



ABA looks at Ten share transactions

SYDNEY: The ABA met with Mr Israel Asper, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of CanWest Global Communications Corporation on 16 December 1996.

The ABA is examining recent share transactions relating to The Ten Group Limited (Ten), to ascertain whether there is a breach of the provisions in the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* ('the Act') on foreign ownership and control of commercial television licences. The Act says a foreign person must not be in a position to exercise control of a commercial television licence.

'Mr Asper provided details of a proposed float of shares in The Ten Group Limited, among other things,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman. 'The ABA reiterated its support for an Australian public float of Ten.'

'Notwithstanding today's discussions, the ABA will be examining a number of witnesses, including Mr Asper, under oath this week as part of its ongoing investigation into whether CanWest is in breach of the provisions of the Broadcasting Services Act on foreign ownership and control of commercial television licences.'

'Mr Asper indicated that he would fully cooperate with the ABA's further investigations in order that they might be brought to a conclusion as soon as possible.'

Since 12 November 1996, the ABA has formally sought and received from the parties involved documents relating to the transactions.

The transactions have had the effect of increasing Canadian company CanWest's 'economic interest' in Ten.

However, the ABA is investigating whether or not the increase in CanWest's 'economic interest' has changed its company interests in Ten or has placed it in a position to exercise control of Ten's licences.

The ABA's investigation will involve examining a number of factual and legal issues. The ABA will monitor any further transfers of shares in Ten.

Investigation into Australian content on pay TV

SYDNEY: The ABA is currently considering written submissions to its investigation into Australian content on pay TV. The ABA has received 39 submissions from pay TV

broadcasters and channel providers, the film and television production industry, Commonwealth film agencies, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the New Zealand High Commission, children's television organisations, free-to-air broadcasters and other interested parties.

The public investigation file may be inspected at the ABA's Sydney office and at Cinemedia in Victoria; Screen West in Western Australia; Film Queensland; the South Australian Film Corporation; the Bureau of Transport and Communications Economics in Canberra; and, the Ministry of Commerce in Wellington, New Zealand.

ABA allocates new commercial TV broadcasting licence for Mildura to Prime

MILDURA: The ABA has allocated a new commercial television broadcasting licence for the Mildura/Sunraysia area to Prime Television (Victoria) Pty Ltd (Prime Victoria).

Prime Victoria bid \$3.2 million for the licence at an auction held by the ABA on 29 October 1996.

'The allocation of a new commercial television licence in the Mildura/Sunraysia area answers a long expressed demand from Mildura residents for a second commercial service in the area,' said ABA Member Tim O'Keefe.

'The allocation of this licence represents the successful culmination of the ABA's planning process in the Mildura area, and the people of Mildura can look forward to the introduction of the new service within 12 months.'

The Mildura licence is the first commercial television broadcasting licence to be allocated under the ABA's price-based allocation system, and the first new commercial television licence to be offered to new players since a licence for Perth was granted in 1986.

Prime Victoria must commence a service in Mildura within one year of being allocated the licence (or seek the ABA's permission for an extension of this period).

ABA invites applications for two new community radio licences for Mt Isa

SYDNEY: The ABA is calling for applications for two new community broadcasting radio licences for Mt Isa, Queensland and one in the York area of Western Australia.