



# 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



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high powered channel (the so called sixth channel) available. The existing five channels are being used by the two national broadcasters (ABC and SBS) and three commercial services.

The ABA cannot allocate permanent community television broadcasting licences on the UHF or VHF television bands until options for the use of the sixth channel have been considered.

Consequently, the ABA has made channels available for open narrowcasting television services for community and educational non-profit purposes on a temporary basis, to allow a trial of community television.

## Open narrowcasting licences for NW Western Australia

SYDNEY: The ABA has finalised its licence area plan for radio in the Carnarvon, Karratha and Port Hedland region of Western Australia. Channels have been made available for open narrowcasting services at Carnarvon, Dampier, Exmouth, Karratha, Onslow, Paraburdoo, Port Hedland, Roebourne and Tom Price.

'The decision to make the channels available follows interest expressed by the TAB of Western Australia. The channels will be allocated via an auction later this year and anyone will be able to bid for the licences,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman.

During April and May, additional commercial radio licences were issued to the licensees of 6LN Carnarvon, 6KA Karratha and 6NW Port Hedland. They have 12 months to get their new services up and running. The new commercial services will operate on the FM radio band.

No submissions were received from organisations in these areas indicating that a local community radio group had been formed to provide a community radio service.

'The ABA's role is to identify vacant broadcasting channels and decide the number and type of new services and licences to make available for allocation. We cannot fund or make others fund new radio services.'

The plan does not include television services. A plan for television services will be released later this year.

Details of the radio licence area plan for Carnarvon, Karratha and Port Hedland are available for viewing at public libraries in these towns as well as Exmouth and Onslow, or can be obtained from the ABA by calling freecall 1800 810 241.

## ABA allocates pay TV licences

SYDNEY: The ABA has allocated 100 licences to Optus Vision Media Pty Ltd (Optus Vision Media) and 20 licences to Foxtel Cable Television Pty Ltd (Foxtel) for non-satellite pay TV broadcasting services.

Optus Vision Media has indicated it intends to deliver the services via cable in Australian towns.

'The ABA examined the share holding structure of the companies and found they both complied with the foreign ownership provisions of the Broadcasting Services Act,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman.

The following table lists all non-satellite pay TV broadcasting licences issued by the ABA.

Licence holder	No. of licences
Access Cable Television Ltd	110
Access Cable TV (Northern Rivers) Pty Ltd	4
Cable Television Services Pty Ltd	20
Cable Network Services Pty Ltd	50
Central Coast Cablevision Pty Ltd	54
CFM Television PTY LTD	1
Cosmovision Cable Television Pty Ltd	50
Cox Media Pty Limited	56
CVC Pay TV Pty Ltd	20
Dergat Pty Ltd	4
Explorer Channel Pty Ltd	1
Graff Pay-Per-View (Australia) Pty Ltd	10
Home Show Cable Australia Pty Ltd	20
Interactive Telecommunications Network Ltd	150
Mudgee Cable Company Pty Ltd	60
Multicom Australia Pty Ltd	35
Neighborhood Cable Pty Ltd	72
Northgate Cable Television Pty Ltd	150
NRS Group Pty Ltd	13
Oberon Broadcasters Pty Ltd	10
Optus Vision Media PTY LTD	100
Pacific Media Telecommunications Pty Ltd	18
Paynet Telecommunications Pty Ltd	8
Planet Pay TV Pty Ltd	20
PPV TV Pty Ltd	20
Premier Cable Australia Pty Ltd	43
Prime Media Developments Pty Ltd	45
Private Cable Network Pty Ltd	102
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
<b>Total</b>	<b>1436</b>