

'COSY CANBERRA' FOUND NOT IN BREACH

The Nine network's screening of the 'Sixty Minutes' report 'Cosy Canberra' on 18 October 1992 did not breach the television standard on accuracy and fairness in current affairs, the ABA has determined.

The ABA's decision was made following complaints from the ACT Chief Minister Ms Rosemary Follett and by the Federal President of the Young Liberal Movement of Australia, Mr Stephen Forshaw, after the program was shown on WIN-TV in Canberra.

The question of possible inaccuracies in the program was raised with the Nine network, but on balance the ABA decided the network met the overall objective of the current affairs standard.

'We appreciate the program caused some concern within the Canberra community as it tended towards a fairly critical editorial line, but the Nine network did subsequently provide other opportunities for contrary views to be put,' said ABA Chairman, Mr Brian Johns.

The Nine network aired other viewpoints on the following week's 'Sixty Minutes' and the 'Today Show' and the local network affiliate, WIN, ran a half-hour special 'Canberra - Right of Reply'.

About the broadcast itself, Mr Johns said: 'There's a line to be drawn between commentary and reporting and

the ABA is satisfied the distinction was clear enough, even if the report was perceived as having a particular angle.'

PROGRAM STANDARDS

Commercial television stations must observe ABA television program standards as a condition of their licences under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (the Act). The same requirements do not apply to the ABC or the SBS.

Television Program Standard 24 (TPS 24) was determined by the ABA's predecessor, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, after a comprehensive public inquiry. There is a parallel standard covering both commercial and community radio, Radio Program Standard 8 (RPS 8).

Both standards deal with accuracy and fairness in current affairs programs and there are other program standards (RPS 5 and TPS 15) which require accuracy, fairness and impartiality in news programs.

TPS 24 commenced on 1 January 1992 and defines a current affairs program as one which focuses on social, economic or political issues of immediate relevance to the community, including interviews and commentaries dealing in depth with news items.

Television licensees have five obligations under the standard, summarised as follows:

- factual material is to be presented accurately and reasonable efforts should be made to correct substantial errors of fact at the earliest opportunity;
- reporting of factual material must be clearly distinguishable from commentary and analysis;
- reasonable efforts should be made or reasonable opportunities given to present significant viewpoints when dealing with controversial issues of public importance either within the same program or in similar programs while the issue has immediate relevance to the community;
- viewpoints should not be misrepresented and material should not be presented in a misleading manner by giving wrong or improper emphasis, by editing out of context, or by withholding relevant available facts; and
- respect should be given to each person's right to protection from unjustifiable use of material obtained without the individual's consent or other unwarranted and intrusive invasions of privacy.



CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS CLASSIFIED C AND P

The following table contains details of programs granted C and P classification by the ABA in December 1992. People interested in submitting programs should contact Nigel Ryan on (02) 959 7930.

TITLE	ORIGIN	CLASSIFICATION	NEW /RENEWAL	DECISION DATE	APPLICANT
ADVENTURES ON THE BALANCED PARTICLE FREEWAY	Australia	PRC	new	31.12.1992	Rosenbaum Whitbread Film and Television Productions
COLT FROM COCKATOO CREEK, THE	Australia	PRC	new	16.12.1992	Fair Dinkum Films
OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY	Australia+OS	C	new	23.12.1992	Great Expectations
Legend	CAD = C Australian Drama		PRC = Provisional C		