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Continued commitment to communications, information technology, the arts and sport – budget at a glance

The 2007-08 Federal Budget continues the Australian Government's strong commitment to the communications, information technology, arts and sports sectors.

The Government has continued its support of important communications and information technology programs, particularly the establishment of a framework for digital radio, and has made far-reaching reforms to strengthen the Australian film and television industry.

The new framework for digital radio will allow the ABC and SBS, together with community broadcasters, to initiate digital radio services and participate with commercial broadcasters when digital radio services begin in capital cities on 1 January 2009.

The Government will provide \$10.5 million to community broadcasters and the funding for the rollout for the ABC and SBS will be determined by a competitive tender process.

Following the recent completion of the Review of Australian Government Film Funding Support, the Budget has provided for a comprehensive package of measures to significantly boost support for the Australian film and television industry.

The package of \$282.9 million represents a complete overhaul of film funding and will introduce a genuine incentive for producers to attract strong investor interest and help put the industry on a more sustainable footing.

The introduction of a new Producer Rebate represents a major new support mechanism film producers can access. It will help the industry to be more competitive and responsive to market forces and to audiences, by providing a tax rebate of 40 percent of eligible Australian expenditure to producers of qualifying feature films and a 20 per cent rate for other eligible formats, principally television. A new long form television series will qualify for the Producer Rebate for the first time.

An improved Location Rebate will significantly enhance Australia's attractiveness as a location for the filming of large-budget offshore productions, including post digital

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and visual effects projects. The Location Rebate increases the existing rebate from 12.5 per cent to 15 per cent, introduces a world-first complementary 15 per cent rebate on all expenditure on post production, digital and visual effects undertaken in Australia for projects valued over \$5 million, and provides greater certainty about what production expenditures qualify for the rebate.

A new Australian Screen Authority (ASA) will be established 1 July 2008 to replace the Australian Film Commission, Film Finance Australia and Film Australia Ltd. The ASA's combined funding will meet the Government's 2004 film election commitments for low budget films, access and screen culture and the History Initiative through Film Australia Ltd. The new agency will also continue to focus on important initiatives in the areas of practitioner and industry development, access programmes and the promotion of Australian films here and overseas.

Other Budget announcements within the portfolio include:

- Funding for the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) increased by \$16.3 to more than \$360 million over four years;
- A package of \$13.6 million over four years to help protect Australians from sophisticated online attacks targeting home and small business computers;
- A commitment of \$24.7 million over the next four years to ensure the continuation of the very successful Visual Arts and Craft Strategy;
- Increased base funding totalling \$24.1 million over four years for 20 of Australia's major performing arts companies;
- \$19.5 million over four years to strengthen and support small to medium arts organisations,
- Additional funding of \$21.2 million over three years to deliver enhanced services and facilities to visitors of the National Portrait Gallery;
- \$4.7 million over four years for the domestic repatriation of Australian Indigenous ancestral remains and secret sacred objects to the community of origin, and to develop a framework for the repatriation on non-Australian Indigenous remains held in Australian collections;
- \$4.6 million in 2007-08 for the Australian Ballet School to refurbish its facilities and plan the future expansion of its programme;
- \$25 million to help build the new grandstand on the old Hill site at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG);
- \$25 million to the redevelopment of the western grandstand at Adelaide Oval.
- An additional \$2.24 million in 2007-08 for the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) to undertake more investigations into possible anti-doping rule violations in Australian sport and
- \$124.4 million over three years for the extension of the Australian Government's highly successful Active After-school Communities (AASC) programme and
- \$10 million towards stage two of the National Sports Museum at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.