

Screenrights is a non-profit company which administers copyright licences in Australia and New Zealand and collects similar royalties from Europe and North America for its 2,200 members from 51 countries.

February 2006

Feature: Going international

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Big things for filmmakers

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This is an online newsletter. You can subscribe by emailing ota@screenrights.org

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Selling broadcast rights in other territories is always good news - and with societies across the world collecting royalties for further uses of your program once it has been televised, the news may be even better than you anticipated. Screenrights International Services Administrator **Maha Ismail** speaks to **Off the air** about how you can maximise revenue when your titles are broadcast in Europe, the United States and Canada.

Ismail, who has been administering international royalty payments since 2003, said Screenrights collects international income from two major sources – retransmission of broadcasts, and home copying from television.

“Retransmission refers to a cable operator carrying free to air broadcasts as part of their service,” Ismail said. “Many countries, including Australia, have laws that require cable operators to pay a royalty to rightsholders in the broadcast programs when they retransmit them. This money is collected by societies such as Screenrights, which then distribute the royalties to the rightsholders in the retransmitted programs.



*Crash Zone,
an ACTF Production*

“Private copying royalties are often a levy paid by the consumer on copying media or equipment. Again, this levy is collected by a society that distributes this money to rightsholders.

If your program is broadcast in a territory that has laws providing payment for either of these uses, Screenrights can collect this money for you,” Ismail said. “And it can be an important source of income.”

In the case of the **Australian Children’s Television Foundation**, for example, these international returns have been particularly significant. In fact, according to ACTF CEO Jenny Buckland, close to half of the Foundation’s Screenrights royalties have come from overseas collections, making a valuable contribution to its revenue stream.

So, just how do you go about getting hold of this money?

According to Ismail, it’s a matter of registering your program details with other societies in the format they require by the deadlines they impose.

“However, knowing what to register and when can be a complex process,” Ismail said. “Our job is to make this easy.”

Or, as Buckland said: “Screenrights International is a simple and cost effective way to collect returns from around the world.”

The ACTF, like other members who have appointed Screenrights to collect international royalties, simply provides Screenrights with program information once.

“In fact, many rightsholders will be providing us with the relevant information anyway when they register for Australian royalties,” Ismail said. “Making this registration global is very simple. It’s just a matter of ticking the appropriate box on the form.”



*Round the twist,
an ACTF Production*

Screenrights has agreements in place with societies in all territories that have retransmission and private copying royalty schemes: that is all European Union Countries covered by AGICOA agreements, the United States and Canada. (The AGICOA Group is the umbrella retransmission society in Europe, and collects and distributes royalties from nearly all EU countries.)

“There’s no need to track down each society and provide them with details,” Ismail said. “You just download the forms from our website, or we can post them out to you.

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Once we have received your details, our role is to lodge this information with other societies, ensuring that the data meets their requirements in terms of format and deadlines."

Registering directly with Screenrights International is not only convenient, it's also cost effective. Screenrights International only takes out its administrative expenses, which are capped at 12% until 1 July 2007.

"Rightsholders who choose to register with an agent for all their royalties (including Australian revenue) will still have the convenience of one registration, but they will have to pay an agent's commission on top of Screenrights' administrative expenses for the royalties it collects," Ismail said. "This can amount to a significant deduction from your hard earned income."



*Crash Zone,
an ACTF Production*

Each society makes regular payments to Screenrights International, which then distributes this money to members who have registered titles and have royalties owing.

"It's important to keep working closely with members," Ismail said. "We like to make regular checks that people have registered new titles with us. We also like to notify members when we are distributing money from a particular territory so that if your program was broadcast or retransmitted in that country during the relevant period, you can let us know if you do not receive payment. Our job is then to chase this up and find out what's happened."



*Round the twist,
an ACTF Production*

For Ismail, it's a matter of trying to help members maximise their returns from their programs.

"Selling broadcast rights into other territories is not the end of the story," she said. "It can be the first step in collecting further royalties, and our aim is to get this money into your hands as quickly and as cost effectively as possible."

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Big things for filmmakers

A documentary about the glorious "Big Things" attractions along the highways of rural Australia was among the recipients of Screenrights' recent \$8.4 million distribution of royalties – the company's largest in a single distribution period.

Jeremy Adair from Blue Goose Productions, makers of **7 Wonders of the Highways**, said the film delves into the minds, methods and madness of the people who built cultural icons such as the Big Banana, the Big Pineapple and the Big Merino Ram.

According to Adair, the Screenrights cheque, which was part of the November/December 2005 distribution round, made up an "unexpectedly large percentage of the royalties that we received for the documentary."

"It greatly aids companies like ours to pay off debts in order to get our next projects off the ground as soon as possible," he said.

The total payout from 1 November to 31 December 2005 was \$8,422,652. This compares with the previous highest amount of \$6,944,130 distributed in the same period in 2004.

Other recipients included Hilton Cordell for their reality documentary series **The Colony** and Network Ten for the educational news program for children, **ttn**.

Cherrie Bottger, Network Manager, Children's Television at Channel Ten, said: "Although ttn can draw on the local, national and international resources of TEN News, royalties from Screenrights gives us extra scope to delve behind stories and deliver the news in a relevant way to our young audience. Screenrights also enhances the reach for ttn, making each week's program accessible to virtually every classroom in Australia."

New agreement with NZ universities

All eight New Zealand universities have entered a new television and radio copying licence with Screenrights, guaranteeing members an important revenue stream while providing educators with access to this valuable resource.

The agreement with the New Zealand Vice Chancellors Committee will take effect from March 2006 and will continue for four years.

Screenrights Chief Executive Simon Lake said the result was a pleasing one for copyright owners in film and television and for academics at New Zealand universities.

"The negotiation process reflects the excellent relationship that has been established with New Zealand universities since the licence first came into operation," Lake said.

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EnhanceTV news

Recent changes to Screenrights online resource centre for teachers, enhanceTV, promise to make the site an even better educational marketing tool for filmmakers by increasing its popularity with teacher subscribers.

More than 4500 teachers currently subscribe to enhanceTV, accessing free study guides and a weekly email educational TV guide. Changes to the site give educators the opportunity to receive information by an rss feed. This provides a quick and easy means by which they can check the highlights and programming information for the day.

EnhanceTV Content Manager Jamie LeHuray said that teachers are "notoriously time-poor."

"These changes make the site much more user friendly for educators," LeHuray said. "And by helping teachers access material for teaching with audio-visual content we are aiding our filmmaker members who want their programs used in schools."

EnhanceTV is also running a competition for subscribers, with the winner receiving a DVD recorder for their school library. To find out more about these changes, visit www.enhancetv.com.au

New agreement for Government copying

Screenrights has finalised an agreement with the Government to cover payment of royalties for television and radio copying by Commonwealth Government Departments over an eight year period.

The agreement has been struck under provisions in the Copyright Act that allow for government use of copyright material provided rights owners are paid. It covers copying done from 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2009.

Screenrights Chief Executive Simon Lake said he was delighted that the agreement had been finalised.

"Screenrights members will be remunerated for this use of their work, providing another source of revenue for filmmakers," he said.

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AIDC update

"Who Owns What and Why? The Copyright Debate" was the subject of Screenrights' sponsored session at the AIDC (Australian International Documentary Conference) held in Melbourne from 13 to 16 February.

With speakers including Daryl Karp, Ian Collie and Dennis O'Rourke, the session provided an insightful look at the practicalities of navigating copyright ownership in film production.

Screenrights Chief Executive Simon Lake was also a panel member on a session entitled "Alternative Financing for Documentaries", speaking about the importance of Screenrights royalties to the documentary sector. And with documentaries accounting for more than one third of educational copying, the returns can be substantial.

Screenrights sponsors the conference as part of its commitment to the industry. To find out more about our sponsorship programme, go to www.screenrights.org.

New fact sheets for members

Screenrights website has a number of new fact sheets for members, including information on retransmission royalties and distributions to directors and performers.

The fact sheets, which can be found at www.screenrights.org/about/factsheets.html cover the following topics:

- ISAN: A fact sheet explaining the new ISAN numbering system and Screenrights' role as a registration agency.
- Directors rights: A fact sheet explaining when Screenrights will pay directors a share of retransmission royalties and why.
- Performers: A fact sheet explaining when Screenrights pays royalties to rightsholders in performances and why.
- Retransmission royalties: A fact sheet explaining the registration requirements for retransmission royalties.