



ABA Conference 2002

What will Australian audiences want?

29 - 30 April 2002



What will tempt viewers and listeners to upgrade to digital, the impact of new technology on industry regulation worldwide and the latest developments in digital video broadcasting and digital radio technology will be among the key themes of this month's ABA conference.

'In an environment of rapid change, the ABA has once again brought together speakers and panels from Australia and overseas that will be able to provide the most up to date information about successful business models, technological developments and emerging policy issues,' said Mr Giles Tanner, ABA General Manager.

The ABA's second annual conference, to be held at the **Hyatt Hotel, Canberra, on Monday 29 and Tuesday 30 April**, presents an ideal opportunity for professionals from government, the broadcasting industry and academic sectors to engage with the ABA on policy and technical issues regarding radio, television and new media. Senator the Hon Richard Alston, Minister for

Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, will open the conference.

Program details

The theme for the first day is *Buying Digital*. For television, the digital policy settings are in place – all that is missing are the viewers. Day one 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 in relation to interactive television.

Day one will finish with a dissection of an actual digital production – the BBC's much-anticipated 'Walking with Beasts'.

For radio, the challenge is to choose between a proliferation of technical standards. It might 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? Speakers in the digital radio stream will include The Basement's Doug Mulray and Digital One's Jeff Astle from the UK.

Media policy and technological change are increasingly interdependent and the conference will feature a strong technology theme, with Italy's Fabio Scalise and Jon Trowsdale of the UK speaking about recent developments in Europe with the digital television standard DVB and long-term digital radio front-runner Eureka DRB. Meanwhile, Fred Gengaroli, the ABA's Director Engineering, will assess the rival IBOC (In Band On Channel) technology from the US and the emerging European DRM (Digital Radio Mondiale) standard. Could IBOC be tested or even introduced into Australia without changing any laws or re-planning any existing licences?

Guest speaker at the conference dinner on the

Monday evening will be Terry McCrann, Associate Editor of Business for the *Herald Sun*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Courier Mail* and commentator for the Nine Network's 'Business Sunday' program.

Damian Tambini from the UK Institute for Public Policy Research starts Tuesday's *New Public Interest* proceedings with an analysis of the changing role of the state. ABA Member Michael Gordon-Smith will host an interactive forum that will canvass and debate the reasons why governments should (or should not) intervene to promote a 'public interest'. Panellists for this forum will include Fairfax's Gail Hambly and Dr Terry Cutler of the Australia Council for the Arts.

Other highlights of day two include the sessions *Broadcast and Broadband: Regulation for the future* and *Sex, flies and the interactive landscape*. 

Registration details

Registration details are available on the ABA website at www.aba.gov.au/conference2002

or by calling (02) 6292 9000.