



submissions to the ABA's Issues Paper for the *Investigation into the Content of On-line Services* which was released in December 1995.

Around two hundred submissions have been received to date. These have come from academic organisations, community groups, educational groups, Government, content and Internet service providers and users.

While some submissions have rejected the idea of any regulation of on-line services, most have offered constructive comment on the ideas presented in the *Issues Paper*. The main questions raised in the *Issues Paper* were:

- Who is responsible for the content of on-line services?
- What are the developments in technology and service trends, including the impact of broadband delivery systems and the impact of the post-1997 regulatory framework?
- What are community concerns in relation to on-line services?
- What views exist on the possibility of a introducing a code of practice for on-line services?
- What is the feasibility of a classification scheme for Australian content providers?
- How could a code be enforced?
- What is the appropriateness for developing a representative on-line industry peak body?
- What is the appropriateness of establishing an independent complaints handling body?
- What are the existing control tools and developments in the educational sector?
- How appropriate would the development of a 'refused access list' be?
- What consumer issues arise?
- How can the development of Australian content be encouraged?
- What are the most effective ways to achieve international collaboration on content issues?

As this issue of *ABA Update* goes to print the submissions are being analysed, and follow-up consultations are being organised in preparation for drafting the final report which is due to be presented to the Minister for Communications and the Arts by 30 June.

All submissions not marked as confidential are available to be viewed in hard copy in the ABA library, and are being put on the ABA's homepage located at:

<http://www.dca.gov.au/aba/hpcov>.

## Community broadcasting - applications for licences

SYDNEY: The ABA has received applications from aspirant community broadcasters in Darwin and Mildura for the two community broadcasting licences available in each of those cities.

Three aspirant community broadcasters have applied for the two licences in Darwin, and two aspirant community broadcasters have applied for the two licences in Mildura. The Darwin applicants are Darwin Christian Broadcasters Assoc. Ltd; Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association; and Larrikia Association Inc.

The Mildura applicants are Association for the Blind Ltd; and CARNMA Trading (Aboriginal Corporation).

The ABA invited applications by way of newspaper notices on 12 December 1995. These are the first new community radio broadcasting licences to be offered under the ABA's new merit based allocation system. Applications closed on 16 February 1996.

The *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* says free-to-air community broadcasting service licences must be allocated on the basis of merit. Under this system, in areas where there is only one applicant for a community broadcasting licence, the ABA only has to decide if the applicant merits a licence. When there is more than one applicant, the ABA may also have to choose on the basis of comparative merit. Alternatively, applicants can combine to present a unified application.

The ABA has placed copies of applications on display in local libraries and invites public comment. Interested parties have 21 days to comment, from the date of notification.

## New Minister

CANBERRA: The new Minister for Communications and the Arts in the newly elected Liberal/National Party Government is Senator The Honourable Richard Alston.

His address is:

Room MG70

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600.