



IN THE NEWS

The ABA has released the 1998–99 broadcasting financial results for 226 commercial radio and 48 commercial television licensees.

Radio profits up 13.4% TV profits down 35.7% in 1998–99

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'In 1998–99, 226 commercial radio licensees generated \$635.5 million in revenue, with \$528.0 million going to expenses,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman. 'This meant a broadcasting profit of \$107.5 million and represents an increase of 13.4 per cent over the previous year's profit of \$94.8 million.'

The amount of revenue generated in 1998–99 was 6.3 per cent higher than the previous year's \$595.8 million generated by 212 licensees. Expenses also increased, by 5.4 per cent over the previous year's amount of \$501.1 million.

'The 48 commercial television licensees generated \$2849.9 million in revenue in 1998–99, with \$2543.3 million going to expenses. This produced a broadcasting profit of \$306.6 million — 35.7 per cent

lower than the previous year's profit of \$476.7 million,' said Professor Flint.

The amount of revenue generated in 1998–99 represents a 3.4 per cent increase over the previous year's amount of \$2755.8 million generated by 47 licensees. Expenses also increased by 11.6 per cent over the previous year's amount of \$2279.2 million.

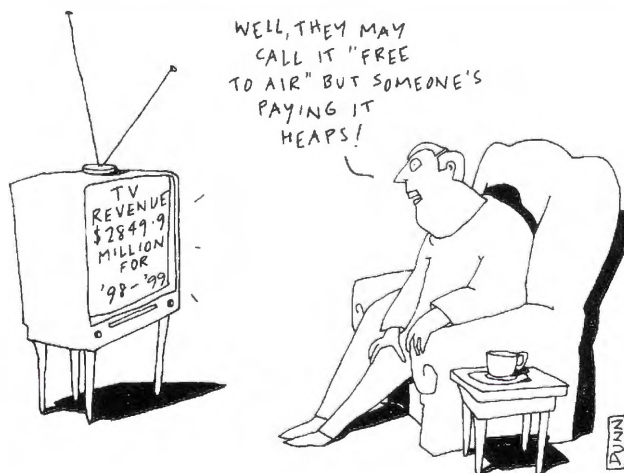
Of the total revenue of \$2779.3 million generated by the networks, Seven Network

and its affiliates account for \$944.7 million or 34 per cent, Nine Network and its affiliates \$1156.1 million or 41.6 per cent, and Ten Network and its affiliates \$678.5 million or 24.4 per cent. Seven Network and its affiliates earned \$24.8 million more than they did in 1997–98 (an increase of 2.7 per cent on the previous year's earnings), Nine Network and its affiliates earned \$47.5 million more (up 4.3 per cent), and Ten Network and its af-

filiates \$20.1 million more (up 3.1 per cent).

Commercial television licensees spent \$607.1 million in 1998–99 on local programming. Of this amount, \$137.7 million was spent on Australian drama and children's programming; \$158.1 million on news and current affairs; \$183.2 million on sports; \$114.3 million on light entertainment; and \$ 13.8 million on documentaries.

Seven Network and its affiliates spent a total of \$274.2 million on Australian programming in 1998–99, representing a 2.2 per cent increase over the previous year's amount of \$268.2 million. Nine Network and its affiliates spent a total of \$251.7 million on Australian programming in 1998–99, representing a 17.4 per cent increase over the previous year's amount of \$214.5 million. Ten Network



Copies of *Broadcasting Financial Results 1998–99* disk are available from the ABA, price \$500, tel: (02) 9334 7700.



and its affiliates spent a total of \$77.3 million on Australian programming in 1998–99, representing a 2.1 per cent decrease over the previous year's amount of \$78.9 million.

'While commercial television licensees are required to comply with quotas relating to Australian content and children's programming, these are not determined on the basis of expenditure on local content,' said Professor Flint.

Earnings by commercial radio and commercial television licensees returned to the Commonwealth a total of \$211.1 million in licence fees. There was an increase of \$4.4 million in total revenue over the previous year's figure of \$206.7 million for 212 radio and 47 television licensees, or 2.1 per cent.

Further details on the financial performance of commercial radio and television licensees in metropolitan and regional Australia are available on disk from the ABA. For commercial radio in metropolitan areas, the information is provided on performance of FM services, AM services and networks in capital cities, while for regional areas, the information is available for larger, medium-sized and smaller regional markets.

The financial performance of commercial television licensees is broken down by State, mainland capital city, multi-station and solus regional markets and networks.

To maintain the confidentiality of individual licensees, broadcasting financial results are aggregated. This means that some information, for example, for AM and FM licensees, is available for some areas only.

Harvey May, Terry Flew and Christina Spurgeon, of the Centre for Media Policy and Practice, School of Media and Journalism, Queensland University of Technology have completed research into. This summary is reproduced with kind permission of the Centre for Media Policy and Practice 2000.

Report on casting in Australian commercial television drama

Executive summary

This project undertook research into the relationship between television and cultural diversity in Australian commercial television drama. Its focus is on actors in on-going roles working in commercial television drama between July and December 1999, in order to establish casting levels for performers from culturally diverse backgrounds. Such a survey was identified in previous research as being a key indicator for

measuring cultural diversity in television programming. As this is the most comprehensive survey of its kind to date, the survey represents a benchmark quantitative study, for determining the cultural diversity of those with on-screen roles in Australian commercial television drama. In addition, 26 interviews with industry personnel were conducted in order to extend the quantitative data and to further explore issues relating to cultural diversity and television.

Key findings

- The proportion of sustaining (on-going) role actors from culturally diverse backgrounds has improved considerably since the early 1990s. Based on findings in this research, performers from culturally diverse backgrounds represent 23 per cent of total sustaining cast members — up from an estimated 2 per cent in 1992 (see table below and chart over page). A significant reason for this improvement is the number of 'second generation

Comparison of studies

Group	1992 MEAA survey *	1999 survey	General population **
	%	%	%
NESB 1	2	3	14
NESB 2	0	17	10
Indigenous	0	3	2

* The figure of 2% in the MEAA research represents both NESB 1 and 2

** These figures are based on ABS (1999) data which is only indicative of ethnicity and are open to interpretation