



**Queensland
Government**

10 NOV 2005

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Corner Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Office of the
**Minister for Education and
Minister for the Arts**

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letters dated 6 and 17 October 2005 regarding the petitions received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly Nos 490-05, 491-05 and 546-06 relating to State Government support for the reality TV series *Big Brother*.

The level of assistance provided to a production in Queensland depends on two factors – the number of Queensland jobs generated and the money spent in Queensland. Our government's Pacific Film and Television Commission (PFTC) attracted the *Big Brother* reality series to Queensland in 2001. We faced strong competition from New South Wales where the parent company, Endemol Southern Star, is based.

Through the PFTC, *Big Brother* is entitled to apply for a Cast and Crew Salary Rebate and a Payroll Tax Rebate, as is any other production company planning a substantial production in Queensland. Without this and the other incentives offered by the PFTC, the production could relocate to New South Wales.

It's all about growing the film and television industry in Queensland, along with the skill and jobs that go with an investment in a major production like this.

Big Brother generates considerable tourism expenditure in the State, including 'spin-off' benefits such as accommodation, retail sales and entertainment. Now in its fifth series, *Big Brother* has contributed over \$35m in direct production expenditure in Queensland with an economic impact of over \$100m. *Big Brother* has generated over 260 jobs for people involved in the film and television industry for the five years it has been produced in Queensland. It has also provided excellent training opportunities for Queensland film and television students.

I share your concern for (what turned out to be) distasteful nonsense in this year's series, but the content of any program broadcast in Queensland is not regulated by the Queensland Government or the PFTC. The Government agency responsible for dealing with such issues is the Federal Government agency, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).

The ACMA can accept direct complaints if the matter concerns a possible breach of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, or the standards relating to Australian content or children's television.

Thank you for raising the concerns of petitioners with me in relation to this matter.

Yours sincerely

Rod Welford MP

Ref: 05/104397

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