



News Update

TV industry should lead to new opportunities for the Australian drama production industry.'

Experience with the operation of the pay TV industry, as well as extensive consultation with pay TV broadcasters, pay TV channel providers and the production industry, has informed the development of the new version of the guidelines.

'The pay TV industry's positive response to the new voluntary regime gives me every confidence that the aim of the condition will be met,' Mr Webb said.

The guidelines are intended as an interim measure pending the outcome of the Ministerial review of Australian content on pay TV, which is scheduled to be conducted prior to 1 July 1997.

ABA requirements

The ABA will require proof by way of an auditor's statement concerning the calculation of program expenditure and the 10 per cent amount required to be spent. The ABA also requires detailed information in relation to each new Australian drama program on which money has been spent.

The voluntary compliance approach of the guidelines has been adopted as an interim measure, prior to the Ministerial review of Australian content on pay TV.

The ABA envisages that compliance information in relation to the condition and these guidelines will be a valuable input to the review.

Pay TV drama channels

The ABA has defined a pay TV drama service as one which shows more than 50 per cent of drama programming annually. There are currently 13 predominantly drama pay TV channels being provided in Australia (see table, 'What's on subscription television?' on p.17 of this issue of *ABA Update*).

It is too early to estimate how much money will be spent on new Australian drama. The ABA will monitor the requirement for new Australian drama by way of annual expenditure statements from pay TV broadcasters and channel providers.

The licence condition requires expenditure on new Australian drama programs but does not explicitly require that the programs be broadcast. The ABA expects, however, that in most cases the Australian drama programs supported by the condition in practice will be broadcast on pay TV.

Some programs may end up being broadcast on a different predominantly drama pay TV channel to the one in relation to which the 10 per cent obligation was

generated. Where the format of a pay TV drama service does not easily accommodate showing new Australian drama, for example nostalgia formats, the guidelines allow operators to show the material on one of the other pay TV drama services.

The ABA began its consultative process in September 1995 when it released a draft of the new guidelines for comment.

Throughout the ABA's consultative process, pay TV broadcasters and channel providers have been co-operative and have indicated their support for the voluntary scheme put forward by the ABA.

Discontinuation of bi-annual revenue returns for commercial radio

SYDNEY: The ABA, in consultation with the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters (FARB), has decided to terminate the collection of bi-annual revenue figures, from June 1996.

The ABA expects to continue releasing annual financial results in February or March of each year in the same format as the 1994-95 series. The ABA previously released bi-annual results, as the publication of the annual data took up to six months from collection date. The annual returns for 1994-95 were published within two months of the collection date (31 December 1995), obviating the need to continue releasing bi-annual results.

Broadcasting Financial Results 1994-95 is available from the ABA (in disk format only), price \$100.

Community television for Bendigo and Hobart

SYDNEY: The ABA has allocated temporary community television licences to Bendigo Community Television Inc. (BCTV) and Hobart Access Community Television Inc. (HACT).

Both BCTV and HACT are non-profit organisations who satisfy the criteria set out in the ABA's Access Statement and the general rules governing potential community broadcasters seeking access to a vacant channel. BCTV will broadcast on UHF channel 41 and HACT will broadcast on UHF channel 37.

The ABA has issued temporary licences in a number of areas for community television services using vacant high powered free-to-air television channels.

In many parts of Australia there is only one