

ABA CONSIDERS RADIO CODES OF PRACTICE

The ABA is assessing new codes of practice which have been developed by the commercial radio industry.

The *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* requires commercial and community broadcasters to develop codes, relating to programming matters, which will replace most ABA broadcasting standards.

Only in the areas of Australian content on television and children's television has regulation of program control through compulsory standards been retained.

The Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters (FARB) presented the codes and a detailed submission supporting their registration to the ABA on 10 March 1993, after consulting with the public, the music industry and the ABA.

The codes cover news and current affairs programs, advertising, programs unsuitable for broadcast, a new complaints handling process and Australian music (with the exception of this last code, FARB's codes are substantially based on ABA radio program standards).

The ABA is assessing the codes against three criteria for registration and expects to complete its consideration by April.

The ABA must register a code if:

- it provides appropriate community safeguards,
- it is endorsed by a majority of service

providers in that section of the industry and

- members of the public have been given adequate opportunity to comment.

FARB initiated a public consultation process which involved a schedule of on-air announcements by all member stations over the period 16 November to 4 December 1992.

Members of the public who responded to these advertisements were provided with copies of the draft codes and invited to comment on them. FARB sent out on request 276 copies of the draft codes, received 20 written comments in response, wrote to all submitters and addressed their comments and concerns.

FARB has given the ABA copies of all submissions received and a rationale of FARB's acceptance or rejection of the points made.

The Australian Music Code has been under development for over 12 months and has involved consultation with the Australian Record Industry Association (ARIA), AUSMUSIC, the Australian Music Publishers' Association, the Musicians' Union and the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance.

FARB has established the Australian Music Performance Committee (AMPCOM), composed of radio and

music industry representatives, to monitor the operation of the codes and to review the code and recommend changes as necessary.

What happens if codes of practice submitted to the ABA for registration are not acceptable?

If no code of practice has been developed in a particular area, or if a code does not provide appropriate community safeguards, the ABA may develop a program standard.

Under the Act's transitional provisions, the ABA has preserved Australian Broadcasting Tribunal program standards for two years or until the ABA registers a relevant code of practice.

What about codes of practice for the commercial television industry and for community broadcasters?

The television industry's codes of practice are currently under development through FACTS (Federation of Commercial Television Stations), while codes for community broadcasters are being developed by the CBAA (Community Broadcasting Association of Australia).

Copies of the final draft codes are available from FARB (02) 906 5944 and its submission in support of registration may be viewed at all ABA offices.



ABA INFORMATION GUIDES

The ABA has issued new information guides on pay TV and narrowcasting services.

The guides are designed to help people understand the regulatory aspects of new opportunities in Australian broadcasting,' said ABA Chairman, Mr Brian Johns.

The two free guides cover subscription television broadcasting services (pay TV) and class licences (narrowcasting).

The *Guide to Subscription Television Broadcasting Services* contains a summary of the most important features of subscription television, including relevant legislation, conditions which apply to both satellite and non-satellite subscrip-

tion television services, and the existing draft pay TV Australian drama guidelines.

This guide highlights programming requirements for these services and the importance of developing codes of practice which cover program content.

Narrowcasting services are described under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* as class licence services, and are dealt with in the *Guide to Service Providers Under Class Licences* which replaces an earlier edition issued by the ABA on 19 October 1992.

This guide includes general information about each of the five categories of class licence: subscription radio broadcasting services; subscription radio nar-

rowcasting services; subscription television narrowcasting services; open narrowcasting radio services; and open narrowcasting television services.

The guides provide general information, are not intended to be a substitute for legal advice and may be updated.

If your interest is in new television services, you may require both guides. If your interest is in radio services, you need only obtain the class licences guide. This information does not relate to community or commercial licences.

For copies of either guide, contact Michael Harrington on (02) 959 7811.

