

ABA Conference 2002



What will Australian audiences want?

The ABA Annual Conference 2002 will provide a unique opportunity to hear and learn about the latest developments in broadcasting and the electronic media while mingling with ABA members and senior staff. This year's conference will be held at the Hyatt Hotel in Canberra Monday 29 - Tuesday 30 April 2002.

Buying digital

The challenge is on to interest viewers and listeners in upgrading to digital. How Australian industry rises to it will be a key factor in keeping our media and production industries strong and viable into the future.

For free-to-air television, the digital policy settings are in place – all that is missing are the viewers. The ABA Conference will feature industry experts, their financial advisors and the UK's **Richard Hooper** talking about the revenue and business models that might underpin a successful transition to digital. It will also look at the all-important question of what will make viewers upgrade to digital. **Dr Duane Varan**, Professor of New Media, Murdoch University, will be presenting results of an industry poll on some of these issues.

We are hoping to finish Day 1 with a dissection of a real live digital production.

For radio, the challenge is to choose between a proliferation of technical standards. It would also be easier to choose the right path to digitalisation if the business case were a little clearer.

Why might consumers take up digital radio and what kinds of consumer products might make use of digital radio signals?

To help Australian decision-makers take full advantage of overseas experience, the ABA is inviting UK and other international guests to update us on developments, particularly with long-term front runner Eureka DRB. Meanwhile, **Fred Gengaroli**, the ABA's Director, Engineering, will be assessing the rival IBOC (In Band On Channel) technologies from the US. Could IBOC be tested or even introduced into Australia without changing any laws or re-planning any existing licences?

The new 'public interest'

Dramatic changes in technology are driving changes in the role and goals of industry regulation world wide. To help policy-makers understand these impacts are an overseas guest **Damian Tambini** from the UK Institute for Public Policy Research, as well as a panel of local experts.

The conference will also deal specifically with topical policy issues. The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, **Senator the Hon Richard Alston**, will provide the keynote address and **John Rimmer**, Chief Executive Officer, National Office for the Information Economy, will speak about Australian content and the new imperatives and opportunities in the global electronic marketplace.

The conference is well timed to hear from the ABA itself on its **Inquiry into the adequacy of news on television in regional Australia**. It will also hear about regulatory implications of streaming of audiovisual content on the Internet.

A strong technical strand

As in past years, there will be sessions for engineers and policy and industry analysts interested in how technology is driving change. Conference highlights should include an evaluation of the local trials of **Hierarchical Modulation** using DVB, also from Europe **Fabio Scalise**, **Chair ETSI subgroup DVB – RCT standard** will be speaking on the option of interactivity via an in-band back channel.

Conference dinner

The ABA Conference is also an opportunity to meet the ABA members. The Chairman, Professor David Flint, the Deputy Chair, Lyn Maddock, and the five ordinary members of the ABA will be present at Monday night's conference dinner and throughout the conference.

Further information

Visit the conference website at www.aba.gov.au/conference2002

For registration, accommodation and flight enquiries, contact:

Conference Coordinators
PO Box 139 CALWELL ACT 2905
Email: confco@austarmetro.com.au
Tel: (02) 6292 9000 Fax: (02) 6292 9002

For all other enquiries, contact:

Bev McConnell, ABA
(02) 9334 7830
bev.mcconnell@aba.gov.au
or
Kelly O'Hara, ABA
(02) 9334 7869 kelly.ohara@aba.gov.au

