



at production industry capacity and at the options in the working paper.

Much of the discussion at the forum focused on the program expenditure options and the issue of greater flexibility in meeting Australian content requirements, in particular, the definition of 'new', whether there should be a pay TV window for television drama and extending eligibility to other Australian program types. Pay TV representatives at the forum were not attracted to the proposal that rerun programming count towards a 20 per cent program expenditure option they contend there is not enough Australian library programming.

The lack of available Australian back catalogue was also one of the main arguments the pay TV industry expressed in opposition to any introduction of transmission quotas.

The other main area of discussion was whether Australian content requirements should be extended to non-drama pay TV channels. The Australian Screen Directors Association argued for Australian content obligations to be placed on documentary channels. The Screen Producers Association of Australia expressed the view that all non-drama pay TV channels, including the forthcoming Arts channel, should be required to spend 10 per cent of their program expenditure on new Australian programs. Others at the forum pointed out that such an approach was not appropriate to many pay TV channels such as news, sport and foreign movies.

The ABA has invited written comment on the working paper and encouraged all at the forum to make further submissions to the investigation. □

The ABA will make a second commercial television licence available for allocation in remote and regional Western Australia.

New television licence for regional WA

The ABA has decided to make a second commercial television licence available for allocation in remote and regional Western Australia.

'The half million Western Australians outside of Perth have never had access to more than one commercial television service,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman. 'The good news for them is that the ABA has decided they should get a second commercial television service.'

Mr Webb was speaking at the ABA's inaugural Broadcasting Planning Seminar in Canberra.

'The ABA believes that such an outcome is both feasible and unambiguously in the public interest. Nevertheless, it is important for the people of the region to understand that the emergence of the new service will depend on the market,' he said.

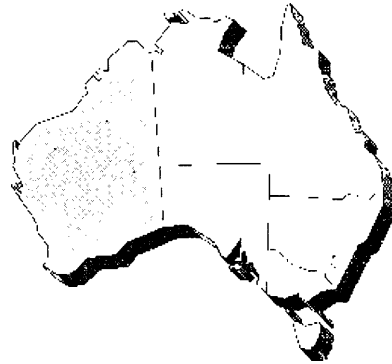
'In the marketplace at the present time, there are still some unknowns about the availability of sufficient programs and about the means by which some programs might be delivered to the more inaccessible areas of the region.'

'But the ABA remains confident that operators or entrepreneurs — and Western

Australia has a couple of notable television entrepreneurs — will find a way to deliver new programs to the remote and regional communities of the state.'

The new commercial television licence will be made available through a price-based allocation process. The licence area of the new service will be the whole of regional and remote Western Australia and will encompass the four existing television licence areas (South West/Great Southern, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and Remote WA).

The ABA's decision is contained in its television licence area plan for remote and regional Western Australia. During its planning process the ABA received expressions of interest in operating the second commercial television service from a number of sources, including Imparja Television, Mr Jack Bendat's jmb Pty Ltd, and a group of businessmen from Albany.



The ABA has also made channel capacity available for:

- ABC and SBS television services in the regional markets;
- re-transmission of ABC and SBS television services in the remote region;
- re-transmission of the second commercial television service in other centres in remote and regional Western Australia on request;
- the existing 13 community television services;
- an extension of the Wingellina community television services to a further 11 sites; and
- one local coverage open narrowcasting television service at Broome. □

Details of the television licence area plans for remote and regional Western Australia will be available for viewing at major public libraries in these regions, or can be obtained from the ABA by calling Freecall 1800 810 241.