



The ABA has found six Queensland commercial television licensees in breach of the licence condition relating to broadcasting political matter at the request of another person, and intends to impose a condition on their licences.

and proposes to impose a licence condition on Queensland television licensees

tions (FACTS) developed the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice, in accordance with the provisions of section 123 of the Broadcasting Services Act. FACTS is the industry body representing commercial television stations.

Section 123 of the Act sets down Parliament's intention that groups representing particular sections of the broadcasting industry will develop, in consultation with the ABA and taking account of any relevant research by the ABA, codes of practice that are to be applicable to those sections of the industry.

The Act sets out a number of matters to which codes may relate. These include preventing the broadcasting of programs that, in accordance with community standards, are not suitable to be broadcast by that section of the industry. A high priority is the need to ensure that children are protected from exposure to program material that may be harmful to them.

In developing the code the industry is required to take

account of community attitudes to matters such as the portrayal of violence, sexual conduct and nudity, and the use in programs of offensive language. The industry is also required to take account of concerns about the portrayal of the use of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco. While developing the code, FACTS sought public comment three times.

The ABA must include a code of practice in the Register of codes of practice if it is satisfied that:

- (i) the code of practice provides appropriate community safeguards for the matters covered by the code; and
- (ii) the code is endorsed by a majority of the providers of broadcasting services in that section of the industry; and
- (iii) members of the public have been given an adequate opportunity to comment on the code.

The code was included in the ABA's Register of Codes of Practice on 8 April 1999. It replaced the September 1993 version of the code.

The ABA has advised the licensees of the Queensland commercial television stations QTQ 9 Brisbane, BTQ 7 Brisbane, TVQ 10 Brisbane, RTQ Regional Queensland, TNQ Regional Queensland and STQ Regional Queensland of its intention to impose an additional condition on their licences.

On 18 June 1999, the ABA found the six licensees in breach of the licence condition relating to broadcasting political matter at the request of another person. The ABA found that the licensees did not announce the 'required particulars', commonly known as the 'authorisation' or 'tag', immediately after the broadcast of five Queensland Government advertisements. The advertisements, aired in the period November 1997 to May 1998, related to hospital waiting lists, education, police staffing and funding, Pacific Highway upgrade and hospital and equipment upgrades.

On 17 December 1999, the ABA found all six licensees, together with the licensee of

the commercial television broadcasting licence QQQ Remote Central and Eastern Australia, in breach of the same licence condition.

The ABA is proposing to impose a condition that will require each licensee to ensure that all those involved on behalf of the licensee in the production and clearance of material for broadcast undertake a training program within 12 months of the condition being imposed. In addition, the ABA has issued a notice to all six licensees, as well as QQQ, requiring each of them to provide to the ABA copies of all records kept by it detailing the persons at whose request political matter is broadcast.

The ABA has formally notified the licensees of its intention and has given them until 15 May 2000 to make representations to the ABA about the matter. Upon receipt of any representations from the licensees the ABA will consider whether to proceed to impose the additional condition on the licences.

