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Bell Broadcast and New Media Fund projects travel down under

Leading Australian public broadcaster ABC has acquired the Australian rights to another Canadian convergence television and interactive property, the audacious *Bromwell High Interactive* website from Decode Interactive. The deal between Decode and ABC was signed following the Co-production Round-table held in Sydney at the Canadian Consulate General on March 4, in the presence of Andra Sheffer, Executive Director of the Bell Broadcast and New Media Fund, a major investor in the project, Domenic Friguglietti, Manager of ABC New Media & Digital Services and Dan Fill, Decode's Vice-President Interactive.

Currently, the Bell Fund is leading a delegation of 14 Canadian interactive producers on a trade mission to Australia to help further develop and encourage co-production opportunities between the two countries. "We are thrilled to see that projects funded by the Bell Fund are being enjoyed by audiences in Australia and around the world," noted Sheffer. "The ABC has taken a very progressive approach to innovation, broadband and convergent content, and it is paying off judging by the popularity of ABC Online – and our projects!"

Bromwell High Interactive offers its users a sophisticated online simulation game, extended animation content and many other activities, to accompany the broadcast of the first season of 13 x 30 minute episodes of the television series *Bromwell High*. This is one of several interactive projects funded in part by the Bell Broadcast and New Media Fund that have been recently acquired by the ABC. Other projects include Decode's Franny's Feet Interactive, GirlStuff BoyStuff Avatar World, The Save Ums Small Is Powerful Games, Collideascope's Ollieland.com and Epitome Pictures/Snap Media's Degrassi.tv.

"The ABC is delighted to work with Bell Fund and Decode to bring the Bromwell High Interactive to Australian audiences," said Lynley Marshall, Director of ABC New Media & Digital Services. "We recognize the importance of providing our audiences with the opportunity to engage with programs across multiple platforms with innovative and high quality content. The international reputation of Bell-funded projects is an assurance of that quality."

Decode's Dan Fill noted: "The Bell Fund is recognized the world over as promoting the development of valuable, innovative, convergent entertainment (television programs that are accompanied by interactive experiences). I am excited to see a growing appetite for this content and very pleased that the ABC has been so supportive of interactive productions."

Bromwell High Interactive is a co-production between Decode Entertainment and the UK's Hat Trick Productions. The web property is based on the animated television series about an overcrowded, under-funded graffiti scarred secondary school. The website is set to launch later this year on the ABC website. The site has also been licensed to the UK's Channel Four website and Canada's Teletoon website *The Detour*.

The Bell Fund provides grants to Canadian independent producers to develop and produce television programming complemented and enhanced by interactive content. It receives funding through annual contributions from Bell ExpressVu, Canada's satellite television distributor and operates as a not-for-profit organization.

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