

Screen Currency 2026

Understanding the value of
Australian screen and games

A study in 5 reports with
supporting case studies

Case study

Deadloch

TV Series • Released 2023
Amazon MGM Studios,
OK Great Productions, and
Guesswork Television



Australian Government



Introduction

 Individual	 Community	 Industry	 Economy	 Nation
Entertainment	Feminist take on crime genre	Globally successful local drama	Regional impacts	Soft power
Humour	Profile of contemporary Tasmania & NT	Creative team from online content creation to TV drama	Regional spend	Positive perceptions of Australia
Genre satisfaction & subversion	Gender & sexuality representation	Training & skills development	Tourism impact	Plural & confident national identity
Culturally relevant stories	Current issues (e.g. age of criminality)	Format innovation	Positive perceptions of regional areas (i.e. Tasmania & Northern Territory)	
Authenticity & satire	Discussion & exchange			
Gender diversity on screen				
Identity				

Deadloch is a black comedy crime drama series that demonstrates how distinctive Australian stories can resonate with audiences within a global streaming environment.

Created by Kate McCartney and Kate McLennan, the series reflects a broader industry shift toward creator-led television that innovates by blending genres with clarity and originality. McCartney and McLennan first developed their profile through online comedy and satire, particularly through works such as *The Katering Show* and *Get Krack!n*, which parodied lifestyle television and media representations of gender. That satirical sensibility informs *Deadloch*, which reworks the conventions of Nordic noir and prestige crime drama through feminist comedy, queer female detectives, male victims and an intentionally dysfunctional investigative partnership.

Set in a fictional Tasmanian town, *Deadloch* Season 1 follows the investigation of a suspicious death that unravels underlying tensions within the community. Framed by the creators as a “feminist noir comedy,” the series uses the murder as a device to engage with social issues, including class, colonial legacy and gendered violence. The narrative explores divisions between long-term residents, affluent newcomers and First Nations communities, positioning crime

not simply as an individual act but as a symptom of entrenched social and cultural power structures. Through this framework, the series combines genre storytelling with sharp cultural commentary and distinctly Australian humour.

The series achieved significant international reach on Amazon Prime Video, appearing in Top 10 lists across more than 165 countries. Its success highlights the global appeal of culturally specific storytelling and demonstrates how genre-led, locally grounded narratives can connect with broad audiences.

The second season took the show to Batchelor in the Northern Territory, supported by Screen Territory’s Production Attraction Incentive Program, which encouraged production spend, work opportunities and tourism flow-on benefits for the Northern Territory. *Deadloch*’s global success demonstrates how a production, when underpinned by a strong creative vision, can travel widely and connect with diverse audiences, to generate cultural and economic value.

Creation

Companies involved

Production company:	Amazon MGM Studios, OK Great Productions, and Guesswork Television
Commissioner:	Amazon Prime Video

OK Great Productions is owned by creators Kate McLennan and Kate McCartney (“the Kates”). The Kates have a background in award-winning stand-up comedy and animation. Their initial success with web series *Bleak* (2014) then *The Katering Show* (2015–2016) was followed by *Get Krack!n* (2017–2019) on the ABC. Web series were of strategic importance in the Kates’ creative careers, not just as a “calling card” but in the formulation of their comedy and voice.¹ Fictional web series have become a proven disruptive alternative to the traditional TV industry, offering actors and producers unprecedented pathways to creative agency and entrepreneurial career development, with measures of success that differ to traditional economic metrics.²

Guesswork Television has been the primary production partner for the Kates for more than a decade, producing *The Katering Show* S2 and *Get Krack!n*, providing them with production infrastructure including financing, contracting and production management services.

Amazon MGM Studios supported the series through financing, global distribution and platform commissioning arrangements with Amazon Prime Video. As commissioner, Amazon Prime Video positioned *Deadloch* as part of its strategy to expand Australian original content offerings for both domestic and international audiences,³ leveraging the platform’s global subscriber base to increase the visibility and export potential of Australian scripted comedy-drama.

Origin story: the idea and initial development

The idea for *Deadloch* emerged between the seasons of *Get Krack!n* when the Kates found themselves watching Nordic noir-inspired crime dramas. Their initial pitch for *Deadloch* was “Funny Broadchurch” – referencing the British crime drama series starring Olivia Colman, who the Kates knew primarily from her earlier comedy work.⁴

The pair tap into the emerging notion of “Tassie noir”, an emulation of Scandinavian crime drama,⁵ and evolve the concept into something more ambitious – with more laughs.⁶ Rather than simply satirising the genre, the series treated crime and comedy with equal weight – aiming to be both genuinely gripping and genuinely funny. As the Kates describe it “We treated the crime and the comedy with equal reverence. Yes, we do want this to be funny, but we need it to be really gripping as well. We were always serving those 2 objectives with the show”.⁷ Their intention was also to create a visually elevated series that could sit confidently on a global stage.⁸

Early development was highly self-directed. Between seasons of *Get Krack!n* the pair travelled to Tasmania, staying on Bruny Island where they wrote the pilot script independently before any partners were attached to the project.⁹ The location played a significant role in shaping the tone and setting of the series.



“Both meets and subverts genre expectations.”¹⁰
– Luke Buckmaster, *The Guardian*

Social intention

The Kates have consistently described *Deadloch* as a project driven not only by an interest in genre play but by a desire to engage with a range of social issues. As McCartney explains, “We tend to find a genre and then use that genre as an entry point for people and then we can talk about the stuff we want to talk about.”¹¹ In this case, a crime series as a vehicle for exploring questions of gender, sexuality and representation.

A central tenet of the series is its feminist perspective, particularly through its depiction of women in positions of authority and its broader interrogation of gender dynamics within the crime genre. This includes the prominence of female police officers as complex, central characters, as well as storylines that normalise queer relationships and community life, such as the inclusion of Dulcie Collins’ gay marriage and a lesbian choir group. The show also achieves this through the Kates’ clever subverting of established conventions of the crime genre.

“We always knew we wanted to open with a scene of a dead body being discovered, and traditionally in those types of shows, it’s always a woman,” says McLennan. “A good-looking woman,” adds McCartney, “... it’s always voyeuristic. Obviously, the crime engine is really enjoyable for people to watch, but we were also interested in what sort of disservice that genre does to marginalised people.”¹²

The production also sought to engage meaningfully with First Nations perspectives, with an emphasis on cultural respect and authenticity. The involvement of Tasmanian Aboriginal artist and cultural practitioner Sinsa Mansell was central to this approach. As McCartney notes, “We had the great honour and pleasure of having Sinsa Mansell involved in the production ... the level of knowledge that she had, and the community had, around shell middens and ochre – we got such an education on the place, that just went beyond 200 years of history ...” McCartney further observed that this engagement revealed “... extraordinary ancient culture” creating a more informed and considered depiction of place throughout the series.¹³

The creative process

The production brought together an experienced creative team led by the Kates as creators and executive producers, alongside Kevin Whyte, Tanya Phegan and producer Andy Walker (*Rosehaven*, *The Kettering Incident*). Cinematography was shared across Katie Milwright and Simon Ozolins, whose work contributes to the show’s distinctive visual balance between noir and comedy.

Season 1 directors were Australian directors Ben Chessell (*The Great*, *Giri/Haji*), Gracie Otto (*The Moth Effect*, *Seriously Red*) and Beck Cole (*Black Comedy*, *Wentworth*).¹⁴ Season 2 was directed by Beck Cole and Gracie Otto.

Stephen Russel, a Melbourne-based arts writer, has praised the series’ execution, “Directors Beck Cole, Gracie Otto and Ben Chessell do a good job delivering a sturdy crime show vibe beautifully shot by cinematographers Katie Milwright and Simon Ozolins, and you can sit back and enjoy it on that level.”¹⁵

The writing team extends beyond the creators to include Kim Wilson, crime writer Christian White, Anchuli Felicia King, Kirsty Fisher and Madeline Sami, reflecting a collaborative approach in blending crime noir and comedy. The development process also incorporated consultation and participation from First Nations voices such as Gunai/Kurnai author and former police officer Veronica (Ronnie) Gorrie, ensuring that specific lived experiences – particularly around policing and identity – were approached with care and intentionality.

“We really wanted to talk to Ronnie about her experience working in the police force, and her dual identity of being a Black woman in the police.”¹⁶

– Kate McLennan, executive producer & creator

“We will always create space for the story ... But there is no expectation that we get to tell those kinds of [First Nations] stories unless people feel like there’s utility to it.”¹⁷

– Kate McCartney, executive producer & creator

Filming in Southern Tasmania, in locations such as Cygnet, Snug and Kingston,¹⁸ was central to the production's creative vision. The region's varied landscape allowed the team to realise an "Australian version of that Scandi-noir aesthetic", with coastline, bushland and small-town environments all within close proximity. McCartney sees Tasmania's visual terrain as a "cinematographer's dream", while also positioning the setting as a character in its own right.

"I know this probably sounds very trite to say, but Tassie really is a character in the show; it's really on show," she says. "There's some incredible drone footage that we've got, particularly in the first episode."¹⁹

The production included a high level of location immersion. Instead of flying in and out during the pandemic, most of the cast and crew relocated to Hobart. McLennan and McCartney lived there for almost 6 months with their families. On breaks in filming, the cast and crew would go out together to pumpkin festivals or pie-eating competitions.²⁰

According to McCartney, "Hobart, and Tassie in general, has just got a really good reputation within the industry ... They've just been so well set up with local cast and crew for TV productions. The benefit is also that Tasmania has got so many different landscapes and that's just like a cinematographer's dream."²¹

All 4 detectives are played by queer actors. Queer relationships in the show are written and performed as natural parts of the characters' lives rather than central to the story.²²



"The show doesn't shy away from serious issues in the Northern Territory, including the territory government's promise to be tough on crime that led the NT to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility to just 10 years old and tighten bail laws."²³

– Hannah Story, ABC



"The conceit was like, 'what happens if you make the normal victims of a crime show the protagonists of a crime show, and you de-centre men?' ... Naturally, that means you create a world of lesbians."²⁴

– Kate McCartney, executive producer & creator

Production

Cast and crew metrics

The following IMDb-sourced metrics illustrate the breadth and scale of the production workforce.²⁵

Producers:	12
Directors:	3
Writers:	7
Cinematographers:	4
Cast:	134
Crew:	416
People with multiple roles:	26

Production financing: investment and presales

Deadloch did not receive direct funding from federal or state agencies for Season 1 and was commissioned by Amazon Prime Video. The decision to go to a US studio was not purely financial. Executive producer Kevin Whyte notes that Amazon “genuinely responded to the material with the most enthusiasm. Finance is always a factor, but it was not primary.”²⁶ Crucially, the streamer wanted an Australian show that felt Australian, not something about Australia for Americans, which resonated with the Kates.²⁷ *Deadloch* was Amazon’s 14th Australian commission since 2019 and its third locally-made scripted drama.²⁸

Season 2 was filmed in the Northern Territory and supported by Screen Territory’s Production Attraction Incentive Program with a \$718,000 investment. It was also supported through Screen Queensland’s Production Attraction Strategy, with the production filming in local waterways and Screen Queensland Studios, Brisbane.^{29,30,31}

Training and skills

In the various locations where *Deadloch* filmed – Tasmania, the NT and Queensland Studios – state agencies cited opportunities for cast and crew.

Jennie Hughes, director of Screen Territory, has said, “We are excited to support this terrific project which will deliver more opportunities for our local cast and crew and anticipate the production of a fantastic series for *Deadloch* fans with a unique Territorian twist.”³²

Economic impacts

Follow-on production activity

Season 2 of *Deadloch* contributed \$3.1 million of direct spend into the Northern Territory economy, bringing the production to the town of Batchelor, where much of its filming occurred.³³

Innovation

Deadloch features numerous creative innovations, notably as a feminist re-engineering of the Scandi-noir genre. It takes the aesthetics of Nordic noir and transforms them into a character-driven satire, placing queer women at the centre in roles usually dominated by men and avoids falling into parody by structuring its story arc around a crime. The second season introduces a new tonal blend, reframing the Tassie noir of the first season into tropical gothic.



\$3.1 million of direct spend into the Northern Territory economy.³⁴

Dissemination

Distribution

First release platform: Amazon Prime Video

Deadloch is available to Prime Video subscribers in 240 countries and territories worldwide.³⁵

Exhibition

Deadloch is exclusive to Prime Video.

Awards

Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) Awards 2024, including Best Acting in a Comedy (Kate Box) and Best Screenplay in Television (Kate McLennan and Kate McCartney).³⁶ *Deadloch*

also won awards for Best Editing in Television, Best Original Score in Television and Best Casting in Television.

Deadloch also received awards from Screen Producers Australia, TV Tonight and the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance's (MEAA) Equity Foundation. Kate Box and Madeleine Sami were both nominated for the 2024 Logie for Best Lead Actress in a Comedy. In September 2024, *Deadloch* was nominated for an International Emmy Award for Best Comedy.

Renewal

Following the immediate success of Season 1, Amazon commissioned a second season.



The show is Amazon's third locally-made scripted drama.³⁷



Top 10 on Prime Video in more than 165 countries and territories, including the UK and the US.³⁸



"*Deadloch* flips the crime genre on its head in such a fresh and engaging way, and we know Prime Video customers globally are going to be hooked from the first episode."

– Sarah Christie, senior development executive at Prime Video Australia



Engagement

Online metrics

Selected audience and critic scores are shown below.³⁹

IMDb:	7.5/10
Rotten Tomatoes (critics):	100%
Rotten Tomatoes (audience):	84%
Metacritic (general score):	79/100
Metacritic (user):	8.2/10

Reception

Australian audiences

Soon after its launch in June 2023 the show was #1 in Australia for the streaming service.⁴⁰ McLennan says they were a little taken aback by the fervent viewer support for *Deadloch*. Without the normal TV ratings to go by, she was relying on social media and what people were telling her to gauge the public's response: "On the weekend everywhere I went someone would stop me and tell me that they liked the show, so it was just like, 'This is reaching some kind of critical mass now, this has ticked over, this is good'."⁴¹

Writing in *The Conversation*, Sue Turnbull reviewed *Deadloch* as "a loving yet savage parody, flipping the Nordic Noir crime genre on its arse and making it funny."⁴²

International audiences

The show was a breakout hit on Amazon Prime, where it made the Top 10 Shows list in more than 165 countries and territories, including the US, UK and Canada.⁴³ Vanity Fair described *Deadloch* as the "feminist crime parody you didn't know you needed."⁴⁴

Some online reviews on Reddit analysed for Screen Currency 2026 showed positive responses from America, Finland, Canada, Iceland, Germany and the UK, including:

"American here! I love it. I watched it because a person I follow on TikTok was recommending 'shows you might not have heard of this year featuring queer women'. I now have 4 other queer friends hooked!"⁴⁵

"I'm from the UK, I'm a lesbian, so my friend told me 'watch this show, it's exactly what you'd like' and what do you know, they were right."⁴⁶

"Watched it from all the way over here in Germany. Loved it. Recommended it to friends and wound up confusing the hell out of them, which made it even funnier."⁴⁷

In a French edition of *The Conversation*, the series was described as a "parodic satire" calling out structural violence and hegemony in feminist terms, comparing it to the recent American film *Promising Young Woman* (2020) and the British black comedy drama series *I May Destroy You* (2020). It also talked about the humour in terms of Hannah Gadsby's internationally acclaimed stand-up show *Nanette* – noting she was also from Tasmania.⁴⁸

Online engagement

Many viewers commenting about *Deadloch* online recognised the diversity in its representation going hand-in-hand with its storytelling, including this example on Rotten Tomatoes: "Awesome queer representation, good POC [people of colour] representation, funny as hell and a clever and very fun mystery too".⁴⁹ The positive commentary was, however, countered by comments from people who didn't get the humour or were intolerant of seeing gender-diverse characters on their screens.



"We wanted to make sure that there was stuff that was quite specific to Darwin there ... Because people can get upset if their hometown isn't properly represented."

– Kate McCartney, executive producer & creator

Fans of the series were extremely enthusiastic, with quotes from the *Deadloch* Fans Facebook group including:

“Just found this series. The writing is HYSTERICAL. I do need to have CC [closed captions] on as I am from the US and it’s hard to keep up with the fast talking. However I can’t stop laughing so it’s worth it.”⁵⁰

“I have not laughed out loud like that in a long time! Perfection.”⁵¹

“Watch *Deadloch*! It’s Aussie, it’s clever, it’s funny and it has more lesbians than you can poke Kevin the seal at.”⁵²

“Just finished watching this class series *Deadloch* ... good plot, very witty, set in Tasmania. I love that the main characters are lesbian and it’s not to ‘make a point’, that’s just who they are ... dyke characters through a dyke lens, and a jolly good murder mystery to boot.”⁵³

Social and cultural impacts

Entertainment value

Audience responses to *Deadloch* highlight its strong entertainment value, driven by its distinctive tonal balance. In the Screen Currency 2026 platform study, 70% of sampled online comments described the series as entertaining.⁵⁴ Its online audience research similarly emphasised its effective blend of humour and drama⁵⁵, with one viewer on Rotten Tomatoes writing, “My husband and I loved the perfect blend of humour and murder! Great show. Hope they will make a Season 2!”

This tension was also noted in media reviews. For example, Luke Buckmaster writing in *The Guardian* commented, “the show’s sombre, darkened aesthetic, with scaled-back colour schemes and an unfriendly sheen ... makes the comedic elements all the more interesting, creating a tension between how it “looks and feels”.”⁵⁶

Social value

Deadloch delivers social value through its sharp cultural commentary and engagement with social issues. The series’ satirical voice – evident in elements such as the fictional Winter Feastival, featuring events like a “Hellenic Screaming Ceremony”, “nose-to-tail dining” and “dadaist durational arts happenings” – is interwoven with a “deeply serious crime mystery,”⁵⁷ allowing humour and critique to operate simultaneously.

International reception has also recognised the show’s treatment of social issues. Writing from a US perspective, *Forbes* noted that “the social issues dealt with in *Deadloch* are relevant and handled with both humour and unflinching sincerity,” adding that “the Indigenous people feel real ... [the show] handles its Indigenous community like real people with humour and actual struggles and lives.”⁵⁸

The series’ cultural specificity is central to this impact. In the Screen Currency study, almost a third (30%) sampled online comments explicitly described the show as Australian.⁵⁹ Audience responses frequently identified its distinctive tone, with one reviewer noting, “It’s got a uniquely Australian sense of humour ... ‘earthy’ but also a really good heart,”⁶⁰ and another stating, “If you hate this you’re a bloody drongo. The best TV I have seen in a while!! Hilarious, dark, Aussie humour.”⁶¹ Collectively, these responses highlight how *Deadloch*’s social value lies in its ability to combine culturally specific storytelling with themes that resonate broadly across audiences.



“We wanted to make something that could sit on an international stage, but we really wanted it to be culturally specific to us and idiosyncratic.”

– Kate McLennan, executive producer & creator

Endnotes

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