

military and hardware engineering considerations remain salient, while civil servants and leading industrial companies provide policy continuity.

**THE BAREFOOT CHANNEL:
COMMUNITY TELEVISION AS A TOOL
FOR SOCIAL CHANGE**

Kim Goldberg - Vancouver: New Star Books, 1990.

There are 300 community TV sta-

tions in cities and towns across Canada. But in spite of the medium's experimental beginnings, most of today's community channel programming follows the well-worn path of mainstream commercial television. It doesn't have to be that way. In *The Barefoot Channel*, Kim Goldberg reminds the reader that the community television station is there for the viewer - not just for their viewing, but for their use. She tells why it's impor-

tant to get inside television sets as well as in front of them, and she explains the politics of the community channel - why it exists, how the North American cable giants have managed to control it, and why it's important that the viewer reclaim it. The book gives examples of community TV programs that have been successful and popular, and how groups can use their local community TV station to get their message out.



THE ABA HAS COMMENCED A SERIES OF RADIO PLANNING SEMINARS TO EXPLAIN HOW THE BROADCAST PLANNING PROCESS WILL WORK. SEMINARS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED IN SYDNEY, MELBOURNE AND BRISBANE. SEMINARS WILL BE HELD IN ADELAIDE ON 2 DECEMBER AND PERTH ON 3 DECEMBER. TELEVISION SEMINARS WILL BE HELD IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1993. REPRODUCED ARE THE ADDRESSES BY BRIAN JOHNS, ABA CHAIRMAN, TIM O'KEEFE, ABA MEMBER AND COLIN KNOWLES, DIRECTOR, ABA PLANNING DIVISION.

PLANNING NEW RADIO SERVICES UNDER THE BROADCASTING SERVICES ACT

Today's seminar is the start of what will be a frank and open debate on planning issues. Gone are the days when planning decisions were made behind closed doors and the first news of a new licence invitation was the Minister's notice and press release. The Act requires us to undertake our work in a very public way. Decisions have to be made to allow progress, but these decisions should be self evident conclusions of the consultation process, not a surprise.

If you leave this seminar with only one message, that message should be that 'the ABA wants to hear your views'. You can talk to us. You can write to us. We will listen to you.

The members and officers of the ABA are available to listen to your proposals to discuss how they might fit within the new Act, and to provide guidance about how and when might be the most appropriate time and method to present your particular case so that it is included in the formal decision process that will be outlined today.

The *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* is direct. It establishes principles for the ABA to follow. We are looking forward to your suggestions about how these principles should be made to work. We natu-

rally have proposals, which we will put forward today. Our purpose in exposing them is to stimulate discussion not to close off the debate.

We are required to decide on the priorities for planning between different parts of Australia, between television and radio, between AM and FM radio and between parts of the AM and FM bands. We can't do everything at once and to do the job properly will take time.

This seminar will address only radio. We will conduct further seminars in 1993 when we reach the point of looking at television planning.

I expect we will be faced with many conflicting priorities: between commercial capital city markets and regional commercial markets; between AM and FM services; between community and commercial services; between national and commercial services; and between commercial, national and community services and narrowcast services.

Our first task is to sort out these priorities in a sensible way that considers the circumstances prevailing in particular areas and between areas. Until we do this, we cannot proceed with preparation of frequency allotment and licence area plans. The only way the ABA can accomplish this task is through constructive com-

ment and soundly based submissions from you arguing your case for priority against the specific criteria set out in the Act and against any other criteria you think important for us to consider.

We are looking for submissions on these things by the middle of February and a notice inviting submissions will be published in the *Australian* and other newspapers in early December. This seminar will explain the type of information we are looking to receive at this stage and point out in more general terms the information we will need later when we consider other aspects of the planning process.

Because of the great interest that has been expressed about narrowcast services, and the apparent high degree of confusion in peoples' minds about where narrowcast services lie in the scheme of things, we will also devote time to discussion of that issue.

We have before us a number of requests to release broadcasting spectrum for narrowcast use. These seek channels ranging from high power wide coverage to low power limited coverage. During the next twelve to eighteen months or so, while the planning process is still in train, the ABA is going to make a measured response to these requests. We are not

going to lightly release channels where such a decision would cut off proper public consideration of the way in which the spectrum should be used.

Depending on priorities, we will most likely give consideration to whether some spectrum should be set aside for low power, limited coverage services so that the obviously high demand for tourist and other information services can be addressed without significant implications for wide coverage main-stream broadcasting services.

Where there is evidence of significant competition for available spectrum, we will make a more cautious response and some may need to wait until we have completed the planning process.

We are not excluding consideration of wider coverage services where there is no conflict with other potential uses, and where it makes good sense to move quickly in the spirit of a more flexible response to demand and innovation.

We want today's seminar to be a dialogue and open discussion rather than a tutorial. It will be divided into four parts following my introduction:

- a discussion of the documents provided in support of this seminar and our initial planning consultations.
- an outline of the planning principles the ABA is obliged to follow and the multiple opportunities you will have to influence our decisions;
- a review of the concept of narrowcasting, and some distinguishing landmarks that set this apart from commercial and community broadcasting; and
- an open forum for broadbased discussion of the issues.

We are on a steep learning curve with this planning process. If you have any concerns or proposals to make we want to hear them.

The notes contained in your information kits go into more depth than the speakers will cover today and I encourage you to read the Act.

We have deliberately kept the presentations to a few key ideas so that we have adequate time for discussion.

There will be a long discussion period at the end of the presentations as well as a short period for questions at the end of each presentation.

We are most anxious that we take you through this material at a pace which allows you to address the issues.

For that reason the speakers will welcome questions at any point in the presentation should there be a particular point you need clarified.

I must say again, we are here to listen and to take your questions. We don't know all the answers but the questions themselves will be of enormous value.

Don't consider any question too basic. We think that wide understanding of the fundamental principles is the key to the success of the new planning approach.

This seminar is the first of many we will conduct as we proceed through the various aspects of planning.

We will be exploring other ways of making the planning as open and accessible as possible to everyone and to stimulate real public input to the planning decisions for new services.

At the same time we recognise the need to establish some certainty in the market place so that investment decisions can be made with a level of confidence that the rules won't change overnight.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ABA'S PLANNING PROCESS

BY COLIN KNOWLES, DIRECTOR PLANNING, ABA

INTRODUCTION

PART 1

There are many aspects of planning and we can but touch on the most important ones today. As the ABA proceeds through its planning work we will produce discussion papers, conduct further seminars at different levels of complexity and arrange specialist workshops to discuss the really technical questions. In all of this, we are seeking to ensure that the end product of our planning is fully understood and is presented in plain English.

Unfortunately we can't discuss broadcasting planning without getting into some aspects of the technology. What makes it difficult for broadcasters is that they usually plan their station once and it stays the same (in the emission sense) for 20 years or so with minimal change. For most new players the planning and transmission

aspects are 'black art'. We want to remove this veil of obscurity and ensure that there is a focused debate on the issues. The issues do not depend on mathematics. They are the factors that determine the outcomes. Outcomes is the business of the ABA and of you the users.

I would like to point out that the Act contains few rigid rules about how the ABA is to conduct its business. We will endeavour to strike a balance between flexibility to accommodate innovation, and respond to the needs of individual markets while maintaining an appropriate degree of certainty and predictability in our approach.

CURRENT STATE OF RADIO AND TELEVISION PLANNING

The definitive document on the present status is the *Current State of Radio and Television Planning* publication. The state of planning is a snapshot as at 5 October

1992, and may not reflect the ABA's future considered position. The final picture will depend on the outcome of consultation.

There are six volumes in the set which cover radio planning in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria/Tasmania, South Australia/Western Australia/Northern Territory, and a volume of AM channel assignment maps. The sixth volume, on television, will be produced early in the new year.

Each of the volumes on radio planning contains market descriptions of existing radio service areas.

As we progress through the consultation and documentation development process set out in the Act we will further develop these market descriptions to include information about demographics, technical specifications, television services, overlap populations and other information such as, perhaps, coverage maps that will be useful references for persons