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## THREE DAY AD BLACKOUT FOR THE HILLS BY-ELECTION

The ABA advised industry organisations and SBS of a blackout on election advertising before the by-election for the NSW state seat of The Hills on Saturday 28 August.

The blackout started at midnight on Wednesday 25 August and applied until close of polling. Broadcasters are not permitted to air political advertisements during the blackout period.

The ban does not prohibit news or current affairs coverage of the election, discussion of political issues on talk-back radio or interviews with candidates. The ban is a requirement of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*.

'The blackout continues a practice in place for many years. The former Broadcasting Act imposed similar restrictions on broadcasters,' said Ms Debra Richards, Director Programs.

Operators of new categories of services, such as open narrowcasters and subscription broadcasters, are also subject to the blackout provisions.



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## ABA FAX NUMBER

The ABA fax number listing in the 1993 Sydney phone book is wrong. The correct number is (02) 334 7799.

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## NARROWCAST RADIO SERVICES

Since the introduction of narrowcast services in October 1992, the ABA has received 893 applications for open narrowcast radio services. Of these, 280 have been licensed, 58 have been licensed for special events, 165 rejected and 390 are pending.



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## THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA

**THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF A SPEECH DELIVERED IN JULY TO THE NATIONAL INDUSTRY FORUM ON THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA, BY SENATOR ROSEMARY CROWLEY, MINISTER FOR FAMILY SERVICES, MINISTER ASSISTING THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE STATUS OF WOMEN.**

have been asked here today to launch the new research data produced by Media Insight for the National Working Party on the Portrayal of Women in the Media.

For more than a decade, research has found that the portrayal of women in the media and in advertising is grossly insufficient and inappropriate.

There is too little coverage of women. Too few women are seen on television. There are too few women in management and too few are involved in producing the news. Where women are portrayed they are too often shown as unintelligent, or sexy, or as housewives only responsible for housework. As one woman told Consumer Contact research in 1992 'you are either a bimbo or a drone - a sex object or a drudge'.

This new research by Media Insight analysed 5000 news items. Its findings confirmed what most women knew or suspected: that the portrayal of women is out of step with changes in our life styles and our economic circumstances.

But the package goes even further. It investigates the financial implications for the media, and its advertisers, of ignoring the views of women. To quote Jennifer Rowe, 'the media is not going to change because it is a good and worthy thing to do'. She points out that the media is driven by the ratings and if they can see that they are suffering they will change.

This research quantifies the value of gender balance in television and newspapers. Gender balanced programming takes into account the concern of the 51 per cent of the population, the women who according to the research by Mattingly and partners, control the vast bulk of household spending and saving.

This latest research, coming on top of ten years of research on women's portrayal in the media demands action by the media. Let me spell out the challenges as I see them. The challenge for the industry

is to break the mould. The challenge is drop dated images of women. The challenge is to present women as they really are. The challenge is to provide equal employment for women in all aspects of the media.

And there are rewards:- the reward for the media is that it makes good business sense.

That is improved ratings for television and wider circulation for newspapers. The reward for advertisers is increased audiences for their product. Of course there is a wider reward for us all in the extension of equity and fairness in our society a society which believes in equal opportunity for all in all areas - economically, socially, politically and culturally.

Although community attitudes are changing to reflect these equalities, it is true to say that these changes are not flowing evenly through the community. There is a need for us to reflect those changes which are occurring in the way we depict women.

Too often women are depicted as sex objects or victims of sensationalised and often violent sex crimes. Sexist stereotyping of women persists in journalism and advertising. According to the research findings of Southdown Press, a major publisher of women's magazines, 62 per cent of women did not believe that the media accurately reflected their lives.

Inaccurate, degrading and misleading images continue to be used. For example, recently a car manufacturer saw fit to use a pregnant woman's stomach to sell cars. No consideration was given to women's possible perception of the ad. Little wonder there was such a public outcry from women. And I would be surprised if this would encourage any women to buy this car. Any woman who has gone through childbirth would be unlikely to be assured of either arriving on time or in one piece.