Extended response: Persuasive essay

This sample is intended to inform the design of assessment instruments in the senior phase of learning. It highlights the qualities of student work and the match to the syllabus standards.

Criteria assessed
- Critique

Assessment instrument
The response presented in this sample is in response to an assessment task.

Context
The Australian film industry has a reputation for innovation and quality, producing films with a unique flavour and global appeal. However, the Federal government is currently reviewing its financial position and is inviting feedback regarding the funding of Australian films. As the film industry relies heavily on government funding, the future of the industry is now in doubt.

Task
You are to write a **persuasive essay** advocating a position in favour of:
- *Either* continuing government support for the Australian film industry
- *Or* reviewing and possibly reducing government support.

In your argument, consider and analyse the ways in which funding is utilised and supports the aims of the industry. Evaluate how any changes to government funding would affect and impact on the industry. Support your argument with reference to, and evidence of, recent Australian films.

Key concept: Institutions

Conditions
- 800–1000 words
- Clear introduction and conclusion with bibliography
- 4 weeks in class researching
- Teacher supported.
Instrument-specific criteria and standards

Student responses have been matched to instrument-specific criteria and standards; those which best describe the student work in this sample are shown below. For more information about the syllabus dimensions and standards descriptors, see www.qsa.qld.edu.au/1245.html.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard A</th>
<th>Standard C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critique</strong></td>
<td>The student work has the following characteristics:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Effectively applies key concept: institutions, to make cohesive and substantiated judgements by thoroughly analysing and evaluating government funding and the affect and impact of this on the Australian film industry.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The student work has the following characteristics:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Applies aspects of key concept: institutions, to make some supported judgements by analysing government funding and the affect and impact of this on the Australian film industry.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Colour highlights have been used in the table to emphasise the qualities that discriminate between the standards.

**Key:**

- **Criteria qualifiers**
- **Criteria characteristics**
**Student response — Standard A**

The annotations show the match to the instrument-specific standards.

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**The Australian Film Industry: Art vs Business**

The Australian film industry has gained a reputation for innovation and quality, by producing films with a unique flavour that create global appeal. For decades the Australian film industry has been focused on internationally subjecting audiences around the world to the raw and exuberant works that lay subjective to Australian film culture. The Australian government has always been very supportive of the Arts and has funded the industry for the past 40 years, with the belief that its own film industry plays a vital role in spreading Australian culture. Despite the Australian film industry relying heavily on government funding; the financial position of the Australian film industry is under review. As a result of this, the film industry is now being questioned as to whether its focal point is relishing the unique and innovative nature of Australian film or if it is now just a business prospect.

With the coming of age of film, Australia quickly became one of the most prestigious and powerful industries in the world, when it created the world’s first feature film, The Kelly Gang in 1905 (Brendan Winter, 2005-07). Australia trailed the industry in the early 1900s with pioneering directors like Charles Chauvel, Ken G. Hall and Raymond Longford creating great Australian films (Brendan Winter, 2005-07). Unfortunately the Australian film industry has not always played a dominant role against others, and consequently suffered many films due to domination by Hollywood’s vertical integration, or foreign directors. Other significant challenges for the Australian film industry have come from the introduction of television into Australian homes. This sent the industry into turmoil as economic and social changes affected audience numbers in cinemas. From this point in time things became even grimmer for the Australian film industry as Hollywood dominated the cinema, resulting in a film drought with no feature films produced between 1959 and 1966. Fortunately the 70s saw the revival of the Australian film industry, better known as ‘The Renaissance’. This sparked potential business in the eyes of the government, as Prime Minister at the time, John Gorton established the Experimental Film Fund (EFF). A program aimed at providing funds for young and creative Australian directors to assist in the making of home grown Australian films. As the Gorton government diminished, the Labour Whitlam government arose in Australia and was even more supportive of the film industry. This saw the birth of the Australian Film and Television & Radio School (AFTRS). From here great works were produced that saw the Australian film industry rise to some of its most prominent moments, and produce some of its most iconic films. Due to the success of the funding from EFF and AFTRS, the Australian government saw the many possibilities for Australian film and brought in the 1980, 10BA tax concessions. This resulted in masses of Australian films being made, however it did result in many poorly made amateur films. Since then the industry has taken a turn for the better with a number of famous iconic films produced over the past decade, not only launching the industry into artistic recognition, but also establishing it as a valuable international business. (film org, Brendan Winter © 2005-2007)

Keeping this in mind, the Australian Government has played a huge role in developing the Australian film industry into the successful business it is today. Between the EFF (Experimental Film Fund), Australian Film and Television & Radio School (AFTRS) and Screen Australia, they have each played important roles in developing and advertising the product...
that Australia produces today. It is the role of government funded Screen Australia to provide production support across a range of film and television programs, facilitating online advertising and information to audiences, not to mention increasing the commercial sustainability of production in Australia. Moreover, Screen Australia is responsible for marketing Australian screen culture to not only engage Australian audiences, but also to international audiences. Federal film agencies: average of $1.62.81 million total income per year, whereas state film agencies: average of $42.21 million total income per year. Screen Australia provides funds of 203.87million on average per annum on a combination of training, production and project development as well as screen culture and archival activities (ScreenAustralia.com, accessed 27/10/2010). From this Producers and Directors are taking advantage of the 2007 tax incentives that allow a 40% offset rebate to films made and produced in Australia. Last year 330 films were released in Australia, 28% of these were Australian films and grossed a small $23million, only 2.8% of the total Australian Box Office. (Program Guidelines pg65, Aust Gov, 2010) Despite the government investing copious amounts of money into the film industry, the movies attract little audience and fail in the box office and receive no real income. In comparison to the income figures, the money spent is not making as much as it is spending on the making and producing of these Australian films. 

Since the 1990s to date, there has been a massive drop in the number of ticket sales and purchase of Australian feature films, overseas. Over a five year period from 2000 to 2004 the box office releases were at 5.2percent, one year later they took a further decrease and dropped a further 10percent (Program Guidelines pg45, Aust Gov, 2010). Since the early to mid 2000s little has changed in the industry and the government is losing money. Despite the past decade having a tonne of films that have been great works of art and well represented Australians from all walks of life, audiences lack interest in them. According to R. Miller Australian films are ‘overhyped’ and that Australian cinema merely consists of the same old “‘Realistic’ dramas set in the bush or outer-suburbs about ‘worthy’ subjects such as mental illness, indigenous rights, refugees, broken families and alienation, whether we want to see them or not”. (R. Miller, newmatilda.com,2008) It is apparent that Australians are more attracted to Hollywood produced films, however with the new tax incentives many foreign directors have been producing films in Australia, merely for this reason. With the government supplying money to foreign directors, the industry has become more about business then the art of film and media. It is also feared that Australia is now merely seen as a back lot for Hollywood. In spite of this, it would seem that the industry is not producing anything new and spectacular to Australian audiences, leaving the industry in financial disarray.

Despite the downward spiral of the Australian film industry over the past decade, it would financially be in the government’s best interest to cut funds from the Australian film industry, as the mass losses on expenditure are proving to be a waste of time and money. Despite this however, internationally, countries strongly identify with their film culture as it showcases their cultural identity. Australia is no different and takes much pride in funding Australian film and indigenous films in particular. According to research conducted by the Bergent Film Finance Corporation into Australian films “Australians often feel that Australian films are not ‘promoted’ sufficiently and that their awareness is low.”(R. Miller, newmatilda.com,2008) By proposing that Screen Australia alternates the use of their funds
Comments

Suggestion for future strategies

Evaluation of impact on institutions

Evaluation of impact on (concept)

Substantiated judgment referenced

films are not ‘promoted’ sufficiently and that their awareness is low.”(R. Miller, newmatilda.com, 2008.) By proposing that Screen Australia alternates the use of their funds by using different forms of advertising and targeting the internet as a means for advertising could be highly effective. Another way to improve the income of the industry would be for the government to put in place a means of using the funds they have more effectively and by doing further research into what genre of film appeals to Australian audiences. Completely abandoning funding to the Australian film industry would see a dramatic demise in Australian Arts and diminish any previous achievements.

The importance of film culture in Australia and making sure that the revival of it is a strong one lies in the hands of the government altering their means of funding. As is, the government is being taken advantage of and supplying money to foreign directors that are merely using Australia as a back lot for Hollywood. Ideally the Australian film industry still holds a strong connection with the arts and is not just a form of business, however due to the dramatic loss in money; it has become an issue of business that is simply awaiting the resurrection of the industry. If Australia wants to rise again and make the film industry once again about the ‘arts’ rather than just a mere business proposition, then it needs to begin producing a genre of film that appeals to Australian audiences. As Australian writer and director, Murali K. Thalluri said “It’s not up to Australian audiences to go support Australian films. It’s up to Australian film makers to make films that not just Australian audiences want to see, but all audiences in general.” (into the Shadows, Andrew Scarano, 2009)

Bibliography


Into the Shadows, 2009, Andrew Scarano, Documentary.

(ScreenAustralia.com, accessed 27/10/2010). PDF File
(Program Guidelines pg65, Aust Gov, 2010) PDF File
(Program Guidelines, pg45, Aust Gov, 2010) PDF File

Acknowledgments

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