SUBMISSION FROM MARGARET SCOTT

12 January 2015

Dear Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your inquiry into the Economic impact of the creative industries.

My name is Margaret Scott and I have worked for over 20 years predominately within the independent television sector. My experience ranges from working within a small SME to a large International business. My role has encompassed policy development, business development and most recently as a production executive for a large returning drama series. I also have experience working with our public sector bodies Scottish Enterprise and Creative Scotland.

The role of public sector agencies and the effectiveness of the support they provide.

The TV industry is a hybrid of a commercial enterprise with a cultural impact and this has, in my opinion, created problems with funding models. Television is for the most part a commercial business and companies making programmes for their clients 'broadcasters' do this on a commercial basis. There are varied routes to achieve growth within these creative business, much depends on the genre and commercial viability of the programmes.

- Being commissioned for a format which can sell internationally,
- Winning a returning series which can form the bedrock to growth,
- Commissions that are reputational by nature winning awards and attention nationally and internationally

Research and Development is crucial to television businesses to enable them to compete in the UK and International market. Given the centralisation of the television industry in the UK 'London focused' our businesses have an additional obstacle to overcome. The issue we need to address is how we can enable these businesses to access R&D support within the Scottish Enterprise environment? We need flexible packages that understand how our business employs talent, that can match existing development interest from any broadcaster to assist the journey to commission and support to secure key talent both on screen and off in this increasingly competitive market place. In short we need Scottish Enterprise to take ownership of the development our independent television industry and help us to create a world beating creative hub that retains and attracts the best talent and businesses large and small.

Creative Scotland should still retain a role in the development of the sector with talent initiatives and investment in feature docs and festivals. I am not suggesting Creative Scotland does not engage with the TV industry but that Scottish Enterprise is charged with creating growth and success. I passionately believe our industry has suffered a lack of public funding in the past by falling between the two stools, we need one body to take the lead in this exciting and fast changing industry.

The role of private sector investment in supporting the video games and the TV and film sectors.
I believe if we can achieve the right balance of R&D support from Scottish Enterprise which allows television businesses to grow this will open up opportunities for investment from the private sector which is currently limited.

How the issues that hinder the growth of creative industries can be overcome and how to capitalise on opportunities.

There are two main issues that hinder the growth of the independent television sector in Scotland. The first is the lack of R&D support currently available to the businesses based in Scotland this impacts on talent retention/attraction as well as competitiveness. We need to punch above our weight to get noticed in this industry, television is heavily centralised in London and the distance is a huge barrier to our business and, I believe, is quite unique to our industry. This is not the case in so many other countries but it is the way our television industry has evolved and at the moment we are stuck with it until there is a radical shake up to create a more federal system. An injection of R&D support into the television is crucial, do what you have always done your get what your have always got, to coin a phrase!

It is my belief that there is no greater time than now for Scotland to insist that our centralised television industry sit up and take notice that Great Britain is going through a period of greater democratisation and decentralisation. The out of London policies of our public sector broadcasters need to be examined to ensure they will have a lasting effect of moving production permanently out of London. Our industry does not have a great track record in this area, it is not easy undoing years of centralisation but the ultimate goal must be one of the creation of a thriving production and talent base with great businesses at its heart and we need to work together to achieve this. We cannot go on pretending we are there when we have a long way to go.

How to retain in Scotland those with the necessary creative skills.

See above, build a thriving television industry that makes a diverse range of television production, enable our companies to compete with their London counterparts by levelling the playing field and we will do the rest.

How to support those in the TV and film and video games industries to develop business skills.

Training initiatives, mentoring with business managers from different industries and helping to focus the creative mind to look at their company differently where necessary. Although I believe our television companies understand the business imperative ongoing training and mentoring is always required in any industry.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Scott