

IN THE NEWS

AUSTRALIAN CONTENT

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beyond its legal powers to include New Zealand programs in the Australian content standard.

The ABA believes the current transmission quota should be increased to 55 per cent, to be achieved at the conclusion of a three year period. The measurement period should be extended to conclude at 2 a.m. in some circumstances.

The ABA is proposing to abolish the current diversity provisions in the standard, but introduce a quota for new Australian documentaries of ten hours per year. Social documentaries is one of the categories included in the diversity provisions of the current standard.

There was strong support for the proposition that the amount of Australian C Drama broadcast should be increased. The ABA proposes the amount should be increased from the current 16 hours per year to 32 hours per year. This increase should be introduced incrementally over a period of three years.

In addition, the ABA believes that 50 per cent of P programs (programs made specially for preschool children) broadcast during a year should be Australian. Stations are required to broadcast 130 hours of P programs per year, but there is no current requirement that these be Australian.

In its July discussion paper, the ABA posed the question: What amount of Australian drama programming should be required and how should it be measured?

Some submitters argued for increased levels of 'high end' drama (mini-series and telemovies).

The ABA has drawn up two models, for further consideration and to provide a focus for discussion at meetings to be held in early December.

The first of these models is one based on a quota of hours broadcast per year. The ABA has nominated a figure of 150 hours as one that could be most realistically achieved by each of the three networks.

The second model is based on a revision of the points system in the current standard.

TIMETABLE FOR THE REVIEW

The ABA considers that there is a need for further discussion, particularly of the questions

■ What amount of Australian drama should be required?

■ How should the level of drama be measured?

It is planned to hold further meetings in Sydney and Melbourne with interested parties in December. The meetings will discuss the proposals set out in the paper, with the aim of gathering information on their potential impact.

For those unable to attend the Sydney or Melbourne meetings, the ABA will accept written comment. This should be received at the ABA's Sydney office by close of business 6 January 1995.

It is anticipated that, following consideration of comments made during these meetings, and of any written comment made by those unable to attend the meetings, the ABA would be able to release a final draft of the revised Australian content standard by early in 1995. ■

CONSULTATION COOL FOR KIDS

'Cool' or 'Gross': Children's Attitudes to Violence, Kissing and Swearing on Television was published by the ABA in October 1994. It examined what concerns, bothers or upsets children about what they see on television and the degree to which rules and routines relating to television exist in the home. The quantitative stage involved surveying children in the state, Catholic and independent school systems.

Many organisations were consulted as part of the public consultation process for the development strategy of the Kids and Classification Research program. Their approval to conduct research in schools was also sought. These organisations included: the Department of School Education and specifically the State Education Research Applications Committee (Quality Assurance Directorate); the Catholic Education Commission and Sydney Diocese; and the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of New South Wales.

These organisations were involved

throughout all stages of the research project, from the initial questionnaire design stage through to the final briefings on the results. As part of the consultation process before the release of the monograph, results were communicated to the Department of School Education, the Catholic Education Commission and the Sydney Catholic Diocese. In addition industry consultation occurred with the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations by way of briefing of topline results.

Since the release of *Cool or Gross* the ABA's Director of Programs, Ms Lesley Osborne, and the Research Manager, Ms Linda Sheldon, have met with Dr Terry Burke, NSW Education Department's Deputy Director-General, Learning and Teaching, to discuss the implications of the research for schools and to begin the consultation process on the second stage of the children's research on what children like about the television shows they watch. This consultation will also include producers and writers of children's shows. ■

