

# AUSTRALIAN FILMS AND GENRE

When used with Film Victoria's analysis of International top ten box office statistics, this analysis should assist local practitioners to understand:

- how Australian audiences have responded to different types of Australian films over time
- types of films currently being produced
- films which could be made to meet current gaps in the marketplace, and possibly increase audience engagement.

A list of distributors and the number of films they have released by genre is also provided to illustrate that a strategic approach may be required when seeking to develop a relationship with a distributor.



## ***Methodology***

Box office data<sup>1</sup> contained in this analysis was sourced from the Motion Picture Distributors Association of Australia (MPDAA) for the period 1954-2009. In the majority of cases where the MPDAA data contained genre classifications, their primary genre classification was used. Where Film Victoria thought there was a more appropriate classification, the classification was altered. An example of one such reclassification was to change *South Solitary* from a Comedy to a Period Drama. Due to the small number of films classified as Mystery, Suspense and Thriller, Film Victoria has decided to combine these into the one genre of Suspense. Where the MPDAA data did not contain any genre classification, Film Victoria provided genre classifications by referring to various internet sources following a predetermined protocol. It is important to note that definitive genre classification can often be a difficult task and relies upon subjective interpretation.

## ***The history of Australian genre films***

From 1954 to 1979 the number of Australian films released could predominately be classified as Dramas (30%), Comedies (18%), Period Dramas (13%) and Horrors (8%). Suspense, Documentary, Action and Family films each represented between 4%-6% of all Australian films. During this period there were also a small amount of adult films produced and released in Australia.

Chart 1 shows the breakdown of genre from 1954 - 1979, although it should be noted that there were very few Australian films released prior to 1970.

<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that theatrical sales are not the only measure of performance however due to a lack of availability of DVD retail information this study is limited to an analysis of box office data.

### Australian Films and Genre 1954-1979

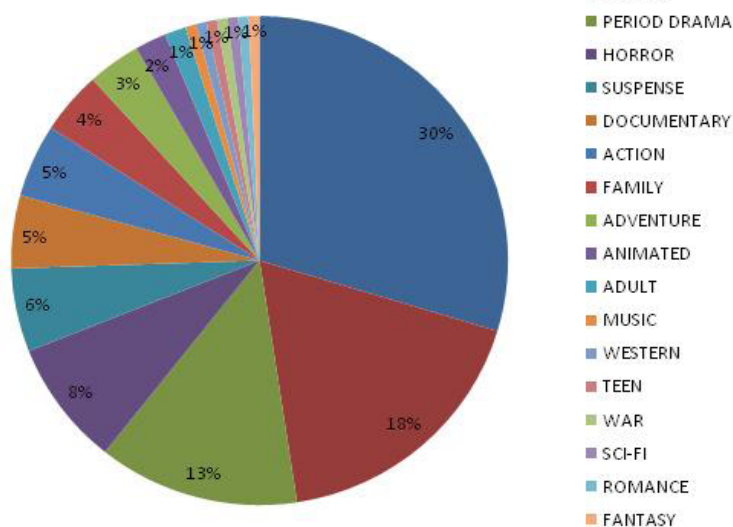


Chart 1

Chart 2, below, reveals that from 1980 to 1989 the percentage of Documentary releases increased while the percentage of Period Dramas and Horror films decreased quite dramatically. The percentage of Animated releases rose due to the release of several 'Dot and the Kangaroo' sequels and family films, which continued to be represented by the release of films such as 'Fatty Finn', 'Ginger Meggs', 'BMX Bandits' and 'Bush Christmas'. While Sci Fi films represented a small percentage of all Australian releases the number of these types of films did rise within this decade.

### Australian Films and Genre 1980-1989

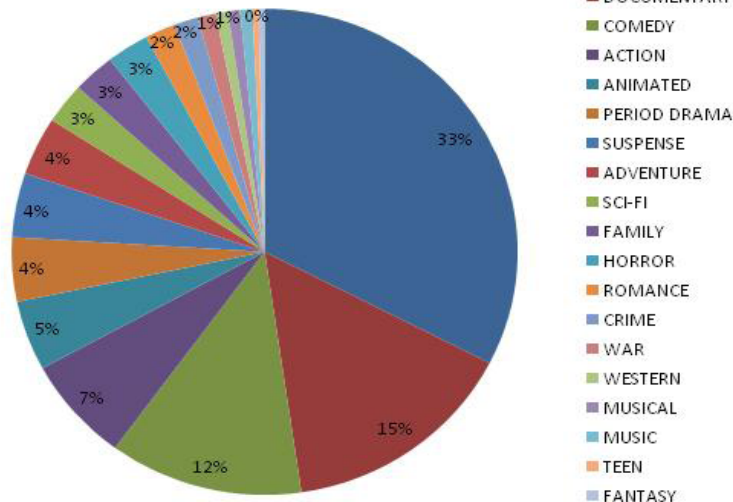


Chart 2

From 1990 to 1999 Drama, Comedies and Documentaries remained dominant, all increasing their share of the overall number of films released. The percentage of Comedy films surpassed that of Documentaries. The genre of Romantic Comedy made its first appearance amongst Australian films during this period representing 6% of all releases. However the percentage of Period Dramas and Horrors continued to fall and the number of Australian Action, Sci-Fi and Animated films - which had all increased in the 1980s - reduced considerably. Crime films, however, while still representing an overall small percentage of all Australian releases began an increasing trend that continues to date.

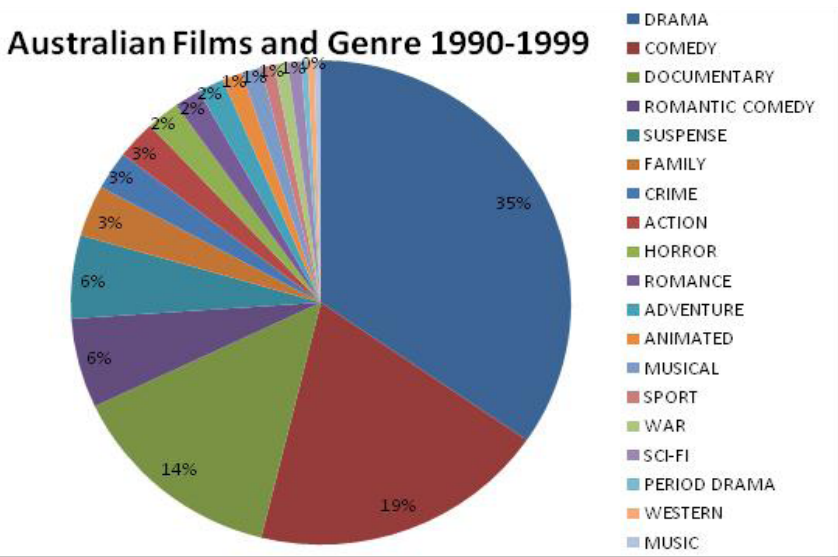


Chart 3

From 2000 to September 2010 Australian Drama, Documentaries and Comedies continue as dominant genres. The number of Family films dropped significantly and Actions, Adventures and Romantic Comedies diminished, however the percentage of Musical and Period Drama films have considerably increased. Horror films also appear to be on the increase.

While representing a lower percentage, Drama, Comedies and Documentaries (since 1980) have steadily been released in Australia. Suspense films, have also remained consistent. However, the genres of War, Romance, Western, Fantasy and Teen films have remained consistently under represented. The number of Sci Fi, Action, Family, and Adventure films has fallen over time, while Animation and Horror seems to fluctuate.

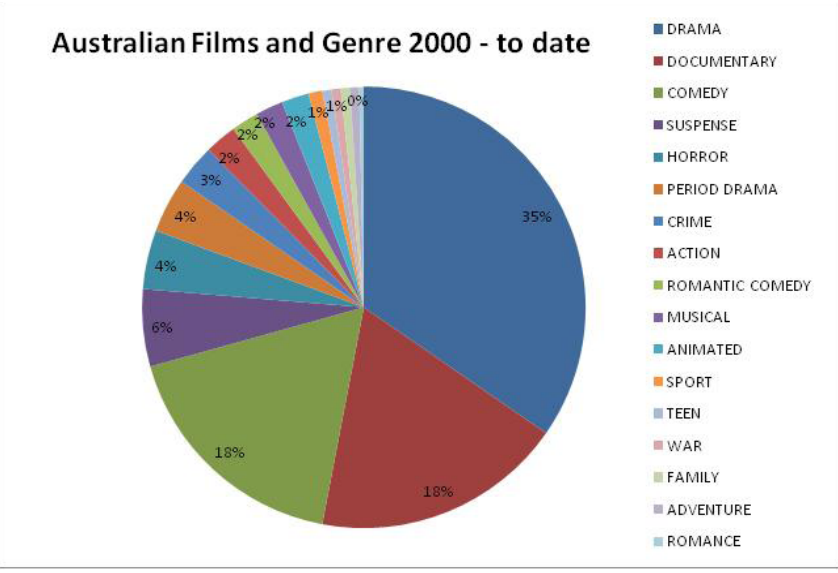


Chart 2



**Screens and Box Office Takings for Australian Films**

Analysis of average screens and box office takings by genre has been limited for the period 2000 to 2009, to ensure results are not skewed by the growth of available screens and are most relevant to today’s practitioners. The table below reveals that while Australian Teen films have had low representation at the cinema, those released have had a high number of screens – most likely reflecting the frequency of cinema going for this target demographic. Animation, Sport, Comedy and Period Dramas also command a high number of screens.

**2000-2009 AVERAGE NUMBER OF SCREENS BY GENRE**

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Average max screens</b>	<b>Examples of titles with a high number of screens</b>
TEEN	154	Looking for Alibrandi
ANIMATED	123	Happy Feet / The Magic Pudding
SPORT	105	Footy Legends
COMEDY	100	The Dish/Crocodile Dundee/Crackerjack
PERIOD DRAMA	99 <sup>2</sup>	Australia
WAR	99	Kokoda
ADVENTURE	92	The Crocodile Hunter
HORROR	87	Wolf Creek/Rogue/Dying Breed
MUSICAL	86	Moulin Rouge/Bootmen
CRIME	53	Chopper
ROMANCE	41	Love's Brother
FAMILY	40	Selkie
ROMANTIC COMEDY	39	The Extra
SUSPENSE	22 <sup>2</sup>	Knowing
DRAMA	26 <sup>2</sup>	Mao's Last Dancer/The Hard Word/The Boys are Back
ACTION	23	Gabriel
DOCUMENTARY	52 <sup>2</sup>	Bra Boys/Not Quite Hollywood

Table 1<sup>3</sup>

**2000-2009 AVERAGE BOX OFFICE TAKINGS BY GENRE**

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Average takings per film</b>
MUSICAL	\$7,693,299
ANIMATED	\$6,869,612
TEEN	\$4,572,143
WAR	\$3,138,501
PERIOD DRAMA	\$2,473,1312 <sup>2</sup>
COMEDY	\$2,131,768
ADVENTURE	\$2,036,691
CRIME	\$1,753,053
HORROR	\$1,438,104
ROMANCE	\$977,106
DRAMA	\$703,8902 <sup>2</sup>
SUSPENSE	\$342,0732 <sup>2</sup>
SPORT	\$376,131
ACTION	\$327,598
ROMANTIC COMEDY	\$281,540
FAMILY	\$217,830
DOCUMENTARY	\$93,5242 <sup>2</sup>

Table 2<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Outliers have been removed when calculating this average due to one or two titles which were significantly skewing results

<sup>3</sup> Where screen number data/ box office takings are not available corresponding titles have been removed from average calculations.

As the number of release screens impacts box office takings, table 3 shows the average box office takings for genre films when divided by the average number of maximum screens. It reveals that Musical and Animation films still perform the best at the box office however, Crime and War films have provided higher box office numbers on average, per number of screens.

**2000-2009 AVERAGE BOX OFFICE TAKINGS BY AVERAGE MAX NUMBER OF SCREENS**

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Average takings by average max screens</b>
MUSICAL	\$71,399.52
ANIMATED	\$55,669.46
CRIME	\$33,312.17
WAR	\$31,702.03
TEEN	\$29,785.94
DRAMA	\$27,122.362 <sup>2</sup>
PERIOD DRAMA	\$24,918.202 <sup>2</sup>
ROMANCE	\$23,831.85
ADVENTURE	\$22,258.92
COMEDY	\$21,416.19
HORROR	\$16,529.93
SUSPENSE	\$15,548.752 <sup>2</sup>
ACTION	\$14,347.34
DOCUMENTARY	\$10,197.322 <sup>2</sup>
ROMANTIC COMEDY	\$5,445.74

Table 3



**Appendix<sup>4</sup>**

**2000 – TO DATE NUMBER OF FILMS AND THEIR GENRE BY DISTRIBUTORS**

Roadshow

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
COMEDY	10
DRAMA	8
HORROR	4
SUSPENSE	2
ANIMATED	2
TEEN	1
ACTION	1
PERIOD DRAMA	1

Palace

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
DRAMA	19
COMEDY	4
DOCUMENTARY	2
ROMANTIC COMEDY	1
WAR	1
CRIME	1
ROMANCE	1

## Hopscotch

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
DRAMA	7
DOCUMENTARY	6
COMEDY	1
CRIME	1

## Dendy

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
DRAMA	12
DOCUMENTARY	4
COMEDY	2
PERIOD DRAMA	1
SUSPENSE	1
MUSICAL	1

## Hoyts

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
COMEDY	4
DRAMA	3
CRIME	2
HORROR	2
ROMANTIC COMEDY	1

## Icon

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
DRAMA	8
COMEDY	3
ANIMATED	2
SPORT	1
HORROR	1
SUSPENSE	1
CRIME	1
FAMILY	1

## Paramount

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
DRAMA	3
COMEDY	2
PERIOD DRAMA	2
WAR	1
SUSPENSE	1
DOCUMENTARY	1
SPORT	1

## Madman

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
DOCUMENTARY	4
DRAMA	2
HORROR	1
SUSPENSE	1
COMEDY	1
PERIOD DRAMA	1
CRIME	1
ANIMATED	1
ACTION	1

## Fox

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
COMEDY	4
MUSICAL	2
DRAMA	2
ANIMATED	1
PERIOD DRAMA	1
ADVENTURE	1

## Ronin

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
DOCUMENTARY	11

UIP

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
COMEDY	3
ROMANTIC COMEDY	2
PERIOD DRAMA	2
FAMILY	1
SPORT	1
HORROR	1

GSF

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
DOCUMENTARY	4
DRAMA	2
MUSICAL	1

Becker

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
DRAMA	3
COMEDY	2
CRIME	1

Indies

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
DOCUMENTARY	4
COMEDY	1
SUSPENSE	1
DRAMA	1

Sharmill

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
DOCUMENTARY	3
DRAMA	1
ADVENTURE	1

BVI

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number Distributed</b>
COMEDY	5
DRAMA	1

<sup>4</sup> Distributors as assigned by the MPDAA. It should be noted that some distributors in this table may no longer exist, may have changed entity or may have altered their business practices. This list has been provided by Film Victoria solely for the purpose of illustrating that a strategic approach considering genre type may be required when seeking to develop a relationship with a distributor.

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