

## Ong Bak series adaptation in the works

Former Keshet execs tie up on TV version of Thai cult classic

A TV adaptation of 2003 Thai action cult classic, *Ong Bak: The Thai Warrior*, is in the works by L.A./Madrid-based 5X Media, Thailand's Sahamongkol Film International, and Hong Kong-based O4 Media Partners.

Yalun Tu (*NCIS: Hawaii*, *Wu Assassins*) is attached to the eight episode premium drama project as script writer and show runner.

*The Fist of Ong Bak* will be produced by Ryan Lindenberg (*Green Lantern*).

Ex-Keshet boss Alon Shtruzman (*La Brea*) and Scott Einbinder (*The Hitman's Bodyguard*) are executive producers.

The series is scheduled to release globally in 2025.

Production details have not been disclosed.

Shtruzman and former Bunim/Murray CEO, Gil Goldschein (*Keeping Up with the Kardashians*), joined 5X Media as co-CEOs in April this year.

5X was founded by Scott Einbinder in 2023. Einbinder, previously co-CEO of Cristal Pictures, is now executive chairman.

Gary Pudney's O4 Media will distribute the *The Fist of Ong Bak* in Asia Pacific.

## "Free-to-air will not die" – Manoj Punjabi

Indonesia's newest free-TV boss takes his place at Net TV

One of Indonesia's top producers, Manoj Punjabi, takes his seat as the country's newest free-TV boss this month following a high-profile acquisition of a majority stake in Net TV.

Punjabi's MD Entertainment holds a stake of about 80% in Net TV.

The Rp1.65 trillion/US\$107 million acquisition of the 10-year-old network, which has struggled to maintain its share, was approved earlier this month.

In the six months to end June 2024, Net TV had a share of 1.6% for 16th place on a list of 20 free-TV stations and well behind market leaders SCTV (13.9%), IVM (13%), MNCTV (11%), RCTI (10.3%) and Trans7 (8.4%), according to Nielsen rankings.

The Net TV deal caps an effort of more than a decade to access the free-TV market, Punjabi told delegates at Media Partners Asia's APOS conference in Bali at the end of September, only days before the acquisition was finalised.

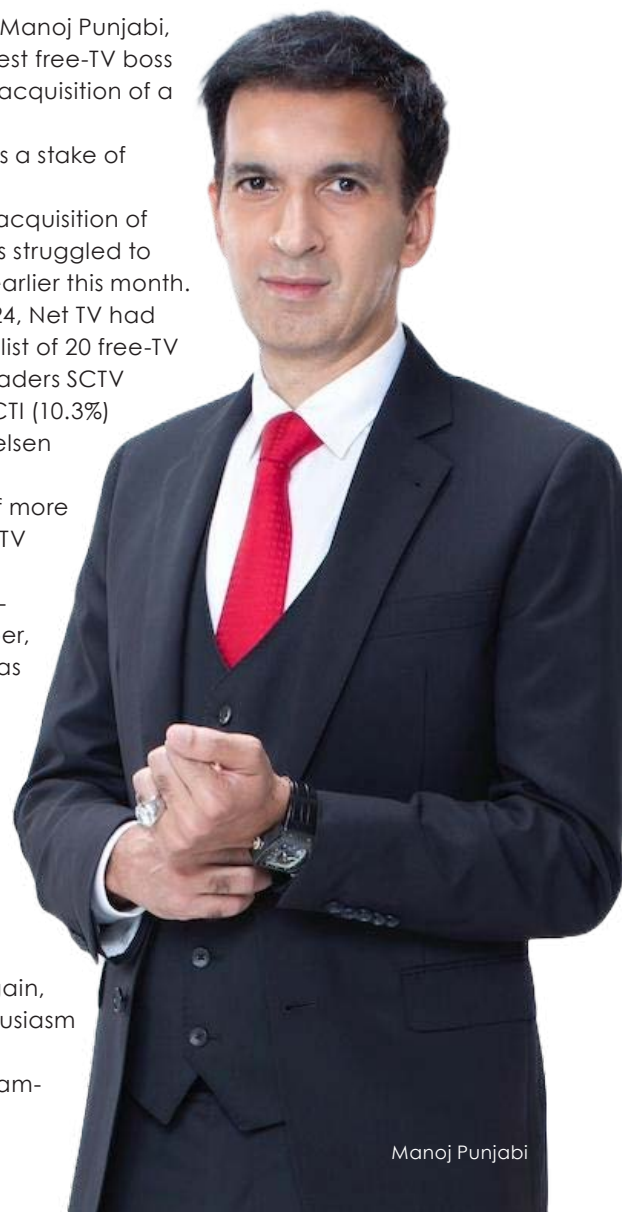
"I was after FTA (free to air) since 2013 but it didn't happen," Punjabi said. "There were no sellers. Even the losing companies didn't want to sell."

A few years later, he pulled back. "In 2017, I said, that's it. It's a sunset."

In 2020, he revised his outlook again, and found himself with a new enthusiasm about free to air TV.

Cinema was struggling, and streaming was emerging.

**More on page 6**

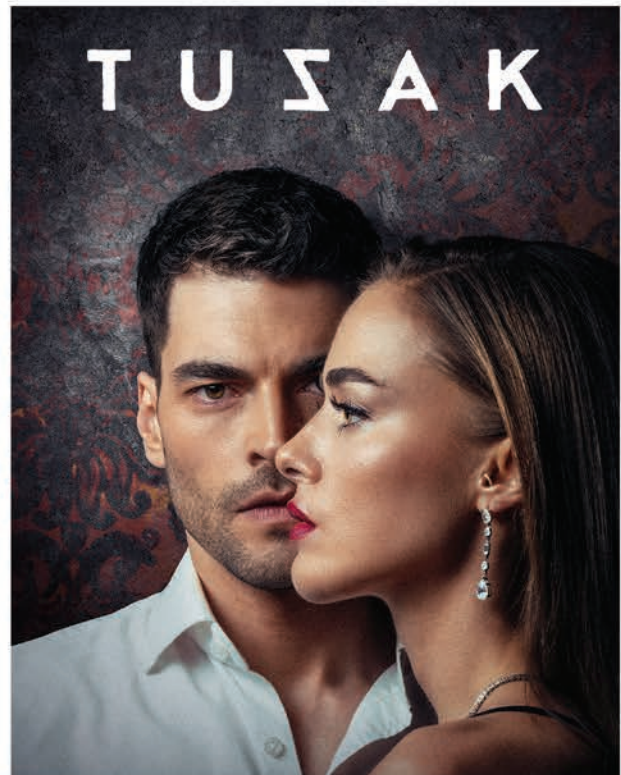


Manoj Punjabi

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## Lavender Fields hits viewing highs

ABS-CBN Jodi Sta Maria drama at 755K+ concurrents



Jodi Sta. Maria plays Jasmine Flores in *Lavender Fields*

ABS-CBN's *Lavender Fields* has hit all-time high viewership records in the Philippines, hitting #2 on Netflix's top 10 in the country for the week of 30 September to 6 October, and #1 on ABS-CBN's iWantTFC.

Directed by Emmanuel Quindo Palo and Jojo Saguin, *Lavender Fields* stars Jodi Sta. Maria as a woman enjoying an idyllic life in her mountain hometown when a brush with a mysterious man tied to a criminal empire whips it all away and sets her on a path to revenge.

The Dreamscape Entertainment thriller has so far spent six weeks on Netflix's local top 10, including three weeks at #1, losing out only to Korea's *Gyeongseong Creature* season two for the two weeks from 23 September.

For the latest week to 6 October, the series is one of two Philippines titles on Netflix's top 10. The second one is rival GMA Network's war drama *Pulang*

*Araw*, which appears at #9 in its 11th week on the domestic chart. Directed by Dominic Zapata, *Pulang Araw* spent two weeks at #1 soon after its release on Netflix in July this year.

At home, ABS-CBN is clearly delighted, saying the drama recorded all-time high viewership with 755,332 peak concurrent viewers during the Friday (4 Oct) episode.

The series, which premiered on Netflix on 30 August follows on 2 September by its free-TV release, broke viewership records three times in a row. On 2 Oct, the show logged 657,514 views, followed on Thursday (3 Oct) by 748,268 views.

*Lavender Fields* airs weeknights at 8.45pm on Kapamilya Channel, A2Z, TV5, TFC, and Kapamilya Online Live on ABS-CBN Entertainment's YouTube channel and Facebook page. Advance episodes stream on Netflix and iWantTFC.



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## Mongolia to air local version of Japan's *Old Enough!*

Mongolia's Brickmedia has acquired adaptation rights to Japanese programmer Nippon TV's *Old Enough!* for kids streaming platform SeeRootV.

The 20-episode adaptation will stream this year.

Brickmedia CEO, Ariunaa Gansukh, said in the announcement that the decision to produce a local version followed the success of the finished Japanese series on the platform.



## Asia hopes rise on Bernhard Sonnleitner's expanded Seven.One International role

Formats specialist Bernhard Sonnleitner has expanded his role at Europe's Seven.One, raising hopes in Asia about greater visibility for home-grown formats.

Sonnleitner is currently VP, international scouting & trends at Seven.

One Entertainment Group.

His expanded remit involves looking for third-party format acquisitions and co-development investment and international distribution opportunities for Seven.One Studios International.



## *Flower of Evil* stage play in the works

Korea's Studio Dragon, Japan's Avex Pictures expand ties



*Flower of Evil*, Studio Dragon

Korean drama *Flower of Evil* is being adapted into a stage play for Japan in a deal between Korea's Studio Dragon and Japan's Avex Pictures.

The first performance in Japan is scheduled for 2026 under Avex Film Labels, Avex Pictures' live-action video label.

Talks are also under way to re-run the musical version of blockbuster TV title, *Vincenzo*. The stage musical premiered in Japan last year in a similar partnership between the two companies.

The move is part of Studio Dragon's global business development ambitions using existing IP.

*Flower of Evil*, starring Lee Joon-gi has been released worldwide through Netflix and Amazon Prime Video since its airing on tvN in 2020, and has ranked in the TOP 10 in a total of 27 countries. It has been particularly popular in Japan, where it has remained in the Netflix series TOP 10 for nine consecutive weeks.

Avex Film Labels' producer, Yuka Higuchi, said *Flower of Evil* was at its core a story of deep love and human drama.

"By conveying this story in a new form of a play, we hope to create a work that will move the hearts of the audience in a more emotional way."



## Pauline Hanna murder series under way South Pacific Pictures drives new limited series

A limited drama series based on a high-profile eight-week murder trial in Auckland is in the works at South Pacific Pictures and U.K.-based Joejack Entertainment and Sinner Films.

*The Mysterious Death of Pauline Hanna* centres around the trial of Philip Polkinghorne, who was found not guilty of murdering his wife, Pauline Hanna, in 2021.

The series' show runners are David Murdoch and Caleb Ranson, with John Deery confirmed as series director. Producers are Kelly Martin, David Murdoch and John Deery.

"Pauline Hanna's life has been laid bare for the world to judge. In developing a drama series around these events, we want to understand

why things ended the way they did for this intelligent, driven woman – and why Pauline's seemingly glamorous life unravelled in a haze of escorts, drugs, and alcohol ultimately leading - in one way, or another – to her tragic death," said Kelly Martin, South Pacific Pictures CEO.

"This goes beyond the salacious headlines of meth and sex workers – it's a story about the cost of addiction and the pressures facing Pauline Hanna – pressures which ended in a tragedy that became a national obsession," she said.

An unnamed New Zealand television network is supporting that project development. The series is yet to be cast.

### From page 1: Net TV

Punjabi's MD Entertainment, with its rich library and production capabilities, benefited in a big way from regional and international streaming activity.

"But it's not the easy for streaming. It will take time because of the infrastructure, internet penetration," he said.

"FTA will not die... if it was sunset 5.35pm three years ago, then it's 5.36pm now. It's an evolution for us. We need to enter this space. I believe I can turn this around... change the game," he added.

"I have my team. We will keep creating content, keep creating

movies... we know the market."

In his new role at Net TV, Punjabi replaces Deddy Hariyanto as president director. Hariyanto resigned this month along with three others in a move that paved the way for the new leadership team.

The other directors exiting the station are Azuan Syahril, Fendy Nagasaputra, Ferry, Halim, Clifford David Rees (independent commissioner) and Rachmat Nugroho.

The sole board member from the previous team to go forward under Punjabi is domestic media veteran, Surya Hadiwinata, who heads up sales and business development.



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# Romance cools in Taiwan; local creators urge balance

## RisingStories pitching competition jury members talk about creative trends

In the last few years, Taiwan's love affair with romantic dramas has cooled. But, some local creative leaders say, the flame may not have – or should not have – gone out entirely.

As this year's RisingStories International Story Pitching Competition entry period closes, jury members and partners in the annual initiative say romance is being replaced by a cross-genre fusion.

Golden Bell Award-winning director and writer, Lai Meng-jie (*Trade War*), says the declining interest among Taiwanese creators in romance themes reflects changing audience tastes.

The traditional "love-above-all" formula no longer appeals to modern viewers, who now prefer romance as a secondary element intertwined with other genres, such as medical or legal dramas, he says.

This cross-genre fusion offers greater appeal to today's audiences, Lai adds.

On the other hand, Carol Wang, chief content officer of Sanlih E-Television's (SET) programming department, believes that while romance themes may be declining in Taiwan, they still hold significant commercial value, particularly in the global market.

SET is the media partner of this year's RisingStories competition, which is expected to close on 400 entries. So far, entries have been received from Canada, China, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan.

Wang urges creators to reevaluate the potential of romance stories and explore this genre further.

Many agree with her, highlighting the value of romance in creating pop stars.

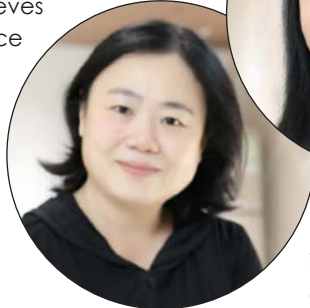
Star Ritz Productions' producer, Angie Chai (*Meteor Garden*), known as the 'godmother of idol dramas', highlights school romance themes, which have a unique competitive edge in the Asian market. However, she also notes

that today's productions need to be packaged with contemporary issues, rather than focusing solely on romance.

Topics such as cyberbullying and fashion



Lin Pei-yu (left) and Angie Chai



trends can be integrated to enhance the appeal of the work, she says. Screenwriter

Lin Pei-yu (*U Motherbaker*), often called the queen of BL dramas, says BL and GL dramas have flourished

in recent years. She cautions against over-saturation. She also encourages creators to maintain diversity and innovation to avoid creative stagnation.

As Taiwanese creators, like their counterparts everywhere, try to merge local identity with global appeal, industry leaders urge balance.

Both Lai and Wang say that an overemphasis on local cultural elements may limit the global reach of a work.

Wang also emphasises that entertainment value is crucial for penetrating the international market, regardless of the cultural background of the production.

Entries close at midnight Taiwan time on 14 October. This article has been adapted from original interviews conducted by Sanlih E-Television (SET), which together with ContentAsia, is a media partner of 2024 RisingStories International Story Pitching Competition. The competition targets Mandarin-speaking creators in the Asia-Pacific region. Winners will receive a script development contract and a NT\$100,000 advance, offering a stepping stone to bring their stories to life on screen. Information at <https://www.risingstories.com/en>

Lai Meng-jie (left) and Carol Wang



Photo credit: SETN.com

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“ We are already making 15 to 16 series a year. We want to get that to between 18 and 24. That challenge is going to feel painful whether or not Disney or Amazon are vying for local resources.”

Mark Francis, chief content and strategy officer at Indonesian streaming platform Vidio talking about the impact of international flip-flopping on local content strategy in Indonesia.

The full story is in ContentAsia's print magazine, distributed at the Mipcom and Mip Junior markets in Cannes in October 2024





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“The production capacity, the ecosystem, here in Taiwan has its own challenges, but also its own strengths. What we are doing right now is making long-term investments in talent, both above and below the line, one original show at a time.”

Maya Huang  
Head of Chinese-language Content, Netflix

The full story is in ContentAsia's print magazine, distributed at the Mipcom and Mip Junior markets in Cannes in October 2024



The poster features a background image of the Burj Khalifa and a stone bridge over a canal in Dubai. A dark red diagonal shape is overlaid on the top right and bottom left corners. A central white box contains the event details.

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“ We can buy titles for [new Chinese movies streaming app] CMGO that we would never ever have bought for our channels... It’s not that we don’t care about censorship. We respect and listen to our platforms, business partners and subscribers. But we also monitor what other streaming services are doing in the market.”

Ofanny Choi  
CEO, Celestial Tiger Entertainment’s (CTE)

The full story is in ContentAsia’s print magazine, distributed at the Mipcom and Mip Junior markets in Cannes in October 2024





**NCIS: ORIGINS**

*NCIS: ORIGINS* follows a young Leroy Jethro Gibbs in 1991, years prior to the events of *NCIS*, and is narrated by Mark Harmon. In the series, Gibbs starts his career as a newly minted special agent at the fledgling NCIS Camp Pendleton office where he forges his place on a gritty, ragtag team led by NCIS legend Mike Franks. Length: 60 mins **Paramount**  
E: [GDGsales@viacomcbs.com](mailto:GDGsales@viacomcbs.com)



**Omusubi**

In the early 2000s, Yoneda Yui is a teen who wakes up to the culture of the "gal" – girls who just want to have fun, no matter what conservative adults may think. Her boundless energy fuels her quest to help others by becoming a nutritionist. "You are what you eat" – Yui strives to first help her immediate family and friends, but gradually moves on to work for people across the country. Always staying true to herself and never losing sight of what is important, Yui connects people one rice ball (*omusubi*) at a time! Length: 150x15 mins **NHK Enterprises, Inc.** E: [Nakano Akiko, nakano-ak@nhk-ep.co.jp](mailto:nakano-ak@nhk-ep.co.jp) (Worldwide ex China, Taiwan, Hong Kong & Korea); [Yamada Shuji, yamada-sh@nhk-ep.co.jp](mailto:yamada-sh@nhk-ep.co.jp) (Taiwan & Hong Kong non-scripted format); [Nagaoka Satomi, nagaoka-sa@nhk-ep.co.jp](mailto:nagaoka-sa@nhk-ep.co.jp) (China & Korea scripted format)

**Good Cop/Bad Cop**

"Welcome to Eden Vale – a little slice of heaven on Earth." So read the signs on the outskirts of the seemingly idyllic American town in this whip-smart new procedural created by John Quaintance and directed by Trent O'Donnell. But darkly comic crimes and complex relationships lurk beneath the surface in Eden Vale, threatening Police Chief Big Hank's work to make it the best and safest place to live in America. For Hank, it's a family affair. His deputy, Lou, is also his daughter, and she has a more realistic understanding of her hometown's underbelly. And when Lou's brother, and Hank's son, Henry, returns from the big city to get his detective's badge, Henry's lack of social skills rubs everyone up the wrong way. Forced to work together, Lou and Henry – the good cop and the bad cop – begin to suspect that Eden Vale's colourful residents, including their father, are keeping a dark secret. But will they risk their progress as a family unit to solve a long-dormant mystery? Blending crime investigations with a unique sense of escapist fun, *Good Cop/Bad Cop* promises action, suspense and humour. Length: 8x60 mins **ITV Studios Augustus Dulgaro**, E: [augustus.dulgaro@itv.com](mailto:augustus.dulgaro@itv.com)



**The Others 2**

New episodes retain the essence of the polarised interactions between neighbors in the second season of *The Others*. In a narrative that magnifies family and social relationships, the series features developments that are often absurd and unexpected, stemming from extreme actions. Length: 12x45 mins **Globo** E: [Fabio Mauro, fabio.fmauro@g.globo.com](mailto:fabio.fmauro@g.globo.com); [Alexandre Bac, alexandre@thematv.com](mailto:alexandre@thematv.com)



**Loveberry**

Zuhal Erdem, a renowned personal development expert, hides a secret life entirely centered around her family. Haunted by her mother's death, she is devoted to her sisters and a controlling father. As her family prepares for a wedding, Zuhal grapples with her own loneliness. A chance encounter with Tayfun ignites a forbidden love, forcing her to choose between her past and her heart. Length: TBC **Inter Medya** E: [Pelin Koray, pelin.koray@intermedya.tv](mailto:pelin.koray@intermedya.tv)



**Deceit**

*Deceit* follows the lives of an unfaithful wife (Kim Chiu), her troubled husband (Paulo Avelino), his jealous half-brother (JM de Guzman) and neglected spouse (Kaila Estrada) as they learn moral lessons the hard way. The series premiered at #1 on Amazon Prime Video Philippines, with lead actress Kim Chiu going on to take the Outstanding Asia Star award at the Seoul International Drama Awards 2024. Length: 38x45 mins, premium version: 20x45-60 mins **ABS-CBN Corporation** E: [Laarni Yu, Laarni\\_Yu@abs-cbn.com](mailto:Laarni_Yu@abs-cbn.com)





**Barney's World Season 1**

Meet Barney, the singing and dancing purple dinosaur who embodies love. This all-new animated series is set in the local playground, where Barney is joined by dinos Billy and Baby Bop and their three kid best friends. Throughout silly and imaginative adventures together, Barney helps kids explore big preschool emotions and shows them how to love themselves, others, and their community. Length: 52x11 mins

**Mattel** E: Grace Chan, [grace.chan@mattel.com](mailto:grace.chan@mattel.com)

**Peter The Great: Greater Than Ever**

After living abroad for 20 years, Pedro returns to his homeland to find a completely different reality from the one he left when he was forced to seek new horizons. To his surprise, he discovers that his son has become a successful and prosperous professional, forcing him to invent a series of stories in order to hide what has been a life of sacrifice and deprivation and to gain Pedro Junior's respect and admiration. Length: 23x60 mins

**Caracol Televisión** E: Jesus Iriepar, [jirriepar@caracoltv.com.co](mailto:jirriepar@caracoltv.com.co)



**HER – Women in Asia**

HER Women in Asia, season five, tells the stories of women from Asia who are breaking stereotypes and voicing their opinions loud and clear. In each episode, three women share their perspectives on universal and existential topics, such as overcoming loneliness, living a waste free life or body image and mental health. The series portrays the lives of women from all spheres of Asian societies, featuring protagonists from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

What challenges do they face, what stories do they have to tell? Length: 6x12 mins

**DW – Deutsche Welle** E: Elyn Yong, [pikpartners@pikfilm.com.my](mailto:pikpartners@pikfilm.com.my)



**Parenthood**

A major new natural history landmark natural history series from Silverback Films, *Parenthood* explores the high stakes challenges of animal parents in raising the next generation. Set across five unique films, the series tells incredible stories of devotion, ingenuity and sacrifice that animals across our planet undergo to achieve the survival of their young. Filmed over a three-year period across six continents, using the latest 8K filming technology, and documenting never seen before behaviours, series reveals the real-life joys and dramas of amazing animal parents in a world that is changing rapidly around them. Length: 5x60 mins

**All3Media International** E: Sabrina Duguet, [sabrina.duguet@all3media.com](mailto:sabrina.duguet@all3media.com)



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**US\$250K up for grabs in new Asia pitches**  
Taiwan's TAICCA leads hunt for new ideas

Asia's hunt for TV scripts ramps up in the final months of 2024, led by three calls out of Taiwan and Singapore and putting prize money of more than US\$250,000 on the table for winning writers. The largest pot – a record NT\$7.2 million/US\$226,000 – comes from Taiwan's government-backed agency, TAICCA, for the Taiwan Creative Content Fest (TCCF) Pitch in Taipei in November.

The full story is on page 4

**MNC completes acquisition of strategic stake in Raam Punjabi's Multivision**  
Indonesian mediagiant touts creation of "Synergistic Entertainment Powerhouse"

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	29 Oct	AVIA: Japan in View 2024	Tokyo, Japan
	30 Oct-1 Nov	TIFFCOM 2024	Tokyo, Japan
November 2024	5-8	Taiwan Creative Content Fest 2024	Taipei, Taiwan
	12-13	Dubai International Content Market (DICM)	Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai
	20-22	16th Content Tokyo 2024	Chiba, Japan
	30 Nov-7 Dec	Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival	Yogyakarta, Indonesia
December 2024	3	The ATF Leaders Dialogue 2024	Singapore
	4-6	Asia TV Forum & Market /ATF 2024	Singapore
	5	AVIA: OTT Summit 2024	Singapore
February 2025	23-27	Mip London 2025	London, U.K.
	23-24	Mip Doc 2025	London, U.K.
	23-24	Mip Format 2025	London, U.K.
	23-28	The London TV Screenings 2025	London, U.K.
March 2025	2-5	Australian International Documentary Conference 2025	Melbourne / Naarm
	17-20	Hong Kong FILMART 2025	Hong Kong
	25-27	Series Mania Forum 2025	Lille, Hauts-de-France
April 2025	24-29	Canneseries 2025	Cannes, France
May 2025	28-31	19th Busan Content Market 2025 (BCM)	Busan, Korea
June 2025	12-14	Telefilm Vietnam 2025	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
July 2025	2-4	17th Content Tokyo 2025	Tokyo, Japan
September 2025	17-26	Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) 2025	Busan, Korea
	20-23	Asian Contents & Film Market 2025	Busan, Korea

## Bluey gives Emily a run for her money

### Aus kids show demand closes in on Netflix blockbuster

Prime Video's *Hazbin Hotel* and Netflix's *Emily in Paris* topped overall demand for TV programming in Australia for the week of 16-22 September, according to data science company Parrot Analytics.

Both streaming titles registered higher demand than programming – including the National Football League (NFL) and Formula 1 – on Australia's free-TV stations.

But the week, perhaps, belonged to homegrown Australian kids series, *Bluey*,

which was topped by the slimmest margin and ended the week in third place. *Emily in Paris* hit 35.5x difference from demand for the average show in the market against *Bluey*'s 35.3.

While Netflix lost out to Prime Video's *Hazbin Hotel*, Netflix dominated demand on the digital originals list, taking six of the top 10 spots for the week.

The other four places on the digital top 10 went to titles from Prime Video and Hulu.

#### Top 10 overall TV shows: Australia

Rank	Title	Difference from Market Average (x times)
1	<i>Hazbin Hotel</i>	39.4
2	<i>Emily In Paris</i>	35.5
3	<i>Bluey</i>	35.3
4	<i>My Hero Academia</i>	31.3
5	<i>National Football League (NFL)</i>	31.1
6	<i>The Rookie</i>	30.5
7	<i>Saturday Night Live</i>	29.7
8	<i>Formula 1</i>	29.1
9	<i>The Daily Show</i>	27.5
10	<i>America's Got Talent</i>	26.8

#### Top 10 digital originals: Australia

Rank	Title	Platform	Difference from Market Average (x times)
1	<i>Hazbin Hotel</i>	Amazon Prime Video	39.4
2	<i>Emily In Paris</i>	Netflix	35.5
3	<i>One Piece</i>	Netflix	26.4
4	<i>Stranger Things</i>	Netflix	24.1
5	<i>Bridgerton</i>	Netflix	23.5
6	<i>The Perfect Couple</i>	Netflix	22.6
7	<i>Only Murders In The Building</i>	Hulu	22.3
8	<i>The Bear</i>	Hulu	22.2
9	<i>The Lord Of The Rings: The Rings Of Power</i>	Amazon Prime Video	22.1
10	<i>Kaos</i>	Netflix	20.4

**Date range: 16-22 September 2024**

The total audience demand being expressed for a title, within a market. Audience demand reflects the desire, engagement and viewership, weighted by importance; so a stream/download is a higher expression of demand than a 'like'/comment. In this dataset we are comparing the demand that exists for each series in this market, against the average TV show. A difference of 1x represents the market average and 10x means a series is ten times more in demand than the average TV show in this market



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