

Creative Collaboration for the Australian Visual Entertainment Industries

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ABSTRACT

A survey of visual entertainment production companies in Sydney has been undertaken to determine the principal factors which relate to their choice of location and propensity to cluster. Similarly, stakeholders and government agencies have also been interviewed to determine the scope for government intervention to facilitate existing and nascent clusters in this industry. The Sydney clusters are concentrated in the lower North shore and the Eastern Suburbs sub-regions on opposite sides of the Sydney Harbour. Businesses located in these two clusters indicated that the existence of related infrastructure including television stations and studio facilities were significant factors in their choice of location. Other primary considerations included the relative land value/rental costs of premises; ease of access to the freeway system and to public transport; and the attractiveness of the environment. However, the rapid advance of digital technology to the industry is having an impact on spatial clustering, with the potential for out-sourcing some services to regional or international locations, and enabling some businesses to scale down and continue a trend for working at home particularly during pre-production phases.

Within Australia the three tiers of government have an impact on the propensity to cluster via several mechanisms, including tax-offsets, enterprise grants, regional assistance grants and local policies to encourage more "film friendly" processes and more flexible development approval processes. There is also evidence to support the need for the industry itself to become better organised in a collaborative sense to derive the best advantage from available government finance and mutual support to lift production capacity from cottage industry status to modern and better integrated enterprise.

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