

From: Williamson-de Vries, Susie
Sent: Friday, 19 May 2023 10:14 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: s 47E(d)
Subject: AGO - just for awareness - AFP involvement in 'NCIS: Sydney' television series [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Categories: A. COORDINATOR

UNOFFICIAL

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Just for information - AFP (and Navy) involvement in a new series of the television show 'NCIS' through engagement with the Endemol Shine Australia production company - for your awareness only at this point - noting shooting has commenced this week.

Please let us know if you would like us to provide this information in a formal ministerial submission, or if you would like to meet with the team involved to discuss further.

Regards Susie

Overview

- The AFP began discussions with NCIS: Sydney producers—Endemol Shine Australia—in mid-2022 to explore collaboration opportunities with the television series. This was in part due to the ability to use the series to raise awareness of the role of the AFP, influence storylines which may be misleading or misrepresent law enforcement, and to leverage the series for sworn police and Protective Service Officer (PSO) recruitment.
 - NCIS, which stands for the Naval Criminal Intelligence Service, is a fictional (and humorous) entertainment television series. The AFP, together with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), has been working with Endemol Shine Australia to influence storylines and scripts, and identify broader profiling opportunities.
 - A formal agreement with Endemol Shine Australia is being led by RAN, who are the lead government agency for NCIS: Sydney. The agreement incorporates a consultative forum which will include representation from the AFP and RAN to quality check scripts, scenarios, authenticity of scenery, filming locations etc. s 42(1)
- s 42(1)
- In addition, to further address the potential for misrepresentation and leverage the series for sworn recruitment, we are also working with Endemol Shine Australia and distribution company Paramount to progress 'The Real Heroes of the AFP'; a short segment that would feature at the end of NCIS: Sydney episodes. These segments would profile real life AFP officers and investigators, and showcase the work we do to protect Australia and our way of life.

Background

- In early-2022 the AFP was made aware of the television series NCIS expansion to cover Sydney. NCIS is a popular US television show, with four specific series running—NCIS, NCIS: LA, NCIS: Hawaii and NCIS: New Orleans. This is the first time the series is expanding outside the US.
- The combination of characters is key to the show's success and there are four main characters of NCIS: Sydney that will have connections to the AFP. These include:
 - AFP Liaison Officer Sergeant Jim "JD" Davidson (a senior AFP officer with a rare ability to bond disparate parties together, placing him squarely at the heart of the NCIS: Sydney team and the second in charge to the NCIS lead).
 - AFP Liaison Officer Constable Evie Cooper (a proud Western Sydney woman from a big family – handpicked from state police to be part of a taskforce before joining the AFP).
 - AFP Forensic Pathologist Doctor Roy Penrose (a treasure trove of knowledge after decades in the service).
 - Forensic Scientist Bluebird Gleeson (joined the AFP as part of the Forensic Outreach Program and while sometimes unorthodox, has never met a code she can't crack).
- As NCIS has no jurisdictional control in Australia, a bespoke mission will bring NCIS personnel to Australia, who will then team up with AFP and Navy officers to solve crime. This arrangement will remain in place for the duration of the season and this meshing of American and Australian cultures will add to the humour and fun of the series.
- The AFP and RAN has been working with producers, Endemol Shine Australia, to influence storylines and scripts. Both agencies recognise the risk for misrepresentation without our involvement, and the opportunities for profiling and recruitment. Noting the series is fictional, there will still be storylines that may misrepresent law enforcement or other agencies in Australia. This is less likely with the AFP's and RAN's involvement. Strategies to influence storylines include a formal agreement inclusive of a consultative forum (with representation from the AFP and RAN), the 'Real Heroes of the AFP' segments to appear alongside NCIS: Sydney episodes, and agency-led campaigns to leverage the series.
- NCIS: Sydney is due to premiere in December 2023. It is unclear at this point which broadcasting network will feature the series and if it will be on-demand or on commercial free to air (or both). The method for broadcasting will impact the level of investment for 'The Real Heroes of the AFP' leveraging activity.

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The Australian Federal Police acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to First Nations people, culture and Elders past, present and emerging.