



**The ABA has launched an investigation into the adequacy of local television news and information programs in regional and rural Australia, in response to the recent closure of news services in these areas.**

# Investigation into the adequacy of regional TV news

The ABA announced on 22 November 2001 its investigation into the adequacy of local television news and information programs in regional and rural Australia, in response to the recent closure of news services in these areas.

The ABA will investigate what is meant by local significance, what constitutes adequate coverage of local news and information, and how commercial television services could contribute to the appropriate coverage of matters of local significance in regional and rural Australia.

The ABA is also interested in the level of community concern about whether coverage of local news and information by commercial television services is responsive to audience needs in regional and rural Australia.

'The ABA is interested in what people think about television

coverage of matters of local significance,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman. 'To make contact easier, the ABA has set up a hotline so viewers can leave comments about issues of concern to them.'

The Freecall hotline is **1800 009 911**. An email hotline, [news.investigation@aba.gov.au](mailto:news.investigation@aba.gov.au), has also been set up so that people can let the ABA know whether broadcasting services in their areas are giving them the news and information they want.

To give the public every opportunity to provide information to the investigation, the ABA intends to hold meetings in regional and rural Australia, in particular, in areas where news bureaux were closed in 2001.

## Terms of reference

The terms of reference to be addressed by submitters and a list of questions to assist the

public in preparing their comments are available on the ABA's website at, [www.aba.gov.au](http://www.aba.gov.au).

## Possible questions

The list of questions below is to assist members of the public in preparing their comments. If preparing a submission, please refer to the terms of reference.

1. What constitutes 'appropriate coverage of matters of local significance'? What would you consider to be 'local' (eg your town, region, state/territory)?

2. What should commercial television services in regional and rural Australia do to demonstrate that they are responsive to your needs?

3. What local news and information programs should be made available by commercial television services where you live?

4. Should commercial television services be required to have particular regard to audience needs for local news and information programs in regional and rural Australia? If so, please explain.

5. What local news and information programs are provided by free-to-air television services where you live? Please give some examples. Have they increased or decreased in the last 15 years?

6. Are the local news and information programs provided where you live adequate for your purposes and meet your needs? If no, why? What is the post code of the area where you live?

7. In your view, what can the ABA do, and how, to ensure that free-to-air television services continue to provide local news and information programs where you live?



## Submissions

Submissions and comments should be received no later than **5.00 p.m. Friday 15 February 2002**. Submissions should preferably be emailed, but could be faxed or posted to the ABA.

Fax: (02) 9334 7799 • Email: [news.investigation@aba.gov.au](mailto:news.investigation@aba.gov.au)

Post: News Investigation, ABA, PO Box Q500, Queen Victoria Building, Sydney NSW 1230