



Revised commercial radio codes of practice registered

The ABA has registered a revised version of the Commercial Radio Codes of Practice. The codes were developed by Commercial Radio Australia (CRA), which represents most commercial radio broadcasters in Australia.

Mr Tanner welcomed the registration of the codes. 'The enduring popularity of commercial radio with Australian audiences makes it important that rules governing the conduct of radio services are appropriate and up-to-date,' he said.

The revised codes contain enhanced community safeguards. The privacy provisions, which previously applied only to current affairs programming, now also cover news programs. There are also new guidelines on the treatment of suicide and mental health issues in stories about these matters. Other community safeguards contained in the previous codes have been carried over to this revised version.

The commercial radio standards, made by the ABA in 2000 following the Commercial Radio Inquiry, continue to apply in addition to the codes.

The commercial radio standards include: the *Broadcasting Services (Commercial Radio Current Affairs Disclosure) Standard 2000*; the *Broadcasting Services (Commercial Radio Advertising) Standard 2000*; and the *Broadcasting Services (Commercial Radio Compliance Program) Standard 2000*.

Research conducted by the ABA in 2003 indicated that Australians were generally satisfied with the content of commercial radio. The ABA concluded from the research that the safeguards contained in the existing codes were largely appropriate, and used this research finding to inform its consultation with CRA.

The low number of submissions received following CRA's call for public comment reinforced the fact that people are generally satisfied with the codes in their existing form.

Code registration

The Commercial Radio Codes of Practice have been developed under section 123 of the Broadcasting Services Act. This provision sets out Parliament's

intention that groups representing particular sections of the broadcasting industry will develop codes of practice that are applicable to that section of the broadcasting industry. The code must be developed in consultation with the ABA and take account of any relevant research conducted by the ABA.

Section 123 requires the ABA to register a code of practice if it is satisfied that the code provides appropriate community safeguards, is endorsed by a majority of providers of broadcasting services in that section of the industry, and members of the public have been given an adequate opportunity to comment on the code.

On 7 February 2004, Commercial Radio Australia released a draft version of the revised codes for public comment. Nine submissions were received and were considered by CRA as part of the code revision process.

The revised code is on the ABA's web site at: www.aba.gov.au/radio/content/codes/index.htm. ☞

ABA recommendations for safer Internet for children:

- parents set rules for their children about using Internet
- parents supervise their children's Internet use and talk to them about who they are chatting with online
- parents consider using filters to block access to certain content and chat rooms
- if a child encounters questionable behaviour in a chat room, they should leave the chat room and tell a parent what's happened
- if a parent suspects that an adult is engaging in inappropriate activity, they should contact their local police.



The brochure, *Cybersmart Guide*, is available on the ABA web site, www.aba.gov.au/internet/education/index.htm or order printed copies from the ABA: tel: 02 9334 7700 or 1800 226 667, or email: online@aba.gov.au.