



News Update

Children and Content On-Line Task Force

The ABA has established a Children and Content On-Line Task Force. The task force will assist the ABA in its consideration of that part of the Direction on on-line services from the Minister for Communications, the Information Economy and the Arts, which deals with content labelling. The first meeting of the task force took place on 3 February 1998.

Content labelling is one of the options currently available to parents and supervisors. It is a means by which they can limit access to Internet content which they do not consider appropriate for children, without affecting the rights of those who do not wish to use such tools. However, the ABA recognises that content labelling raises some important and complex issues.

The task force is composed of individuals with a range of skills and backgrounds

including children and media, multimedia, service providers, content providers, libraries, educational bodies, industry associations, community groups, and film and video classification. The task force will meet four times from February to May 1998 and will

be aiming to make some recommendations to the ABA.

The terms of reference for the task force are:

- to consider issues relating to the protection of children from unsuitable and harmful material in the on-line environment in a manner which does not interfere with the rights of adults to access the same material;
- to consider the role of content labelling, along with other options and strategies, as a means of addressing the protection of children from unsuitable and harmful material on-line as part of a self-regulatory approach to Internet content issues;
- to consider other issues regarding children's safety in the on-line environment, including issues relating to the security of personal information provided by children;

- to consider international developments in the labelling of content on the Internet and the implications for the Australian on-line industry, including consideration of the development of an international content rating scheme and, where appropriate, contribute to relevant international fora;
- to advise on a national consultative process on the issue of labelling content in the on-line environment;
- to advise on options for implementation including the feasibility, costs, and likely benefits, of a strategy for labelling content on-line. Consideration will also need to be given to related technical issues and strategies to encourage content providers to label Internet content;
- to consider community education tools to educate Internet users about the availability of labelling, and alternative tools, to limit children's access to harmful and unsuitable material on-line; and
- to provide input on content labelling to the ABA's proposed report to the Minister on the issues raised in his second direction.

In addressing these terms of reference, the task force also aims to support the development of content for the on-line industry and facilitate the use of on-line services by children and the Australian community.

Task force members:

Ms Andre Wright, Office of Film and Literature Classification; *Ms Brenda Aynsley*, Internet Support Services Australia Pty Limited; *Ms Liz Williams*, BT Australasia; *Ms Theresa White*, Whitewolf Online; *Ms Georgina Smith*, Village Roadshow; *Mr Peter Coroneos*, Internet Industry Association; *Mr Chris Lee*, Indiginet; *Ms Belinda Redman*/*Ms Toni Jupe*, Young Media Australia, (alternate members); *Ms Sonya Kilkenny*, Australian Children's Television Foundation; *Ms Sue Harriman*/*Mr Glenn Dudley*, NSW Department of Schools Education (alternate members); *Mr Derek Whitehead*, Australian Council of Library and Information Services; *Ms Bridget Bainbridge*, Multimedia Victoria; *Mr Matthew Hall*, Dunhill Madden Butler; *Ms Becky Lenaburg*, Microsoft; and *Ms Imogen Boas*, Netscape.

ABA to auction new commercial TV licence for remote and regional WA

The ABA will conduct an auction for a new commercial television broadcasting licence, to





News Update

serve remote and regional Western Australia, on Wednesday 1 April 1998.

The licence area of the service covers all of Western Australia, excluding Perth.

'The ABA has received ten applications for the licence and is extremely pleased with the size and strength of the field,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman.

The auction will be held in Perth. Members of the public may attend the auction, but only registered applicants may bid for the licence. As is the normal practice with auctions, only the name of the successful bidder will be made public.

Applications for the licence closed on Thursday 26 February 1998.

Extension of 2TEN into Stanthorpe

The ABA has taken the preliminary view that it should allow the community radio service 2TEN Tenterfield to extend its licence area to serve the town of Stanthorpe, Queensland.

The proposal to extend the community radio licence area follows consideration of a submission on community-of-interest ties between Tenterfield and Stanthorpe, provided by 2TEN Tenterfield.

The ABA's proposal is contained in a consultation paper which is supplementary to the discussion paper and draft licence area plan for radio services in the Toowoomba/Warwick area of the Darling Downs region, released by the ABA in November 1997.

The proposed 2TEN Stanthorpe transmitter is planned to operate on FM 98.7 MHz from a nominal site at Mt Marlay, with a maximum effective radiated power of 100 W.

Applications invited for 7 new community radio licences

The ABA has invited applications for seven new community radio broadcasting licences in Southern NSW and Northern Victoria. The licences are to serve Albury, Alexandra/Eildon, Corryong, Mansfield, Shepparton, Walwa/Jingellic and Wangaratta.

'Allocation of these new community broadcasting licences has begun as a result of the ABA's public planning process being finalised in these areas,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman. 'Licences are being offered because the planning process identified demand for new community broadcasting services that are operated by people living in these communities.'

Free-to-air community broadcasting service licences are allocated on the basis of merit. If there is only one applicant for a community broadcasting licence, the ABA need only decide if the applicant merits a licence.

When there is more than one applicant, the ABA may have to choose on the basis of comparative merit. Applicants may combine to present a unified application.

Community radio applications for Bathurst

The ABA is seeking public comment on applications for a community radio broadcasting licence to serve the Bathurst area of New South Wales.

The ABA received applications for the licence from Bathurst Christian Broadcasters Inc. trading as Radio Rhema, and Bathurst and District Community Radio Broadcasters Inc.

The public file, containing the applications and other relevant information is available for inspection at Bathurst City Library.

Send written comments to:
Manager, Allocation and Renewal,
ABA, PO Box Q500, Queen Victoria Building,
NSW 1230 by Friday 20 March 1998.

Senate Select Committee on Information Technologies

The ABA appeared before the Senate Select Committee on Information Technologies at the New South Wales Parliament House in Sydney on 5 February 1998. The Committee was holding hearings as part of its inquiry:

To evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness and privacy implications of the existing self-regulatory framework in relation to the information and communications industries and, in particular, the adequacy of the complaints regime.

In his opening statement to the Committee, Mr Giles Tanner, ABA General Manager, said, 'The ABA has now had five years experience implementing the self-regulatory framework for the broadcasting industry adopted by Parliament with the introduction of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*. We hope we are able to assist the Committee in its evaluation of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the existing system with the information we are able to provide about the ABA's experience'.

The ABA had previously provided a written submission to the Committee. This contained

The ABA's consultation paper is available for viewing at the Stanthorpe, Toowoomba and Warwick libraries. The document can also be obtained from the ABA by telephoning Freecall 1800 810 241. Send written submissions to:

Planning Officer for Darling Downs
ABA
PO Box 34
Belconnen, ACT 2616
by 13 March 1998

For more information:
call the ABA's Allocation and Renewal Section on (02) 9334 7700.

Applications

Applications for the Albury, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Alexandra/Eildon, Corryong, Walwa/Jingellic and Mansfield licences must be received **before 5.00 pm, Tuesday 14 April 1998.**