




ABA plays host to Hong Kong visitor

The Chief Entertainment Standards Control Officer in the Research Branch of the Hong Kong Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA), Mr Noel Leung, visited the ABA for one week in May. During his stay, Mr Leung studied the functions of the ABA and how they are carried out. He also attended meetings with the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations, the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters and the Office of Film and Literature Classification.

Mr Leung was interested in self-regulation in the Australian broadcasting in-

dustry, and codes of practice. Hong Kong broadcasters adhere to codes of practice which relate to programming, advertising, home shopping and technical standards, and Mr Leung was keen to see how such issues are covered in Australia.

Mr Leung also expressed an interest in classification issues. He compared the Australian system with that of Hong Kong, which he said has one of the most relaxed censorship environments in the Asian region. Mr Leung was particularly interested in censorship issues as they have implications for the introduction of video-on-demand services in Hong Kong this year. 



Mr Noel Leung, Chief Entertainment Standards Control Officer in the Research Branch of TELA and Mr Gareth Grainger, ABA General Manager, Policy and Programs Division.

ITU Study Groups on radio and television

Australia was well represented at the recent meetings of the International Telecommunications Union Study Groups on Radio and Television, held in Geneva in April. The Australian delegation, led by General Manager Planning and Corporate of the ABA, Mr Colin Knowles, ABA included Mr Richard Barton, Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations, Mr Geoffrey Smith, Scientific Atlanta, Mr Bob Greeney and Mr Craig Todd, ABA, and Mr Spencer Lieng, ABC.

The study groups are the peak technical body of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). They are empowered to adopt recommendations developed by their various working parties and task groups, and to set the priorities of these groups.

The study groups adopted a large number of new and revised recommendations on radio and television technology which will now be submitted to the peak body of the sector, the Radiocommunications Assembly, for final approval later this year.

The most significant new recommendations were those on the international standards for digital terrestrial television broadcasting, which were finalised at a meeting in Sydney last November. Further to the recommen-

dations on digital television was the adoption of a single world-wide target format for high definition television production based on a proposal submitted to the ITU by Australia in the late 1980s. This format enables conversion between different broadcast systems with the least possible degradation to the image quality, and provides enhanced ability to electronically manipulate during production.

Australia made five contributions to this round of meetings. They included contributions on the image format for high definition television production mentioned above; observations on the maximum limits of spurious radiation from television transmitters; proposals for reallocation of digital television work from the task groups that have completed their work; file formats, interfaces and network protocols for production and recording; and proposals concerning the overall tolerance in synchronism between sound and picture signal timing in television.

Parental control over children's television viewing continues to interest a number of countries. The relevant working party has initiated a survey of members so that during the next study period agreement may be reached on a common parental control system. The

V-chip is one of the technologies being considered but this has limitations in certain broadcast transmission circumstances. However, before the technology can be developed, there must be a uniform approach to classification of television programs so that a common access control system can be implemented.

Interactive television was given new importance at these meetings with the establishment of a new task force of Study Group 11. This task force is charged with coordinating Study Group 11 and the work of the other interested parties so that the eventual system can be integrated into the broadcast chain.

The Australian contributions to the work of the ITU Study Groups are developed by the Australian Radiocommunication Study Group (ARSG) 10-11 which is chaired by Colin Knowles. Participation in the ARSG work is open to any interested individual or organisation. The contributions developed by the ARSG are formally submitted to the ITU via the Spectrum Management Agency (SMA). This process ensures that contributions are consistent with Australian Government policy. The delegation to the meetings is governed by a formal brief approved by the SMA. 