



Opportunities for producers in changing broadcasting environment

PERTH: The power of forces on the loose in the broadcasting environment is certain to bring about huge change, Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman, said in his address to the 'Small Screen, Big Picture' conference in Fremantle on 9 March.

'The challenge is to grasp the opportunities that change will bring,' Mr Webb said.

The broadcasting landscape has already changed over the past two years with the introduction of pay TV. While pay TV has provided limited scope for producers of Australian programming to date, opportunities for Australian producers are set to increase significantly. The only Australian content requirement for pay TV operators at present is a licence condition that 10 per cent of expenditure on programming for drama channels must be for new Australian drama.

'Following a round of discussions with the pay TV operators and the production industry about this licence condition, it is clear that few, if any, of the pay TV operators will themselves expend money on programming,' Mr Webb said. 'The ABA has therefore been encouraging voluntary expenditure on new Australian programming by those companies which are packaging program streams or channels for the pay TV industry.'

'If the licence condition remains unchanged, the pay TV industry believes that while there may not be a great impact on the production industry in the short term, the long term will bring quite significant commissions for new Australian drama programs.'

In less than sixteen months satellite delivery of pay TV in Australia will be unhindered by licence limitations and the present cross media rules governing the two existing satellite operators will drop away. In the period leading up to this loosening of regulations, the Minister for Communications and the Arts must conduct a review of the level of Australian programming on all pay TV channels.

The advent of services on the Internet that will be indistinguishable from radio and television programs is also an opportunity for Australian producers, Mr Webb said. As part of its current investigation into the content on on-line services, the ABA has set out to explore possibilities that might encourage local development.

Other issues canvassed by Mr Webb in his speech included the prospects for a fourth commercial television channel, the roll out of pay TV in Western Australia and ABA progress in planning new free to air television services in regional Western Australia.

During his visit to Perth, Mr Webb met with a number of bodies and individuals who have made submissions to the ABA's on-line investigation, including the Censorship Office of Western Australia, the WA Internet Association and the Electronic Frontiers Association.

Submissions: on-line services investigation

SYDNEY: The regulation of on-line services is clearly a hot topic in Australia today. This is supported by the large number and range of individuals and organisations who have made

Programs granted C and P classification

Programs granted C and P classification between 5 February 1996 and 4 March 1996. Producers interested in submitting programs for classification should contact Liz Gilchrist on (02) 334 7840.

Title	Origin	Class.	New/ Renewal	Decision date	Applicant
HERCULES	Australia	CAD	new	23.1.1996	Burbank Animation Studios Pty Ltd
LIFT OFF	Australia	CAD	new	30.1.1996	Australian Children's Television Foundation
LIFT OFF	Australia	P	new	30.1.1996	Australian Children's Television Foundation

C - children's program CAD - C Australian drama P - Preschool program PRC - Provisional C