



News Update

will allow the proposed sale of CanWest's excess company interests in Ten to a restructured TNQ to be completed. The ABA will examine the final transaction documents for compliance with the Act.

The breach must be remedied by midnight, 13 February 1998. No further extensions can be granted.

Investigations into program matters

CANBERRA: There were 49 breaches of codes of practice or licence conditions by broadcasters in 1996-97, according to the ABA's Annual Report tabled in Parliament on 29 October. Of the 49 breaches, 41 related to codes of practice, and 8 were breaches of licence conditions.

'Given the number of codes that are operational, the range of issues they cover and the number of broadcasting services that are covered by codes, the ABA does not consider the number of code breaches it has found to be indicative of any serious problem, either with the performance of broadcasters, or with the operation of the codes,' the report says.

'The issue which resulted in most code breaches was complaints handling,' said Ms Jonquil Ritter, ABA Manager, Codes and Conditions. 'Sixteen of the 41 code breaches related to complaints handling under the relevant industry sector's code of practice. The ABA is working with broadcasters to improve their handling of complaints and their responsiveness to audience concerns.'

Other matters to which code breaches related included accuracy and fairness in news and

current affairs, broadcast of distressing material, distinguishing program content from commercials, invasion of privacy, vilification and incitement of hatred and inappropriate depiction of sex and nudity. Of the 41 code breaches, 20 related to

commercial television services, 9 to commercial radio, 5 to ABC television, 2 to ABC radio and 5 to community radio.

The ABA completed 115 investigations into program related matters in the financial year 1996-97, some of which had carried over from

the previous year. Twenty nine investigations resulted in the ABA finding a breach or breaches had occurred. A total of 42 breaches were found as a result of completed investigations, as some investigations resulted in findings of more than one breach. The other 7 breaches were admitted by the broadcaster concerned while the ABA's investigation was in progress. The ABA found 46 breaches in the previous financial year.

ABA international relations program

SYDNEY: On 30 September 1997, the ABA released a booklet outlining its international program from 1992 to 1997.

'This booklet provides a chronicle of the ABA's international relations program and seeks to promote an understanding of the ABA's bilateral and multilateral activities,' said Mr Peter Webb, former ABA Chairman.

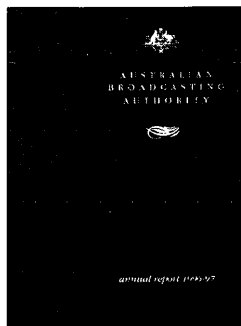
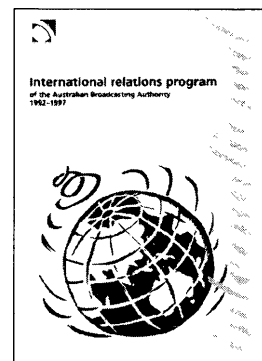
'This week provides an opportune time for its release as we have communications regulators from several countries, such as the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission and the Korean Broadcasting Commission, attending the International Institute of Communications Annual Conference in Sydney,' Mr Webb said.

In releasing the booklet, Mr Webb acknowledged the rapid technological changes, coupled with communications and commercial operations, which are becoming increasingly multinational in nature.

'In such a context, international cooperation and regional collaboration on socio-economic and technological issues grow in significance. As regulators, we need to take account of, and be involved in, international developments while pursuing domestic policies,' Mr Webb said.

The ABA has played a lead role in several areas in relation to broadcast regulation, including digital terrestrial television, digital radio broadcasting, children's television and on-line services.

Copies of the publication, which is free, are available by calling (02) 9334 7700.



Copies of the ABA's Annual Report 1996-97 are free. Call (02) 9334 7700