



## **ABA licences community TV in Perth and Mandurah**

PERTH: The ABA has issued a licence to the West Australian Community Broadcasting Association (WACBA) which will manage access to the sixth television channel in the Perth/Mandurah area.

WACBA, the peak body for community broadcasting in Western Australia, will hold the licence on behalf of two existing aspirant community television groups: Mandurah Community Television (MCTV) and Perth Community Television (CTV Perth).

WACBA is a consortium which draws membership from a range of community broadcasting licensees, aspirant groups and individuals.

'WACBA satisfied the ABA its activities would be open to individuals, community and educational groups. Also, it has highlighted the importance of open access in its founding charter,' said ABA Chairman, Mr Brian Johns.

The ABA has made the sixth channel (UHF Channel 31—the last high power free-to-air television channel in the Perth/Mandurah area) available until February 1996 and has issued WACBA a one year transmitter licence as an open narrowcaster for community and educational non-profit purposes.

The ABA cannot allocate permanent community television licences on the sixth channel before a ministerial review of the television broadcasting industry, which must be completed by July 1997.

The announcement follows earlier decisions by the ABA to make the sixth channel available to providers of open narrowcasting services for community and educational non-profit purposes in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Lismore.

### **Sixth channel**

As there is no separate sixth channel frequency for Mandurah, which lies within the Perth television area, both MCTV and CTV Perth were competing for one licence. Discussions between the ABA, the WA Department of State Services and WACBA resolved that WACBA act as broker between the two groups by holding the licence.

WACBA said that, with the endorsement of CTV Perth and MCTV, it was willing to act as guarantor to ensure that the only presently available frequency was shared equitably and operated in the community interest.

The consortium will operate transmitters at two sites: Bickley and Mandurah. The

transmitters are not be used concurrently to avoid interference problems.

As licensee, WACBA will be responsible for making decisions about access to air time which both aspirant groups must abide by.

### **MCTV and CTV**

MCTV and CTV Perth have both undertaken temporary transmission broadcasts.

MCTV has been broadcasting on weekends from Mandurah under a temporary transmission licence since November 1993.

CTV Perth has been in contact with the ABA since early 1993 about progress towards a long term (continuing trial) licence application. CTV Perth undertook its first temporary transmission for a three week period in late 1994 from a transmitter site in Bickley.

### **Program content standards applying to community television**

While industry codes of practice are being developed, the ABA's program content standards for narrowcasting services apply to community television broadcasters. WACBA has been temporarily licensed as a narrowcaster, pending the ministerial review of the television broadcasting industry.

Under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, industry groups representing various broadcasting industry sectors are required to develop codes. This means broadcasters are primarily responsible for ensuring programs reflect community standards, and for handling complaints about the content of their programs.

## **Another 270 pay TV licences allocated**

SYDNEY: The ABA has allocated 150 licences for non-satellite pay TV broadcasting services to Interactive Telecommunications Network Ltd (Interactive). It has also allocated a further 120 licences to Australis related companies, Star Vision Pty Ltd (Star Vision), Selectra Pty Ltd and Vinatech Pty Ltd.

The ABA has allocated 20 licences to Star Vision, 50 to Selectra and 50 to Vinatech.

Selectra intends to deliver its services via cable and MDS (multipoint distribution system which transmits via microwaves) to country areas of NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

Vinatech intends to deliver its services via cable and MDS to the whole of the Northern Territory, country areas of Queensland, plus the far north eastern corner of NSW.

Selectra is wholly owned by STV Pty Ltd



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while Vinatech is part-owned by CTV Pty Ltd. STV and CTV are part-owned by Australis Media Ltd, who will deliver programming to STV and CTV under a franchise agreement.

Star Vision, a subsidiary of Australis Media Ltd, has indicated it intends to deliver its services Australia-wide via MDS. The prohibition on licensing a pay TV broadcasting service using MDS as a means of delivery ceased to have effect on 31 December 1994.

Star Vision has previously been allocated 30 licences for non-satellite pay TV broadcasting services. The proposed means of delivery for these services was cable.

Interactive has indicated it intends to deliver its services Australia-wide via cable.

The majority of the licences allocated to Interactive are for the provision of near-video-on-demand services. These are movie based services which utilise a large number of channels as they offer the same movies at different times, giving subscribers a choice about viewing time.

The licences are allocated on the basis of one licence per proposed service. The ABA takes a service to be a single stream of programming.

The ABA has now issued a total of 769 licences for non-satellite pay TV broadcasting services.

<i>Licence holder</i>	<i>No. of licences</i>
Access Cable Television Ltd	110
Access Cable TV (Northern Rivers) Pty Ltd	4
Cable Television Services Pty Ltd	20
Central Coast Cablevision Pty Ltd	10
Dergat Pty Ltd	4
Explorer Channel Pty Ltd	1
Home Show Cable Australia Pty Ltd	20
Interactive Telecommunications Network Ltd	150
Multicom Australia Pty Ltd	35
NRS Group Pty Ltd	13
Oberon Broadcasters Pty Ltd	10
Pacific Media Telecommunications Pty Ltd	18
Paynet Telecommunications Pty Ltd	8
Premier Cable Australia Pty Ltd	43
Prime Media Developments Pty Ltd	45
Private Cable Network Pty Ltd	34
Rowcom Holdings Pty Ltd	28
Selectra Pty Ltd	50
Star Vision Pty Ltd	50
Vinatech Pty Ltd	50
Visitor Publishing Group Pty Ltd	2
Wright Weller Rosenblum Pty Ltd	10

## Australian content consultation

As part of the review of the program standard for Australian content on television, the ABA held meetings with industry representatives in Sydney and Melbourne in mid December 1994.

The meetings gave the Chairman, Mr Brian Johns, and ABA Member, Mr Tim O'Keefe, the opportunity to hear the views of the broadcasting industry, production industry, public interest groups and the craft unions.

Debate focused on the proposals outlined in the ABA's Working Paper (released in November 1994), in particular on the issues of the amount of Australian drama programs and the way Australian drama should be measured.

The ABA has invited written submissions on the Working Paper proposals from those unable to attend either of the meetings. A total of 27 submissions have been received. These are currently under consideration, along with the transcripts of the Sydney and Melbourne meetings.

The ABA has commenced work with the Office of Legislative Drafting to draft a revised Australian content standard. Once the draft is finalised, the ABA will seek further public comment on the proposed variations to the standard.

Present at the meeting in Sydney were representatives from Grundys, the Australian Screen Directors' Association, Screen Producers Association of Australia (SPAA), Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, Film Finance Corporation, Australian Film Commission, Presbyterian Women's Association and the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations. Bruce Gyngell from the Nine Network and producers including Sandra Levy of Southern Star and David Field of Village Roadshow also attended.

At the meeting in Melbourne were representatives from the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, Artists Services, Australian Children's Television Foundation, Australian Children's Television Action Committee, FACTS, SPAA and independent producers.

The ABA would like to express its appreciation to the Australian Film Commission for the use of their facilities in both Sydney and Melbourne.

## Singapore visit

SINGAPORE: In an address to the Pan Asian Telecommunications Summit in December, Mr Brian Johns stressed the need to ensure that