

CABLE TELEVISION SERVICES

The ABA has issued a total of 70 subscription television broadcasting services to date. The current licence holders are Paynet Telecommunications Pty Ltd (Paynet), Rowcom Holdings Pty Ltd (Rowcom), Access Cable Television Pty Ltd (Access), Home Show Cable Australia Pty Ltd (Home Show) and Cable Television Services Pty Ltd (CTS).

Paynet proposes to provide services to the Cairns and Townsville regions of Queensland. Rowcom has proposed to cover the Darwin, Cairns, Townsville, Sunshine Coast, Hobart and Launceston areas. CTS proposes a coverage area of Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Adelaide and Perth. Home Show proposes to service Adelaide initially and then cities and towns throughout Australia with populations greater than 150 000 whilst Access will provide services to Lismore at first and then a number of selected country areas and towns in Northern NSW.

Section 96 of the Broadcasting Services Act allows the ABA to allocate subscription television broadcasting li-

cences delivered by means other than satellite.

The current prohibition on licensing a pay TV broadcasting service dependent on an MDS system as its means of transmission, or as a part of its means of transmission, does not extend to services using cable as a means of delivery.

The ABA must not allocate a licence for an MDS delivered pay TV broadcasting service before the commencement of satellite broadcasting services under licence A, B or C. This prohibition will cease on 31 December 1994.

Apart from licences A, B and C, the ABA must not allocate a licence that uses satellite as a means of service delivery before 1 July 1997.

Unlike transmitter licences or other service delivery permits, these licences do not have geographical limitations. Therefore, a service licence is valid throughout Australia as long as the programming on that service is the same in all areas of reception. Where the service differs in a location, a separate service licence is required.



STATE OFFICES CLOSE IN SA AND WA

The ABA's state broadcast engineers' (SBE) offices in Western Australia and South Australia have closed.

The Perth SBE office was located at 256 Adelaide Terrace, Perth and closed on 28 January. The Adelaide SBE office, at 10-20 Pultney St, Adelaide, closed on 4 February.

The ABA flagged its intention to close its regional offices last year. The decision was made as a result of a review of the structure of the ABA.

When the ABA was established by the Broadcasting Services Act in October 1992, it inherited the full staff complement of the former Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) and the Station Planning Branch of the Department of Transport and Communications.

'However, the functions and budget of the new organisation were altered significantly in line with the new legislation, with the work of the state offices being particularly affected,' said Mr Brian Johns, ABA Chairman.

The review concluded that budget limitations and the priority for resourcing essential functions made it difficult to justify the continued role of state offices.

The public and industry will still be able to obtain broadcast engineering information and advice by telephoning the Canberra ABA office on (06) 256 2832 or 1 800 22 6667 (freecall).

Further announcements about the closure of other regional offices will be made as they arise. All other former ABT offices have already closed.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Mr Brian Johns
Chairman
Australian Broadcasting Authority

Dear Sir,

I thank you, through the editor of *ABA Update*, for sending us a copy of the latest issue.

Pages 21 & 22 contained a shortened version of an address by Lesley Osborne to the AGM of ACMA (Australian Christian Media Association). Her address referred, in part, to Clause 7(c) of Part 3 Schedule 2 of the Broadcasting Services Act 1992.

We are pleased that [the] ABA has made no ruling under this Clause. But we are displeased at the suggestion that this is so only because commercial broadcasters are still fulfilling their 'community service responsibilities'. We are unhappy that ABA sees it desirable that broadcasters should continue to aid religious bodies to brainwash the public.

Clause 7(c) discriminates against all freethought bodies in Australia - they have no countering 'uniquely privileged position' with ABA assistance to counter religious propaganda and myths.

Regards
Bill Keir
President
Victorian Secular Society
Melbourne, Vic.

