perspectives as truth. Foucault elaborates how these conventions enable agents to render the present moment intelligible through the careful selection and organisation of past events into a cause-and-effect narrative, to infer "a teleological movement or natural process" ("Nietzsche" 154). The temporal conventions particular to traditional history obscure the "historian's...grounding in a particular time and place, their preferences in a controversy-the unavoidable obstacles of their passion" (Foucault, "Nietzsche" 156-7). Traditional history is thus a set of conventions that affect the illusion of objective knowledge to privilege certain perspectives within the discursive and social economy.

Counter-memories are representations or performances strategically constructed from effective histories that are elided, dismissed and ignored by official discourse. As Foucault states, traditional history is only *one* of a great many “distinct regimes” which mould the body to produce effective history. There exist a variety of official discourses that circumscribe the multifarious ways that individuals know and interact with the world, the most apparent examples being legal, scientific, medical, political and media discourse. Official discourses are woven into the fabric of everyday experience, and although their influence is significant, they cannot contain the conflicting memories borne of personal experience. Counter-memories “take shape within mainstream cultural memories that are not monolithic but heterogeneous” (Burlein 216). They are constructed from subjective knowledge and memories that have formed along side, and in relation to, official discourse. Their similarity to and inconsistency with meanings in the political public sphere constitutes a challenge to dominant ideologies. Counter-memories are thus strategies of hegemonic resistance. There are three strategies of counter-memorial intervention that are relevant to the concerns of this study. This sub-section will now extrapolate these strategies and the representational conventions that characterise them.

Re-membering is the first characteristic of counter-memory, and is defined as the contestation of Western epistemology via the representation of situated knowledge and memory. The most prominent example of this strategy is encapsulated by the feminist slogan “the personal is political,” which advocates the practice of publically remembering the repressed experiences of the feminine Other.⁶⁰ The public remembrance of personal experiences seeks to expose and subvert “the systematic nature of gendered violence” whereby, for example, “each violent event is treated in isolation as the pathological behavior of a deranged individual rather than as behavior into which such individuals have

⁶⁰ Throughout this chapter the term “Other” is capitalised to refer to collective cultural identities that are broadly categorised as marginal within mainstream discourse, and who are prevented from participating in Western societies on an equal basis as a consequence of their marginality. The use of the term Other broadly encompasses racial marginality (e.g. Asian, Aboriginal), ethnic marginality (e.g. Italian, Greek), sexuality, gender, disability, religion and so on.

been socialized” (Bold, Knowles and Leach 127). For such acts of remembrance to disrupt hegemony they need to be performed by those who occupy, and speak from a position of alterity; as a woman, a migrant, a black man or woman, a homosexual and so on. While such identities are socially constructed as homogenous, knowable entities, they are “experienced as unstable, paradoxical, a social and cultural phenomenon as well as a visceral one” (Quinn 368). As such, social identities represent a particular kind of social, cultural and corporeal positioning, which produces its own contradictions and discontinuities that can illuminate how “other realities are framed” (Quinn 368). Counter-memory is here a practice that apprehends and deploys the specificity of situated knowledge, to undermine and problematise claims to truth and objectivity. It “reverses the surreptitious practice of historians, their pretension to examine things furthest from themselves,” rather “it studies what is closest, but in an abrupt dispassion, so as to seize it at a distance” (Foucault, “Nietzsche” 156). Counter-memories do not displace official histories, meanings and identities, nor do they exist in a dialectic relationship with them. Rather, counter-memories exist alongside official history and identity, threatening to disrupt hegemony by exposing the contradictions within official discourses through the proliferation and validation of alternative perspectives.

A second characteristic of counter-memory is referred to as the *(re-)appropriation* of popular signs and symbols, which have become reified as vessels of meaning, and which are mobilised to unify a community or collective around a particular set of ideas. “Re-” is set in brackets to foreground how, in some instances, the act of appropriation is, in fact, a reclamation of a sign or symbol by minority groups from whom it was poached. The practice of appropriation and re-appropriation encourages critique of hegemonic discourses by attaching a different set of meanings to popular cultural signifiers. A pertinent example is provided by Devin Zuber, who appropriates the situated perspective of the flâneur to counter-memorialise the former site of the World Trade Centre in New York, as an absolute symbol of American solidarity, democracy, and restitution. For example, Zuber reveals: graffiti in subways “concerned with the suppressed identity of African Americans”; and guerrilla media campaigns that “redeploy the high iconography of consumer culture” to recast the war on terror

as “technologized fantasies of global capitalism” (275-87). Zuber’s performance of *flânerie* records a palimpsest of aesthetic regimes in lower Manhattan. He appropriates and invests these regimes with meanings that articulate Ground Zero as an ironic symbol of the nation’s “manifest destiny.” This demonstrates how counter-memorial acts of (re-) appropriation manipulate the plasticity of signs and symbols, to expose contradictions, paradoxes and elisions that exist within Western epistemology, and the processes by which it is naturalised.

A third characteristic of counter-memory is *polyphony*, understood as the co-existence of multifarious and irreconcilable perspectives that manifest with the *fracturing of chronotopic conventions* within Western epistemologies. While traditional history constructs the illusion of objectivity through the selective reconstruction of past events into a linear cause-and-effect narrative, counter-memory proliferates narratives of the past that are simultaneous and discontinuous with official discourses. The power of counter-memory stems from the proliferation of voices and meanings that attach to events, objects, stereotypes, and images, affirming “knowledge as perspective” (Foucault, “Nietzsche” 156), and which ultimately undermines the singularity and authority of official discourse. In order to merge different perspectives into a teleological narrative, certain perspectives must be privileged over Others. Thus, the second important convention disrupted by polyphony is the construction of different subject positions as subject or object, protagonist or antagonist, self or Other. Polyphony refuses this authorial worldview via multiple techniques, including those enumerated above, namely the representation of subjective experience, and through the (re-) appropriation of signs and symbols. Another strategy is historical revision from the perspective of those who have been constructed as Other within traditional historical narratives.⁶¹ Both strategies are polyphonic

⁶¹ This is demonstrated via Ann Burlein’s provocative case study of the international Christian Right radio ministry, Focus on the Family. In this example the leader of the ministry James Dobson re-members cultural “memories of protest and popular resistance associated with the 1960s” that the “left thinks of as its own property” (217). Dobson uses counter-memorial techniques to contrive a position of alterity and speak out against the diminishment of the (still significant) hegemony of the white male Protestant majority. Dobson’s voice does not displace or

insofar as they proliferate irreconcilable perspectives that are forced to co-exist in uneasy relation.

Counter-memorial re-remembering, (re-) appropriation and polyphony are each discursive and performative strategies for resisting hegemony. Hegemony is that which is at stake in the construction of a national imaginary through official discourse. The use of the term *hegemony* requires some clarification insofar as it appears counter-intuitive in the context of this thesis, which has rejected Marxist-ideological definitions of neo-liberalism (see chapter one). This thesis adopts the term *hegemony* in a descriptive sense, to refer to:

the cultural, political and intellectual processes related to dominant economic practices and activity within a given society by which domination of one class is achieved over another (or others). This is effected chiefly, though by no means exclusively, through non-coercive means, such as the dissemination of forms of knowledge, which constitutes and constructs socially normative subject positions through institutionally authorized means and discourses such as those of education, the law, journalism and the media, religion, or, in a more diffuse manner, through the very idea of a normative or dominant culture itself (Wolfe 81).

This definition of hegemony corresponds with Foucault's elaboration of governmentality insofar as the power and privilege enjoyed by the ruling elite is not understood as an object possessed, or maintained via exclusively coercive means. Rather, hegemony is a process that constructs privileged "subject positions" that individuals can move into and out of. Moreover, it is a "lived system of meanings and values – constitutive and constituting – which as they are experienced as practices appear reciprocally confirming" (Williams, *Marxism* 110). Counter-memory identifies subjugated knowledge, the residual memories of individuals and collectives that are not identical with officially sanctioned discourses, as a resource that can challenge those representational processes that reify certain meanings and values as hegemonic. This is consistent with Zuber's deployment of counter-memory as well as many other studies including those by

erase counter-cultural histories but rather becomes another voice proliferating irreconcilable narratives around a single event.

Aleida Assman (1994), Jacqueline E. Bixler (2002), Stephen Legg (2005), and Maria Bucur (2009). Each of these studies utilise the concept to illustrate how official discourses of national history and identity are contested by those who are marginalised, oppressed, misrepresented, or forgotten within the national imaginary.

In summary, this sub-section has identified three prominent strategies that are commonly used within counter-memorial representations to challenge hegemony: re-membering, (re-) appropriation and polyphony. Re-membering is a strategy that revises collective histories from the subjective perspective of the Other, who has been marginalised within mainstream discourses. It exposes whiteness as a perspective that shapes a collective sense of reality, and which privileges select groups of people in society while it marginalises Others. (Re-) appropriation is the second counter-memorial strategy, which disrupts hegemony by reinvesting common signs and symbols with new meanings. It is a strategy that functions to expose epistemological contradictions, and also, to expose how discourse is used to reinforce and naturalise asymmetrical power relations in society. Polyphony is the third strategy, which challenges hegemony by proliferating narratives around a single event or topic. Polyphony refuses to cohere different subject positions into the subject-object relations required of teleological narratives, and thereby confounds the discursive processes of marginalisation. Each of these strategies reflexively manipulates common representational conventions to undermine the reproduction of hegemony through discourse. It is the contention of this chapter that independent producers, working within the SBSi world, seized upon the political potential that Foucault identified within counter-memorial practice, to challenge mainstream screen representations, which construct Australian identity and history from the perspective of whiteness. Before extrapolating how these counter-memorial strategies manifested in SBSi content, it is first necessary to establish that whiteness is a hegemonic subject position in Australia, and how screen representations contribute to its maintenance.

1.2. Theorising White Hegemony

While the implementation of an official policy of multiculturalism in the 1970s is popularly regarded as the death knell of white supremacy within Australia's political, social and cultural institutions, racial whiteness continues to be privileged within the national imaginary. Far from a superficial remnant of a less enlightened past, the ubiquitous image of fair skinned citizens (often replete with blonde hair and/or blue eyes) is indicative of deeply entrenched representations of ideal whiteness, which continue to naturalise white hegemony. This sub-section establishes how the Australian national imaginary has been shaped, and white hegemony maintained, through screen representations. First, it draws from Ghassan Hage's *White Nation* to broadly establish how white hegemony continues to be secured and mystified via political discourse. It foregrounds how the historical narrative of multicultural enlightenment bolsters the hegemony of whiteness within the national imaginary, even as it remembers the emergence of a culturally diverse citizenry. Second, this sub-section engages with critical race and whiteness scholarship to outline how common formal, aesthetic and narrative characteristics of film and television naturalise white-centric constructions of history and identity, in both national and international contexts. The objective is to identify some significant stereotypes, motifs, tropes and narratives that continue to circumscribe racist representations of Australian history and identity. In so doing, this sub-section establishes a counter-point against which to read the counter-memorial interventions conducted by SBSi programs, analysed in section two.

The emergence of a multicultural policy framework from the mid-1970s has been popularly remembered as the enlightened abandonment of racist policies and practices, historically enacted by the State, to secure white governance within the Australian territory (Hage, *White Nation* 82). Throughout the nation's formative years, Australian national identity was explicitly defined as a white identity. Various policies, enacted up until the introduction of post-WWII immigration programs in the late-1940s, attempted to realise this imagined "utopia" exclusively peopled by white citizens. The most well known of these was the *Immigration Restriction Act*, known colloquially as the "White Australia Policy." This was one of the first Acts of national parliament following the Federation of Australia in 1901, and was implemented to restrict immigration to those of

white British heritage. While some policies were directed outwards to prohibit entry of Asians, Pacific Islanders and other non-British peoples into the country, other policies were directed inwards to control the movement and marriages of Indigenous peoples (Stephenson 9-11; Reynolds 127). Both sets of policies manifested a desire to secure the national space exclusively for phenotypically defined white citizens.

Legitimate Australian identity was, in the first decades of the twentieth century, explicated in overtly *racial* terms. However, from the late 1940s there “was a gradual shift to an understanding of whiteness as signifying the presence of a particular type of culture” (Stratton, “Multiculturalism” 172). This shift was influenced by a political appeal to the public, to accept less-white European immigrants to meet the country’s post-war reconstruction needs (Hage, *White Nation* 82). The admittance of Southern European migrants in the 1950s and 60s catalysed a discursive repositioning of whiteness in relation to non-British European cultures, “between which difference was limited because of their common moral basis” (Stratton, “Multiculturalism” 172). The primacy of Anglo-Celtic heritage was however, maintained via assimilationist policies, which required migrants to divest themselves of the heritage of their homelands and adopt the language, culture and values proper to Australia.⁶² The multicultural policy framework adopted by the federal government in the 1970s is popularly historicised as the beginning of a “truly pluralist ‘cultural egalitarian’ era,” which both accepted the “reality” of cultural diversity within Australia, and promoted the acceptance of this diversity by Australians as a defining feature of their national identity (Hage, *White Nation* 83). This generic evolutionary tale of the birth of a multicultural nation is one that celebrates the erasure of race and racism from Australian politics and society.

The institutionalisation of multiculturalism is a dominant narrative within the Australian national imaginary, which has functioned to obscure the discursive maintenance of white hegemony. For Hage, State multicultural policy

⁶² The conjunction Anglo-Celtic is a racial category that similarly masks a long history of othering peoples of Irish, Scottish and Welsh descent by Britons within Australia, and the relatively recent redefinition of Celts as white within a context of post-World War II migration.

strategically countered the increased level of political power won by migrant Australians, and sought to maintain white power by mystifying “the element of coercion” (*White Nation* 101). That official multiculturalism reinforced and obscured white supremacy is betrayed by the advocacy of “tolerance” within a contemporary Australian context. Like the “practices of intolerance and exclusion,” tolerance is a nationalist practice:

aimed at the management of the national space...It is a mode of classification based on a differentiation between manager and managed, a national subject imagining themselves capable of exercising their will within the nation and the national object perceived as an object of value, only capable of submitting to the will of the national subject (Hage, *White Nation* 94)

As elaborated in chapter one, on behalf of an ill-defined Australian “mainstream,” Howard often positioned asylum seekers and refugees arriving “illegally” beyond the clear and acceptable limits of benevolent Australian tolerance. His infamous declaration that “we will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come,” at the launch of the 2001 Liberal party election campaign, did not contravene multicultural tolerance but rather, publically exercised officially sanctioned choice to not tolerate. The rhetoric of tolerance is a self-effacing process that disarticulates the explicit association of whiteness from national identity (Hage, *White Nation* 101). Those who “illegally” travel to Australia by boat are marked as culturally, racially and nationally different, if not by clear phenotypical characteristics, then by their physical location outside the geo-political borders of the nation. Those endowed with the power to tolerate cultural difference, or not to tolerate as the case may be, are those who are not marked as outside of core Australian culture and values.

While “race” has been erased from the “textual surface of respectable discourse” (Ang and Stratton 107), whiteness remains the dominant lens through which Australian history and identity is narrativised and remembered. This dominance is maintained because whiteness is ill defined and subject to “continual processes of slippage, condensation, and displacement among the constructs ‘race,’ ‘nation,’ and ‘culture’” (Frankenberg 6). This slippage obscures whiteness as a discernable or knowable category, which functions to preserve its hegemony. Echoing Foucault’s critique of traditional history, critical race and whiteness

constitutes an analytical category that interrogates the discursive, representational and performative “processes,” which preserve the supremacy of whiteness in the national imaginary (Frankenberg). Principal among these processes is the construction of whiteness via the categorisation, definition and organisation of what it is not, for example, black, Asian or Muslim. Such categories are reproduced through the production and consumption of cultural products (e.g. cinema, literature, art, photography) and official discourse (e.g. media, medicine, science, politics, history). Second, this process of categorisation fixes phenotypical, national and cultural characteristics to the iconography of variously defined Others. The Other is brought into focus as an embodied object that can be known, and elides the embodied existence of the (white) knowing (and tolerating) subject. Third, these ways of knowing and organising the world manifest materially to produce and sustain social, cultural and political hierarchies, which confer unearned privilege upon those who are white, or rather, unmarked by racial categories. Fourth, because race is “a categorical object...deemed to belong to the other” (Moreton-Robinson, “Whiteness” 76), whiteness and its privileges are largely invisible to those who enjoy them. For white hegemony to be successfully contested, resisted and subverted, it must be articulated along with Other identities as a racial category (Dyer). Finally, whiteness is a slippery concept, in a constant state of flux, and is subject to change over time and across different geo-political regions. How whiteness is discursively practiced, how it is made to mean is historically and geographically specific. For example, each wave of migration, subsequent to British colonisation of the Australian continent, evidences a process of discursive revision whereby the newest group of would-be immigrants constitutes a new external “Other” to define national identity against (Farid). This process concomitantly installs, and maintains, a hierarchy of internal otherness that corresponds with migratory patterns and bolsters the centrality of whiteness (Farid). The narrative of the shift towards a multicultural Australian politics and identity also supports this last point.

Whiteness has successfully been maintained as an ideal across multiple Western contexts because it is maintained via a web of discursive, representational and performative processes. Moreover, it has been reproduced as a hegemonic subject position because the meanings generated by its representation are contingent on

the context in which it appears. This is demonstrated by Ruth Frankenberg, who, via analyses of cultural texts spanning cinema, literature and the visual arts, elucidates how white hegemony is sustained via a mutable repertoire of tropes, which “construct versions of femaleness and maleness divided by race, nationality,” ethnicity and class, that are hierarchically organised into “trope-ical family” (11). The utility of the familial metaphor lies in its exposition of how white hegemony is sustained, through discourse, *as a relation* to Other categories. A simplified example provided by Frankenberg includes: White Man, “strong dominant, arbiter of truth, protector of white womankind, defender of the nation/territory”; White Woman, “frail, vulnerable, delicate, sexually pure but at times easily led astray”; Man of Colour, “is sexually rapacious, sometimes seductive, usually predatory, especially toward White Woman” (whom White Man protects from Man of Colour); and Woman of Colour who is likewise “sexually eager, seductress... personally unhygienic, overly fertile” and useful for breeding and tending White people (11-12).⁶³ In this configuration, “White Man would founder without White-Woman-who-must-be-saved” from Man of Colour “as predator” (Frankenberg 12). The utility and potency of tropes derives from the fact that their meaning is contingent upon context, and their organisation in relation to each other, processes that elide the myriad contradictions borne by each category. For instance, Asian men have variously been cast as Man of Colour; a sexual threat to white women during the gold rush eras in both nineteenth century Australia and the US, when Chinese men migrated without wives or families, and at other times “derided as effeminate” (Frankenberg 14; Elder, *Being* 120). The concept of “White Trash” – or the colloquial “bogan” in Australia – testifies to the uneven distribution of power and privilege amongst those who are white, and is itself a category constituted at the intersection of race and class, and at the borders of white and colour. Racial categories are broad, mutable, internally differentiated, and their meanings multiple and contradictory. The paradoxes that shape tropes, narratives and motifs around whiteness “provide

⁶³ The cast of characters that comprise the trope-ical family are given “capitalized and thus “proper” names” by Frankenberg “for the purpose of underscoring their status as tropes rather than people” (1997, 11). For the sake of consistency this chapter will use capitalised names to refer to tropes.

instabilities that generate stories, millions of engrossing attempts to find resolution” (Dyer 39-40). While contradictions inherent to racial categories and ideal whiteness are never fully recuperated within a given screen narrative, the multifarious meanings signified by the idea of *whiteness* or *blackness*, for example, are momentarily fixed via their relation to one another.

Popular film and television are significant cultural sites that perpetuate racism and white hegemony in both national and international contexts. Race is “a socio-historical formation” (Bernardi, “Emergence” 3), which is constructed and revised using the representational conventions particular to cultural, as well as political and legal, discourse. How screen representations construct the “meaning of race and the representation of identity,” directly shapes “our historical lives and future because, like race” these “representations, styles and stories are ubiquitous” (Bernardi 2008, xvi). Richard Dyer’s seminal text *White* (1997) and edited collections such as *The Birth of Whiteness* (Bernardi) and *Classic Hollywood, Classic Whiteness* (Bernardi), have identified various techniques (e.g. lighting, *mise en scene*, sound, performance, narrative) that have evolved since the beginning of cinema to reify racial whiteness as an ideal.⁶⁴ The stable of racial tropes, stereotypes and motifs coding the Other as inferior, is in contemporary screen representations, far less explicit than in the early and classic periods. It remains however, that race is a fundamental means by which film and television programs are encoded and meaning transmitted (Bernardi,

⁶⁴ Dyer illustrates how lighting techniques evolved in the early cinema to reify the trope of “white woman as angel...the symbol of white virtuousness and the last word on the claim that what made whites special as a race was their non-physical, spiritual, indeed ethereal qualities” (Dyer 127). Lighting techniques drew upon the Christian archetype of the Madonna – the embodiment of “suffering, self-denial and self-control” - to construct white femininity as the apogee of moral and spiritual superiority (Dyer 17). Another example is the motif of the frontier within the Western genre, which imposed a spatial and metaphorical boundary between white and red peoples, and “proselytized westward colonial expansion” into a coherent narrative of (white American) Manifest Destiny (Berg 2008, 3; Dyer 1997, 33). Both examples evidence the development of representational techniques that draw from racialised Christian and colonial discourses.

“Emergence;” “Hollywood;” “Contemporary;” Dyer).⁶⁵ Racial and ethnic stereotypes provide filmmakers with legible bodies with which to signify a broad range of meanings. Ultimately however these codes implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, maintain and mystify the hegemony of whiteness.

Mainstream Australian cinema is similarly populated by a stable of racist tropes and motifs, which situate whiteness as the apotheosis of ideal national identity. An explicit fascination with representing an ideal white identity dates back to the earliest twentieth century historical epics, such as *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (Charles Tait) and *The Birth of White Australia* (Philip K. Walsh). This cinematic project was resumed in the 1970s with the revival of the national industry, and is exemplified by the Ocker cycle of films, including *The Adventures of Barry*

⁶⁵ Sean Redmond provides an instructive example in his analysis of how physiognomy, behaviours and spatial organisation in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (Peter Jackson) encode characters with stereotypes of race and ethnicity. Whiteness is, in the films, internally differentiated via a reliance on racialised stereotypes of class: “Spirit, purity and power become the markers of the refined upper class or nobility, while nature, earth/dirt, and primitive urges become the ideological indicator of the working class” (Redmond 96). While those who hold positions of power in the film, namely wizards and elves, bear the first set of qualities, hobbits, dwarves and mortal men, those charged with undertaking the quest, are rendered via the latter set of characteristics. The army of evil Uruk-hai are bred in the fires of industry deep below the earth’s surface, literally locating them below all other characters. Their blackened skin, huge muscular bodies, dreadlock hair and animalistic posturing “directly recalls the stereotype of the all body/no brain black buck of racist imagination” (Redmond 97). The morally ambiguous character Gollum evokes the trope of Jewish-ness, conveyed by his single-minded pursuit of the ring and his emaciated prisoner of war (POW) appearance, synonymous with images of Jews in Nazi concentration camps (Redmond 96). Gollum’s back story foregrounds a slow descent into darkness, a turning away from the light in his pursuit of the ring, reflecting the ability of certain ethnicities to “pass” (Bernardi, “Contemporary” xvii) into and out of whiteness. Gollum is not Jewish, however the characteristics particular to the stereotypical Jew (e.g. shrewd, untrustworthy) become embodied by him as a consequence of recognisable phenotypical markers (e.g. emaciated appearance) and desires (e.g. love of gold). Redmond’s analysis thus demonstrates how racial and ethnic stereotypes continue to provide filmmakers with legible bodies that encode characters with meaning.

McKenzie (Bruce Beresford), and AFC genre of period films like *Gallipoli* (Peter Weir) ((Dermody and Jacka, *Screening vol.2*; Turner, “Whatever” 32). Underwriting this obsessive preoccupation with the representation of white Australian-ness in is:

a desire for the land, a fear of others who may claim the land and, as a result of this, a deep ambivalence about belonging to this space. These anxieties, desires and ambivalences mean that securing a strong story about non-Indigenous white belonging is an important aspect of Australian national identity narratives. These narratives privilege elements of non-Indigeneity, whiteness, masculinity and heterosexuality (Elder, *Being* 6).

“Fear of Others who may claim the land” manifests historically produced anxieties regarding claims of Australian sovereignty, which is founded on the myth of *terra nullius*. It also manifests as a consequence of geographical factors insofar as Australia is a European outpost in the remote and populous Asia-Pacific region. These fears are coded via a repertoire of tropical characters and narrative motifs that inscribe the Australian textual landscape across myriad art forms, including cinema. One narrative motif that emerges as a consequence of this anxiety is the troubling presence of Indigenous men within the diegesis, who are “frequently violently killed” to achieve narrative resolution (Elder, *Being* 155).⁶⁶ Another example is colonial stories that posit non-Indigenous characters as in danger, as victims of the land, which effectively displaces the violence done to Indigenous peoples onto white bodies (Elder, *Being* 155). Such narratives are variously populated by “lost children,” who embody separation anxiety from the British mother country (Probyn and Simpson; Pierce 1999), and Aussie Battlers, a revered and masculine trope, signifying mateship, larrikinism, and doomed heroism (McFarlane).⁶⁷ Cinema participates in a long narrative tradition of naturalising white Australian virtuosity, innocence and belonging to the land; it is

⁶⁶ Examples include: *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith* (Fred Schepisi) and *Blackfellas* (James Ricketson).

⁶⁷ Examples of lost child narratives include: *Back of Beyond* (John Heyer); *Walkabout* (Nicholas Roeg) and *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Peter Weir). Examples of the Aussie Battler trope can be found in: *Gallipoli* (Peter Weir); the *Mad Max* trilogy (George Miller); *The Man From Snowy River* (George Miller); and *Crocodile Dundee* (Peter Faiman).

a process that entails the displacement and erasure of the “troubling presence” of Indigenous peoples within the national imaginary.⁶⁸

Exclusion is an important process by which national identity is constructed and white hegemony reified therein. Until the early 1990s the representation of Asian characters in Australian cinema was virtually non-existent, and was largely limited to grotesque caricatures that invoked Asian-ness to physically mark the antagonist in the narrative, such as in *The Birth of White Australia* (Pike and Cooper 191).⁶⁹ The almost total absence of Asian characters from the tropic-ical repertoire of Australian film is a symptom of anxious white belonging, which requires the radical exclusion of any who threaten the legitimacy of this claim. Other forms of exclusion relate to characteristics that undermine the integrity of the nation-State as a self-perpetuating and robust entity. For example, homosexuality is radically excluded because race “is a means of categorising different types of human body which reproduce themselves” (Dyer 20). As such, both White and Coloured characters that comprise the national tropic-ical family are “relentlessly heterosexual” (Frankenberg 15). In Australian cinema, homo- or deviant sexuality often manifests as a process of defining the Other as inimical to the national type. As stated earlier, Asian Man was characterised within the British colonial imagination as sexually deviant, a trope that embodied the threat of miscegenation, or alternatively, was depicted as impotent or effeminate, qualities that rendered him unattractive to White Woman. Similarly, tropes of homosexuality are an instrumental means by which the Australian cinema has subverted class hierarchy, which has traditionally positioned Australian-ness as inferior to British-ness. In revival era films like *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith* (Fred Schepisi) *Gallipoli*, and *Barry Mackenzie*, British male characters are rendered effeminate and cowardly in relation to their Aussie counterparts; they are polite even in anger, unwilling to get their own hands dirty in the pursuit of

⁶⁸ Like expressions of white supremacy in political discourse, television and film representations of race are historically and geographically specific, subject to revision, contestation, and ongoing negotiation (see O’Regan, *Australian National*; Collins and Davis).

⁶⁹ Examples of Asian representation from the 1990s include: *Floating Life* (Clara Law); *The Goddess of 1967* (Clara Law); *Japanese Story* (Sue Brooks); *The Home Song Stories* (Tony Ayres); *Lucky Miles* (Michael James Rowland); *Mother Fish* (Khoa Do).

shared objectives, and delegate dangerous work to the Aussie Battlers whom they govern (McFarlane 57-8).⁷⁰ While on the one hand the Aussie Battler is working class and therefore less white than his British forebears, within an Australian cinematic context, this hierarchy has been inverted such that Australian-ness is imbued with masculine characteristics (i.e. is physical strong, hardworking, loyal and heroic) and British-ness with stereotypically homosexual characteristics (i.e. callow, precious, untrustworthy, deviant).

The elevation of the Aussie Battler to the heights of ideal whiteness on the mainstream Australian screen has, arguably, been bolstered by the rise of a multicultural national identity. Representations of ethnicity that commonly emphasise physiognomic features, such as olive complexion and dark greasy hair. Together with imperfect English, these features mark out the ethnic Other as different, allowing the characteristics of whiteness to remain invisible. Such tropes of ethnicity are evident in white representations of token ethnicity, such as in the sitcom *Kingswood Country* (created by Cary Reilly and Tony Sattler). It also manifests in representations by CALD Australians, such as the sitcom *Acropolis Now* (created by Nick Giannopoulos, George Kapiniaris, Simon Palomares). These traditions have been traced back to white depictions of Italian-ness in the 1966 feature film *They're a Weird Mob* (Michael Powell), as well as self-deprecating representations of Jewish-ness in the 1933 feature *Strike Me Lucky* (Ken G. Hall). While there exists a parallel tradition of CALD self-representation that does not capitulate to white-centric stereotypes, the success of such programs is more often critical than commercial, and does little to threaten hierarchical representations of race in mainstream screen representations. These more complex characterisations have, however, become more prevalent since the 1990s, as more second and third generation Australians have assumed key creative positions in the television and film industries.⁷¹ This tradition can be also

⁷⁰ The trope of the effeminate British Man is exemplified in *Barry Mackenzie*, insofar as the title character regularly refers to Britons as “pommy bastards” or “poofs” (Moore 13; McFarlane 58).

⁷¹ A number of factors contributed to the shift in how migrants and migration have been depicted from the 1970s onwards. Most notably the final giving way of the White Australia policy to the official policy of multiculturalism in 1973, and the revival of the film industry, contributed to increased – albeit limited – opportunities for CALD people to tell their own stories. In the early

be traced back to the 1960s and 70s, to the independent films made by émigré Georgio Mangiamele. With regard to mainstream representations, there exists considerable debate regarding the headway achieved by stereotypical representations of ethnicity produced by “white multiculturalists” and CALD filmmakers (Mitchell; Jakubowicz; Jakubowicz *et al*; Hage, *White Nation*; Aquilia). These debates serve as a reminder that Australian tropes and motifs remain mutable, dynamic and contested categories.

As a subsidiary of the SBS Corporation, SBSi was absolutely implicated in representational processes encoding cultural diversity on Australian screens. The SBS Charter, formalised in 1991, explicitly states that it is the responsibility of SBS to “*increase awareness* of the contribution of a diversity of cultures to the continuing development of Australian society,” to “*promote understanding and acceptance*” of this diversity, and to “*contribute* to the retention and continuing development of language and other cultural skills” (emphasis added) (*Special Broadcasting Services Act 1991*, sect. 6, para.2). Although the SBS Charter identifies Australian society as explicitly multicultural, the public broadcaster’s mandate to “increase awareness” and “promote understanding and acceptance” insinuates a fissure between mainstream (read homogenous and white) understandings of what it means to be Australian, and the diversity of cultures

period of multicultural policy, migrant and second-generation filmmakers began to explore the emotional traumas associated with migration, the everyday complexities of negotiating a hyphenated cultural identity, and often conveyed these via the narrativisation of fraught bi-cultural relationships. Examples include: Turkish émigré Ayten Kuyululu’s 1973 *A Handful of Dust*, and her 1975 *The Golden Cage*; Dutch émigré Paul Cox’s 1979 *Kostas*; and Sophia Turkiewicz’s 1984 *Silver City*. It is also worth noting that during this period, migrant characters begin appearing in mainstream films, such as the Greek lover in the 1976 film *Caddie* (Donald Crombie). The entry of second and third generation European migrants, as well as subsequent waves of Asian, Middle Eastern and African migrants, into the film industry from the 1980s contributed to a more varied body of work, both in terms of genre (particularly the eschewing of social realism in favour of more popular genres), and themes. Examples include: Ana Kokkinos’ 1998 feature *Head On*; Kate Woods’ 1999 filmic adaptation of Melina Marchetta’s popular novel *Looking for Alibrandi*; Steve Jacobs 2001 *La Spagnola*; Michael Jenkins 1993 *The Heartbreak Kid*; Baz Luhrmann’s 1992 *Strictly Ballroom*; Geoffrey Wright’s 1992 *Romper Stomper*; Clara Law’s *Floating Life*; and Tony Ayres’ *The Home Song Stories*.

that actually co-exist in contemporary Australia. What is inferred by the terms of the charter is that media has the power to breach this gap, to articulate different ways of identifying as a national community, and thereby to reconfigure the lines of cultural inclusion and exclusion. However, it does not necessarily follow that SBS's mandate to "increase awareness," "promote understanding and acceptance," and "reflect" an explicitly multicultural national identity, either implicitly or explicitly, subverts existing structures of political and social power. Indeed, the terms of the charter testify to how the transformation of the national imaginary is envisaged as a process that is facilitated by those very institutional structures. As will be demonstrated in section two, SBSi staff worked within the strictures of neo-liberal bureaucracy to open out a space for counter-memorial narrative interventions, thereby disrupting white racial hegemony. While not all commissions can be categorised as counter-memorial, a substantial number of titles acquired by the commissioning house facilitated a public presence for individual and collective memories, histories and perspectives, otherwise marginalised within the national imaginary.

The SBSi counter-memorial cycle shares objectives and strategies with a number of other screen traditions identified by scholars. Foremost among these is *inter-subjective* strategies within ethnographic documentary making, which have evolved out Direct Cinema movement in the 1960s. As a "product of colonialism, ethnographic cinema, for a long period, created audiovisual narratives of *exotic others*" under the pretence and "authority of *scientific objectivity*" (Catalán Eraso). The use of "objective-like commentaries; the choice of prominent people in the community to support the central argument; and the use of voice-overs to impose the filmmaker's own categories and values," were some strategies identified as contributing to the disempowerment and objectification of filmic subjects (Catalán Eraso). Since the 1960s, ethnographic cinema has undergone a number of phases – observational, reflexive and inter-subjective, respectively – each of which has sought to develop new styles of representation that empower, rather than dominate, the filmic subject. In inter-subjective documentary, participants are given a more authoritative role in terms of decision-making, prior to, and during, the pro-filmic event. Inter-subjective practice "entails the construction of spheres of negotiated authority between researcher and subject;

polyphonic spaces of communication that allow reflexivity, explicitly or implicitly, to be put into practice” (Catalán Eraso). Inter-subjective cinema also inherits from earlier modes of ethnographic filmmaking, a philosophy of self-reflexivity, which is expressed through techniques employed at the pre- and post-production stages, as well as during the pro-filmic event. Insofar as it blurs the “frontier that traditionally separates researcher and participants,” inter-subjective film “has abandoned languages that objectify the other and lead us to reflect, through audiovisual language, on the ambiguity and permeability of cultural identity” (Catalán Eraso). Examples of inter-subjective documentary commissioned by SBSi include those directed, filmed and produced by Tom Zubrycki, such as *The Diplomat* and *Molly and Mobarak*; as well as *Our Brother James* (Jessica Douglas-Henry); *Fond Memories of Cuba* (David Bradbury); *Rainbow Bird and Monster Man* (Dennis K. Smith); *Fahimeh’s Story* (Faramarz K. Rahber); *Yellow Fella* (Ivan Sen) and *Growing Up and Going Home* (Belinda Mason). While the counter-memories represented within these, and other productions, are exemplary of interventions into hegemonic white national identity, inter-subjective documentary is a terrain adequately covered by Belinda Smaill (2001). This chapter extends Smaill’s study, and conducts a close analysis of formal, aesthetic and narrative strategies utilised to de-centre whiteness across *fictional* formats.

Another category of filmmaking that intersects with counter-memory is *inter-cultural cinema*. In her 2000 book *The Skin of the Film*, Laura Marks develops the concept of inter-cultural cinema, to refer to films that experiment with formal and aesthetic regimes, and which develop new conventions capable of representing non-white stories. The use of the term inter-cultural, rather than established terms such as post-colonial, multicultural and hybrid, conveys how filmmakers attempt to forge axes of cross-cultural communication that bypass, and thus overcome, the reproduction of white, patriarchal hegemony through cinematic language. For example the idea of multiculturalism connotes a nationalist frame for cross-cultural interaction, one that admits and subsumes selected forms of cultural difference into an established cultural hierarchy, which is mediated by white heterosexual masculinity. Furthermore, the term inter-cultural allows for greater flexibility with regard to the types of cultural

communities that communicate with one another. Consistent with the expansive definition of the term “culture” used throughout this thesis, Marks selects the term for its ability to denote national, religious, ethnic, racial, generational groupings. Inter-cultural films are also contiguous with counter-memorial films to the degree that they “evoke both individual and cultural memory” (Marks 2). Inter-cultural cinema is, however, characterised by a level of formal and narrative experimentation that is exceptional within the SBSi catalogue rather than characteristic of it (Marks 1). Thus, while the concept of inter-cultural cinema has certainly informed the elaboration of counter-memorial techniques in this chapter, it must be apprehended as a distinct category.

In summary, this sub-section has drawn on critical race and whiteness scholarship to demonstrate how whiteness continues to be constructed as the hegemonic subject position within the Australian national imaginary. It began with a brief examination of the discourse of multiculturalism, and established that the historical tale of Australian multicultural enlightenment masks discursive processes that continue to reproduce white hegemony. This was achieved via the scholarship of Hage, which demonstrates how the advocacy of tolerance within political discourse reproduces and mystifies white hegemony, by empowering white citizens as subjects who tolerate, and by concomitantly positioning CALD citizens and new migrants as objects who are tolerated. This sub-section then demonstrated how political discourse is part of a broader web of discursive, representational and performative processes, which maintains whiteness as an exclusive and privileged subject position in both Australian and international contexts. This privilege is principally secured by categorising and organising identities, which are defined by phenotypical and cultural attributes that are not white. This brings non-white bodies into focus as a knowable Other, and which ultimately elides the white knowing subject as an embodied object, and occludes whiteness as a racial category that can also be known. As demonstrated via Frankenberg’s trope-ical family, whiteness emerges as a hegemonic position precisely because it is defined in relation to its Others, and thereby lacks any clear characteristics by which to identify and challenge it. Moreover, definitional slippage is compounded by the apprehension of ideal whiteness in relation to multifarious categories, including racial, national, religious, sexual and gender

categories. It is the work of critical whiteness to elucidate “white” as a racial category and thereby provide the tools for challenging its hegemony.

Finally, this sub-section demonstrated how whiteness-as-process has manifested in Australian screen representations as a legible stable of tropes, motifs and narratives, which privilege white heterosexual masculinity as coextensive with ideal national identity, and which frames historical events through this perspective. The representational strategies explicated herein are consistent with Foucault’s extrapolation of traditional history, and neo-liberal governmentality, as a regime of truth that shapes lived reality via a set of discursive and institutional processes, and which is engineered to legitimate social hierarchies. The trope of the Aussie Battler, and the narrative motif erasing the “troubling presence” of Indigenous characters, are both exemplary of these processes. Both are conventions that reinforce whiteness as hegemonic position within the national imaginary, and naturalise the “truth” of white sovereignty and belonging to the Australian territory. It is these types of conventions that SBSi content strategically counter-memorialised, to contest, disrupt, and de-centre white hegemony. The next section moves on to elaborate these strategies.

SECTION 2

STRATEGIES OF COUNTER-MEMORY

A consistent feature within the SBSi catalogue is the development of counter-memorial strategies that subvert racist representational practices, which continue to shape the national imaginary. This section elaborates three principal strategies of counter-memorial intervention: re-membering, (re-) appropriation, and polyphony. Each of these strategies builds upon the three characteristics of counter-memorial representation identified in section one, via the close textual analysis of exemplary films. The objective of this analysis is to demonstrate how formal, aesthetic and narrative techniques were deployed to de-naturalise white epistemology, and to challenge the legitimacy of white racial hegemony.

2.1. Counter-Memorial Re-membering

Counter-memorial *re-membering* is a category of SBSi film that conducts an intervention into narratives of national identity and history, which naturalise a white connection to, and thus legitimate the authority of whiteness within, the Australian territory. Stories of white national belonging are well rehearsed across the spectrum of official and popular discourses, and are “a central way in which being Australian is reinforced” (Elder 5). The revival of the film industry via government subsidy and on the basis of cultural preservation has over-determined the role of the Australian cinema in the construction of a distinct (and marketable) national identity (Dermody and Jacka, *Screening vol.2*; Turner, “Whatever” 32). From the AFC genre films of the early revival period, through to multicultural and post-Mabo re-imaginings from the mid-1980s, there remains a distinct pre-occupation with the representation of an historically white Australian national identity. The privileging of non-Indigenous, white, masculine and hetero-normative elements betrays a persistent national anxiety about legitimate belonging, and evidences what Moreton-Robinson has termed the “possessive logic of white patriarchal sovereignty” (*Possessive*). Thus, while the 1990s witnessed mainstream engagement with experiences of migration and multiculturalism, there remained a strong tendency, in films like *Strictly Ballroom* (Baz Luhrmann), to depict the culture of the Other as a source of nourishment and renewal. As such, access to the mainstream by the Other continued to be managed such that the core white identity of Australian-ness was maintained (J. Bennett 71). Where difference was represented in official and popular discourses, it was to re-centre whiteness, even as it tinkered at the boundaries of legitimate national identity. Counter-memorial re-membering is conducted from the situated perspective of the Other, and seeks to re-present significant events, ideas or images of the past from a particular social, cultural and corporeal positioning. The purpose is to illuminate how discourses of nation are constructed, and how they circumscribe the everyday lived reality of Australians.

Counter-memorial re-membering is a category applicable to fictional or factual narratives that carve out a space within the national memory for non-white histories and knowledge. These personal narratives intersect with historical events, moments, places or people prominent within Australian cultural memory,

representing them from the position of alterity. Re-membering thus produces an alternative perspective of Australian history, and proliferates the meanings that are signified by this history. It is in this sense that the hyphenation of the term “re-membering” infers a figurative process of pulling apart, of the dismemberment of official histories and their reconstruction from the perspective of the Other. In this regard, counter-memorial re-membering is a process of refracting cultural histories through the prism of biographical or autobiographical narratives. There exist three variations of counter-memorial re-membering: 1) *historical films and documentaries* that counter-memorialise the historical past, including events prominent within the national imaginary, and personal histories that create new spaces for non-white memories; 2) *period films* that re-imagine the national past from the perspective of alterity; and 3) *Australia in the Asia-Pacific*, those productions that re-member Australian national histories as inextricably entangled with the histories of neighbouring Pacific and Asian peoples and territories.

Examples of historical films and documentaries that explicitly re-member narratives of recent events, and that have predominantly been disseminated via television and print media, include: the documentaries *The Isabellas: The Long March* (Sally Ingleton), *The Raid* (Barbara Anna Chobocky), *SOS: Save Our Sons* (Rebecca McLean), *After Mabo* (John Hughes), *Exile in Sarajevo* (Tahir Cambis and Alma Sahbaz), *Seeking Asylum* (Mike Piper), *Trespass: Yvonne Margarula's Fight For Country* (David Vadiveloo), *The Tasty Bust Reunion* (Stephen MacLean); and fictional re-imaginings including the feature film *The Boys*, the episode of the comedy series *Pizza*, season five, entitled “Beach Pizza, part one,” and the short animated documentary *The Safe House*. Programs that re-member events that disrupt white national histories include the documentaries: *The Irish Empire*, *Stolen Generations* (Darlene Johnson), *The Habits of New Norcia* (Frank Rijavec), *Whispering in our Hearts* (Mitch Torres), *Black Soldier Blues* (Nicole McCuiag), *Pioneers of Love* (Julie Nimmo), *Dark Science* (Warwick Thornton), and *First Australians*. The telling of personal histories, both biographical and autobiographical variations, also counter-memorialise the national past across a significant number of documentaries including: *Tales from a Suitcase* (Andrea Dal Bosco), *The Hillmen: a Soccer Fable* (Steve Thomas),

Grandfathers and Revolutions (Peter Hegedus), *Kabbarli*, *Long Shadows: Stories from a Jewish Home* (Kate Hampel), the *Hybrid Life* series, *Molly and Mobarak*, *In Search of Bony* (Lisa Matthews), *The Buchenwald Ball* (Danny Ben-Moshe, Uri Mizrahi and Andrew Wiseman), *Growing Up and Going Home*, and *Lionel* (Eddie Martin).

Period films and programs are a fictional variation of the historical film, providing a perspective of the past that deviates from white, patriarchal and hetero-normative imaginings. While these films disrupt normative whiteness, they are not necessarily thematically preoccupied with national identity. These films may be set in the past, for example, *Two Bob Mermaid* (Darlene Johnson), *Bobtales* (Todd Williams), *La Spagnola*, *Harvie Krumpet*, *The Mysterious Geographic Explorations of Jasper Morello*, *Ten Canoes*, and *The Home Song Stories*; or they may be set in a present that has been indelibly shaped by past events such as *Payback* (Warwick Thornton), *No Way to Forget* (Richard Frankland), *Blackman Down* (Bill McCrow), *Radiance*, and *Jammin' in the Middle E* (Kim Mordaunt). Finally, are films that re-member personal and collective histories that are geo-politically circumscribed within the Asia-Pacific region, rather than by the borders of the Australian nation-State. This contingent of films is quite significant in terms of quantity, and includes the documentaries: *Bougainville: Our Island, Our Fight* (Wayne Coles-Janess), *Winds of Change* (series directed by Alan Carter), *Since the Company Came*, *The Diplomat*, *Shadow Play* (Chris Hilton), *Children of the Crocodile* (Marsha Emerman), *In Limbo* (Dai Le), *Fearless: Stories from Asian Women* (Peter Du Cane), *Sydney at War: The Untold Story* (Claude Gonzalez), *Betelnut Bisnis* (Chris Owen), *Vietnam Symphony* (Tom Zubrycki), *Vietnam Minefield* (Richard Walker), *Hula Girls* (Trevor Graham), *Operation Babylift* (Dai Le), and *Trafficked* (Luigi Acquisto). The feature films *Floating Life* and *The Home Song Stories* are important fictional examples of *Australia in the Asia-Pacific* narratives, which counter-memorialise the primacy of “national identity,” and instead foreground post-national movements, belonging and forms of identification.

As an example of how these SBSi productions contest white hegemony, this subsection will conduct a close analysis of an episode of the comedy series *Pizza*

entitled “Beach Pizza, part one.” In this example the conventions of reality television are reflexively employed to re-member the events leading up to the 2005 Cronulla riots from the perspective of the series’ Maltese-Australian protagonist, Pauly. “Beach Pizza” turns the camera on journalists reporting the event, and in doing so, exposes how the conventions of news media exclude ethnicity as Other, and naturalise dominant whiteness. The purpose is to extrapolate formal, aesthetic and narrative techniques exemplary of counter-memorial re-membering, how these reflexively construct the situated perspective of the Other, and also, how these de-naturalise the construction of Australian identity as white.

“Beach Pizza, part one” (2007)

Pizza was a comedy series that ran for five seasons between 2000 and 2007. The first four seasons were produced in-house at SBS-TV, and SBSi commissioned the fifth and final season in 2005, as an independent production. The series was written and directed by Paul Fenech, who also starred in the series performing the lead role of Paul “Pauly” Falzoni. The program derives its comedy via its cast of exaggerated ethnic, racial and gender stereotypes, which are broadly representative of different immigrant groups within “multicultural” Australia. *Pizza* has largely been analysed in the context of “wogsploitation” film and television, a satirical tradition that includes the feature films *Strike Me Lucky*, *They’re a Weird Mob*, *The Wog Boy* (Aleski Vellis), and television sitcoms such as *Acropolis Now*. *Pizza* is typical of wogsploitation insofar as it is characterised by an irreverent, “crude, obvious, vulgar and unsophisticated” satirical style, and “broad caricatures and send-ups of suburban kitsch” (Speed, “Life” 139). Scholarship analysing wogsploitation predominantly interrogates whether or not the reprisal of ethnic stereotypes subverts or upholds white hegemony (Mitchell; Jakubowicz; Speed, “Life,” “*Strike*”). This sub-section shifts focus away from the merit of stereotypes, to instead elucidate the important political work done by the program securing a public space for ethnic counter-memories. This is demonstrated via the analysis of the season five episode “Beach Pizza, part one,” which re-members the 2005 Cronulla riots from the perspective of the silenced

ethnic Other, to construct a satirical exposé of white journalist bias against ethnic minorities.

The Cronulla riots were sparked on 4 December 2005, when a group of four young Lebanese-Australian men allegedly launched an unprovoked attack on three (white) lifesavers patrolling Cronulla beach. Throughout the following week a series of violent clashes ensued between white and Middle Eastern peoples in and around the Sydney suburb of Cronulla, which escalated into a riot involving some 5000 people on 11 December 2005. Numerous scholars have since demonstrated the culpability of journalists who used newspaper, radio and television forums to incite violence and vilification against Lebanese and Middle Eastern peoples on the basis of ethnicity (Poynting; Due and Riggs; Turner, "Politics"). Consistent with trope-ical processes elaborated above, the ethnically marked Other was, within these media, maintained as the object of attention. The ethnic Other was a counterpoint against which audiences and commentators defined Australian national identity as white, without having to name that whiteness. In this sense the media did not report on racial conflict in the interests of informing audiences, but rather orchestrated what Ron Hoenig calls "surrogate conflicts." That is, journalists reported the cross-cultural conflict as a springboard for white Australians to intervene in ongoing discourse about "Our national identity" (Hoenig). A key characteristic of surrogate conflicts is the silencing of the ethnic Other, who is "spoken about but unspeaking – the mirror in which the reader defines him or herself as part of an act of self-definition" (Hoenig). Public commentary is conducted by white commentators who may speak out against, or on behalf of, ethnic Others who themselves lack access to the means of self-representation in the public sphere. "Beach Pizza" produces a counter-memory of this process, it utilises reality television conventions to re-member the riots, enabling the ethnic Other to turn the camera on media and elucidate how conventions of news reporting reproduce white hegemony, and silence ethnic citizens.

"Beach Pizza" follows a day in the life of Pauly, a second generation Maltese-Australian who delivers pizzas for a living. The series of misadventures that befalls Pauly are chronicled as though intended for broadcast on a type of reality

television program, akin to early observational incarnations of the format.⁷² The bulk of the episode is constructed using conventions characteristic of such programs to fabricate a “reality effect,” and suggest that represented events were spontaneously captured as they occurred (Casey *et al* 197). These conventions include formal and stylistic elements, such as “camera wobble, poor lighting, sound distortion, off-centre framing and disjointed editing,” which all function as “indexes of authenticity” (Casey *et al* 197). For example, the camera is often unable to track Pauly’s quick movements, indicating spontaneous action that is difficult for the camera to predict. Another relevant convention is the organisation of the narrative around “personal, emotional and often intimate revelations of the first person accounts,” which is then “supported with actual footage (or dramatic reconstructions) of the events concerned” (Casey *et al* 196). Such programs typically represent ordinary people responding to traumatic, extraordinary, unexpected and bizarre circumstances in which they invariably find themselves, though over which they have little control (Casey *et al* 196). This is emulated in “Beach Pizza” insofar as Pauly is granted the freedom to interact directly with the camera, and explain his motivations and feelings as he haplessly finds himself caught up in the riots. A final convention contributing to the “reality effect” is the chronological organisation of “actual” footage into a

⁷² Reality television is a category with little internal coherence and which is notoriously difficult to define. Daniel Beck, Lea C. Hellmueller and Nina Aeschbacher usefully propose that reality television constitutes a meta-genre encompassing various sub-genres. The sub-genre that “Beach Pizza emulates emerged in the late 1980s and focuses on “real life” insofar as it captures the ordinary, everyday lives of non-prominent people as they go about their daily business (Beck, Hellmueller and Aeschbacher 5; Curnutt). Examples of this type of reality program include: COPS and the MTV series *The Real World*. Other sub-genres of reality television that has emerged since the 2000s include programs like *The Osbournes*, which observe the ordinary, every day lives of the rich and famous, and game show-documentary hybrids such as *Big Brother*, *Survivor* and *The Bachelor* (Keane and Moran 158). While reality television has burgeoned into a multifaceted meta-genre, it remains that across the different sub-genres “observation finds a grounding reference, and a large part of its interest and pleasure, in the real characteristics of real people, even if the material and temporal conditions for that behavior have been entirely constructed by television itself” (Corner 256). It is this generalised mode of observation “grounding” reality television that is signified in “Beach Pizza” via its use of certain formal techniques.

cause-and-effect narrative, which visually and aurally validates Pauly's perspective. This chronology is signposted with subtitles at the beginning of each sequence, orienting the viewer in time and place. The conventions particular to the observational style of reality television are utilised in "Beach Pizza" to reflexively re-member the familiar riot narrative from the perspective of alterity, inverting and exposing the normative construction of ethnicity as Other in Australian media.

In the context of "Beach Pizza" the conventions of reality television enable a subjective vantage of events, capable of exposing the representational conventions of news media and thereby undermining the assumed veracity of media discourse. Early in the episode Pauly contacts journalist Karl Stiffanovic, at Australia's *A Current Affair* news program, to publicise his experience of unprovoked police harassment.⁷³ Pauly's unguarded expression of frustration for being racially vilified by police, swings between violent threat and apologetic retraction:

PAULY: I'm starting to feel prejudice against them mate. Like, I HATE EM AND I JUST WANNA SMASH SOMETHING MATE. I'M GETTING PUMPED UP AND I'M...JUST GONNA LOOSE IT MATE! But I mean, like, I wouldn't really smash anything, it's just, that's the feeling they give me cause they're always like, keeping us down. You know, like with the blacks in America it's the same with the ethnics like in Hashfield Valley here.

The capitalised statements are proclaimed with aggression and threat direct to the news camera. Pauly's story is soon abandoned by Stiffanovic who learns of an altercation on Cronulla beach between surf lifesavers and men of "Middle Eastern" appearance. Pauly's passionate statements are however edited and repurposed to situate him as a key instigator in the riots, and in which he played no part:

STIFFANOVIC: We later caught up with a gang member who was part of the attack, apparently angry at being made to conform to Australian values.

PAULY: I HATE EM AND I JUST WANNA SMASH SOMETHING MATE. I'M GETTING PUMPED UP AND I'M...JUST GONNA LOOSE IT MATE!

⁷³ The character Karl Stiffanovic is a parody of Australian journalist Carl Stefanovic, and is performed by actor Brendan Jones.

This news sequence segues from footage of a small altercation at Cronulla beach between surf lifesavers and Pauly's work colleagues, the latter clearly identifiable by their uniforms, bright yellow caps and black t-shirts that bear the logo "FAT PIZZA." It is these uniforms, also worn by Pauly, which enables Stiffanovic to infer a "gang" affiliation and thus "trim" Pauly's comments to reflect the tone of the report. Claims of gang affiliation satirise epistemological processes that "evidence" tenuous racial categories based on physical features. Moreover, the report edits out Pauly's testimony of prejudicial police harassment, and thus, foregrounds how meaning in news reports is contingent on editorial decisions. The montage contrasts significantly with the chronological organisation of events in the reality television sequences, illuminating how sound bites are collected, aggregated and selectively organised by journalists to reflect "dominant ideology," and serve "ruling social and political interests" (Casey *et al* 146). Chronological representation is a convention used within reality television to infer a cause-and-effect sequence of events, and is reflexively used in "Beach Pizza" to satirically "expose" how editorial conventions are manipulated in news media to silence the ethnic Other.

The news broadcast sequence is also notable for its critique of media discourses that represent the excluded, ethnically marked body, to code white Australian national identity. This is achieved via framing and editing, and via Stiffanovic's body language clearly demarcating Middle Eastern "assailants" over there, and (white) "victims" over here. As is customary of location reporting, Stiffanovic stands in the foreground turning his gaze between the camera whom he addresses, and the ensuing altercation in the background. He proclaims: "As you can see a tense stand off has broken out behind me between these men of Middle Eastern appearance and the great Australian heroes, the Cronulla Beach lifesavers." The spatial organisation places Stiffanovic in between the audience and the event, his presence literally mediates the audience gaze from an explicitly "white and male world view" (Casey *et al* 146), directing attention to particular details and shaping perception of who is the hero and who is the villain in this scenario. This is also reinforced by the different spatial organisation of white witnesses and ethnic "assailants" within the news report. In the above example, Pauly and Stiffanovic are only pictured together within a single frame for a brief moment,

and only to substantiate Stiffanovic as the journalist who broke the story. Pauly is otherwise represented as a lone figure, his angry face filling the screen as he delivers his threats to camera. This is a significant contrast with the second interview, conducted with David “Davo” Dinkum, a regular character within the series who conforms to the White Trash stereotype; he is dirty, unkempt, unemployed, perpetually intoxicated and involved in a violent de facto relationship. For the entirety of this interview both Stiffanovic and Davo are included within a single frame inferring shared sense of identity, and eliding the obvious class disparity between the pair. Stiffanovic points towards the beach directing Davo’s gaze and asks: “So you were saying that you were bashed unprovoked by *those* men of Middle Eastern appearance.” As Stiffanovic points, the shot cuts to “those men of Middle Eastern appearance” on the beach and then cuts back to the racially “unmarked” Davo and Stiffanovic. The camera literally frames different spaces, and accentuates the distinction between “those Middle Eastern men” over there and “us (white people)” over here. Costume denotes class disparity between David and Stiffanovic, such that whiteness becomes the only possible basis for identification between the pair. As such “Beach Pizza” satirically foregrounds how journalists construct “common-sense” equanimity between whiteness and legitimate Australian identity, by eliding class differences between white citizens.

The cause-and-effect conventions of reality television are, in the final minutes of “Beach Pizza,” employed to position journalists as the unequivocal instigators of the riots. This serves as a critique of how media processes factual events, to enact a series of cultural inclusions and exclusions, shaping public attitudes toward ethnic, racial and cultural Others. This is achieved by showing the final broadcast of Stiffanovic’s report interspersed with short sequences, which feature the reactions of different regular characters. These reaction shots demonstrate how media narratives utilise the “opaque” ethnic Other to construct the “good white Australian” viewer (Hoenig). There are three distinct types of reaction represented. First is the shock of the excluded ethnic Other who is clearly not addressed by the report. For instance, in response to his edited statements Pauly declares: “I didn’t say that man, I mean I did...they’ve done that snipping thing that they do, them tricks.” Similarly, one of *Pizza’s* resident Turkish characters

“Mohammed 1” responds as part of the Middle Eastern group excluded from the address of the report. He declares: “They tried to bash our cousins, everybody text all your cousins.” Pauly’s shock and Mohammed’s call to arms are both defensive reactions to violent exclusion from the national imaginary, a discursive positioning which *causes* them to fulfil the media constructed role of “bad Arab.” A second reaction is that of the non-white subject, DJBJ, who responds by saying: “Hey man I didn’t know Pauly was a racist, what a dickhead.” DJBJ is here interpellated as a “good white Australian,” but only insofar as he accepts the media representation of his work colleague as not Australian.

The “good white Australian” addressed by the report performs the third and final position. In response to Stiffanovic’s “unconfirmed” claim that “Cronulla beach is headed for a major race riot,” a group of middle-aged white men drinking in the pub declare: “Fuckin’ Arabs! They’re takin’ over our fuckin’ beach, let’s get em.” Talk back radio host Alan Jones (performed by actor Tim Carroll), similarly responds by publically “calling on all true blue Aussies to get down there and defend our beaches.” Significantly, there is little difference between the responses of white and Middle Eastern mobs. Both sequences represent large crowds of people who are phenotypically similar to one another, the white crowd is gathered around a television screen and the Middle Eastern crowd is gathered around multiple mobile phone screens. This similar mob mentality, displayed by both white and Middle Eastern” characters, is aesthetically emphasised by the fact their costumes are both predominantly blue and white. Responses delivered by the white and Middle Eastern crowds are also similar. Each of the above stated quotes are delivered by a single character, positioned in the foreground, and his are actions quickly acted upon by the mob to which he speaks. The white mob stand up and starts moving toward the beach, whilst Mohammed’s crew instantly set about “texting” their cousins. Both groups assemble large crowds and march toward the beach to exact violent retribution for the perceived wrongs committed by the Other. In this sense “Beach Pizza” satirises the uncritical mob mentality of all participants, irrespective of race or ethnicity. The sameness of the two groups serves to highlight the arbitrary distinction between white and Middle Eastern expressions of violence by media, which ultimately justifies white violence via the construction of the “good white viewer” in relation to the “bad Arab.”

In summary, the analysis of “Beach Pizza” has demonstrated some formal, aesthetic and narrative techniques used to re-member national historical events from the perspective of the (silenced) ethnic Other. The first key strategy of counter-memorial re-membering is the reflexive use of representational conventions, foregrounding how events are constructed to reproduce white hegemony. In “Beach Pizza” this was achieved via the juxtaposition of reality and news media conventions, foregrounding how different “documentary” techniques construct vastly different versions of the same event. This process of juxtaposition foregrounds epistemological inconsistency, proliferates available perspectives, and thereby exposes how objective news is constructed from a subjective vantage. This was also achieved via the use of reality conventions to privilege Pauly’s perspective, which imbricates the news media into the Cronulla Riot narrative as antagonists, drawing attention to whiteness as a racial perspective that structures reality. In this way, “Beach Pizza” contested the official Cronulla Riot narrative constructed by journalists, and more broadly, de-naturalised news media conventions used to erase ethnic subjectivity and normalise white perspectives. Formal and aesthetic techniques were also employed to reflexively re-member the event and critique how news media performs whiteness. For example, images of white and Middle Eastern mobs were composed in aesthetically similar ways to foreground their similarity, to demonstrate how journalists fabricate clear subject positions, and how they call upon the “good white Australian” viewer to define themselves against the “bad Arab.” This was also demonstrated via the spatial organisation of the ethnic and white characters featured in the news report. “Beach Pizza” exemplifies how counter-memorial re-membering reflexively renders formal, aesthetic and narrative techniques to reconstruct historical events; to de-naturalise white hegemony on the one hand, and on the other, to carve out a space within the national imaginary for non-white memories and voices.

2.2. Counter-Memorial (Re-) Appropriation

As elaborated in section one, film and television are key cultural sites that reproduce tropes, stereotypes and symbols, which are used to categorise and subordinate variously defined Others within the white national imaginary.

Counter-memorial (*re-*) *appropriation* refers to a strategy that appropriates, or re-appropriates, these signifiers for those who are marginalised by them. Once (re-) appropriated they are then occupied as a social, cultural and corporeal position from which the Other can speak. This situated perspective is privileged within the context of a given film, and imbues the (re-) appropriated sign with a new set of “authoritative” meanings, which are inconsistent with its mainstream meanings. For example, Cate Shortland’s 2004 multiple award winning feature *Somersault*, (re-) appropriates archetypes from the European fairy tale *Little Red Ridding Hood*, and re-contextualises these within an explicitly Australian setting to disrupt cinematic tropes that portray white masculinity as synonymous with ideal Australian identity. Other filmic examples such as *Jewboy*, analysed below, (re-) appropriate Jewish stereotypes as a point of departure from white epistemologies. Filmmakers look to the culture being represented for formal and aesthetic inspiration, and they eschew classic narrative techniques (e.g. continuity editing, establishing shots, plot-driven narratives) that reinforce white hegemony. In this variation, counter-memorial (re-) appropriation is not about whiteness in any direct sense, but rather, is a means to achieving cultural representation not circumscribed by racist ideas and nationalist agendas. An important qualification is that while SBSi films predominantly (re-) appropriate *national* tropes and stereotypes, the global circulation of screen content precludes an engagement with racist signifiers that are propagated across, as well as within, geo-political territories, for example, “Jewish-ness” in *Mamadrama: the Jewish Mother in Cinema* (Monique Schwarz), and the iconography of the “hula girl” in *Hula Girls*.

SBSi programs that are exemplary of counter-memorial (re-) appropriation are many and varied. Films that challenge racist tropes and stereotypes of Indigeneity include: Ivan Sen’s short films *Tears*, *Wind*, *Dust*, his feature *Beneath Clouds*, and his documentary *Yellow Fella*; the short film *Two Bob Mermaid*; the features *Yolngu Boy* (Stephen Johnson), *The Tracker*, and *Australian Rules* (Paul Goldman). Andrew Sully and Anna Broinowski’s documentary *Hell Bento!*, Clara Law’s feature *Floating Life*, and Tony Ayres’ documentary *Sadness*, all (re-) appropriate tropes of Asian-ness, to create a space for the representation of lived experiences and memories of being Asian across different national, sub-

national and post-national contexts.⁷⁴ Programs that (re-) appropriate ethnic and religious tropes include: the documentaries *Mamadrama* and *Fahimeh's Story*; the feature *La Spagnola*; the short animation *Harvie Krumpet*; the comedy series *John Safran versus God*; the short features *Jewboy* and *Jammin' in the Middle E*; and the drama series *Kick* (Esben Storm). Tropes and stereotypes of Australian gender and sexuality are (re-) appropriated in: the documentaries *Sexing the Label*, *The Original Mermaid* (Michael Cordell), *Man Made: Two Men and a Baby* (Emma Crimmings), *Hula Girls*, *The Prodigal Son* (Tony Radevski), and *Paper Dolls: Australian Pinups of World War II* (Angela Buckingham); the feature films *The Boys*, *Mullet* (David Caesar) and *Somersault*; the short features *Feeling Sexy* (Davida Allen, 1998) and *Martha's New Coat* (Rachael Ward, 2003); and the comedy series *Wilfred*.

Another variation of counter-memorial (re-) appropriation are productions that foreground internal variations in the category "whiteness." Examples include programs that foreground class, such as *The Boys* and *Mallboy*, the comedy series *Bogan Pride* (created by Rebel Wilson) and the documentary *A Calcutta Christmas* (Maree Delofski). A trope that recurs throughout the SBSi catalogue is physical disability, a form of embodiment that is radically expelled from mainstream representations of white corporeality. Programs that (re-) appropriate this trope to instead signify ability include: the documentaries *Untold Desires*, *Emily's Eyes* (Jessica Douglas-Henry), *Welcome to my Deaf World* (Helen Gaynor), *Jabe Babe: A Heightened Life* (Janet Merewether), and *Short Stories* (Matthew Duffy and Stuart McCarney); the sitcom *House Gang* and the animated comedy series *QUADS!* The representation of disease and death undermines the physical and mental integrity that ordinarily characterises white corporeality in:

⁷⁴ *Sadness* is exemplary of a tendency in many SBSi films, which contest multiple tropes and stereotypes at once. *Sadness* contests racial tropes of Asian-ness as not Australian, as well as tropes of homosexuality and disease. These films achieve this via the situated perspective of the protagonist whose sense of self has been forged through multiple axes of identification. As such, while each section only lists a film once, films like *Sadness* can often be classified as belonging to multiple sub-categories. Likewise, films like *Sadness* and *Call Me Mum* (Margot Nash) can be regarded as exemplary of more than one counter-memorial strategy, and are listed as such where relevant.

the features *Walking on Water*, *The Illustrated Family Doctor*, *Look Both Ways*, and *Noise* (Matt Saville); the animated short *The Mysterious Geographic Explorations of Jasper Morello*; as well as in the documentaries *Our Brother James*, *Still Breathing* (Charlotte Roseby), *Rainbow Bird and Monster Man* and *Shake Rattle and Roll* (Andrew Wiseman). Another interesting trope that is interrogated within a small number of SBSi films is white criminality, such as in the documentaries *Business Behind Bars* (Catherine Scott), *Music and Murder* (Michael Cordell), and *The President Versus David Hicks* (Curtis Levy and Bentley Dean). Finally, there is a collection of programs that conduct an intervention into racial tropes via broad topics such as music (*John Safran's Music Jamboree*, 2002), night (*Night* directed by Lawrence Johnston, 2007), or parenthood (*The President versus David Hicks; Call Me Mum*); elements of human experience that transcend cultural difference and provide the basis for cross-cultural communication.

This sub-section will now conduct a close analysis of *Jewboy* as an example of how new formal, aesthetic and narrative techniques are innovated to achieve counter-memorial (re-) appropriation. In so doing it demonstrates how the practice of (re-) appropriation re-signifies common racial tropes and opens out a cultural space from which the Other can speak and be heard.

Jewboy (2005)

Tony Krawitz's 2005 short feature *Jewboy* conducts a counter-memorial (re-) appropriation of Jewish masculinity, and in so doing, undermines the imbrication of Jewish tropes into a system of signs that reinforce white supremacy in Australian and other national cinemas. *Jewboy* is about Yuri, a Chasidic Jew who has been studying in Israel to become a Rabbi, and who has returned to Bondi in Sydney's Eastern suburbs to attend his father's funeral. Yuri is experiencing a crisis of faith, which leads him to reject his long suffering girlfriend Rivka, and his grandmother Minnie. Yuri becomes a cab driver, which brings him into proximity with the temptations of Sydney's nightlife, though shedding a lifetime of ritual and faith proves a lot more difficult than simply swapping his kippah for a baseball cap. Yuri's desire for physical and emotional intimacy is an organising motif in *Jewboy*, and is formally and aesthetically rendered via imagery of hands

and desiring gazes. This sub-section argues that these images evidence the development signifiatory regime into which the figure of the Jewish male is (re-) appropriated and counter-memorialised. Furthermore, this process of (re-) appropriation undercuts Jewish masculinity as a signifier of inadequacy, and a trope that reifies white supremacy. This is demonstrated via a brief overview of common tropes of Jewish-ness in Australian and Hollywood cinemas. These include tropes of the castrating Jewish mother, of the “schlemiel,” and of Holocaust imagery, all of which connote the inadequacy of Jewish masculinity in relation to white masculinity. This sub-section then analyses *Jewboy* and demonstrates how the film gives formal expression to the Chasidic taboo regarding touch, and in so doing, develops an empowering paradigmatic and syntagmatic precedent for the representation of Jewish masculinity. Finally, it examines how this formal regime is implemented to critique and subvert the erasure of Jewish subjectivity in film and television.

The screen representation of Jews and Jewish-ness is in Australia, almost non-existent. *Strike Me Lucky* featuring vaudeville star Roy Rene is the only known example from the early cinematic period. While for some, the film inaugurates a tradition of “ethnic humour” in Australian film and television explicated earlier in terms of “wogsploitation” (Speed, “*Strike*”), for others the “leering, cringing, hook-nosed” character Mo,” performed by Rene, “who spittss and sputters when he speaks, is just too close to the Nazi stereotype of the Jew for post-Holocaust Jewish comfort” (Freiberg, “Lost” 202). There exist only three examples from the revival period. Henri Safran’s 1983 feature *Norman Loves Rose*, described by Freiberg as a “new tack on the bad-taste Jewish family satire;” the 1985 mini-series *The Dunera Boys* (Ben Lewin), in which the portrayal of Jewish identity lacks any local grounding insofar as “there are no Australian Jews;” finally the 1985 mini-series *Palace of Dreams*, which is exceptional for its portrayal of Australian Jewish-ness (Freiberg, “Lost” 198). Australian Jewish-ness is, to the present day, largely screened out by local film and television, though from the 1990s, circumstance improved marginally with the production of the SBSi documentaries *Mamadrama*, *Long Shadows* and *The Buchenwald Ball*, Adam Elliot’s short animation *Harvie Krumpet*, his 2009 animated feature *Mary and*

Max, as well as *Jewboy* (all of which were produced with the support of SBSi).⁷⁵ Significantly, and perhaps due to the historical paucity of local depictions, these films largely engage with either global tropes and motifs, which have tended to fix representations of Jewish subjectivity to the Holocaust (e.g. *Long Shadows*, *Buchenwald Ball*), or stereotypes that have emerged from within mainstream Hollywood film (e.g. *Mamadrama*, *Mary and Max*). This is not to suggest that these films mindlessly reproduce harmful stereotypes, but rather, that the lack of local reference points seems to have engendered an engagement with Jewish representation at an international level.

Screen portrayals of Jews and Jewish-ness in Australia are largely consistent with global representational trends towards stereotype and caricature, the erasure of Jewish subjectivity whereby actors pass as white, and imagery that links the Jewish male body to Holocaust imagery. Each of these tendencies is inextricably implicated in the reification of racial whiteness as an ideal. Key stereotypes made popular within the context of Hollywood cinema include the “monstrous Jewish mother” who embodies the repressive force of the Jewish family, which conflicts with US cultural values, namely individualism and freedom (Freiberg, “Monique” 102; Erens). The Jewish mother is often narrativised as a figure from which Jewish men must escape in order to achieve the American dream. The schlemiel is a second prominent stereotype that has become synonymous with the self-deprecating humour of actor/writer/directors, such as Woody Allen (*Annie Hall*) and Ben Stiller (*The Heartbreak Kid*). The cinematic schlemiel has evolved into a general stereotype of inadequate masculinity, someone to “whom life happens, especially as embarrassing circumstance, and for whom taking initiative and seeking active agency ends almost invariably in frustration and humiliation” (Buchbinder 229). This is indicative of two broad trends in Hollywood cinema. First, as explicated in section one, tropes of Jewish-ness are used to imbue characters with legible, deprecating characteristics; a process that reinforces racial hierarchies. Second, is the tacit erasure of Jewish subjectivity whereby

⁷⁵ While SBSi is not credited as a production or funding partner for *Mary and Max*, the SBS Annual Reports for the 2004-05 and 2006-07 financial years indicates that the institution was involved in the project at the initial funding and development stages.

actors of Jewish heritage pass as white, which again, reifies whiteness as ideal (Bernardi, “Hollywood,” “Contemporary;” Sammond and Mukerji). The cinematic portrayal of Jewish masculinity as inadequate has also been reified via a tableau of Holocaust imagery that has fixed the Jewish male body as mentally and physically vulnerable, and also, emaciated, and impotent (Lehman and Hunt 2008). The death-like embodiment of Jewish masculinity is a trope that marks the failure to accede to the ideal embodiment of white masculinity, which is ostensibly muscular, evinces agency, and is desirable to women; qualities that connote white male ability to survive and reproduce itself (Dyer; Lehman and Hunt). What sets *Jewboy* apart from other contemporary Australian portrayals of Jewish subjectivity, is the development of Australian Jewish characters via narratives that also subtly engage with globally produced and circulated images of Jewish masculinity and femininity, without reproducing these stereotypes and tropes in a manner that reifies white supremacy.

Jewboy, commences with the (re-) appropriation of the dead Jewish male body and its re-signification within an explicitly Chasidic paradigm. The opening sequence of *Jewboy* observes the ritual of *taharah*, whereby the body of Yuri’s deceased father is prepared for burial: he undergoes a process of washing (*rechitzah*), ritual purification (*taharah*), and dressing (*halbashah*), whilst prayers and readings from the Torah are recited. The sequence of shots cut between extreme close ups of gloved hands washing the hands, feet and legs of the deceased (see figure 3); low angle close up and medium shots of the anonymous faces of three men as they cleanse the body, and a fourth man reciting from the torah. The framing and tightness of each shot fragments the bodies of the living and the dead, refusing to orient the viewer, only occasionally, and briefly, pulling back to offer an establishing shot of the sterile room in which the ritual is being performed. The soundtrack emphasises each movement and imbues the images with a tactile quality; the sound of water being poured over the body, the rough weave of material dragging over skin, the scrape of wood beneath fingernails, which is accompanied by non-diegetic and sparse notes being plucked on an electric guitar. The dead Jewish male body is here (re-) appropriated into a paradigmatic and syntagmatic terrain unfamiliar to Western cinemas. In both Hollywood and European film, Jewish masculinity has been refracted via the

history of World War II. The ubiquity of Holocaust images, of mounds of emaciated, naked and decaying bodies piled in concentration camps, has over many decades, come to circumscribe the embodiment of Jewish masculinity in

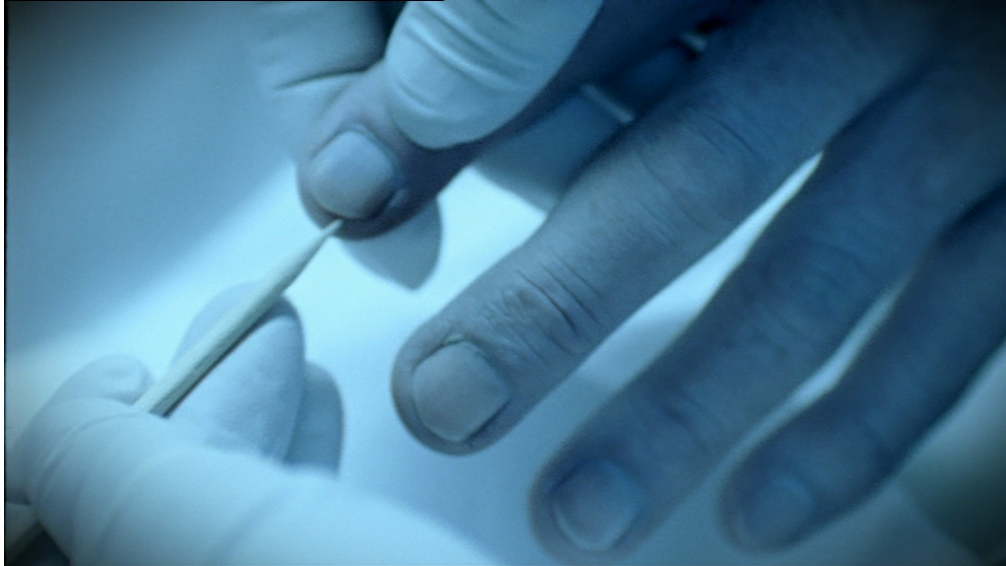


Figure 3. Close up of hands cleaning the dead body. *Jewboy*, 2005, Tony Krawtitz, [DVD] Porchlight Films.

the cinema, such that the very “notion of the sexually desirable Jewish male body has become something of an oxymoron” (Lehman and Hunt 158). “Frontal male nudity abounds as an image of humiliated, vulnerable Jewish masculinity,” for example in Steven Spielberg’s 1993 feature *Schindler’s List* and his 2005 feature *Munich*, István Szabó’s 2000 *Sunshine*, and Jean-Jacques Annaud’s 2001 *Enemy at the Gates* (Lehman and Hunt 159). It is a trope that has evolved to bolster the complementary stereotypes of the schlemiel and the castrating Jewish mother. It is also a trope that ascribes failed masculinity to the Jewish Other and that, concomitantly, naturalises the authority and supreme physical power of white masculinity. While the Holocaust is later acknowledged as an ever-present trauma that is formative of the Australian Chasidic community – by way of a fleeting image of the Nazi serial number tattooed on Minnie’s wrist - this opening sequence opens out a space for non-stereotyped representations of Jewish masculinity. The fragmented and intimate images direct the viewer’s gaze between the naked body, and the hands and gazes that move over its surface. This indicates a movement away from white stereotypes of Jewish male bodies as lack, and towards an exploration of Jewish masculinity via the development of a haptic signification system (Marks) that draws from Chasidic cultural memory.

Formal elements and performances are manipulated to invoke the rhythms of religious ritual, which develops a cinematic language that synaesthetically communicates the swell of conflicting emotions that are shaped from within a Jewish cultural context. Touch, specifically the Chasidic taboo dictating who can touch whom, and under which circumstances, is an organising motif in the film. This motif opens out a space for the representation of a Jewish masculinity, which is not circumscribed by white Western representations. In the Chasidic religious tradition, men will not touch or even shake hands with anyone of the opposite sex, other than their wife, mother, or daughters. The converse is true for women. It is this taboo that is drawn upon to render Yuri's search for intimacy, for a sense of comfort to assuage his grief. In the sequence following the *taharah*, the mourning family receive guests in accordance with the seven-day post-burial ritual known as *Shiva*. Yuri sits in a line beside his grandmother and Isaac (presumably his uncle), as well-wishers file past offering condolences according to custom. Rivka embraces Minnie, grasping her hands in a heartfelt expression of support before moving to Yuri (see figure 4). As Rivka steps before Yuri she



Figure 4. Rivka offers Minnie her condolences. *Jewboy*, 2005, Tony Krawtitz, [DVD] Porchlight Films.

pulls her hands towards her body, the shot framing out Rivka's upper body and focusing instead on her hands as she nervously wrings them. The shot cuts to Yuri's hands, which tense, then deliberately relax into a loose clasp, Yuri then looks up defiantly Rivka's expectant face. Yuri stares after Rivka, as she walks away in frustration. The dance of hand gestures and gazes conveys a sense of

desire, of consciously pulling back from an impulse to reach out and touch each other in comfort. It also communicates a sense of history, a fractured relationship weighed down by uncertainty.

This reading is supported by a subsequent sequence, whereby desire between the pair is heightened as the taboo is broached. Yuri wordlessly sidles up beside Rivka who is in the kitchen preparing food for *Shiva*. Yuri slides his forefinger through the flour that blankets the surface of the table top, tracing the outline of Rivka's hand (see figure 5). The camera closes in on her eyes and mouth as her breath hitches in anticipation. The shot cuts to a close up of Yuri's face as he



Figure 5. Yuri traces the outline of Rivka's hand. *Jewboy*, 2005, Tony Krawtitz, [DVD] Porchlight Films.

cheekily assesses her response and his next move. All desire is obliterated for Rivka, and for the audience, as Yuri brashly moves in to kiss her, when he compromises the integrity of the taboo rather than just flirting with its boundaries (see figure 6). The range of emotions inferred by both sequences is not specific to Chasidic cultural and religious practice, however, the framing, editing and performance of hand gestures, gives these otherwise universal experiences a Chasidic “accent” (Naficy, *Accented*). This accent is pivotal to overcoming a tendency within Western cinemas to represent Jewish male characters as asexual, or as sexually unappealing, particularly in relation to their white male counterparts (Lehman and Hunt). *Jewboy* here develops a cinematic paradigm that facilitates the expression of Jewish sexuality, which is not erased or circumscribed by the hierarchical connotations of ethnicity, religion and sexuality



Figure 6. Rivka pulls back from Yuri in shock. *Jewboy*, 2005, Tony Krawtitz, [DVD] Porchlight Films.

reproduced within Western cinemas. The culturally specific formation of Jewish masculinity and sexuality, and thus the import of culturally specific representation, is forcefully reiterated when Yuri adopts a brash Western approach to sexual gratification, and completely shatters the build-up of sexual tension between Rivka and himself.

These opening sequences conduct a pivotal (re-) appropriation of Jewish masculinity, such that Yuri's subsequent and self-imposed exile from his Chasidic community is grounded within an empowering, rather than emasculating, representational paradigm. Images of Yuri's gaze is a recurrent motif that represents his yearning for physical and emotional intimacy, and conversely, images of hands convey how this desire remains circumscribed by religious and cultural habit, even as he experiences a crisis of faith. In his new life as a cab driver, Yuri experiences three important encounters with non-Jewish women: with an anonymous and intoxicated woman, whom he cabs home; with his colleague Sarita, for whom he develops an infatuation; and a prostitute named Cheryl, whom he solicits for sex. The first woman, scantily clad and intoxicated, falls into a deep sleep in Yuri's cab, and from which she cannot be awakened. Images of Yuri's gaze, cast over his shoulder, and via the rear vision mirror, are cut into shot-reverse-shot sequences with images that fragment and pan across the woman's body draped over the backseat of the car, signifying his arousal (see figure 7). This formal regime diverges from the film's opening sequences insofar

as hand imagery is all but absent. There are only three close up shots of Yuri's hands, as he resists temptation to touch her exposed neck with his fingertips, and as he undoes her seatbelt. Before physically removing the woman from the cab and into her home Yuri covers his hands, arms and torso with his jacket so as to avert contact with her skin. The woman is passed out, there are no witnesses, he has removed himself from the castigating gaze of his community, and yet Yuri remains bound by a lifetime of conditioning. While medium and close up shots of Yuri's gaze maintain him as a sexual being, the lack of hand imagery, and indeed the literal covering of hands, denote the ritualistic minimisation of temptation and the complete absence of intimacy.



Figure 7. Yuri glances at the woman asleep in his cab. *Jewboy*, 2005, Tony Krawtitz, [DVD] Porchlight Films.

Yuri's inability to achieve intimacy outside of his community is forcefully conveyed via the formal construction of his awkward relationship with his colleague Sarita. This is demonstrated via the composition of the two scenes in which Sarita and Yuri socialise outside of work. In the first scene Yuri and Sarita meet for coffee. Their inability to establish a bond is signified by the table that imposes a physical boundary between them. In a latter scene Yuri and Sarita are drinking at a pub, they are framed in a medium shot with Yuri on the right of the screen and Sarita on the left. They are separated by a large space that fills the centre of the shot. While their conversation (about Yuri's desire to touch a woman) indicates a growing sense of intimacy, this is undercut by the fact that neither one of them physically breaches this space. As the topic gets more

personal the sequence moves into a shot-reverse-shot pattern, with each shot tightening the frame on each characters face/gaze, intensifying the formal isolation of the characters. As with the encounter with the anonymous woman, the sequence conveys Yuri's sexual desire via close up of eyes. Also repeated is the absence of hand imagery, which reiterates Yuri's failure to achieve the intimacy outside of his community. Hands represent a system of communication for Yuri, and in the absence of another to whom that system is legible, Yuri becomes more isolated from his Chasidic and adopted communities. The lack of hand imagery, together with more eye imagery, is a formal regime that counter-memorialises "passing" as a performance, which masks painful experiences of isolation and atomization.

This is further substantiated in the sequence where Yuri solicits the prostitute Cheryl, for sex. At the moment in which Cheryl convinces Yuri to remove his hands from his pockets and place them on her breasts, the formal regime, meticulously constructed by the film, collapses. There is no close up of his hands as they touch her breasts, the motion is instead obscured by the profile of her body, and as she slides to her knees, the quality of the image disintegrates and develops an over-exposed and grainy quality. This signifies that, by giving in to his sexual desires and breaching his cultural taboo, Yuri has passed into whiteness and compromised his sense of self. The sequence gives way to blurry and canted images of Yuri moving through Sydney's CBD, the effect of which is disorientation, whereby the literal over-exposure of the film creates a blurry and grainy effect, figuratively conveying Yuri's over-exposure to Western cultural mores (see figure 8). The bleaching of the image also figuratively conveys Yuri's passing into whiteness, and the concomitant dissolution of his Jewish subjectivity, which fails to reconfigure into a cohesive and alternative image of any discernable substance. In this way the film counter-memorialises passing-as-white, as a violent process of self-effacement.

Mired within white culture, Yuri lacks a community with which he can effectively communicate. Interactions with women outside of a Chasidic context lack images of Yuri's hands and the hands of women, indicating that Yuri lacks the cultural skills to assert a sexually confident and capable subjectivity within a

secular Western context. The omission of hand imagery, together with a continued focus upon Yuri's gaze, counter-memorialises the subordination of

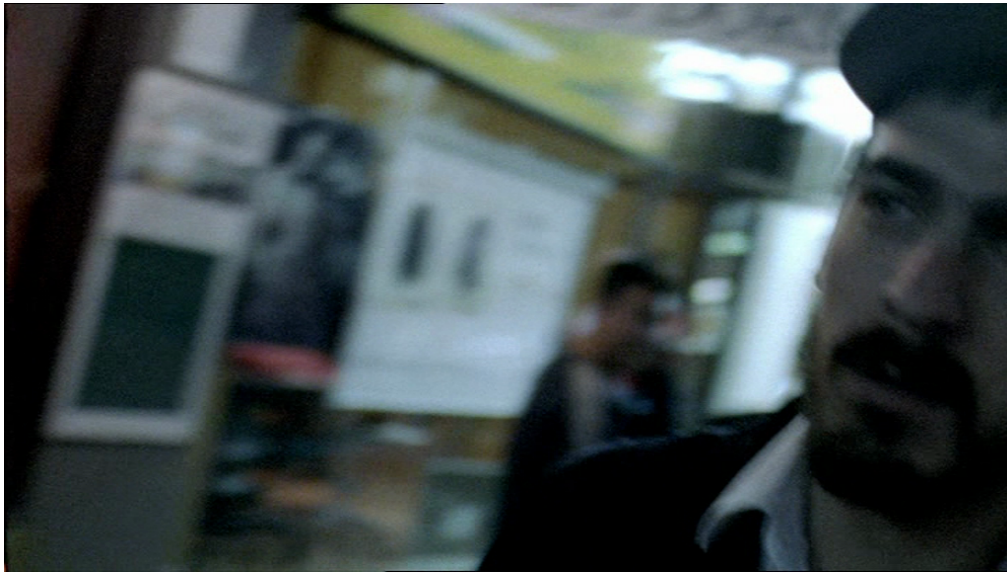


Figure 8. Yuri is disoriented after a sexual encounter. *Jewboy*, 2005, Tony Krawtitz, [DVD] Porchlight Films.

Jewish male subjectivity within a white Western context; Yuri is not inept in comparison to white embodiments of masculinity, but rather, he is out of place. While the film is ambiguous with regard to the resolution of Yuri's crisis of faith, it does restore him to the semiotic order used in the opening sequences of the film. This is demonstrated in the final sequence of the film when Yuri returns to the home of his grandmother. When Yuri enters the apartment, Minnie invites him to have some soup, and watch the tennis with her, as though nothing of note has passed between them. As Minnie commentates the tennis, the scene cuts to a close up of Yuri smiling at his grandmother (see figure 9). The shot then cuts to an image of Yuri's hand closing over Minnie's hand (see figure 10), and then to a medium shot of the two of them side-by-side, holding hands as Minnie, with a contented smile turns to look at Yuri. Regardless of his religious and personal choices in the future, as Yuri grasps Minnie's hand he accepts that his subjectivity, his embodiment of masculinity, which has been forged through the customs, rituals and relations traditional to his family. The approving gaze returned by Minnie evidences mutual understanding between the pair, and a sense of belonging, which definitively (re-) appropriates the trope of Jewish masculinity. Finally, Yuri's search for intimacy is resolved with his grandmother, rather than a sexual or romantic partner, which refuses to reduce the revised

image of Jewish masculinity to sex and sexuality. In so doing it also refuses white tropes that invoke stereotypes of gender and sex to hierarchically organise racial and ethnic others in a subordinate relation to white patriarchal masculinity.



Figure 9. Yuri gazes at his grandmother. *Jewboy*, 2005, Tony Krawtitz, [DVD] Porchlight Films.



Figure 10. Yuri intimately grasps Minnie's hand. *Jewboy*, 2005, Tony Krawtitz, [DVD] Porchlight Films.

In summary, the formal techniques employed in *Jewboy* evidence how counter-memorial (re-) appropriation strategically re-signifies white racist tropes, by developing a new cinematic grammar, which gives expression to non-Western ways of knowing and being in the world. This was achieved in *Jewboy* via the development of a formal and aesthetic regime, which used close up images of hands and gazes to re-code the trope of Jewish masculinity. This regime was powerfully asserted from the first sequence, which refused the viewer a stable

vantage from which to recognise the dead body of Yuri's father as a sign of Jewish masculinity. The formal and aesthetic regime establishes a Chasidic accent, enabling the portrayal of Yuri's search for sexual intimacy, and sidestepping harmful stereotypes of Jewish masculinity as sexually inadequate. In this way the film exemplifies the crucial work of counter-memorial (re-) appropriation, which is the mobilisation of tropes and stereotypes as a stable cultural position from which the Other can forge new stories and identities, and thereby subvert the limitations imposed by white epistemological categories.

2.3. Counter-Memorial Polyphony

Counter-memorial *polyphony* is a category of film that exposes inconsistencies in the construction of whiteness, and across disparate discourses, via the arrangement of multiple and simultaneous languages, accents and voices. The concept of polyphony comes from musical traditions and theories that date back to the ninth century, and in the broadest sense, describes an "arrangement of multiple voices of equal importance," with emphasis placed both on simultaneity and "on individual lines" (Brun 189). Polyphony has, for many decades, been extrapolated in relation to the cinema in two important ways. First, is the tradition of the musical analogy, whereby "film aspires to visualise and portray an individual consciousness without being lyrical, without merging it with an authorial worldview, and to avoid traditional plot considerations" (Brun 190; also see Satre).⁷⁶ John Brun identifies an emerging tradition of polyphonic film that is structured around multiple protagonists, with the plot arranged to portray the characters as "parallel lines moving contingently in rival incompatible spheres" (205). Such films achieve thematic rather than narrative (and ideological) unity, eschewing teleology in favour of a "dialogic interaction of incompatible but equal points of view that make up human experience" (Brun 200). Polyphony is also a concept applied to film in relation to the study of sound. Victoria E. Johnson (1997), for instance, demonstrates how the polyphonic arrangement of diverse musical regimes on the soundtrack of Spike Lee's 1989 film, *Do The Right*

⁷⁶ As John Brun's article extrapolates, polyphony has also been theorised within a literary context, most prominently by Mikhail Bakhtin in his 1984 *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*.

Thing, are aligned with different characters, to affect a sense of mounting racial tension. Johnson's analysis reflects that of Brun to the degree that sound is a strategy for representing different individuals, and differences between individuals, contravening the demands of classical narrative cinema, and the conventional distinction between the subject and object of the narrative. The category of counter-memorial polyphony is exemplary of the imperative towards: multi-perspectival storytelling; temporal simultaneity between the separate spheres represented within the program; the use of sound to shape different worldviews that characterise each sphere/perspective; and thematic rather than narrative unity.

SBSi programs that exemplify counter-memorial polyphony challenge the integrity of white national hegemony via multi-lingual, multi-accented or multi-voiced narratives. In this respect counter-memorial polyphony intersects with and borrows from Hamid Naficy's *accented cinema*, defined as a style of cinema that encodes the experience of liminal subjectivity particular to the émigré (*Accented, "Situating"*). In accented cinema, the experience of migration and de-territorialisation gives rise to counter-hegemonic tendencies, evident across a wide variety of films by émigré directors. While Naficy is primarily concerned to flesh out the concept in terms of formal, stylistic and narrative characteristics that facilitate political critique, at its "most rudimentary level, making films with an accent" also "involves using on-camera and voice-over characters and actors who speak with a literal accent in their pronunciation" (Naficy, "Situating" 119). Similar to accented cinema, counter-memorial polyphony strategically represents multiple accents and voices to destabilise the assumption of linguistic homogeneity and de-centre whiteness. In this respect the effect of counter-memorial polyphony, in SBSi productions, builds upon the achievements of the SBS subtitling department, which is credited with discovering "the foreignness within" the nation (Hawkins and Ang 7). Counter-memorial polyphony short-circuits the assumed nexus between Australian-ness, whiteness, and the English language, particularly so with regard to Australia's first peoples and the representation of Indigenous languages and accents. The concept of polyphony points to the multiplication of languages, accents and voices within and across narratives, and indicates a process of de-naturalising and de-territorialising white

accents and perspectives. White voices are represented as a part of - they do not preside over - the multitude of languages, accents and voices spoken across SBSi content. In this sense, counter-memorial polyphony reflects the critique of accented cinema forwarded by Asuman Suner, and Song Hwee Lim, who argue that the concept of “accented cinema” not be apprehended in opposition to mainstream cinema, for if émigré films constitute a category apart, then the Hollywood “accent” continues to be naturalised as neutral and its superiority mystified. Multi-lingual, multi-accented and multi-voiced narratives short circuit stereotypical perceptions of migrants as lacking mastery over the English language, and as such contravene their construction as less-than-white.

As indicated, the terms *multi-lingual*, *multi-accented* and *multi-voiced* are discernable varieties of counter-memorial polyphony. *Multi-lingual* and *multi-accented* polyphony refers to the coincidence of multiple languages and accents respectively, and both suggest language as a marker of racial, ethnic and/or national identity. *Multi-vocal* or *multi-voice* programs feature subjects whose perspectives are forged through other forms of alterity, not always marked in pronunciation. These include: disability, gender, sexuality, religion and class. That said, films rarely belong to a single category. Margot Nash’s 2005 tele-feature *Call Me Mum*, analysed below, is a case in point. While multi-voiced in the sense that the narrative features the perspectives of a lesbian and a disabled character, it is also accented in its juxtaposition of white and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, and multi-lingual to the degree that Indigenous songs and phrases are featured. As such, the examples provided below are intended as a broad indication of a particular film or series’ dominant tendencies. Content that exemplifies the multi-lingual variation of counter-memorial polyphony include the feature films: *Floating Life*, *Yolngu Boy*, *La Spagnola*, *Ten Canoes* and *The Home Song Stories*. Documentary examples include: *Hell Bento!*, *The Isabellas: The Long March*, *The Diplomat*, *Grandfathers and Revolutions*, *Winds of Change*, *Since the Company Came*, *Fond Memories of Cuba*, *Tales from a Suitcase III: The Afghan Experience* (series directed by Andrea Dal Bosco), *Trespass: Yvonne Margarula’s Fight For Country*, *Dying to Leave* (Chris Hilton), *Sydney at War: The Untold Story*, *Vietnam Symphony*, and *Yellow Fella*.

The multi-accented variation of polyphony has primarily emerged via SBSi's orchestration of themed strands. As explicated in chapter three, themed strands initiated the production of documentary and drama content around a broad theme or format, with each film that forms part of the series being made by a different filmmaking team. For instance the individual films that comprise the *Indigenous Drama Initiative (IDI)* series' including *From Sand to Celluloid*, *Shifting Sands*, *Crossing Tracks*, *On Wheels*, *Dreaming in Motion*, and *Dramatically Black*, and the sixth series of the *National Indigenous Documentary Fund (NIDF6)*, *Loved Up*. Drama and comedy series include: *Pizza*, *RAN*, and *Wilfred*. Examples of multi-accented documentaries include the first two series of *Tales from a Suitcase* (series directed by Andrea Dal Bosco), *The Hillmen: A Soccer Fable*, *Emily's Eyes*, *Black Chicks Talking* (Leah Purcell), *Homemade History* (Robert Herbert), and *Molly and Mobarak*. Multi-vocal programs also manifest as a consequence of themed strands, as evidenced in: *4 on the Floor*, *Hybrid Life*, *Australia by Numbers*, *My Way*, *Everyday Brave*, each of which is a kaleidoscopic series of films, detailing vastly disparate experiences and memories that emerge as a consequence of living in Australia. Documentaries such as *Kabbarli*, *Penicillin: The Magic Bullet* (Gordon Glenn) and *In Search of Bony*, portray historical and literary figures through re-enactment of past events. Integral to this process is the staging of interviews whereby key participants in the history share their memories and perspectives in a manner that undercuts the authority of official versions, and the sanctity with which the central protagonist is ordinarily rendered. Other documentaries include *Untold Desires*, *Sexing the Label*, *Welcome To My Deaf World* and *Night*.

Notably, the programs that constitute the category of counter-memorial polyphony are overwhelmingly documentary programs. An exception that is analysed in this section is the 2005 tele-feature *Call Me Mum*, directed by Margot Nash and written by Kathleen Mary Fallon. The analysis of *Call Me Mum* will extrapolate the use of multi-vocal and multi-lingual strategies to critique and disrupt white settler histories, and how these were utilised to frame national debates about reconciliation.

Call Me Mum (2005)

Call Me Mum tells the story of Warren, a mentally and visually impaired teenager of Torres Strait Island heritage, who is travelling from his home in Sydney to Brisbane, together with his white, lesbian foster mother Kate. Both Warren and Kate are returning to family; Warren, to be reunited with his dying birth mother Flo, and Kate to seek the support and assistance of her estranged parents Dellmay and Keith. The primary motivation for Kate's reluctant journey home is to prevent the removal of Warren from her care. Warren's disabilities preclude his dependence on a carer into adulthood, and his impending eighteenth birthday portends his re-institutionalisation as a ward of the state. Thus Kate also seeks Flo's consent to adopt Warren. The story told by the film is multi-vocal in the sense that it is assembled almost entirely from intersecting monologues, delivered direct to camera by the five above named characters. The characters each reflect upon formative events from their past, their various experiences of having a mum or being a mum, as the narrative inexorably moves towards Warren's imminent removal at the close of the film. The following analysis extrapolates how multi-vocal and multi-lingual polyphony is strategically deployed in *Call Me Mum* to counter-memorialise the relation of contemporary white Australians to the history of the Stolen Generations. It begins by examining the multi-vocal construction of the plot, and how the lack of physical action and verbal interaction between characters, achieves a sense of temporal simultaneity, emphasising parallel spheres of existence. It argues that the multi-vocal construction of the film foregrounds how individual citizens are plugged into the nation and connected to each other through a network of (racist) government policies and institutions. Second, it demonstrates how Flo's native *Meriam Mir* language is inscribed into the film to privilege her idealised memory of the past. It argues that *Call Me Mum* employs multi-lingual polyphony, to displace Howard's idealised evocation of a proud settler history, with Flo's counter-memory of a communal Australian past.

The screenplay for *Call Me Mum* was written by Kathleen Mary Fallon, and though not an autobiographical piece, was inspired by her experience as a white foster mother of a Torres Strait Islander child with disabilities. While scholarship examining Fallon's literary work has often been explicitly read via the rubric of

critical whiteness and the politics of voice (Ravenscroft; Riggs), *Call Me Mum* has predominantly been read against the contemporaneous socio-political climate, and specifically Howard's refusal to issue a formal apology to the Stolen Generations. For Felicity Collins, the delivery of five personal sorry speeches towards the conclusion of *Call Me Mum*, engages with the "politically charged question of an apology," by way of "a rehearsal of what it might mean to say sorry and to be sorry – or not" (2006, 49). The following analysis of *Call Me Mum* augments that of Collins, insofar as it reads the film against Howard's opening address to the *Australian Reconciliation Commission*, delivered on the 26 May 2000, and his infamous justification for his government's refusal to forward a formal apology on behalf of the nation. In response to the recommendations of HREOC, Howard asserted:

Australians of this generation should not be required to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control. However, we must acknowledge past wrongs, understand that they still cause a great deal of *personal distress* and resolve to improve areas of indigenous disadvantage both now and into the future (emphasis added).

This extract evidences how reconciliation debates were circumscribed by the State imperative to secure the future of white hegemony. Howard rationalised an otherwise arbitrary delineation of past from present, of personal distress and Indigenous disadvantage, from the concerns of white national citizens. *Call Me Mum* stages a multi-vocal and multi-lingual counter-memorial intervention, to critique the presumed disjunction between personal and national histories, and thereby reframe the historical grounds upon which contemporaneous debates were conducted.

Consistent with Bruns' elaboration of cinematic polyphony, the narrative of *Call Me Mum* is almost exclusively structured around the delivery of monologues delivered direct to camera. This multi-vocal strategy affords each of the five characters the status of a fully realised subject. Furthermore, the monologues reinforce the impression that each character inhabits parallel spheres of existence that only occasionally intersect. Visually, the impression of distinct worlds is achieved through the representation of space. Each character inhabits only a single place throughout the course of the film; Kate and Warren address the

audience from the aeroplane throughout their journey (see figures 11 and 12 respectively), Flo remains in her hospital bed (see figure 13), while Dellmay and



Figure 11. Kate delivers her monologue from her seat in the aeroplane. *Call Me Mum*, 2006, Margot Nash [DVD] Big and Little Films.



Figure 12. Warren records a message for Flo. *Call Me Mum*, 2006, Margot Nash [DVD] Big and Little Films.

Keith inhabit their suburban home (see figures 14 and 15 respectively). The single exception is the brief image of Warren at the end of the film, glimpsed



Figure 13. Flo delivers her monologue from her hospital bed. *Call Me Mum*, 2006, Margot Nash [DVD] Big and Little Films.



Figure 14. Dellmay delivering her monologue from the family home in Queensland. *Call Me Mum*, 2006, Margot Nash [DVD] Big and Little Films.

through the rear window of a car as authorities take him away. Furthermore, the duration of the film coincides with the duration of the plane journey, which



Figure 15. Keith delivers his monologue from the family home in Queensland. *Call Me Mum*, 2006, Margot Nash [DVD] Big and Little Films.

creates a sense of the film unfolding in real time. Cross cutting between the monologues constructs the impression of temporal simultaneity, that is, of the simultaneous delivery of the individual monologues. Interaction between characters is minimal, reduced to furtive glances between Kate and Warren from opposite sides of the plane, and snide remarks which Dellmay and Keith occasionally level at one another. Aurally, the individual monologues constitute a multi-vocal polyphony, and foregrounds what Foucault refers to as the “univocity of being”: the “singleness of expression, [which] is paradoxically the principal condition which permits difference to escape the domination of identity, which frees it from the law of the Same as a simple opposition within conceptual elements” (Foucault, “Nietzsche” 192). Inter-personal interaction is between a single character and the audience, which liberates the characters from relations of racial and sexual alterity, from teleological narrative conventions that fix the Other as the silenced antagonists within a given film. Kate is clearly passive, insofar as the monologues reveal how she is acted upon, and she remains unaware of other character’s actions against her. However, her ability to speak

her experience, to pose questions, affords her character agency ordinarily denied within a classic narrative structure. Indeed, the lack of movement in the film, of traditional modes of cinematic storytelling that favour physical action in favour of voice, is that which gives her agency and facilitates multi-vocal polyphony.

Multi-vocal polyphony in *Call Me Mum*, functions to atomise each of the characters in parallel worlds, such that their individual relation to the nation via government policy and institutions are brought to the fore. For example, Kate first came to care for Warren in her capacity as a nurse at the medical institution where Warren lived as a toddler. Unbeknownst to Kate, her guardianship of Warren has historically been, and continues to be, frustrated by Dellmay, who has vigilantly worked with health department employees to remove Warren from Kate's care. Flo traces Warren's disability back to the political mediation of her marriage to Albert, Warren's "full-blooded" father, who by virtue of his desire to wed a "half-caste" woman, was required to seek the approval of the State according to the mandate of the Aboriginal Protection Act.⁷⁷ Finally, the media misrepresentation of Warren as having been "Stolen" by Kate is the catalyst for Warren's re-institutionalisation as a ward of the state. The exposition of all of these pieces of data occurs within, and across, each of the monologues. The events and people that have circumscribed Warren's life are multifaceted, and cannot be cohered into an intelligible sequence of events, nor can a single catalyst be identified. However, common to all of these revelations, the events that precipitated the current crisis faced by Warren, is the mediating presence of

⁷⁷ The first Aboriginal Protection Act was established by the Victorian state government in 1869 and introduced into legislation a range of controls and policies for managing Indigenous people. These Acts were enforced all over Australia by state governments and were designed to "absorb" Indigenous peoples into the general white population in two key ways. First, via "cultural assimilation," which reflected the belief that Indigenous people could be taught to live like white people, and independently of white people. This is reflected in the 1886 Act that commenced a policy of forcibly removing "mixed race" children from their parents, and placing them in the care of white people, such as in Christian orphanages. Another aim was "biological absorption," whereby Indigenous populations were managed with a view towards breeding out their physiognomic features. A key way this was achieved was through Acts requiring Indigenous peoples to seek the permission of the State to marry. For more information see: Ellinghaus.

multiple institutions. While the characters remain physically isolated from each other, these tales of institutional intervention constitute moments of rupture in their monologues, points of contingency at which the different spheres come into contact with one another to affect irrevocable change. The medical, political, media and military institutions recounted in the stories of each character are symbols of the nation-State. It is only through involvement in apparatuses of the nation-State that the characters are ever represented as connected to one another. That is to say, in *Call Me Mum*, characters are constituted as national subjects, and placed into affective relation with one another, exclusively via their involvement in State institutions and policies. As such, *Call Me Mum* critiques Howard's distinction between national citizens and State institutions, and the imagined separation of white and black histories, as illogical and untenable.

At the heart of *Call Me Mum* is a counter-memory of nurturing motherhood, violently disrupted and irrevocably perverted, by white patriarchal hegemony. Pivotal to the construction of this counter-memory is the repeated and idealised image of the island home of Flo's memory and Warren's imagination. Pearl luggers sail gracefully across glistening seas, Islander children fish off piers; the scene is tranquil, undisturbed by the vagaries of white society and politics. That this image is an idealised fantasy, of a half-remembered past on Mer Island, is inscribed in the surface of the images, which often appear over-exposed, bleached of colour, faded like aging photographs and home video footage. Layered over these images are songs composed in Flo's native language, *Meriam Mir*. For example the opening sequence features the song *Awail*, sung by Vicki Saylor who also performs the role of Flo. That these songs and images are intimately connected to Flo is substantiated in the final moments of the film. Flo, awaiting the arrival of Warren and Kate, indeed, awaiting the arrival of her own death, begins to sing *Waiye*. The sequence cuts away from the image of Flo, staring longingly to her right, to a surreal image of a Torres Strait Island seas lapping at the sill of her hospital room window (see figure 16). At this moment Flo's voice is joined by a harmony of non-diegetic voices, these voices aurally inscribe the final montage with a sense of unfulfilled longing. The sunset images of Flo's Torres Strait homeland conceal the detail of the island, the people and the pearl luggers appear in silhouette, the sepia tone of the images again, conveys a sense

of past-ness, of a life forever lost to Flo. While Flo's voice is at first isolated, singular, it is enjoined by many other voices and soon blends into a harmony,



Figure 16. Torres Strait Island seas lapping at Flo's hospital window. *Call Me Mum*, 2006, Margot Nash [DVD] Big and Little Films.

marking her tragic story out as only one among many. Considered in relation to all of the monologues, the fantasy sequences produce multi-lingual polyphony. While extended versions of these sequences open and close the film, truncated versions sit at the interstice of the film's monologues. If the monologues are the flesh of the film, then the fantasy sequences are its bones; a counterpoint to repeated expressions and recollections of violence, all of which are spoken in English.

The fantasy sequences featuring songs sung in *Meriam Mir*, disrupt the integrity of white colonial history and its nostalgic preservation of conservative Australian values. In his review of the film Adrian Martin notes how the formal and stylistic construction of *Call Me Mum* "transforms each locale – plane, hospital, lounge room – into something subtly unreal, a kind of fantasy projection from out of the characters' heads" ("Your Mummy"). It is, however, only Flo's memories that find visual and aural expression that exist independently of her image, and the space to which she is mired. Or more accurately, given that Saylor is a vocal

presence in most of the non-diegetic *Meriam Mir* songs, these sequences privilege Flo's voice by disarticulating it from her image and anchoring it to a communal past, signified by the voices that sing in harmony with her. Furthermore, the *Meriam Mir* language inscribes images of Torres Strait Island territories as expressly non-white signifiers of history and memory. The polyphonic arrangement of the fantasy sequences and the monologues, effectively inverts the dynamics of contemporaneous reconciliation debates under the Howard government. For example, in his same address to the Australian Reconciliation Convention, Howard contextualised the government's refusal to extend a formal apology to the Stolen Generations in historical terms:

In facing the realities of the past, however, we must not join those who would portray Australia's history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism, exploitation and racism. Such a portrayal is a gross distortion and deliberately neglects the overall story of great Australian achievement that is there in our history to be told, and such an approach will be repudiated by the overwhelming majority of Australians who are proud of what this country has achieved although inevitably acknowledging the blemishes in its past history.

Call Me Mum displaces Howard's "overall story of great Australian achievement," with an equally nostalgic image of the Australian past, though one that is a projection of Torres Strait Islander memory and language. Within the context of the film, the fantasy sequences function like Howard's ideal past, insofar as they provide an historical reference point in relation to which all of the monologues are arranged. Moreover, the fantasy sequences substitute and displace Howard's white history with Flo's Torres Strait Islander memory, and the *Meriam Mir* language songs accentuate the discord among the voices of the featured characters.

Multi-lingualism in *Call Me Mum* inscribes the film to produce a critique of Howard's nationally polarising response to HREOC. At a rudimentary level, the motif of motherhood signifies inter-generational relationships and communal heritage, and viewed through this particular social, cultural and corporeal perspective, Howard's insistence that Australian history is a succession of unrelated generational and cultural practices ceases to be legible. As suggested, the monologues in *Call Me Mum* are predominantly spoken in English, with the

exception of a smattering of Islander words spoken and sung by Flo. These words and songs also however, appear in other monologues as moments of rupture, as unanswered questions that signpost the points at which the individual stories intersect. For example, in an early sequence, Kate rehearses a story to share with Flo. Kate recounts an incident that preceded her fostering of Warren, when she cared for him in her capacity as a nurse at an institution referred to as Cherrymeade. Kate recalls that Warren, only a toddler, was gently stroking the cheek of another child that staff called “the moaner”: “he sang his song to her, *awail kanake, awail kanake, bo bak a beddle awail*. He was comforting her Flo. None of us had even ever tried. Is that how you comforted him?” Kate’s utterance of *Awail* signifies unmet possibilities for inter-personal, inter-cultural and inter-generational communication outside of institutional structures. *Awail* is merely a trace of Flo in the language that comes to Kate and to Warren. At this juncture of the film, the song *Awail* also becomes intimately connected to the motif of motherhood, and concomitantly, the Australian government’s institutional attack on mothering. Warren sings *Awail* as a comforting gesture, Kate recognises this as a performance learned from and conducted in lieu of his absent mother. This song is also connected to the motherland of both Flo and Warren, as it inscribes the film’s opening fantasy sequence. Kate’s reiteration of the song in the context of her memory of Warren, begins a process, whereby the motherland is re-contextualised as a nurturing entity from which Flo and Warren are irrevocably estranged. Nurturing and nourishing motherland and motherhood are ostensibly reduced to unattainable ideals.

In summary, multi-vocalism and multi-lingualism represent two interrelated currents of counter-memorial polyphony that can be traced in the soundtrack of *Call Me Mum*. As demonstrated, the formal and stylistic structuring of the filmic narrative around five individual monologues, fundamentally disrupts the teleological organisation of classic film narratives, and with it, subject and object relations that reinforce white hegemony. Multi-vocalism strategically represents different characters as fully realised subjects occupying parallel worlds, and concomitantly, foregrounds how seemingly disconnected individuals are brought into proximity through State institutions. While *Call Me Mum* overtly challenged the terms upon which the Howard Coalition government engaged in the

reconciliation debate, it also produced an alternative image to white patriarchal heritage exclusively available to a select contingent of Australians. Images of Flo's idealised homeland, aurally inscribed with *Meriam Mir* language, sits at the interstice of the intersecting monologues, privileging non-white memories of the past. The effect is multi-lingual polyphony, which displaces idealised white settler histories as a common reference point within the national imaginary. One effect of this displacement is to reframe reconciliation debates in relation to Indigenous history and memory. The second effect is the subtle critique of white patriarchal hegemony as a violent, and sustained attack on motherhood, on homeland, and on the ability of citizens to forge inter-personal, inter-cultural and inter-generational relationships outside of institutional structures. This is exemplary of strategies of counter-memorial polyphony that undercut the singularity and authority of whiteness in the national imaginary, refusing to cohere the cacophony of voices, accents and languages, so often silenced in the political public sphere.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that the creative management objectives and processes practiced by SBSi gave rise to a new counter-memorial cycle of films that challenged white hegemony in Australia. Using a critical race and whiteness approach, it established that Australian, like international television and cinemas, are absolutely complicit in the reproduction of whiteness as a hegemonic subject position. This is affected, both implicitly and explicitly, via stereotypes, tropes and motifs, which function as representational processes that formally, aesthetically and narratively encode screen content with meaning. Within an Australian screen context, tropes and narrative motifs are often invoked to work through national anxieties about white belonging and legitimate claims to white national sovereignty. This has resulted in the construction of ideal Australian identity as white and masculine, for instance, via the Aussie Battler trope whose selfless defence of future Australian sovereignty is coded via his relation to Lost Children, British effeminacy, Asian villainy and Indigenous extinction.

This chapter then identified and extrapolated three counter-memorial strategies developed under the aegis of SBSi, which intervened in processes perpetuating white Australian hegemony, and gave rise to new modes of storytelling. These strategies are: re-membering, (re-) appropriation and polyphony. Counter-memorial re-membering challenges white hegemony by reframing dominant historical narratives, from the perspective of the Other who has been marginalised by them. This strategy critiques white hegemony via the reflexive use of representational conventions that ordinarily sustain it. In “Beach Pizza” this was achieved via the juxtaposition of ethnic and white perspectives, represented via reality television and news media genres respectively. Not incidentally, these are two factual television genres closely associated with notions of authenticity, veracity and real life. This strategy called attention to the conventions of representation, and in so doing exposed how white perspectives framed the “reality” of the Cronulla Riots in a manner that reproduced white authority. Via an analysis of “Beach Pizza,” it was demonstrated that the subjective re-membering of Australian history offers powerful interventions into the reproduction of white national hegemony, insofar as they bring whiteness into view as a racial category and elucidate the processes by which its benefactors are privileged.

The second counter-memorial strategy elaborated was (re-) appropriation, which disrupts white hegemony by formally, aesthetically and narratively forging new spaces for non-white self-representation. Counter-memorial intervention is achieved via the (re-) appropriation of tropes and stereotypes, which are then occupied as a cultural position from which the Other can speak and be heard. This was demonstrated via an analysis of *Jewboy*, which, via regular close up images of hands and gazes, establishes a visual regime that inflected the tropes of Jewish masculinity with a Chasidic accent. The almost exclusive use of this motif to render expressions of sexual desire, of grief, of cultural displacement and emplacement, confounds attempts to know Yuri via his embodiment of masculinity, and forces the audience to engage with his character as a fully realised subject. This subverts white hegemony because it undermines the tropes that define white supremacy in relation to its racial, gender, sexual and religious Others, which invariably signify lack. Insofar as the film is about

failed attempts to achieve sexual intimacy, *Jewboy* represents a particularly potent example of the utility of established tropes, as a point of departure from white epistemologies, to shape new and empowering narratives.

The final strategy was polyphony, which through multi-lingual, multi-accented and multi-vocal storytelling, subverts the teleological narrative conventions that fix non-white perspectives as Other. This was achieved in *Call Me Mum* via a polyphonic formal and narrative structure, which refused to harmonise individual voices and achieve ideological coherence. The process of spatially and aurally atomising different characters enabled their self-representation as fully realised subjects, and refused to organise “protagonists” and “antagonists” into traditional subject/object relations. Like “Beach Pizza,” *Call Me Mum* flattened out cultural hierarchies and re-positioned whiteness (and the processes by which it is privileged), within a spectrum of racial, ethnic and cultural differences. *Call Me Mum* is also indicative of counter-memorial processes more generally, insofar as it reclaims tropes as a publically recognised positions from which to voice non-white perspectives and subjectivities.

Finally, this chapter also conducted a database analysis of the SBSi catalogue, which demonstrated that the institution cultivated a high volume of counter-memorial productions that challenged white Australian hegemony. Moreover, this analysis demonstrated that SBSi productions comprise a coherent counter-memorial cycle, characterised by the three principal strategies of re-remembering, (re-) appropriation and polyphony. Together, the database and close textual analyses extend the analyses developed in chapters two and three, which demonstrated that SBSi was a formidable institution that manoeuvred within the strictures of neo-liberal governmentality, to seed new filmmaking milieux, and cultivate new modes of filmmaking. This chapter has extended this argument to also demonstrate how creative management objectives and processes shaped a new counter-memorial genre, which challenged white national hegemony sustained through neo-liberal regimes.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This thesis has provided a detailed history of SBSi as a cultural institution from its establishment in 1994, through to its merger with SBS-TV in 2007. Using the rubric of productive diversity it has demonstrated how SBSi cultivated the resource of cultural diversity, allowing for new creative labour practices to emerge, new filmmaking milieux to form, and new counter-memorial filmmaking strategies to flourish. As elaborated in chapter one, productive diversity was a State program harnessing the cultural and linguistic diversity of citizens, as a competitively advantageous resource for Australian business, in the era of globalisation. In the cultural sectors, cultural heterogeneity was posited as a source for innovation; it could generate original content, stimulate job creation and new niche markets, and in so doing, it could add value to the economy. Productive diversity was one technique within a broader neo-liberal agenda of “governing through the market.” SBSi was a key institution administering these techniques, transforming cultural capital into economic capital within the independent production and public service broadcasting sectors. SBSi was however, a significant cultural institution precisely because it carefully manoeuvred within this neo-liberal regime to also open out new possibilities for innovative, diverse and political modes of independent filmmaking.

SBSi was a formidable cultural institution that posed an important challenge to neo-liberal reform. This was established in chapter two, using a cultural policy approach, demonstrating how the institution manifested features conducive to the commercial ambitions of *Creative Nation*, and which could also advance local multicultural programming on SBS-TV. The form and function of SBSi was explicitly designed such that SBSi could gain access to new neo-liberal systems of public subsidy at the same time as honouring the SBS Corporation’s long-term commitment to social welfare. With regard to policy developments, the commissioning model for content acquisition optimised potential to satisfy the policy push toward outsourcing, cross funding, resource sharing and productive partnerships. SBSi represented the new managerialism and value for money

characteristics of neo-liberalism, and it is precisely these features that vouchsafed the future of the institution. This was substantiated via an examination of funding campaigns and budget announcements, verifying the industrial and political value of SBSi on the basis of value for money and industry success. Throughout phase two (1996-2003), SBSi funding campaigns explicitly addressed the aims of cultural policy, judiciously omitting references to controversial content, extolling the high output of SBSi relative to public investment, its contribution to job creation, and its support for nationally and internationally successful films and filmmakers.

SBSi's challenge to neo-liberal reform was considerably diminished in phase three (2003-2007) when it was utilised as a principal mechanism to achieve rationalisation within the SBS Corporation. The merger of SBSi and SBS remained consistent with cultural policies requiring cultural institutions to adopt more business-like practices, including corporate downsizing and commercial sponsorship. Rationalisation was however, implemented to finance more expensive popular programs, and reposition the broadcaster as a competitor for mainstream television audiences. While broadly consistent with the commercial impetus of neo-liberalism, new mainstreaming objectives broke with SBSi's explicit and State-sanctioned responsibility to govern productive diversity. That is, SBSi was no longer adding value to the mainstream film and television economy via the development of new niche markets. Moreover, it signalled the abandonment of SBS-TV's long-standing commitment to diverse programming that challenged the centrality of whiteness in the Australian national imaginary.

Chapter three examined management processes developed by SBSi to engender productive diversity, and elaborated how these reshaped creative labour practices within the independent production and public service broadcasting sectors. Unlike traditional modes of creative labour, characterised by insulated production milieux operating exclusively within independent filmmaking contexts *or* institutional television contexts, SBSi forged new networks linking these sectors. It achieved this by co-ordinating project-based production alliances between film financing agencies, independent film producers, broadcasters, distributors and exhibitors, to help agents pool resources and open out new pathways for

Australian content to reach new audiences. Moreover, new collaborative modes of production and distribution underwrote the brokerage of themed strands and drama enterprises, explicitly targeting culturally and professionally diverse filmmakers for early career development and long-term alliances. This represents an unprecedented intervention seeding a generation of Indigenous producers such as Richard Frankland, Darlene Johnson, Lawrence Johnston, Catriona McKenzie, Ivan Sen, and Warwick Thornton, and CALD producers such as Luigi Acquisto, Tony Ayres, Peter Hegedus and Dai Le. It also represents a significant intervention preserving a modicum of public subsidy for innovative and political modes of filmmaking, as reflected in the works of animators such as Adam Elliot, Anthony Lucas and Sarah Watt, and documentarians such as Anna Broinowski, John Hughes, Curtis Levy and Bentley Dean.

Ultimately, SBSi was empowered to conduct such interventions because of changes to financing infrastructure, installing public broadcasters as the new centre of creative management within the independent production sector. This was a detrimental development that subjected independent modes of production to the logic of capital accumulation, and which reduced opportunities for formal, aesthetic and narrative innovations that challenged the reproduction of white hegemony. This was demonstrated via the explication of new creative management strategies in phase three (2003-2007), such as commissioning popular genre and new format series to improve network ratings. It was also demonstrated via the case study of *Betelnut Bisnis*, which demonstrated a radical intervention moulding formal and narrative components to produce a more marketable documentary. As well as articulating independent modes of production to the commercial system, creative management by SBSi (and by extension, the ABC) extended the reach of the State into creative stages of production, as members of project teams. The long term effects of more bureaucratic mediation was exemplified 2009 when all commissioning activity ground to a halt under the direction of experienced public broadcaster, Shaun Brown. This was a far cry from entrepreneurship that characterised Bridget Ikin's management of SBSi, and indeed, from policies promising to facilitate innovation by liberating the cultural industries from the stultifying effects of regulation and bureaucracy.

The content commissioned by SBSi constitutes a coherent counter-memorial cycle and demonstrates how its governance of productive diversity also allowed non-assimilative elements to manifest. This was demonstrated in chapter four using a critical race and whiteness approach, enabling an elucidation of strategies innovated in SBSi productions to challenge white Australian hegemony. Consistent with the tradition of counter-memory, SBSi productions challenged hegemony via formal, aesthetic and narrative techniques, which both decoded representational processes that reproduce and naturalise white hegemony, and allowed for new representations of non-white characters as fully realised subjects. This thesis identified and extrapolated three distinct strategies employed within the SBSi catalogue to achieve these objectives: re-membering, (re-) appropriation and polyphony. As demonstrated via the analysis of “Beach Pizza,” counter-memorial re-membering undermines the authority of white hegemony by reflexively reconstructing national historical events from the perspective of the Other, exposing epistemological contradictions elided within dominant discourse. This was achieved in “Beach Pizza” via concurrent representations of the Cronulla riots using news media conventions to represent a white perspective, and reality television conventions to represent an ethnic perspective. This strategy called attention to discrepant meanings that emerge from different “documentary” conventions, and how these are utilised represent non-white subjectivities as an Other against which to construct ideal white nationhood.

(Re-) appropriation was the second counter-memorial strategy elaborated, which was shown to disrupt white hegemony via the appropriation and re-signification of racist tropes. This was demonstrated via the analysis of *Jewboy*, which achieved (re-) appropriation via the re-signification of tropes that ascribe Jewish masculinity as inadequate, asexual and physically weak, and which are regularly invoked to naturalise the desirability and power of white masculinity. This strategy is reflexive insofar as the act of (re-) appropriation acknowledges mainstream constructions of non-white subjectivities as Other, however the core work performed by this strategy is formal and aesthetic innovations that transforms the Other into a fully realised subject. This subverts the mainstream function of the trope as a signifier of white supremacy, activating it as a social, cultural and corporeal position from which the Other can speak and be heard.

Polyphony was the third and final variation of counter-memorial intervention. As demonstrated via the close analysis of *Call Me Mum*, polyphonic narrative structures and aural regimes allow different characters to be represented as fully realised subjects, flattening out cultural hierarchies and re-positioning whiteness as one perspective among many. Multi-vocal polyphony was reinforced in *Call Me Mum* via the spatial atomisation of the five different protagonists, refusing the ideological coherence of teleological narrative structures, and instead inviting audiences to explore a single *theme* from multiple angles. It also invoked multi-lingual and multi-accented variations of polyphony, whereby the *Miriam Mir* language layered idealised images of the Torres Strait Islands, short-circuiting naturalised connections between the English language and Australian territories. Such formal, aesthetic and narrative innovations foreground the SBSi counter-memorial cycle as a significant moment in Australian film and television, and evidence how, as a cultural institution, SBSi worked within the proscribed limits of productive diversity to advance the non-white representation.

Key to this thesis is a challenge to scholarship that has largely consigned SBSi to the footnotes of Australian screen history. The strong commitment to innovation and cultural diversity locates SBSi and the Special Production Fund within the genealogy of minor stream public subsidy (O'Regan, *Australian National* 15), which has, historically, shored up support for culturally diverse filmmakers and experimental forms of production. However, unlike these mechanisms explicitly supporting non-commercial, non-institutional modes of filmmaking, SBSi operated at the interstice of mainstream and independent production milieux, steering the convergence of distinct screen sectors. As the new centre of creative management, SBSi transformed independent production in line with broader neo-liberal policy implementations. Indeed, the utilisation of the Special Production Fund for genre and new format programming in phase three (2003-2007) is consistent with programs redirecting public support toward offshore productions (Herd, *Chasing*), and international co-productions (Hammett-Jamart; Graham, *Making*). The creative labour approach adopted in this thesis has also, however, elucidated how SBSi forged new alliances across film and broadcasting terrains, and between independent producers and distributors, opening out new spaces for an innovative, diverse and political filmmaking ecology to thrive. SBSi exhibited

considerable entrepreneurship insofar as it invited established independents to work within the SBS ethos, pooled resources with other cultural institutions to innovate new mentorship and early career opportunities, and co-ordinated production and distribution, thereby developing niche markets and driving demand for unique and diverse content. In the face of globalisation, transnationalisation and conglomeration, SBSi rejuvenated declining independent modes of production by seeding a new generation of diverse filmmakers and incubating unique cycles of production.

SBSi was also exemplary of the *Creative Nation* moment, and how a cultural institution has negotiated neo-liberal incorporation to engineer prosperous new spaces for non-assimilative cultural elements. At the level of policy, this was achieved via the design of a cultural institution that allowed government to demonstrate prudent investment, economic growth, new employment opportunities, and the development of niche markets for Australian content. The commissioning structure capitalised on a central paradox of neo-liberalism, which allowed for ideological dissent insofar as dissenting representations were successfully circulated within the market economy, and could be touted as exemplars of State intervention enabling Australian exceptionalism. At the level of production, SBSi worked within a governmental logic, devising programs that allowed the benefits of productive diversity to also flow through to those culturally diverse citizens targeted as a resource. Programs training aspiring Indigenous, regional and CALD filmmakers not only improved access and equity, but also shaped a new counter-memorial genre that absolutely challenged white hegemony. Since the *Creative Nation* moment, the neo-liberal rationale guiding cultural intervention has further strengthened, and has recently been reiterated and refined in the form of the *Creative Australia* policy statement, released by Julia Gillard's Labour government (June 2010 - June 2013) in March 2013. The way that SBSi worked within a governmental logic to advance social welfare, provides a template for *Creative Australia* and how to manoeuvre within this neo-liberal regime.

It is now five years since SBSi became defunct, during which time SBS has intensified efforts to “deliver content that drives both audience growth and

distinctiveness” (*SBS Corporate Plan 2010-13*, 9). Arguably, the pursuit of ratings has absolutely undermined the “quest for difference” (Smaill 2003, 115), and innovative modes of programming that made the broadcaster so distinctive in the 1980s and 1990s are no longer in evidence. The language used by SBS is telling in this respect. While on the one hand SBS emphasises its unique ability to represent multiple viewpoints, it expresses the need to do so through food programs and other readily digestible modes of factual entertainment (*SBS Corporate Plan* 9). The SBS submission to the Gillard Labour government’s 2012 *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*, expressed a similar level of timidity insofar as it assumed Australian audiences needed to be eased into a cross-cultural dialogue with Asia, and in a manner that doesn’t upset established binary frameworks distinguishing “us” from “them”. SBSi is sorely missed within this post-national context, particularly its strong focus on formal, aesthetic and narrative innovation that challenged audiences to forge new sub-national and trans-national axes of identification and belonging.

Approaching the study of SBSi as a cultural institution has allowed this thesis to produce a wide-ranging account of how SBSi impacted production labour, distribution and representational practices. This broad conceptual scope has, inevitably, generated key limitations regarding the depth of analysis. Hopefully these limitations provide useful points of departure for other research. For instance, while creative management processes implemented by SBSi certainly indicate the advancement of CALD television and filmmaking, there is need of qualitative and quantitative analysis of labour processes demonstrating the scope of these programs relative to the size of the sector. Whether or not SBSi affected lasting change is also in question, particularly in light of the limited opportunities for all local producers, regardless of background, to carve out long-term careers (Screen Australia, “Employment”). This avenue of investigation intersects with a broader gap in knowledge regarding CALD in the film and television sectors, and which is reflected by Screen Australia data detailing developments regarding Indigenous but not CALD representation. The inability to address these issues in this study was dictated by methodological as well as conceptual choices, namely the small sample of interviewees which was predominantly drawn from former employees of SBSi.

Another key area for future research is the comprehensive analysis of SBSi texts. The number of textual analyses possible in this study was necessarily limited by an analysis of the conditions that produced the cycle. So many interesting productions have been overlooked as a consequence; particularly those transnational film projects that counter-memorialise white Australian hegemony via innovative representations of post-national identities, histories and affiliations. Another fruitful area of analysis regards somewhat anachronistic dichotomies between independent-institutional, independent-commercial modes of representation. To demonstrate how SBSi helped to affect a convergence between these different spheres this thesis has focused its textual analysis on programs that reflect the values and traditions historically associated with independent filmmaking. These include low budget aesthetics, experimentation and counter-cultural politics, elements that have come to signify independence from mainstream commercial and institutional modes of production. The institutional focus of the study has produced a nationally bounded analysis leaving to one side an examination of popular genres and formats, which have emerged from within transnational modes of production and distribution. These types of programs represent a small but significant contingent of the SBSi catalogue, and includes new format franchises such as *Nerds FC*, *Who Do You Think You Are?* and *Top Gear Australia*, co-productions with international broadcasters including *QUADS!*, *The Colony* and *Hula Girls*, and locally produced factual entertainment and reality programs such as *Desperately Seeking Sheila*, *The Nest*, and *Food Safari*. These types of programs indicate a different, though equally important, set of narrative representations that have been steered by a creative industries paradigm. The significance also extends to SBS insofar as it indicates a convergence with global trends, and a significant movement away from SBS's legacy pioneering new post-national modes of broadcasting.

A final consideration is the question of how new distribution and exhibition practices have re-territorialised SBS within the domestic and global mediascape. This study has suggested that processes of re-territorialisation were inculcated with the institution of SBSi, which developed industry partnerships to connect SBS content to audiences via film festival, theatrical platforms as well as international broadcast. Since the demise of SBSi, technological developments

have resulted in a proliferation of platforms through which SBS now disseminates content. For instance, the network now delivers content via two subscription channels, via the internet (which includes a website that has become the authoritative Australian source for all things soccer), DVD, sales to international broadcasters, and via four digital free-to-air channels, including the Indigenous channel NITV launched on 12 December 2012, and the newly revamped SBS 2 (1 April 2013), targeting the 16-39 year old demographic (traditionally overlooked within the SBS schedule). This suggests that SBS can no longer be understood as occupying the periphery of a national broadcasting. As such, distribution and exhibition represents another important area of investigation, which has significant implications for understandings of SBS as small, but important, agent within broader network of film, television and media organisations.

The study of SBSi as a cultural institution has allowed this thesis to contribute a solid case study of the techniques of neo-liberal governmentality, and how these have transformed creative labour practices in the Australian screen industry. Moreover, the adoption of a creative labour approach to examine these techniques represents an important contribution to the field insofar as it points to new ways of studying Australian film and television, and which productively accounts for the convergence of these two spheres within Australia's "creative economy." A significant contribution is the use of creative labour to demonstrate how a governmental logic can be manipulated and tweaked to produce novel opportunities for dissent, resistance and for innovation. This thesis has also made an original contribution to the field in the form of interviews and the SBSi database, which have helped to preserve the memory of the institution, and provides a useful point of departure for future cultural histories. SBSi was a remarkable institution that continues to occupy a special place in the memory of innumerable film and television professionals. This study has endeavoured to honour that memory, and demonstrate the enduring legacy of the institution and how it has shaped contemporary screen practices.

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- My Mother, My Son*. Dir. Erica Glynn, 2000. Film.
- Mysterious Geographic Explorations of Jasper Morello, The*. (Anthony Lucas, 2004).
- Nerds FC*. Executive Prod. Asif Zubairy, 2006. Television.
- Nest, The*. Dir. Fabio Basone, Max Bourke, Chester Dent, Madeline Hetheron and Harvey Oliver, 2008. Television.
- Night*. Dir. Lawrence Johnston, 2007. Film.
- Noise*. Dir. Matt Saville, 2007. Film.
- Norman Loves Rose*. Dir. Henri Safran, 1983. Film.
- Not a Nice Job for a Jewish Girl*. Dir. Jacquelynne Willcox, 1994. Film.
- No Way to Forget*. Dir. Richard Frankland, 1996. Film.
- Once a Queen*. Dir. Lawrence Johnston, 2005. Film.
- Only the Brave*. Dir. Ana Kokkinos, 1999. Film.
- Operation Babylift*. Dir. Dai Le, 2005. Film.
- Original Mermaid, The*. Dir. Michael Cordell, 2002. Film.
- Oscar and Lucinda*. Dir. Gillian Armstrong, 1997. Film.
- Our Brother James*. Dir. Jessica Douglas-Henry, 2001. Film.
- Palace of Dreams*. Dir. David Goldie, Denny Lawrence, Geoffrey Nottage, Riccardo Pellizzeri, and Graham Thorburn, 1985. Television.

- Paper Dolls: Australian Pinups of World War II.* Dir. Angela Buckingham, 2008. Film.
- Passionately Single.* Dir. Rivka Hartman, 1987. Film.
- Payback.* Dir. Warwick Thornton, 1996. Film.
- Penicillin: The Magic Bullet.* Dir. Gordon Glenn, 2006. Film.
- Piano, The.* Dir. Jane Campion, 1993. Film.
- Pioneers of Love.* Dir. Julie Nimmo, 2005. Film.
- Pizza.* Created by Paul Fenech. Dir. Paul Fenech, 2000-2007. Television.
- President Versus David Hicks, The.* Dir. Curtis Levy and Bentley Dean, 2005. Film.
- Prodigal Son, The.* Dir. Tony Radevski, 2006. Film.
- QUADS!* Created by John Callahan. Dir. Chris LaBonte and Steve French, 2000, 2002. Television.
- Quiet Room, The.* Dir. Rolf de Heer, 1996. Film.
- Radiance.* Dir. Rachel Perkins, 1998. Film.
- Raid, The.* Dir. Barbara Anna Chobocky, 1994. Film.
- Rainbow Bird and Monster Man.* Dir. Dennis K. Smith, 2002. Film.
- RAN: Remote Area Nurse.* Dir. David Caesar and Catriona McKenzie, 2006. Television.
- Raskols.* Dir. Sally Browning and Anou Borrey, 1995. Film.
- Road.* Dir. Catriona McKenzie, 2000. Film.
- RockWiz,* 2005-2009. Television.
- Roy Hollsdotter Live.* Dir. Matt Saville, 2004. Film.
- Sadness.* Dir. Tony Ayres, 1999. Film.
- Safe House, The.* Dir. Lee Whitmore, 2006. Film.
- Saved.* Dir. Tony Ayres, 2009. Television.
- Schindler's List.* Dir. Steven Spielberg, 1993. Film.
- Seeking Asylum.* Dir. Mike Piper, 2002. Film.
- Sexing the Label.* Dir. Anna Broinowski, 1996. Film.
- Shadow Play.* Dir. Chris Hilton, 2001. Film.
- Short Stories.* Dir. Matthew Duffy, Stuart McCarney, 2005. Television.
- Since the Company Came.* Dir. Russell Hawkins, 2000. Film.
- Somersault.* Dir. Cate Shortland, 2004. Film.
- SOS: Save Our Sons.* Dir. Rebecca McLean, 1996. Film.
- South Park.* Created by Trey Parker and Matt Stone, 1997-present. Television.
- Speak Quiet, Speak Strong.* Dir. Cathy Eatock, 1995. Film.
- Still Breathing.* Dir. Charlotte Roseby, 2002. Film.
- Stolen Generations.* Dir. Darlene Johnson, 2000. Film.
- Stone Bros.* Dir. Richard Frankland, 2008. Film.
- Story of the Kelly Gang, The.* Dir. Charles Tait, 1906. Film.

- Strictly Ballroom*. Dir. Baz Luhrmann, 1992. Film.
- Strike Me Lucky*. Dir. Ken G. Hall, 1933. Film.
- Sunshine*. Dir. István Szabó's 2000. Film.
- Swift and Shift Couriers*. Created by Paul Fenech. Dir. Paul Fenech, 2008, 2011. Television.
- Sydney at War: The Untold Story*. Dir. Claude Gonzalez, 2004. Film.
- Tales from a Suitcase: Stories from the Migrant Experience 1946-1952*. Series Dir. Andrea Dal Bosco, 1996. Television.
- Tales from a Suitcase II: Stories from the Migrant Experience 1949-1959*. Series Dir. Andrea Dal Bosco, 2000. Television.
- Tales from a Suitcase III: The Afghan Experience*. Series Dir. Andrea Dal Bosco, 2002. Television.
- Tasty Bust Reunion, The*. Dir. Stephen MacLean, 2004. Film.
- Tears*. Dir. Ivan Sen, 1998. Film.
- Ten Canoes*. Dir. Rolf de Heer and Peter Djigirr, 2006. Film.
- They're a Weird Mob*. Dir. Michael Powell, 1966. Film.
- Top Gear Australia*. 2008. Television.
- Tracker, The*. Dir. Rolf de Heer, 2002. Film.
- Trafficked*. Dir. Luigi Acquisto, 2005. Film.
- Travelling Light*. Dir. Kathryn Millard, 2003. Film.
- Trespass: Yvonne Margarula's Fight For Country*. Dir. David Vadiveloo, 2003. Film.
- Two Bob Mermaid*. Dir. Darlene Johnson, 1996. Film
- Uncle*. Dir. Adam Elliot, 1996. Film.
- Unfolding Florence*. Dir. Gillian Armstrong, 2006. Film.
- Under the Skin*. Series Prod. Franco di Chiera. Dir. Belinda Chayko, Pip Karmel and Monica Pellizari, 1993. Television.
- Untold Desires*. Dir. Sarah Stephens, 1994. Film.
- Vasili's Garden*. Perf. Vasili Kanidiadis, 2009. Television.
- Vietnam Minefield*. Dir. Richard Walker, 2005. Film.
- Vietnam Symphony*. Dir. Tom Zubrycki, 2005. Film.
- Walking on Water*. Dir. Tony Ayres, 2002. Film.
- Welcome to my Deaf World*. Dir. Helen Gaynor, 2005. Film.
- Wilfred*. Created by Jason Gann and Adam Zwar. Dir. Tony Rodgers, 2007. Television.
- Where the Two Rivers Meet*. Dir. Ken Kelso, 2000. Film.
- Whispering in our Hearts*. Dir. Mitch Torres, 2003. Film.
- Who Do You Think You Are?* Executive Prod. EP: Margie Bryant, Brian Beaton, 2007, 2009. Television.
- Wind*. Dir. Ivan Sen, 1999. Film.
- Winds of Change*. Series Dir. Alan Carter, 1999. Film.

Wog Boy, The. Dir. Aleski Vellis, 2000. Film.

Wrong Side of the Road. Dir. Ned Lander, 1981. Film.

Yellow Fella. Dir. Ivan Sen, 2005. Film.

Yolngu Boy. Dir. Stephen Johnson, 2000. Film.

You Can't Stop the Murders. Dir. Anthony Mir, 2003. Film.

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APPENDIX ONE

QUANTITATIVE DATA

Table 1: Feature Films Produced in Australia 1994/95 to 2006/07

Year	No of Aust Feature Films Prod*	No of SBSi Films Commissioned**	SBSi Percentage of Total Output
1994-1995	15	0	0
1995-1996	23	2	8.7
1996-1997	33	2	6
1997-1998	35	3	8.6
1998-1999	29	4	13.8
1999-2000	27	4	14.8
2000-2001	25	3	12
2001-2002	27	3	11.1
2002-2003	19	1	5.2
2003-2004	22	2	9
2004-2005	29	4	10.3
2005-2006	32	0	0
2006/2007	30	2	6.7
Total	346	30	8.6
13 Year Average	26.6	2.3	8.6

Figure 1

* Figures compiled from *Get the Picture*, Screen Australia accessed 24 September 2011. Screen Australia advises that figures may not be exact due to rounding and are subject to revision due to subsequent updates of data. NB: Productions under creative control, including domestic productions, official co-productions, and other productions including shared creative control.

See, <http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/research/statistics/mpfeatures1970.asp>

**Figures are taken from SBS Reports 1996/97 to 2006/07, which lists all productions commissioned for that financial year. Except for 1994/95 to 1995/96 where data was not reported by SBS, has been obtained from former General Manager Andy Lloyd James (1994-96). I have used data regarding commissioned productions rather than transmitted to maintain due to lag time in television exhibition of feature films.

Table 2: Documentary Films Produced In Australia 1994/95 to 2006/07 (Single and Series)

Year	No of Aust Docos Hours Prod*	No of SBSi Doco Hours Comm**	SBSi Percentage of Total Output
1996/97	267	36	13.4
1997/98	272	71	26.1
1998/99	292	36.5	12.5
1999/2000	364	34.5	9.5
2000/01	280	53	18.9
2001/02	240	58.9	24.5
2002/03	289	33	11.4
2003/04	344	74.5	21.6
2004/05	331	93	28.1
2005/06	285	174	61
2006/07	406	169	41.6
Total	3370	833.4	24.7
11 Year Average	306.36	75.76.36	24.7

* Figures compiled from *Get the Picture*, Screen Australia accessed 24 September 2011. Screen Australia advises that figures may not be exact due to rounding and are subject to revision due to subsequent updates of data. Total documentary hours are represented including that produced by broadcasters and independent filmmakers, and includes series as well as single documentaries.

See, <http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/research/statistics/mpdocosactivity.asp>

**Figures are taken from SBS Reports 1996/97 to 2006/07, which lists all productions commissioned for that financial year. Except for 1994/95 to 1995/96 where data was reported by SBS, has been obtained from former General Manager Andy Lloyd James. I have used data regarding commissioned productions rather than transmitted to maintain due to lag time in television exhibition of feature films.

APPENDIX TWO

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For Directors and Producers

1. The Attraction of SBS Independent (SBSi)

In section one I would like to establish whether or not the process of commissioning content from the independent filmmaking sector enables a democratic public forum, that is, whether or not the process provides space for political debate and citizen participation. I want to examine whether or not the process of commissioning enables filmmakers to produce work that they feel engages with contemporary political issues such as Australian immigration policy, that reflects a personal perspective on such issues, and which meaningfully contributes to multicultural and diverse representation from a grassroots perspective. What kind of filmmaking does SBSi inspire?

- a. Was SBSi the only funding agency to provide you with the opportunity to produce the work in question?
- b. Did you actively decide that you wanted to work with SBSi because they reflected the concerns of your proposed project?
- c. What were the reasons offered SBSi by when they agreed to fund this project? (I.e. On the basis of innovation, of political relevance, strength of the proposal, potential for completion)
- d. Was your film funded as part of any co-operative arrangement between film funding bodies (i.e. pre-sale, accord, co-operative funding)
- e. Did you respond to a call for proposals centred on a particular theme, or did you submit a proposal independently?
- f. Did you conceive of your project as an explicit response to the contemporary political context? (By political I mean government policy and/or social responses to government policy, for example, the Howard Government's response to asylum seekers or "illegal immigrants")
- g. Did your proposal need to be modified to comply with:
 - A particular focus dictated by SBSi?
 - If so, how did this ultimately alter the focus/intent of the work?
 - Do you think the political poignancy of the work was enhanced or negated in any way? If so, how?
- h. Has your involvement with SBSi created further opportunities for you as a filmmaker?
 - Do you feel enabled to produce similarly political works outside of SBSi?
 - Do you believe that the presence of SBSi has influenced the kinds of projects that attract funding? (For example, do you think that the representation of minority groups has increased in Australia, or perhaps, has the presence of SBSi inspired an increased interest in political filmmaking in the independent filmmaking sector)?

2. Exhibition

A significant number of productions commissioned by SBSi also garner theatrical release and/or are screened at national and international film festivals. For content screened at international festivals, or which gain a theatrical release, I want to gain an understanding of the different contexts of exhibition and reception in which the works circulate, how these contexts construct the meanings that become attached to the work. I wish to establish how the filmmaker geographically locates the issues that they address, that is, how they imagine their Australian audience: as defined by the geographical limits of the nation, or, as part of a larger network of global political issues such as migration and war.

- a. When developing your project did you envisage an international audience or did you regard the work as addressing an explicitly national audience?
- b. What do you think are the characteristics of your film that resonate with a global audience (i.e. themes, aesthetics, exemplary national product, medium)?
- c. What are some of the differences in the reception/discussion of your film in an international context and in a national context?
- d. Did the international acclaim for your film alter the way that your film was received and discussed nationally? If so, why do you think this is the case?
- e. How do you think that your film has contributed to national debates/discussions about the topic that you have addressed?

3. Form, Style, Content and Medium

With this section I wish to establish how the filmmaker came to decide on the best ways in which to represent their chosen topic, if some of these decisions had to be compromised, and at which point of the production process these compromises, if any, were made.

- a. Why did you choose to work with this format (i.e. documentary, film, comedy or drama series) to address these particular issues?
 - What does this format offer?
 - Did you change which format you intended to work with at any stage?
 - Was it easier to guarantee funding with this format?
 - Did it allow you to exhibit your work at sites other than SBS-TV?
- b. What factors informed your decisions concerning the form and style of the final film?
 - Describe how your aesthetic and formal decisions reflect the content.
 - What or who are your influences?
 - To what extent and in what ways do you feel that these influences informed your aesthetic and formal decisions?
- c. SBSi primarily commissions content for the SBS-TV schedule. Was television your intended medium for the exhibition of your work?
 - What were some of the benefits of exhibiting your work on television?
 - Would you have preferred a different medium? If so, why?

For Staff and Former Staff of SBSi

1. Relationship of SBSi to SBS-TV

Here I want to establish how the creation of SBSi has reshaped the objectives and purpose of SBS-TV. That is, how has a focus on commissioning locally produced content, as opposed to an almost total reliance on imported content, influenced how

staff at SBS imagine the public broadcaster's purpose and its target audience. (For example, it may entail a shift in thinking its role as facilitating the needs of Diasporic communities to one that promotes a multi-cultural identity for all Australians.)

- a. How has the ability to commission locally produced content through SBSi influenced the way that SBS-TV imagines its pedagogical and cultural role?
- b. Since the 1990s, cultural critics have identified a shift in the definition of cultural diversity employed by SBS, one which has expanded upon an understanding of ethnic, racial and religious diversity to also include gender, sexuality, disability, age, etc. Do you think the ability to commission locally produced content is a major factor in this shift? Why?
- c. What does commissioning locally produced content offer to the community that imported content cannot?
- d. SBSi primarily commissions content for the SBS-TV schedule. What is the process of negotiation between the two departments?
- e. How does this internal relationship determine the criteria for which projects garner funding?

2. Selection

Here I want to establish how the political and pedagogical function of the content itself is perceived from the perspective of SBSi staff. The intention is for this line of questioning to complement the questions asked of the filmmakers. Where the filmmakers are asked what their work offers to political debates in relation to their personal/artistic vision, here I want to see how SBSi staff regards the function of these projects in the context of the role of the organisation.

- a. What are some of the projects (i.e. themed seasons, individual films, documentaries or series) that you have been involved in commissioning, and describe the reasoning behind their selection?
 - Is the range of programming offered to the public a primary concern?
 - Is there an imperative to provide a balanced representation of sensitive issues?
 - Were there certain individual projects that stood out for any particular reason? (For example, the political poignancy of the work, the probability of completion, its aesthetic merit, etc).
 - Is there an imperative to respond to volatile or contemporary political issues such as asylum seekers, and September 11? How does SBSi perceive its role when seeking to contribute to the public debate concerning such issues?
 - Does SBSi perceive its role as contributing to, or perhaps arbitrating the ongoing discourse concerning national identity?
- b. How does staff at SBSi perceive the role of the organisation?
 - For example, is it offering a voice to under-represented members of the community, minority representation, democratising the media, innovation, contributing to debates around contemporary issues?
- c. When you fund a proposal for content addressing issues of race, ethnicity or religion in particular, is there an imperative to approve work that is being produced by members of the community being featured?
- d. Marginalised groups such as Afghani asylum seekers are not in a position to produce their own stories, how do you decide who has the authority to speak about or for them?

- e. Do you regard the primary role of SBSi to offer a voice to under-represented sectors of the community, or as arbiters/mediators of a balanced political debate?
- f. Do the objectives of SBSi shift in response to the political climate of the day?
- g. From 1996-2006, the period of the Liberal federal government, was there a perceived need to respond to the anti-multicultural rhetoric? If so, what decisions and/or actions were taken?
 - For instance, were you involved in any themed seasons whereby content was commissioned to explicitly address these issues?
 - Was there a shift in SBSi's interpretation of the SBS Charter?
 - Was there a perceivable shift in SBSi's definition of the term multiculturalism?
- h. Does SBSi conceive of itself as addressing a lack in the representation of multicultural identity, Australian history and contemporary political issues offered by other Australian media?

3. Accords and Co-operative Funding Arrangements

SBSi was conceived of as a commissioning house that would be able to leverage its allocation of government funding through co-operative arrangements with existing film funding bodies. Therefore it was designed to integrate into an existing industry. This section is designed to establish how SBSi has influenced the Australian film industry as a result of this funding structure, but also, how various international funding arrangements have affected SBS in turn and the ways that SBS interprets its multicultural mandate.

- a. How has the establishment of SBSi influenced the thematic and aesthetic characteristics of the content that is being produced by the independent film and television sector?
- b. How has the establishment of SBSi influenced filmmakers in terms of what format they produce work for (i.e. television, cinema, festival, etc)?
- c. SBSi was established to become a part of a larger network of film funding bodies. How has its insertion into an established industry influenced the kind of content that is funded?
 - For example, do you think that it has influenced an increased concern with multi-cultural representation outside of SBS?
- d. SBSi has a number of international funding partnerships. How do these partnerships alter the parameters of the SBS multicultural mandate? Do you think that the term multiculturalism is now defined in a global rather than a national context?
- e. How do these various international connections alter the interpretation of the SBS Charter?
- f. Are SBS audiences now addressed as part of a global community as opposed to an explicitly national community?
- g. Many of the films produced are released theatrically or at international film festivals before they are screened on SBS-TV. Does this expansion of exhibition and reception entail a decisive shift in the perceived audience? That is, is content now chosen in part, for its ability to address a global audience?

APPENDIX THREE

STAFF TIMELINE

		1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	
Government		Generation 1			Generation 2				
	Federal Government	Keating Labour Government			Howard Liberal Government				
	Minister for Communications and the Arts	Michael Lee			Richard Alston				
SBS	Managing Director	Malcolm Long (to Sept 1997)							
	Head of Television	Sawsan Madina			Peter Cavanagh (From 96/97 financial year to 2000)				
	Scheduling/ Network Programmer	Rodd Webb (Scheduling)		Rodd Webb (Network Programmer)					
	Head of Policy	Robert Stokes	Lois Cleal	Chris Sharp					
SBSi	General Manager	Andy Lloyd James		Tristram Miall Acting GM	Bridget Ikin				
	Business Affairs Manager	Julie Cottrell-Dormer							
	Commissioning Editor: Documentary Melbourne				Claire Jager (from after ALJ left)		John Hughes (end 1998-end 2000)		
	Commissioning Editor: Documentary Sydney	Barbara Mariotti				Courtney Gibson (1998-2000)			
	Commissioning Editor: Drama	David White			Barbara Masel (mid-1996-1999)		Franco di Chiera (Aug 1998-Mar 2000)		

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Generation 3				Generation 4			
d Liberal National Coalition government						Rudd Labour Government	
			Daryl Williams	Helen Coonan		Stephen Conroy	
Nigel Milan				Shaun Brown (2005 to April 2011)			
August 2002)		Shaun Brown		Matt Campbell Director Content: TV and Online			
			Matt Campbell (Network Programmer)	Jane Roscoe			
Julie Eisenberg							
Glenys Rowe				Ned Lander Acting GM Dec 05 to Jul 06; GM to end 2007		Denise Erikson SBS Commissioned Content	
			Teresa-Jame Hanlon				
)		Marie Thomas May 2002-2004					
-2003) Deputy C/E Documentary			Jennifer Crone (March 2004-Sept 2008) Executive				
:003); Acting GM Doco or Drama?							
Ned Lander (Dec 2001-2004 CE Documentary; Senior CE to				Tevor Graham (2005-2008)			
Debbie Lee (1999-end 2007), CE Drama/Comedy							
Miranda Dear (2000-2005), Senior CE Drama							

APPENDIX FOUR

SBSi CONDENSED DATABASE

The following data has been collated from multiple online databases and from SBS Annual Reports. Due to the incomplete records contained within each of these resources, it is impossible to vouchsafe the accuracy of all information contained herein. For instance, in some cases it has been difficult to ascertain if titles, listed as commissioned within the SBS Annual Reports, remained incomplete or were released under a different title. Such titles are listed in this database as having no release date (n.d.). Also, some SBSi commissioned productions may not be listed due to the fact that they did not appear in the SBS Annual Reports. For example, the internationally acclaimed documentary *Exile in Sarajevo* was not listed in the SBS Annual Reports. I have only been able to link this title to SBSi as a result of pre-existing publicity and scholarship, which not all titles enjoy.

ANIMATION

Commissioned 1997/8

Brother. Screenplay by Adam Elliott. Dir. Adam Elliott, 1999.

Commissioned 1999/2000

Bruce Petty Mad Century. n.d.

Commissioned 2000/1

Harvie Krumpet. Screenplay by Adam Elliot. Dir. Adam Elliot, 2003.

Commissioned 2002/3

Mysterious Geographic Explorations of Jasper Morello, The. Screenplay by Mark Shirrefs. Dir. Anthony Lucas, 2004.

Safe House, The. Screenplay by Lee Whitmore. Dir. Lee Whitmore, 2006.

Commissioned 2004/5

One of the Lucky Ones. Dir. Wendy Chandler, 2007.

Commissioned 2005/6

Chainsaw. Dir. Dennis Tupicoff, 2007.

ANIMATED SERIES

Commissioned 1995/6

Bobtales. Dir. Todd Williams, 1997.

Commissioned 1997/8

Animated Tales of the World. Created by Christopher Grace. Prod. Channel 4 Wales, n.d.

Ha!Ha!Ha! n.d.

Swimming Outside the Flags. 2000.

Swimming Outside the Flags. 2000.

Commissioned 1999/2000

Home Movies. 2001.

Leunig. Screenplay by Michael Leunig. Dir. Andrew Horne, David Grusovin and Katey Grusovin, 2001.

QUADS! Created by John Callahan. Dir. Chris LaBonte and Steve French, 2000.

Commissioned 2000/1

Animated Tales of the World II. Created by Christopher Grace. Prod. Channel 4 Wales, 2000.

Urban Eccentrics. Dir. Adam Elliot, n.d.

Commissioned 2001/2

Animation Pilots. n.d.

Commissioned 2002/3

QUADS!, season 2. Created by John Callahan. Dir. Chris LaBonte and Steve French, 2002.

Commissioned 2004/5

AFC/SBSi Interstitials. n.d.

COMEDY SERIES

Commissioned 1995/6

House Gang. Screenplay by Roxxy Bent. Dir. Mandy Smith, 1996.

Commissioned 1996/7

House Gang, season 2. Dir. Phillip Gordon, 1999.

Commissioned 1997/8

Gomorrah Today. n.d.

Commissioned 1999/2000

Death by Horoscope. n.d.

Commissioned 2000/1

Effie, Just Quietly. Dir. Warren Coleman and Shawn Seet, 2001.

John Safran's Music Jamboree. Screenplay by John Safran and Mark O'Toole. Dir. Clayton Jacobson, 2002.

Mary G Show, The. Dir. John Smith, 2001.

Commissioned 2001/2

Mary G Show, season 2. 2001.

Commissioned 2002/3

John Safran vs. God. Screenplay by John Safran and Mark O'Toole. Dir. Craig Melville, 2004.

Commissioned 2003/4

Fat Tuesday. n.d.

Commissioned 2004/5

Angriest Video Store Clerk, The. Pilot. n.d.

Bogan Pride. Screenplay by Rebel Wilson. Dir. Peter Templeman, 2008.

Wilfred. Screenplay by Jason Gann and Adam Zwar. Dir. Tony Rodgers, 2007.

Commissioned 2005/6

In Siberia Tonight, season 2. Perf. Steve Abbott, n.d.

Pizza, season 5. Screenplay by Paul Fenech. Dir. Paul Fenech, 2007.

Pizza Da Vinci Cup. Screenplay by Paul Fenech. Dir. Paul Fenech, 2006.

Pizza World Record. Screenplay by Paul Fenech. Dir. Paul Fenech, 2006.

Swift and Shift Couriers. Screenplay by Paul Fenech. Dir. Paul Fenech, 2008.

Under the Grandstand. Perf. Steve Abbott. n.d.

Commissioned 2006/7

Newstopia. Pilot. Perf. Shaun Micallef. n.d.

Speech Impediment. Perf. John Safran. n.d.

Commissioned 2007/8

Bogan Hunter. n.d.

Newstopia, season 1. Screenplay by Matt Cameron, Richard Marsland, Tony Martin, Gary MacCaffrie, Shaun Micallef, Tony Moclair, Dave O'Neil and Michael Ward. Dir. Jon Olb, Bradley J. Howard, Kevin Carlin and Karen Johnson, 2007.

Newstopia, season 2. Screenplay by Stephen Hall, Richard Marsland, Gary MacCaffrie, Shaun Micallef, Tony Moclair, Matt Parkinson, Brett Snelgrove and Michael Ward. Dir. Jon Olb, Bradley J. Howard, Kevin Carlin and Karen Johnson, 2008.

DOCUMENTARY

Commissioned 1994/5

Boomtown. n.d.

Brainstorm. Dir. Lina Safro, 1995.

Champagne Charlie. n.d.

Divorce. n.d.

- Empty Arms, Broken Hearts*. Screenplay by Iain Gillespie. Dir. Iain Gillespie, 1994.
- Going Tribal*. Dir. Michael Balson, 1995.
- Hell Bento! Uncovering the Japanese Underground*. Screenplay by Anna Broinowski and Adam Broinowski. Dir. Andrew Sully, 1995.
- Isabellas: The Long March, The*. Screenplay by Sally Ingleton. Dir. Sally Ingleton, 1995.
- Life Chances*. Screenplay by Gregory Miller and Georgia Wallace-Crabbe. Dir. Gregory Miller and Georgia Wallace-Crabbe, n.d.
- Metals: Anatomy of a Union, The*. Screenplay by Peter Flynn and Tony Wickert. Dir. Peter Flynn, 1995.
- Mission Impossible*. n.d.
- My Own Flesh and Blood: Children's Casualty*. Screenplay by Jessica Douglas-Henry and Mary Ellen Mullane. Dir. Jessica Douglas-Henry, 1994.
- Not a Job for a Jewish Girl: Woman Rabi*. Screenplay by Jacquelynne Willcox. Dir. Jacquelynne Willcox, 1994.
- Raid, The*. Screenplay by Barbara Anna Chobocky and Jeffrey Bruer. Dir. Barbara Anna Chobocky, 1994.
- Raskols*. Screenplay by Sally Browning, Anou Borrey and Mark Worth. Dir. Sally Browning, Anou Borrey and Mark Worth, 1995.
- Speak Quiet Speak Strong*. Screenplay by Cathy Eatock. Dir. Cathy Eatock, 1995.
- Untold Desires*. Screenplay by Sarah Stephens. Dir. Sarah Stephens, 1994.

Commissioned 1995/6

- Alicia*. Screenplay by Philippe Charluet and Jane Searle. Dir. Philippe Charluet, 1996.
- Chinchilla Dry*. Dir. Andrew Wiseman and Richard Keddie, 1996.
- Cracks in the Mask*. Screenplay by Frances Calvert. Dir. Frances Calvert, 1997.
- Demons at Drivetime*. Dir. Kerry Brewster, 1995.
- Dhuway*. Dir. Lew Griffiths, 1996.
- Exile in Sarajevo*. Screenplay by Tahir Cambis and Alma Sahbaz. Dir. Tahir Cambis and Alma Sahbaz, 1997.
- Flying Nun*. Screenplay by Jeanne Ryckmans. Dir. Jeanne Ryckmans, 1995.
- Germany a Reluctant Nation*. Screenplay by Belinda Hawkins. Dir. Belinda Hawkins, 1996.
- In a Small Valley*. Screenplay by Dennis K. Smith. Dir. Dennis K. Smith, 1996.
- Journey of Origin*. Dir. Richard Dennison, 1996.
- Last True Action Hero*. Dir. Karen Borger, n.d.
- Dance of Nature*. Dir. Don Featherstone, 1996.
- Musica Viva*. Screenplay by Simon Target. Dir. Simon Target, 1995.
- Our Children Didn't Come Home*. n.d.
- Red Light in Full Light*. Dir. Samia Mikhail, 1996.
- Saltwater Dreaming*. n.d.

Taking Pictures. Screenplay by Les McLaren and Annie Stiven, 1996.

The Hillmen: A Soccer Fable. Screenplay by Steve Thomas. Dir. Steve Thomas, 1996.

The Last God King. Screenplay by James Gerrand. Dir. James Gerrand, 1996.

The Young One. Dir. Maggie Bryant, 1995.

Tracker, n.d.

Trial by Media. n.d.

You Might as Well Live. Screenplay by Con Anemogiannis. Dir. Con Anemogiannis, 1995.

Commissioned 1996/7

A Breath. Screenplay by Christopher Tuckfield. Dir. Christopher Tuckfield, 1998.

A Dying Shame. Screenplay by Paul Roy. Dir. Paul Roy, 1997.

A Shit of a Job. Screenplay by Daryl Sparkles. Dir. Daryl Sparkles, 1999.

After Mabo. Screenplay by John Hughes. Dir. John Hughes, 1997.

Amazon: The Invisible People. Screenplay by Michael Balson. Dir. Dean Jeffreys. Narration by Michael Balson, 1997.

Babes on Boards (4 on the Floor). Dir. Adrian Holmes, 1997.

Beating the Drum. Screenplay by Fiona Cochrane and Louise Hubbard. Dir. Fiona Cochrane, 1998.

Bougainville – Our Island, Our Fight. Wayne Coles-Janess. Dir. Wayne Coles-Janess, 1997.

Buffalo Legends. Screenplay by Des Kootji and Paul Roberts. Dir. Des Kootji and Paul Roberts, 1997.

Calling Young Hong Kong. Screenplay by Rachel Potter and Robert Wilkins. Dir. Rachel Potter and Robert Wilkins, 1997.

Colour Bars. Screenplay by Mahmoud Yekta. Dir. Mahmoud Yekta, 1997.

Confessions of a Debutante. n.d.

Copyrites. Screenplay by Cathy Eatock and Kim Mordaunt. Dir. Cathy Eatock and Kim Mordaunt, 1997.

Cracks in the Mask. Screenplay by Frances Calvert. Dir. Frances Calvert, 1997.

Errands of Mercy. Screenplay by Steve Thomas. Dir. Steve Thomas, 1998.

Festivals (4 on the Floor). Screenplay by Matthew Rooke and Caroline Waters. Dir. Matthew Rooke and Caroline Waters, 1997.

Golden Pig. Dir. Joel Petterson, 1997.

Hear No Evil: Obsession and Fantasy on the Underside of Suburbia (4 on the Floor). Screenplay by Kate Hampel. Dir. Kate Hampel, 1997.

In My Room. Dir. Melissa Juhanson, 1998.

Jack Sue. Screenplay by Terry Carlyon and Robyn Miller. Dir. Terry Carlyon, 1999.

James' Story. Dir. Mark Elliot, 1997.

- Last of the Nomads*. Screenplay by Matthew Kelley and Gary Gower. Dir. Matthew Kelley, 1997.
- Mao's New Suit*. Screenplay by Sally Ingleton. Dir. Sally Ingleton, 1997.
- Mohammed Ali's Happy Day Feast*. Screenplay by Nicky Tyndale-Biscoe. Dir. Nicky Tyndale-Biscoe, 1998.
- Music and Murder*. Screenplay by Michael Cordell. Dir. Michael Cordell, 2002.
- Nauru*. n.d.
- Nicki*. Dir. Dr Riju Ramrakha, n.d.
- No Milk, No Honey*. Screenplay by Franco di Chiera. Dir. Franco di Chiera, 1997.
- Our Park*. Screenplay by Gillian Leahy and Erika Addis. Dir. Gillian Leahy, 1998.
- Paradise Bent: The Third Sex*. Dir. Heather Croall, 1999.
- Rites of Passage*. Screenplay by Richard Keddie and Andrew Wiseman. dir. Richard Keddie, 1997.
- S.O.S. Save Our Sons*. Dir. Rebecca McLean, 1996.
- Secret Fear*. Screenplay by Sarah Barton. Dir. Sarah Barton, 1997.
- Sexing the Label: Love and Gender in a Queer World*. Screenplay by Anna Broinowski. Dir. Anna Broinowski, 1996.
- So Simple, So Hard*. Screenplay by Philippe Charluet and Jane Searle. Dir. Philippe Charluet, 1997.
- They Came, They Saw, They Concreted*. Screenplay by Andres Del Boscoe. Dir. Andres Del Boscoe, 2002.
- Wandering Acrobats of Wuqiao*. n.d.
- Was That Really Me?* Screenplay by Edwin Hill and Tracey Callender, 1997.
- Wild Girls and Hard Boiled Heroines*. n.d.

Commissioned 1997/8

- A Calcutta Christmas*. Screenplay by Maree Delofski. Dir. Maree Delofski, 1998.
- Astonishing Ashtons, The*. Screenplay by Lisa Jane Wallace. Dir. Lisa Jane Wallace, 1998.
- Bidding Game, The*. Screenplay by Mandy Salomon, 1997.
- Diplomat, The*. Screenplay by Tom Zubrycki and Wilson da Silva. Dir. Tom Zubrycki, 2000.
- Canvassing the Country*. n.d.
- Choice Funerals*. Screenplay by Jennifer Gheradi. Dir. Jennifer Gheradi, 1999.
- Chrissie*. n.d.
- Dancing on the Grave*. n.d.
- Emily's Eyes*. Screenplay by Jessica Douglas-Henry. Dir. Jessica Douglas-Henry, 1998.
- EPI*. Dir. Gabrielle Jones and Randall Wood, n.d.
- Fat Chance*. n.d.
- Fish*. Screenplay by Stephen Page. Dir. Stephen Page, 1998.

- Gori Girl*. n.d.
- Grandfathers and Revolutions*. Screenplay by Peter Hegedus. Dir. Peter Hegedus, 1999.
- Growing Wild*. Screenplay by Renee Webster. Dir. Renee Webster, 1999.
- Hephzibah*. Dir. Curtis Levy, 1998.
- Here Comes the Judge*. Screenplay by Celia Tait and Alan Carter. Dir. Celia Tait, 1998.
- I Cover the Waterfront*. n.d.
- Idris and Beauty*. n.d.
- Island Style*. Screenplay by Carla Drago and Maud Page. Dir. Carla Drago, 1998.
- Levantes*. Screenplay Lisa Horler and Fionn Skiotis. Dir. Lisa Horler and Fionn Skiotis, 1997.
- Maiden Over*. Screenplay by Els Van Poppel and Judith Hewitson, 1999.
- Moana*. n.d.
- My One Legged Dream Lover*. Screenplay by Kath Duncan. Dir. Penny Fowler-Smith and Christine Olsen, 1999.
- Omelette*. Dir. Christina Heristanidis, n.d.
- Original Shtick*. Dir. Maciej Wszlaki, 1999.
- Punitive Damage*. Dir. Annie Goldson, 1999.
- Reunion (AFC Guerilla Doc)*. Screenplay by Lisa Wang. Dir. Lisa Wang, 1998.
- River of Dreams*. Screenplay by John Hughes. Dir. John Hughes, 1999.
- Servant of the Ancestors*. Screenplay by Malia Nunn. Dir. Malia Nunn, 1998.
- Somewhere Between Light and Reflection*. Screenplay by Harriet McKern. Dir. Harriet McKern, 1998.
- Stolen Generations (Unfinished Business)*. Screenplay by Darlene Johnson. Dir. Darlene Johnson, 2000.
- Strangers of the Same Blood*. n.d.
- Tadron*. n.d.
- Temple on the Hill*. Screenplay by Kay Rasool. Dir. Kay Rasool, 1997.
- Toxic Queen*. Dir. Fiona Cunningham Reid, 1998.
- Visions of Yankilla*. Screenplay by Rosie Jones. Dir. Rosie Jones, n.d.

Commissioned 1998/9

- Buried Country*. Screenplay by Andy Nehl and Clinton Walker. Dir. Andy Nehl, 2000.
- Business Behind Bars*. Screenplay by Catherine Scott and Alison Lyssa. Dir. Catherine Scott, 2000.
- Chasing Buddha*. Dir. Amiel Courtin-Wilson, 2000.
- Cry from the Heart (Unfinished Business)*. Screenplay by Jeni Kendall and Tracie Walsh. Dir. Jeni Kendall, 2000.
- Dream Believers*. Screenplay by Laura Zusters. Dir. Laura Zusters, 1999.

- Fauves: Fifteen Minutes to Rock, The.* n.d.
- Growing Old Disgracefully.* Dir. Dominic Bourke, 1999.
- Habits of New Norcia* (Unfinished Business). Screenplay by Harry Taylor. Dir. Frank Rijavec, 2000.
- Haweeney's Veil.* n.d.
- Heather Rose Goes to Cannes.* Dir. Christopher Corin, 1998.
- Land of the Little Kings* (Unfinished Business). Screenplay by Des Kootji Raymond. Dir. Des Kootji Raymond, 2000.
- Least Said, Soonest Mended.* Screenplay by Steve Thomas. Dir. Steve Thomas, 1999.
- Orientations: Christopher Doyle.* Screenplay by Rick Farquharson and Karena Slaninka. Dir. Rick Farquharson, 2000.
- Out Of Our Minds.* Screenplay by David Carlin. Dir. David Carlin, 2000.
- Producers, The.* n.d.
- Sadness.* Dir. Tony Ayres. Perf. William Yang, 1999.
- Since the Company Came.* Screenplay by Russell Hawkins. Dir. Russell Hawkins, 2000.
- Siren's Song, The.* n.d.
- Surfing the Healing Wave.* Dir. Huey Benjamin and Tim Burns, 1999.
- Taking Charge of Cabramatta.* Dir. Dai Le, 1999.
- Ultimate Sin, The.* n.d.
- Uncle Chatzkel.* Screenplay by Rod Freedman. Dir. Rod Freedman, 1999.
- Walking Through a Minefield.* Screenplay by Cathy Henkel. Dir. Cathy Henkel, 1999.
- Whiteys Like Us.* Dir. Rachel Landers, 1999.

Commissioned 1999/2000

- Actor and the President, The.* n.d.
- Adaminaby 2630: Our Drowned Town* (Australia By Numbers). Screenplay by Jeannine Baker. Dir. Jeannine Baker, 2001.
- Always a Visitor* (Hybrid Life). Dir. Nevin Seyit, 2001.
- Autism: A Stranger in the Family.* Screenplay by Sally Browning. Dir. Sally Browning, 2001.
- Birth Rites.* Screenplay by Linda Rawlings and Jennifer Gheradi. Dir. Jennifer Gheradi, 2002.
- Boulia 4829* (Australia By Numbers). Screenplay by Stephen Irwin. Dir. Jason Webb.
- Brides of Khan* (Hybrid Life). Dir. Safina Uberoi, 2001.
- CBD 2000* (Australia By Numbers 2). Dir. Luke Carter, 2000.
- Central Australia* (Australia By Numbers). Dir. Kate Gillick and Harold Furber, 2000.
- Cosenza Vecchia* (Hybrid Life). 2001.
- Dear Bert* (Hybrid Life). Screenplay by Christina Heristanidis. Dir. Christina Heristanidis, 2001.

- Dinosaur Dealers*. n.d.
- Fond Memories of Cuba*. Screenplay by David Bradbury. Dir. David Bradbury, 2002.
- From Here to Ithica* (Hybrid Life). Screenplay by Lisa Horler. Dir. Fionn Skiotis, 2000.
- From Korea With Love*. Screenplay by Justine Flynn. Dir. Jennifer Cummins, 2002.
- Gampa 6443 to 5690* (Australia By Numbers). n.d.
- Gepps Cross 5094* (Australia By Numbers). Dir. Amy Gebhardt, 2000.
- Holly Rollers*. Screenplay by Rosie Jones and Paul Davies. Dir. Rosie Jones, 2000.
- Islands* (Hybrid Life). Dir. Vincent Heimann and Amiel Courtin-Wilson, 2001.
- King of the Market*. n.d.
- Last Pechenuik, The* (Hybrid Life). Dir. Ness Alexandra, 2001.
- Minymaku Way, There's Only One Women's Council*. Dir. Erica Glynn, 2000.
- Mr Strehlow's Films*. Screenplay by Hart Cohen. Dir. Hart Cohen, 2001.
- Operation Feathergrinder 6365* (Australia By Numbers). Screenplay by Melanie Byers. Dir. Melanie Byers, 2000.
- Painting Country*. Screenplay by Sally Ingleton. Dir. Sally Ingleton, 2000.
- Parra* (Hybrid Life). Dir. David Pledger, 2001.
- Paying for the Past*. Screenplay by Nicola Woolmington, Penny Robins and James Kirby. Dir. Nicola Woolmington, 2000.
- Pitch n' Punt*. n.d.
- Poles Apart*. Screenplay by Judy Rymer and Robert Dein. Dir. Judy Reimer, 2001.
- Prahan 3181: Swimming in the Backyard* (Australia By Numbers 2). Dir. Polly Watkins, 2002.
- Robert Fortune, The Tea Thief*. Dir. Diane Perelsztejn, 2001.
- Saltwater Bluesman* (Everyday Brave). Screenplay by Mitch Torres. Dir. Mitch Torres, 2002.
- Schtick Happens*. Dir. Maciek Wszelaki, 2002.
- Secret Safari*. Dir. Tom Zubrycki, 2001.
- Shaman's of the Amazon*. Dir. Dean Jeffrey, n.d.
- Starting From Zero*. Screenplay by Amanda King, Fabio Cavadini, Alison Lyssa and Dai Le. Dir. Amanda King, Fabio Cavadini, 2001.
- Sydney 2000: The Foundation* (Australia By Numbers 2). Dir. Troy J. Russell, 2002.
- Two Roads to Helidon 4344* (Australia By Numbers). Screenplay by Anthony Mullins and Kris Kneen. Dir. Anthony Mullins and Kris Kneen, 2000.
- Yuletide 3078* (Australia By Numbers). Karli Lukas, 2000.
- Yvonne Kenny: An Australian Diva*. Screenplay by Barbara A. Chobocky and Jeffrey Bruer. Dir. Barbara A Chobocky, 2001.

Commissioned 2000/1

Beach Balls. n.d.

- Beyond the Royal Veil*. Screenplay by Catherine Marciniak and Sarina Singh. Dir. Catherine Marciniak and Sarina Singh, 2003.
- Black Chicks Talking*. Screenplay Leah Purcell and Brendan Fletcher. Dir. Leah Purcell and Brendan Fletcher, 2002.
- Blue Movies*. n.d.
- Boggo Road 4102 (Australia By Numbers 2)*. Screenplay by Stephen Irwin. Dir. Stephen Irwin, 2001.
- Bougainville: Breaking Bows and Arrows*. Screenplay by Liz Thompson and Ellenor Cox. Dir. Liz Thompson, 2002.
- Children of the Crocodile*. Screenplay by Marsha Emerman. Dir. Marsha Emerman, 2001.
- Chinese Takeaway*. Screenplay Anna Yen. Dir. Mitzi Goldman, 2002.
- Chunky Move: Just Add Water (My Way)*. Dir. Cordelia Beresford, 2002.
- Country Inside, The*. n.d.
- Disturbing Dusts*. Screenplay by Tosca Looby. Dir. Tosca Looby, 2002.
- Doing Dimboola (Australian By Numbers 3)*. Dir. Sean Cousins, 2001.
- Dr Fruitloop Goes to East Timor*. n.d.
- Echo Land*. n.d.
- Football Farm*. Dir. Steve Westh, 2002.
- For Who I Am: Bonita Mabon (Everyday Brave)*. Screenplay by Danielle Maclean. Dir. Danielle Maclean, 2002.
- Jaimie Leonarder and the Sounds of Seduction*. n.d.
- Jetja Nai Medical Mob (Everyday Brave)*. Screenplay by Catriona McKenzie. Dir. Catriona McKenzie, 2002.
- John Callahan: We Won't Get Far On Foot*. Dir. Chris Labonte and Steve French, 2003.
- Kabbarli*. Screenplay by Andrew G. Taylor. Dir. Andrew G. Taylor, 2002.
- King of Belle-lle*. Screenplay by Albie Thoms. Dir. Albie Thoms, 2001.
- Kumarangk 5214 (Australia By Numbers)*. Screenplay by Jessica Summerton. Dir. Jessica Summerton, 2001.
- La Balsa*. n.d.
- Leaping Off the Edge*. Dir. Pat Fiske and Nicolette Freeman, 2001.
- Making Venus*. Screenplay by Gary Doust. Dir. Gary Doust, 2002.
- Media Nomads: The Thaiday Brothers (Everyday Brave)*. Screenplay by Donna Ives. Dir. Donna Ives, 2002.
- Mistake Creek (Everyday Brave)*. Screenplay by Mitch Torres. Dir. Allan Collins, 2002.
- Moses Family, The*. n.d.
- Nannup 6275 (Australia By Numbers 2)*. n.d.
- Our Bother James*. Screenplay by Jessica Douglas-Henry. Dir. Jessica Douglas-Henry, 2001.

- Rockhampton 4700* (Australia By Numbers 2). Screenplay by Carita Farrer. Dir. Carita Farrer, 2001.
- Secret Side of Me, The* (My Way). Screenplay by Kim Farrant and Kate Reidl. Dir. Kim Farrant, 2002.
- Shadow Play: Indonesia's Years of Living Dangerously*. Screenplay by Chris Hilton. Dir. Chris Hilton, 2001.
- Sixty Thousand Barrels*. Screenplay by Paul Brown. Dir. Jan Castle, 2003.
- Soccer Lady, The* (My Way). Screenplay by Donna Ives. dir. Donna Ives, 2001.
- South Hobart 7004* (Australia By Numbers 2). n.d.
- Still Breathing* (My Way). Screenplay by Charlotte Roseby. Dir. Charlotte Roseby, 2002.
- Stranger In My Skin* (Everyday Brave). Screenplay by Darlene Johnson. Dir. Darlene Johnson, 2002.
- Taringa 4068: Our Place, Our Time* (Australia By Numbers 3). Dir. Dennis Tupicoff, 2002.
- Troubled Waters*. Screenplay by Ruth Balint. Dir. Ruth Balint, 2001.
- Two Thirds Sky*. Screenplay by Sean O'Brien. Dir. Sean O'Brien, 2002.
- Unholy Orders*. Screenplay by Geraldine Gandolfo. Dir. Geraldine Gandolfo, 2003.
- Vietnam Symphony*. Screenplay by Tom Zubrycki. Dir. Tom Zubrycki, 2005.
- Vis-à-vis: Techno Tribal*. Screenplay by Nick Torrens, Steven Lawrence and Phil Lucas. Dir. Nick Torrens, Steven Lawrence and Phil Lucas, 2003.
- Welcome to the Waks Family*. Screenplay by Barbara Chobocky and Jeff Bruer. Dir. Barbara Chobocky, 2003.
- Whispering In Our Hearts*. Dir. Mitch Torrens, 2003.
- Yamaji Man: Walking In Two Worlds*. Dir. Rick Randall, 2002.

Commissioned 2001/2

- Becoming Julia*. Screenplay by Ruth Cullen. Dir. Ruth Cullen, 2003.
- Betelnut Bisnis*. Screenplay by Chris Owen. Dir. Chris Owen, 2004.
- Bitter Harvest*. Screenplay by Ashley Smith, Peter George, Chris Hilton and Ian Walker. Dir. Ashley Smith, 2002.
- Brotherhood*. Dir. Terry Carlyon, 2002.
- Cave in the Snow*. Screenplay by Liz Thompson. Dir. Liz Thompson, 2002.
- Death the Final Mystery*. n.d.
- Demon Fault*. Screenplay by Elizabeth Tadic and Mem River. Dir. Elizabeth Tadic, 2003.
- Desperate Man Blues* (My Way). Dir. Edward Gillan, 2004.
- Dreams of Taboo*. n.d.
- Fahimeh's Story*. Screenplay by Faramarz K-Rahber. Dir. Faramarz K-Rahber, 2004.
- Gough Whitlam: In His Own Words*. Screenplay by John Faulkner. Dir. Robert Frances, 2001.

- In Limbo*. Screenplay by Dai Le. Dir. Dai Le, 2002.
- Indonesia: Art Activism and Rock n' Roll*. Dir. Charlie Hill-Smith, 2002.
- Inheritance: A Fisherman's Story*. Screenplay by Peter Hegedus. Dir. Peter Hegedus, 2003.
- Jane Elliot: The Australian Eye*. Dir. Phillip Cullen, 2002.
- Labour of Love*. n.d.
- Long Shadows: Stories From a Jewish Home*. Dir. Kate Hampel, 2002.
- Love Bites*. n.d.
- Madam Mary*. n.d.
- Me!Me!Me! and ADHD*. Screenplay by Shelley Matulick. Dir. Shelley Matulick, 2002.
- Memory Passed, the March of the Living*. n.d.
- Much Depends on Dinner*. n.d.
- Musical Renegades*. Dir. Tim Slade, 2003.
- Original Mermaid, The*. Screenplay by Michael Cordell. Dir. Michael Cordell and Ana Kokkinos, 2002.
- Painting With Light in a Dark World*. Dir. Sascha Ettinger-Epstein, 2002.
- Poker Kings*. 2004.
- Rainbow Bird and Monster Man*. Screenplay by Dennis K. Smith. Dir. Dennis K. Smith, 2002.
- Riddle of the Bradshaws, The*. Dir. Paul Roy, 2003.
- Seeking Asylum*. Screenplay by Mike Piper, Andrew Ellis and George Pavlou. Dir. Mike Piper, 2002.
- Slow Food Revolution*. Screenplay by Gabriella Pignatelli. Dir. Carlo Buralli, 2003.
- Trespass: Yvonne Margarula's Fight for Country (My Way)*. Screenplay by David Vadiveloo. Dir. David Vadiveloo, 2003.
- What If Man, The*. Screenplay by Mark Atkin. Dir. Mark Atkin, 2002.
- Who's Killing the Coral?* n.d.
- Yum Cha Cha*. Screenplay by Boyd Bitton. Dir. Boyd Bitton, 2002.

Commissioned 2002/3

- A Girl, A Horse, A Dream*. Dir. Rachel Landers, 2003.
- Big All At Once*. Dir. Tina Havelock Stevens, 2003.
- Big Men, Bigger Dreams: Australian Wrestlers*. Screenplay by Dimitri Ellerington and David Goldie. Dir. Dimitri Ellerington, 2003.
- Bob Brought the War Home*. Dir. Shelley Matulick, 2004.
- Godfather of Bodies, The*. n.d.
- Golden Sandals: The Art of Reg Mombassa*. Dir. Haydn Keenan, 2006.
- Grandpa's Games*. Dir. Zane Lovitt, 2003.

- Helen's War: Portrait of a Dissident*. Screenplay by Anna Broinowski. Dir. Anna Broinowski, 2003.
- Lilita*. n.d.
- Man Made: The Story of Two Men and a Baby*. Dir. Emma Crimmings, 2003.
- Matthew's Fight For Life*. Dir. Carolyn Betram, 2003.
- Molly and Mobarak*. Dir. Tom Zubrycki, 2003.
- Petra's Journey*. n.d.
- Prep For Life*. 2004.
- President vs David Hicks, The*. Dir. Curtis Levy and Bentley Dean, 2004.
- Sandman in Siberia*. Created by Steve Abbott, 2005.
- Selling Sickness*. Dir. Catherine Scott, 2004.
- Silent Storm*. Dir. Peter Butt, 2003.
- Sydney at War: The Untold Story*. Screenplay by Claude Gonzalez. Dir. Claude Gonzalez, 2004.
- Tasty Bust Reunion, The*. Screenplay by Stephen MacLean. Dir. Stephen MacLean, 2004.
- Trouble With George, The*. Screenplay by Aurora Scheelings. Dir. Aurora Scheelings, 2003.
- Trash*. n.d.
- Troubled Minds: The Lithium Revolution*. Dir. Dennis K. Smith, 2004.
- Who's Afraid of Designer Babies?* Screenplay by Sean Cousins. Dir. Sean Cousins, 2004.
- Why Men Pay For It*. Screenplay by Don Parham. Dir. Don Parham, 2004.
- Without Prejudice*. n.d.

Commissioned 2003/4

- Big Lie, The*. Dir. Terry Carlyon, 2005.
- Bullet Seller, The*. n.d.
- Chasing Birds*. Screenplay by Greg Woodland. Dir. Greg Woodland, 2008.
- Donkey in Lahore*. Screenplay by Famarz K. Rahber. Dir. Famarz K. Rahber, 2006.
- Dream of Love, The* (NIDF 6: Loved Up). Screenplay by Lawrence Johnston. Dir. Lawrence Johnston, 2005.
- Drover's Dilemma, The*. 2003.
- Eighth Summit, The*. Screenplay by Wayne Tindall. Dir. Wayne Tindall, 2005.
- Endangered* (NIDF 6: Loved Up). Dir. Tracey Rigney, 2005.
- Gladiatorix*. 2004.
- Hanging Out With Henry*. Screenplay by Janette Howe. Dir. Janette Howe, 2003.
- Healing of Bali, The*. Screenplay by John Darling. Dir. John Darling, 2003.
- Hearing James*. Screenplay by Cath Moore. Dir. Cath Moore, 2004.

- Hidden History of Homosexual Australia, The*. Dir. Con Anemogiannis, 2004.
- House of Dreams*. n.d.
- Hula Girls*. Screenplay by Louis Nowra and Trevor Graham. Dir. Trevor Graham, 2005.
- Innocence: The Other Side of DNA*. Dir. Dennis K. Smith, 2008.
- Jabe Babe: A Heightened Life*. Screenplay by Janet Merewether. Dir. Janet Merewether, 2005.
- Korean Anzacs*. Screenplay by Alice Ford. Dir. Alice Ford, 2004.
- Life and Times of Malcolm Fraser, The*. Dir. Luigi Acquisto, 2004.
- Lore of Love, The* (NIDF 6: Loved Up). Screenplay by Beck Cole. Dir. Beck Cole, 2005.
- My Brother's Kosova Wedding*. Dir. Bill Leimbach and Selman Beha, 2005.
- OK, Let's Talk About Me*. Screenplay by Sophie Hyde. Dir. Sophie Hyde, 2004.
- Operation Babylift*. Screenplay by Dai Le. Dir. Dai Le, 2005.
- Raul the Terrible*. Screenplay by Carlos Alperin. Dir. David Bradbury, 2007.
- Saddam's Wives*. n.d.
- Sex Lives*. n.d.
- Sexual Life of Us, The*. Screenplay by Peter George. Dir. Jenny Ainge, 2007.
- Shake, Rattle and Roll: A Journey With Parkinson's*. Dir. Andrew Wisemen, 2005.
- Testing Taklo*. n.d.
- Trafficked: The Child Sex Trade*. Screenplay by Chris Payne and Luigi Acquisto. Dir. Luigi Acquisto. Perf. Chris Payne, 2005.
- Truth, Lies and Intelligence*. Screenplay by Carmel Travers. Dir. Carmel Travers, 2005.
- Tug of Love*. Dir. Tosca Looby, 2004.
- Undercover Angels: Sex, Spies and Surveillance*. Screenplay by Shannon Sleeth. Dir. Shannon Sleeth, n.d.
- Welcome to My Deaf World*. Dir. Helen Gaynor, 2005.
- Yellow Fella* (NIDF 6: Loved Up). Screenplay by Tom E. Lewis and Fleur Parry. Dir. Ivan Sen, 2005.

Commissioned 2004/5

- Abortion, Corruption and Cops: The Bertram Weiner Story*. Screenplay by John Moore. Dir. John Moore, 2005.
- After Maeve*. Screenplay by Jan Cattoni. Dir. Jan Cattoni, 2006.
- Balanda and the Bark Canoes*. Screenplay by Molly Reynolds, Tania Nehme and Rolf de Heer. Dir. Molly Reynolds, Tania Nehme and Rolf de Heer, 2006.
- Black Road, The*. Screenplay by William Nessen and Lawrie Silvestrin. dir. William Nessen, 2005.
- Black Soldier Blues*. Screenplay by Nicole McCuig and Veronica Fury. Dir. Nicole McCuig, 2004.

- Book That Shook the World, The*. Screenplay by Con Anemogiannis, Dir. Con Anemogiannis, 2006.
- Buchenwald Ball, The*. Dir. Danny Ben-Moshe, Uri Mizrahi and Andrew Wiseman, 2007.
- Bush School*. Screenplay by Brian Duffy. Dir. Brian Duffy, 2005.
- Dirty War*. Screenplay by Alan Carter. Dir. Alan Carter, 2006.
- Fair Dinkum Manjit*. Screenplay by Faramarz K. Rahber. Dir. Faramarz K. Rahber, 2006.
- Footy Chicks*. Dir. Rebecca Barry, 2006.
- Gone to a Good Home*. Screenplay by Heather Phillips. Dir. Karen Berkman, 2005.
- Good Morning Afghanistan*. n.d.
- Habibi Jammin*. Screenplay by Enda Murray and Brian Rapsey. Dir. Brian Rapsey, 2006.
- Homeless*. n.d.
- Hoover's Gold*. Screenplay by Franco di Chiera. Dir. Franco di Chiera, 2005.
- I Love a Sunburnt Country*. n.d.
- Johnny Warren's Football Mission*. Screenplay by Stephen Oliver. Dir. Stephen Oliver, 2006.
- Kidnapped!* Screenplay by Melissa Kyu-Jung Le. Dir. Melissa Kyu-Jung Le, 2005.
- Maternity Unit: Stories from a New Life in a New Country*. Dir. Janette Howe, 2006.
- Once a Queen*. Screenplay by Lawrence Johnston. Dir. Lawrence Johnston, 2005.
- Opera Therapy*. Screenplay by Traicee Evison-Griffith. Dir. Traicee Evison-Griffith, 2005.
- Outsourced*. Dir. Anna Carter and Safina Uberoi, 2006.
- Penicillin: The Magic Bullet*. Screenplay by Gordon Glenn. Dir. Gordon Glenn, 2006.
- Platypus Park*. n.d.
- Prodigal Son, The*. Screenplay by Tony Radevski. Dir. Tony Radevski, 2006.
- Rampage*. n.d.
- RAN EPK*. n.d.
- Rescue at Sea*. n.d.
- Revealing Gallipoli*. 2005.
- Russian Dolls*. n.d.
- Saving the World*. n.d.
- Siege, The*. Dir. Elise West and Bentley Dean, 2007.
- Suburb for Sale*. Screenplay by Anne Delaney and Lara Cole. Dir. Anne Delaney and Lara Cole, 2006.
- Super Flu*. Screenplay by Steffan Moore. dir. Steffan Moore, 2005.
- Swapping Lives*. Screenplay by David Goldie. Dir. David Goldie, 2005.

Unfolding Florence. Screenplay by Katherine Thompson. Dir. Gillian Armstrong, 2005.

Veiled Ambition. Screenplay by Celeste Geer. Dir. Celeste Geer, 2006.

Vietnam Minefield. Screenplay by Walter Pearson. Dir. Richard Walker, 2005.

Vietnam Nurses. Dir. Polly Watkins, 2005.

Wedding Sari Showdown. Dir. Kylie Boltin, 2005.

Commissioned 2005/6

2 Mums and a Dad. Dir. Miranda Wills, 2007.

4. Dir. Tim Slade, 2007.

A History of Walking. n.d.

A Thousand Days: India's First Woman Police Officer. n.d.

After Cronulla. n.d.

All That Glitters. n.d.

Ayen's Cooking School For African Men. Dir. Sieh Mchawala, 2007.

Bridge At Midnight Trembles, The. Screenplay by Esben Storm and Richard Moir.
Dir. Peter Leiss and Esben Storm, 2005.

Choice, The. Dir. Don Parham, 2006.

Choir, The. Screenplay by Michael Davie. Dir. Michael Davie, 2007.

Dark Science. Screenplay by David Milroy. Dir. Johan Gabriellsson, 2007.

Educating India. n.d.

Elvis Lives in Parkes. Screenplay by Anthony Mullins. Dir. Anthony Mullins, 2006.

Fabric of a Dream, The. Screenplay by Dennis K. Smith. Dir. Dennis K. Smith, 2006.

Fat Chance. Screenplay by Yuka Sekiguchi. Dir. Yuki Sekiguchi, 2007.

Friday Night Fever. n.d.

Growing Up and Going Home. Screenplay by Belinda Mason. Dir. Belinda Mason, 2006.

Halal Mate. Screenplay by David Batty and Claudia Rowe. Dir. David Batty and Claudia Rowe, 2007.

Here Comes Charlie. n.d.

In My Father's Country. Screenplay by Tom Murray. Dir. Tom Murray, 2008.

In Our Name. n.d.

In Search of Bony. Screenplay by Lisa Matthews and Caroline Baum. Dir. Lisa Matthews, 2006.

Junction House Blues. Screenplay by Russell Vines and Traceylee Arestides. Dir. Russell Vines, 2006.

Last Forest, The. n.d.

Mohammed Hossain's Intensive Care. Screenplay by Geoff Burton ACS. Dir. Geoff Burton ACS, 2006.

My Brother Vinnie (NIDF 7). Screenplay by Aaron Pedersen. Dir. Steven McGregor, 2006.

Naked on the Inside. Screenplay by Kim Farrant. Dir. Kim Farrant, 2006.

(NIDF 7, project 2). n.d.

Not Quite Hollywood. Screenplay by Mark Hartley. Dir. Mark Hartley, 2008.

Nurse Maggie. Screenplay by Rebecca Heath and Jonathon Heath. Dir. Rebecca Heath and Jonathon Heath, 2006.

Our Bush Wedding (NIDF 9). Screenplay by Adrian Wills and Sienna Brown. Dir. Adrian Wills, 2006.

Portrait Painter, The. n.d.

Race for the Beach. Dir. Alan Erson, 2007.

Toad Busters. n.d.

Vote Yes For Aborigines. Screenplay by Frances Peters-Little. Dir. Frances Peters-Little, 2007.

Commissioned 2006/7

A Fighting Chance. Screenplay by Mark Anderson and Katrina Lucas. Dir. Mark Anderson, n.d.

A Northern Town. Screenplay by Rachel Landers. Dir. Rachel Landers, 2008.

Deported to Danger. n.d.

Desperately Keeping Sheila. Screenplay by Russell Vine and Alan Carter. Dir. Russell Vine, 2007.

Embedded With Nationalists. Screenplay by Tina Havelock-Stevens and Michaela Perske. Dir. Tina Havelock-Stevens and Michaela Perske, 2008.

Embedded With Sheik Hilaly. Screenplay by Gary Doust. Dir. Gary Doust, 2008.

Embedded With the Murri Mob. Screenplay by Sophie Meyrick and Sarah-Jane Woulahan. Dir. Sophie Meyrick and Sarah-Jane Woulahan, 2008.

Frank and Daz Take on the World. Screenplay by Judy Rymer. Dir. Judy Rymer, 2007.

I'll Call Australian Home. Dir. Belinda Mason, 2008.

Lionel. Screenplay by Eddie Martin and David Tiley. Dir. Eddie Martin, 2008.

Maverick Mother. Screenplay by Janet Merewether. Dir. Janet Merewether, 2007.

My America. Screenplay by Peter Hegedus and Mark O'Toole. Dir. Peter Hedegus, 2010.

My Biggest Fan. Screenplay by Tara Morice. Dir. Tara Morice, 2008.

Never Say Die Matildas, The. Screenplay by Helen Barrow. Dir. Helen Barrow, 2008.

Passports to Fame: The Fabulous Flag Sisters. n.d.

PNG: The Rules of the Game. Screenplay by Thom Cookes and Chris Owen. Dir. Thom Cookes and Chris Owen, 2007.

Redfern: The Musical. Dir. Brian Hill, n.d.

Rosa's Journey: The Story of a Nation. Dir. Luigi Acquisto, 2008.

Two Men and Two Babies. Screenplay by Emma Crimmings and Catherine Dixon.
Dir. Emma Crimmings, 2007.

Walk Like a Man. Screenplay by Lester Shane and Patrick Downs. Dir. Patricia Zagarella and Jim Morgison, 2007

Wedding Sari Showdown ("Episode 2"). Screenplay by Kylie Boltin and David Tiley.
Dir. Kylie Boltin, 2007.

Commissioned 2007/8

Community Cop. Screenplay by Helen Gaynor. Dir. Helen Gaynor, 2008.

Death of the Megabeasts. Screenplay by Franco di Chiera and Frank McCourt. Dir.
Franco di Chiera, 2009.

Every Family's Nightmare. Screenplay by John McCourt, Julia Redwood and Rhian Skirving. Dir. Michael Muntz, 2009.

Kuru: Science and Sorcery. Dir. Ben Alpers and Rob Bygott, 2010.

Miscreants, The. Screenplay by George Gittoes and Gabrielle Dalton. Dir. George Gittoes, 2008.

Mother of Rock: The Lillian Roxon Story. Screenplay by Paul Clarke. Dir. Paul Clarke, 2010.

Mr Firth Goes to Washington. Screenplay by Charles Firth and Nick Richardson. Dir.
Bradley Howard, 2009.

My Asian Heart. Screenplay by David Bradbury. Dir. David Bradbury, 2009.

No Way, Get F#ked, F*#k Off*. Dir. Ben Ulm, n.d.

Not Forgotten. Screenplay by Jane Jeffes. Dir. Jane Jeffes, 2008.

Pageant, The. n.d.

Paper Dolls: Australian Pinups of World War II. Screenplay by Angela Buckingham.
Dir. Angela Buckingham, 2008.

Tibet: Murder in the Snow. Screenplay by Mark Gould and Sally Ingleton. Dir. Mark Gould, 2008.

Town They Gave Away, The. n.d.

DOCUMENTARY SERIES

Commissioned 1994/5

First Person: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Stories. Dir. Alan Carter, Claire Calzoni, Steve Thomas, Sonya Pemberton, Andrew Wiseman and Ross Hutchens. Series Prod. Alan Carter, 1996.

Nature of Healing. Dir. Celia Tait. Series Prod. Brian Beaton, 1996.

Nearly Normal Nimbin. Dir. Jeni Kendall and Paul Tait, 1995.

Tales from Oceania. Screenplay by Nadine Amadio. Dir. John Tristiam and I. James Wilson, 1997.

Paul Davies Big Questions. Dir. Mike Piper, 1995.

Tales from a Suitcase: Stories from the Migrant Experience 1946-1952. Screenplay by Joanna Penglase. Dir. Andrea del Bosco, Nina Veretennikova and Martin Sepulveda. Series Prod. Will Davies, 1996.

Wildfish. 1996.

Commissioned 1996/7

Artists Up Front. Screenplay by Des Kootji Raymond, Paul Roberts. Dir. Melissa Haluck, Des Kootji Raymond, Paul Roberts, 1997.

Documentary Series, Untitled. n.d.

First Person, season 2. n.d.

Paul Davies in Conversation with Phillip Adams: More Big Questions. Dir. Mike Piper, 1998.

Rewind. Screenplay by Margret Murphy and Steve McLeod. Dir. Margret Murphy, 1998.

Commissioned 1997/8

If It Doesn't Kill You. Screenplay by Garry McKechnie and Gregory Miller. Dir. Garry McKechnie, 1999.

Irish Empire, The. Screenplay by David Roberts, Dearbhla Walsh, Alan Gilsonan, Jane Manning, Dearbhla Walsh and Siobhan McHugh. Dir. David Roberts, Dearbhla Walsh, Alan Gilsonan, 1999.

Movie Post Cards. n.d.

National Indigenous Documentary Fund (NIDF). n.d.

Once Were Monks. Screenplay by Luigi Acquisto. Dir. Luigi Acquisto and Andrew Sully, 1999.

Tales From a Suitcase II: Stories From the Migrant Experience 1949-1959. Series Dir. Andres Dal Bosco, 2000.

Wildfish II. Dir John Haenke, 1999.

Winds of Change. Screenplay by Alan Carter. Series Dir. Alan Carter, Dir. Yvonne Yuen Han Ng, Tran Anh Phuong, Do Doan Than, Riri Riza, Mira Lesmana, Srikaton, M and Luu Hong Son, 1999.

Commissioned 1998/9

Risky Business. Screenplay by Susan Lambert and Greig Pickhaver. Dir. Susan Lambert, 2000.

Commissioned 2000/1

Unsung Heroes (NIDF 5). n.d.

Commissioned 2001/2

Fearless: Stories From Asian Women. Screenplay by Peter Du Cane and Matthew Kelley. Dir. Peter Du Cane and Matthew Kelley, 2002.

Fine Line. Screenplay by Ellen Fanning. Dir. Ellen Fanning, 2003.

First Australians. Screenplay by Rachel Perkins, Beck Cole and Louis Nowra. Dir. Rachel Perkins and Beck Cole, 2008.

Tales From a Suitcase III: The Afghan Experience. Series Dir. Andrea Dal Bosco, 2002.

Commissioned 2002/3

- Bush Doctor*. Screenplay by David Goldie. Dir. Scott Thompson, 2003.
- Convicts*. n.d.
- Divorce Stories*. Series Dir. Steve Welsh. Dir. Jessica Douglas Henry, 2005.
- Dying to Leave*. Screenplay by Chris Hilton and Aaron Woolf. Dir. Chris Hilton, 2003.
- Getting of Wisdom, The*. n.d.
- Handle With Care*. Screenplay by Jessica Douglas-Henry. Dir. Jessica Douglas-Henry, 2003.
- Hard Choices (QLD)*. Dir. Anthony Mullins and anonymous, 2004.
- Hard Choices (WA)*. Dir. Tosca Looby, Melanie Byres, Sanchia Robinson and Robyn Marais, 2004.
- Knot at Home Project*. 2004.
- Over the Fence*. Screenplay by Jennifer Crone. Dir. Jennifer Crone, 2003.
- Pioneers of Love*. Screenplay by Julie Nimmo. Dir. Julie Nimmo, 2005.
- Red Heart Hospital*. n.d.
- Under One Roof*. Dir. Kay Pavlou and Ray Argali, 2002.

Commissioned 2003/4

- Heat in the Kitchen*. Series Dir. Ruth Cullen, 2005.
- Lifestyle Experts, The*. Screenplay by Nicolette Freeman. Dir. Nicolette Freeman, 2007.
- Missing*. Screenplay by Rachel Landers. Dir. Rachel Landers, 2004.
- Short Stories*. Dir. Matthew Duffy and Stuart McCarney, 2005.
- Stock Squad*. Screenplay by Kerry Tait. Dir. Nicole McCuiag, 2006.
- Submariners*. Screenplay by Hugh Piper. Dir. Hugh Piper, 2005.

Commissioned 2004/5

- Closet Tales of Australian Fashion*. Dir. Ben Harding, 2007.
- Do Not Resuscitate*. Screenplay by Davor Dirlic. Dir. Davor Dirlic, 2006.
- Give Me a Break*. 2006.
- Inspiring Teachers*. Screenplay by Rebecca Barry and Michaela Perske. Dir. Rebecca Barry, 2007.
- Kokoda*. Screenplay by Don Featherstone, Andrew Wiseman and Uri Mizrah. Dir. Don Featherstone, 2010.
- Mosque, The*. n.d.
- NIDF 7*. n.d.
- Singles Club*. Dir. Luigi Acquisto and Alisa Piper, 2007.
- Two Of Us*. Dir. Jane Schneider, 2006.

Commissioned 2005/6

- Alive and Kicking*. Screenplay by Stephen Thomas. Dir. Stephen Thomas, 2008.

- Attack of the Baby Boomers: The Story of Global Aging.* n.d.
- Desperately Seeking Doctors.* Screenplay by Stuart Greig and Max Walker. Dir. Stuart Greig and Max Walker, 2008.
- Downunder Grads.* Screenplay by Phoebe Hart and Suzanne Howard. Dir. Phoebe Hart, Randall Wood and Suzanne Howard, 2007.
- Eating With the Ancestors.* n.d.
- Glamour Game, The.* Screenplay by Susan Lambert and Aviva Zeigler. Dir. Susan Lambert and Aviva Zeigler, 2007.
- Great Australian Albums.* Screenplay by Toby Creswell, 2007.
- History of Sex.* n.d.
- Indonesia: A Reporter's Journey.* Screenplay by Deborah Richards. Dir. Chris Hilton, Hugh Piper and Deborah Richards, 2007.
- International Rescue.* n.d.
- Is Your House Killing You?* Dir. Daniella Ortega, Jennifer Lyons-Reid and Roger Power, 2007.
- Light on the Hill, The.* n.d.
- Love's Harvest.* Dir. Brian McKenzie, 2008.
- Making Babies.* Screenplay by Madeleine Hetherton, Rebecca Barry and Michaela Perske. Dir. Madeleine Hetherton, 2007.
- Museum of the World.* Screenplay by Michel Viotte and Steve Oliver. Dir. Michel Viotte and Julie Nimmo, 2008.
- Parent Rescue.* Series Dir. Jessica Douglas-Henry, 2006.
- Policing the Pacific.* Screenplay by Alan Erson. Dir. Stephen Oliver, Andrew Merrifield and Alan Erson, 2006.
- Real Top Guns.* Screenplay by Gregory Quail. Dir. Gregory Quail, 2007.
- Risking It All.* Screenplay by Matthew Bate, Sophie Hyde, Shane McNeil, Kathryn McIntyre Andrew Ellis and Alan Carter. Dir. Matthew Bate, Sophie Hyde, Shane McNeil and Kathryn McIntyre, 2008.
- Surviving High School.* n.d.
- World of Colours.* n.d.

Commissioned 2006/7

- About Men, About Women.* Screenplay by Jessica Douglas-Henry. Series Dir. Ruth Cullen ("About Men") and Judith John-Story ("About Women"), 2009.
- Burke and Wills.* n.d.
- Cooking the Books.* n.d.
- Darwin's Lost Paradise.* Screenplay by Hans Schuler, Katharina von Flotow and Jan N. Lorenzen. Dir. Hans Schuler, Katharina von Flotow, 2009.
- Dead Tired.* Screenplay by Paul Scott. Dir. Paul Scott, 2009.
- History of Shopping, The.* n.d.
- Journos.* Screenplay by Paul Roy. Dir. Paul Roy, 2009.

Liberal Rule: The Politics of a Changed Australia. Screenplay by Nick Torrens and Gary Sturgess. Dir. Nick Torrens, 2009.

mY Generation. Dir. Viron Papadopoulos, Katrina Lucas, Mark Anderson, Ben C. Lucas, Sean Lahiff, Janine Boreland, Britt Arthur and Bettina Hamilton, 2008.

Passionate Apprentices, The. Dir. Roger Scholes, 2008.

Passports to Fame. n.d.

Rebels, The. n.d.

Rebel With a Cause: The Dangerous Life and Times of Wilfred Burchett. n.d.

Road Trip Nation. Dir. Kalita Corrigan, 2008.

Taxi School. Screenplay by Claire Haywood. Dir. Claire Haywood, 2009.

Commissioned 2007/8

Altona Girls. n.d.

Camel Odyssey, The. 2010.

Destination Australia, season 2. Screenplay by Lauren Dewery and Cathy Beitz. Dir. Lauren Dewery, 2009.

Great Australian Albums, season 2. Screenplay by Toby Creswell. Dir. Larry Meltzer, 2008.

Loved Up, season 2. n.d.

Once Bitten. Screenplay Janette Howe. Dir. Paula Jones and Max Walker, n.d.

Persons of Interest. Screenplay by Haydn Keenan. Dir. Haydn Keenan, 2010.

Pilgrim's Walkabout. n.d.

Rocking the Rock. n.d.

Secret History of Eurovision. Screenplay by Stephen Phil Craig and Stephen Oliver. Dir. Stephen Oliver, 2011.

DRAMA SERIES

Commissioned 1995/6

Passion. Duration 6 x 26 mins, n.d.

Commissioned 1996/7

Marriage Acts. Duration 4 x 52 mins, n.d.

Three Forever. Duration 8 x 26 mins, n.d.

Commissioned 1997/8

Bondi Banquet. Screenplay by John O'Brien. Dir. Argall, Stuart McDonald and Kay Pavlou. Duration 7 x 26 mins, 2000.

Hunting Ground. Duration 6 x 26 mins, n.d.

Small fortunes. Duration 4 x 26 mins, n.d.

Commissioned 1998/9

Eighty Percent. Duration 7 x 26 mins, n.d.

Last Cry, The. Duration 2 x 75 mins, n.d.

Commissioned 1999/2000

Church Street. Duration 13 x 26 mins, n.d.

Undertows. Duration 3 x 26 mins, n.d.

Commissioned 2000/1

RAN. Screenplay by Sue Smith. Dir. David Caesar and Catriona McKenzie. Duration 6 x 52 mins, 2005.

Commissioned 2001/2

Dirt. Duration 7 x 52 mins, n.d.

Neil, Neil Orange Peel. Duration 4 x 52 mins, n.d.

Commissioned 2002/3

Post Reality. Duration 6 x 26 mins, n.d.

Triple Zed. Duration 6 x 26 mins, n.d.

Commissioned 2003/4

Circuit, The. Screenplay by Ross Hutchens, Kelly Lefever, Dot West, Michelle Torres, and Beck Cole. Dir. Catriona McKenzie, Richard Frankland and Steve Jodrell. Duration 6 x 52 mins, 2007.

Hippy School. Duration 3 x 26 mins, n.d.

Kick. Screenplay by Kris Mrksa, Esben Storm, Adam Bowen, Ahn Do, Zaheda Ghani, and Lina Kastoumis. Dir. Esben Storm. Duration 13 x 26 mins, 2007.

Token Kooris. n.d.

Commissioned 2004/5

East West 101. Screenplay by Kristen Dunphy. Dir. Peter Andrikidis. Duration 6 x 52 mins, n.d.

John Hurt. Duration 6 x 52 mins, n.d.

Love, Sex and Disabilities. Duration 6 x 52 mins, n.d.

Ulysses. n.d.

Commissioned 2005/6

Carla Cametti PD. Screenplay by Kris Mrksa, Josephine Martino, Samantha Winston and Liz Doran. Dir. Ian Watson. Duration 6 x 52 mins, 2008.

Committee, The. Duration 8 x 26 mins, n.d.

Friday Night Club, The. Duration 6 x 52 mins, n.d.

Hospital. Duration 4 x 52 mins, n.d.

Kangarouthes. Duration 6 x 52 mins, n.d.

Mr Lucky. Duration 6 x 26 mins, n.d.

Original Face. Duration 8 x 26 mins, n.d.

Commissioned 2006/7

The Circuit, season 2. Screenplay by Ross Hutchens, Kelly Lefever, Dot West, Mitch Torres, Wayne Blair, Dir. Catriona McKenzie, Richard Frankland, Steve Jodrell, James Bogle and Aaron Pedersen. Duration 6 x 52 mins, 2010.

Salon. Duration 6 x 52 mins, n.d.

Saved. Screenplay by Belinda Chayko. Dir. Tony Ayres. Duration 2 x 52 mins, 2009.

TI Taxi. Duration 6 x 26 mins, n.d.

Commissioned 2007/8

East West 101, season 2. Screenplay by Kristen Dunphy, Michael Miller and Michelle Offen. Dir. Peter Andrikidis. Duration 7 x 52 mins, 2010.

ENTERTAINMENT EVENTS

Commissioned 2005/6

Austen Tayshus.

Australia Day 2006. Created by Alexander Gutman, 2006.

Ethnic Business Awards 2005.

IF Awards 2005.

Oz Concert 2006.

Commissioned 2006/7

IF Awards 2006.

IF Awards 2007.

Oz Concert 2007.

Commissioned 2007/8

Ethnic Business Awards 2007.

Kev Carmody: Cannot Buy My Soul. Screenplay by Kelrick Martin. Dir. Kelrick Martin, 2007.

FACTUAL ENTERTAINMENT SERIES

Commissioned 2005/5

Eco House Challenge. Di. Russell Vines, 2007.

Going Bush. Screenplay by David Batty and Tony Jackson. Dir. David Batty and Tony Jackson, 2005.

RockWiz, season 2. Created by Brian Nankervis, 2006.

Speaking in Tongues with John Safran and Father Bob. Screenplay by John Safran and Mark O'Toole, 2005.

Vasili's Garden. 2009.

Who Do You Think You Are? Screenplay by Franco di Chiera, Catherine Marciniak, Jane Manning, Alan Carter, Kay Pavlou and Judy Rymer. Dir. Franco di Chiera, Catherine Marciniak, Jane Manning, Alan Carter, Kay Pavlou and Judy Rymer, 2007.

Commissioned 2005/6

Food Lovers Guide to Australia, The. Series Prod. Toufic Charabati. Perf. Maeve O'Meara and Joanna Saville, 2005.

Food Safari. Screenplay by Toufic Charabati and Maeve O'Meara. Dir. Toufic Charabati, 2007.

Global Village. n.d.

Going Bush, season 2. Screenplay by Tony Jackson and David Collins. Dir. Tony Jackson, 2007.

Here Comes the Neighbourhood. Dir. Pria Viswalingham, 2006.

Here Comes the Neighbourhood, season 2. Dir. Pria Viswalingham, 2006.

Hotline. n.d.

Movie Show, The. n.d.

RockWiz, season 3. Created by Brian Nankervis, 2007.

Thalassa. n.d.

Commissioned 2006/7

Food Safari, season 2. Screenplay by Toufic Charabati and Maeve O'Meara. Dir. Toufic Charabati, 2007.

Global Village. n.d.

Here Comes the Neighbourhood, season 2. Dir. Pria Viswalingham, 2008.

Hotspell. Screenplay by Justine Flynn and Steve Rothwell, 2007.

Movie Show, The. n.d.

RockWiz, season 4. Created by Brian Nankervis, 2008.

RockWiz, season 5. Created by Brian Nankervis, 2008.

Salem Café. n.d.

Thalassa. n.d.

Vasili's Garden. 2008.

Commissioned 2007/8

Feast Greece. Screenplay by Leigh Foster, Tony Porter and Barry Vera. Dir. Harry Panagiotidis and Robert Grieve, 2008.

Food Safari, season 3. Screenplay by Toufic Charabati and Maeve O'Meara. Dir. Toufic Charabati, 2009.

Luke Nguyen's Vietnam. Dir. Michael Donnelly, 2009.

Movie Show, The. n.d.

RockWiz, season 6. Created by Brian Nankervis, 2009.

Salem Café. n.d.

Top Gear Australia. Series Dir. Gary Deans, 2008.

Who Do You Think You Are? season 2. Screenplay by Russell Vines, Belinda Mason, Catherine Marciniak, Jane Manning and Alan Carter. Dir. Russell Vines, Belinda Mason, Catherine Marciniak, Jane Manning and Alan Carter, 2009.

FEATURE FILM

Commissioned 1995/6

Bran Nue Dae. *

Floating Life. Screenplay by Clara Law and Eddie L.C. Fong. Dir. Clara Law, 1996.

Quiet Room, The. Screenplay by Rolf de Heer. Dir. Rolf de Heer, 1996.

Commissioned 1996/7

Boys, The. Screenplay by Stephen Sewell. Dir. Rowan Woods, 1998.

Radiance. Screenplay by Louis Nowra. Dir. Rachel Perkins, 1998.

Commissioned 1997/8

A Wreck, A Tangle. (Million Dollar Movies). Screenplay by John O'Brien. Dir. Scott Patterson, 2000.

City Loop. (Million Dollar Movies). Screenplay by Stephen Davis. Dir. Belinda Chayko, 2000.

Fresh Air. (Million Dollar Movies). Screenplay by Neil Mansfield. Dir. Neil Mansfield, 1998.

Student of Medicine. n.d.

Commissioned 1998/9

La Spagnola. (Million Dollar Movies). Screenplay by Anna Maria Monticelli. Dir. Steve Jacobs, 2002.

Mallboy. (Million Dollar Movies). Screenplay by Vincent Giarrusso. Dir. Vincent Giarrusso, 2000.

Mullet. Screenplay by David Caesar. Dir. David Caesar, 2001.

Yolgnu Boy. Screenplay by Stephen Johnson. Dir. Stephen Johnson, 2000.

Commissioned 1999/2000

A Mother's Disgrace. n.d.

Meaning of Life, The. n.d.

Silent Partner. Screenplay by Daniel Keene. Dir. Alkinos Tsilimidos, 2001.

Teesh and Trude. Screenplay by Vanessa Lomma and Wilson McCaskill. Dir. Melanie Read, 2002.

Walking on Water. (Adelaide Film Festival, 2002). Screenplay by Rodger Monk. Dir. Tony Ayres, 2002.

Commissioned 2000/1

Australian Rules. (Adelaide Film Festival, 2002). Screenplay by Phillip Gynnne. Dir. Paul Goldman, 2002.

Beneath Clouds. Screenplay by Ivan Sen. Dir. Ivan Sen, 2001.

Polka. n.d.

Tracker, The. (Adelaide Film Festival, 2002). Screenplay by Rolf de Heer. Dir. Rolf de Heer, 2002.

Commissioned 2001/2

Illustrated Family Doctor, The. Screenplay by David Snell and Kriv Stenders. Dir. Kriv Stenders, 2005.

Travelling Light. Screenplay by Kathryn Millard. Dir. Kathryn Millard, 2003.

You Can't Stop the Murders. Screenplay by Anthony Mir, Gary Eck and Akmal Saleh. Dir. Anthony Mir, 2003.

Commissioned 2002/3

Somersault. Screenplay by Cate Shortland. Dir. Cate Shortland, 2004.

Commissioned 2003/4

Look Both Ways. Screenplay by Sarah Watt. Dir. Sarah Watt, 2006.

Ten Canoes. Screenplay by Rolf de Heer and Peter Djigirr. Dir. Rolf de Heer and Peter Djigirr, 2006.

Commissioned 2004/5

Home Song Stories, The. Screenplay by Tony Ayres. Dir. Tony Ayres, 2007.

Night. Screenplay by Lawrence Johnston. Dir. Lawrence Johnston, 2007.

Noise. Screenplay by Matt Saville. Dir. Matt Saville, 2007.

Commissioned 2006/7

Lake Mungo. Screenplay by Joel Anderson. Dir. Joel Anderson, 2009.

Stone Bros. Screenplay by Richard Frankland and William Bainbridge. Dir. Richard Frankland, 2009.

INTERSTITIAL SERIES

Commissioned 1997/8

A Dozen Eggs. 1998.

Commissioned 1999/2000

Multicultural Mentorship. 2000.

Commissioned 2001/2

Homemade History. Dir. Robert Herbert, 2003.

Commissioned 2003/4

ARTV. n.d.

Indigenous Interstitials. Perf. Leah Purcell, n.d.

Keeping it Together (AFTRS). Dir. 1. Marc Ianniello, Matthew Walker, Madeleine Hetheron, Madeleine Hetheron, Michele Thistlewaite and Sascha Ettinger-Epstein, 2004

Commissioned 2004/5

Blokes and Sheds. n.d.

Frocks Off. n.d.

Indigenous Interstitials. Created with ScreenWest. n.d.

Indigenous Interstitials. Created with the Film Victoria. n.d.

Marx and Venus. Screenplay by Gary Ausbruch, Michael Ottaviano, Conrad Kenyon, Lydia Kenyon, Celia Temby, Philip Jeng, and Kane Matty Limpus. Dir. Robert Forsyth, Renee Webster, Peter Templeman and Mark Powell, 2007.

My Voice. Screenplay by Quentin Kenihan and Sarah Wishart. Dir. Quentin Kenihan, 2006.

Commissioned 2005/6

A Bit of Black Business (Indigenous Drama Initiative). Dir. Warwick Thornton, Debbie Carmody, Pauline Whyman, Michael Longbottom, Adrian Wills, Dena Curtis, Trisha Morton-Thomas, Michelle Blanchard, Martin Leroy Adams, Aaron Fa'aoso, Kelli Cross, Jacob Nash, Jon Bell, 2007.

Football Shorts. n.d.

Podlove. 2006.

Commissioned 2006/7

Alter Ego (Podlove 2). 2008.

REALITY TELEVISION

Commissioned 2002/3

Colony, The. Dir. Malcolm McDonald, 2005.

Commissioned 2003/4

Desperately Seeking Sheila. Dir. Janine Hosking, Kay Pavlou, Mira King, Ariel White, and Russell Vines, 2004.

Commissioned 2004/5

Desperately Seeking Sheila, season 2. n.d.

Commissioned 2005/6

Nerds FC. 2006.

Song for the Soccerroos. n.d.

Commissioned 2006/7

Nerds FC, season 2. 2007.

Commissioned 2007/8

Angels in New York. Screenplay by Elizabeth Courtney and Gregory Miller. Dir. Elizabeth Courtney and Gregory Miller, 2009.

Nest, The. Dir. Fabio Basone, Max Bourke, Chester Dent, Madeline Hetheron and Harvey Oliver, 2008.

SHORT FEATURES

Commissioned 1997/8

Feeling Sexy. Screenplay by Davida Allen. Dir. Davida Allen, 1998.

Commissioned 2001/2

Floodhouse (Family Matters). Screenplay by Miro Bilbrough. Dir. Miro Bilbrough, 2003.

Martha's New Coat (Family Matters). Screenplay by Elizabeth J. Mars. Dir. Rachel Ward, 2003.

Roy Hollsdötter Live. Screenplay by Matthew Saville. Dir. Matthew Saville, 2004.

Commissioned 2002/3

Cable. n.d.

Cold Turkey. Screenplay by Steven McGregor. Dir. Steven McGregor, 2002.

Preservation. Screenplay by Sofya Gollan. Dir. Sofya Gollan, 2004.

Queen of Hearts. Screenplay by Danielle MacLean, 2003.

So Close to Home. Screenplay by Madeleine Blackwell. Dir. Jessica Hobbs, 2003.

Commissioned 2003/4

Jewboy. Screenplay by Tony Krawitz. Dir. Tony Krawitz, 2005.

Space Travel. n.d.

Wives Tale. n.d.

Commissioned 2004/5

Glenmore Job, The. Screenplay by Greg Williams. Dir. Greg Williams, 2005.

Heartbreak Tour, The. Screenplay by Ben Chessell. Dir. Ben Chessell, 2004.

Jammin' in the Middle E. Screenplay by Howard Jackson. Dir. Kim Mordaunt, 2005.

SHORT FILM

Commissioned 1994/5

Blackman Down (From Sand to Celluloid). Screenplay by Sam Watson. Dir. Bill McCrow

Fly Peewee Fly (From Sand to Celluloid). Screenplay by Sally Riley. Dir. Sally Riley, 1996.

No Way to Forget (From Sand to Celluloid). Screenplay by Richard Frankland. Dir. Richard Frankland, 1996.

Payback (From Sand to Celluloid). Screenplay by Warwick Thornton. Dir. Warwick Thornton, 1996.

Round Up (From Sand to Celluloid). Screenplay by Rima Tamou. Dir. Rima Tamou, 1996.

Two Bob Mermaid (From Sand to Celluloid). Screenplay by Darlene Johnson. Dir. Darlene Johnson, 1996.

Commissioned 1997/8

Where the Two Rivers Meet (Unfinished Business). Screenplay by Ken Kelso. Dir. Ken Kelso, 2000.

Commissioned 1998/9

Confessions of a Headhunter (Unfinished Business) (On Wheels). Screenplay by Sally Riley. Dir. Sally Riley, 2000.

Commissioned 1999/2000

Dust (Unfinished Business) (On Wheels). Screenplay by Ivan Sen. Dir. Ivan Sen. 2000.

My Mother, My Son (Unfinished Business) (On Wheels). Screenplay by Erica Glynn. Dir. Erica Glynn, 2000.

Road (Unfinished Business). Screenplay by Catriona McKenzie and Matt Ford, Catriona McKenzie, 2000.

TELE-FEATURE

Commissioned 1999/2000

John Safran vs. the Exorcist

Commissioned 2004/5

Call Me Mum. Screenplay by Kathleen Mary Fallon. Dir. Margot Nash, 2005.



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MALEL TREVISANUT, AMANDA

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