



The ABA's Legal section plays an important role in supporting all other areas of the ABA. **Insider** outlines the role of the section and provides some background to the lawyers.

Legal section



The Legal team,
L-R (standing): Carolyn Lidgerwood, Connie Ceramidas, John Corker, Cathy Bishop.
Seated: Kaaren Koomen

Legal history

The legal section consists of five lawyers who all have different and interesting backgrounds.

The section is managed by John Corker who has been with the ABA and the former ABT for almost five years. He was previously a corporate lawyer with Imparja Television and the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association. Prior to that he had spent a number of years as a solicitor with the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service and as a barrister in Melbourne. He is also the Freedom of Information and Privacy Co-ordinator for the ABA.

Connie Ceramidas joined the Legal Section in March 1994 from the Australian Securities Commission where she worked as a senior lawyer and brought with her strong investigative skills. She has worked closely on the Canwest/Ten investigation. She previously worked as a solicitor with the Australian

Government Solicitor and the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Cathy Bishop joined the section in January 1995 from the Registry of the Federal Court. Prior to her time as a Deputy District Registrar of the Court, she had a number of years as a senior solicitor with the Australian Government Solicitor. Cathy co-ordinates and manages the provision of legal services to the ABA's planning branch in Canberra.

Carolyn Lidgerwood also joined the section in January 1995. Carolyn was recruited from the Melbourne office of Messrs Arthur Robinson and Hedderwicks Solicitors where she was working in the Tax, Superannuation and Trusts Department. She was previously Associate to Chief Justice Black of the Federal Court of Australia. Carolyn has been closely involved in the ABA's work in administering the Broadcasting Services Act's anti-siphoning provisions.


Kaaren Koomen joined the section in March 1995 coming directly from the Seaview Aviation inquiry where she was a senior solicitor with the Australian Government Solicitor. Prior to that she spent four years as a lecturer in law at the Charles Sturt University at Bathurst NSW where she lectured in Commercial and Communications Law. Kaaren also worked for two and a half years at Baker and McKenzie, solicitors, where she practiced in a range of areas including commercial litigation, trade practices, intellectual property and commercial property.

This team provides legal advice to members and staff of the ABA about the ABA's powers and functions, the Broadcasting Services Act, Radiocommunications Act, Telecommunications Act and other associated legislation.

The lawyers work on a diverse group of issues. These might range from providing simple oral advice on the investigation of a program complaint to the drafting of international memoranda of understanding or the conduct of examinations of witnesses in ownership and control investigations.

The Legal Section assists members and staff in the development of ABA policy and in the preparation of reports of ABA decisions. The





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lawyers are closely involved with the effective conduct of investigations and examinations.

The Legal Section manages any litigation in which the ABA is involved and instructs the Australian Government Solicitor, the Office of General Counsel and the private bar on behalf of the ABA.

It also maintains contact with the Department

of Communications and the Arts on legislative matters and monitors the Commonwealth parliamentary program as it relates to Communications

The lawyers contribute to the legal education of ABA staff by conducting training sessions and workshops on relevant legal issues.

The implementation policy sub-section of the ABA's Planning Branch consists of one staff member only. **Jenny Brigg** discusses Implementation Policy's role and functions.

Implementation Policy



Jenny Brigg

The Implementation Policy sub-section is part of the Services Planning Section of the ABA Planning Branch and is located in Canberra.

The area is responsible for advising ABA management and staff on implementation policy issues relevant to the Planning Branch in regard to broadcasting, telecommunications and radiocommunications. Recent implementation policy initiatives have included the development of policy on special events and re-transmission. The sub-section is currently developing ABA policy on AM to FM conversion for existing community broadcasters.

Planning Branch liaison and negotiation with other areas of the ABA, the Minister for Communication and the Arts office and other outside agencies on policy issues are also handled by Implementation Policy. These

include Parliamentary questions, Senate estimate briefs, ABA input to Ministerials on broadcast planning issues, and the co-ordination of Planning Branch input to the ABA Annual Report.

The area manages the registration of callsigns for all radio and television broadcasting services.

With a staff of one, the area claims to be the smallest sub-section in the ABA!

Jenny Brigg, Assistant Manager, joined the Implementation Policy sub-section in October 1994. Before joining the ABA, she was responsible for the development of cultural policy for the ACT Government Arts and Cultural Development Unit. Ms Brigg also taught Drama and Media Studies in a senior secondary college for five years and has worked in a variety of jobs both in the public and community sectors, including two years as a drug and alcohol counsellor. ☐

Programs granted C or P classification

Programs granted a C or P classification by the ABA between 8 June 1995 and 11 July 1995. Producers interested in submitting programs for classification should contact Liz Gilchrist on (02) 334 7840.

Title	Origin	Clas.	New/ renewal	Decision date	Applicant
COSMO KIDS	Australia	CAD	new	22.6.1995	Novalis Entertainment Pty Ltd
LAMB CHOP'S PLAYALONG (Series 3)	USA	P	new	29.6.1995	Seven Network Australia
OCEAN GIRL 3	Australia	CAD	new	5.7.1995	Jonathan M. Shiff Productions Pty Ltd
PENPALS	Australia	C	new	13.6.1995	The Seven Network Ltd

CAD-C Australian drama, P - Preschool, C - Childrens