ACMA hosts 10th ASTAP Forum

ACMA hosted more than 130 delegates from the Asia–Pacific at the 10th forum of the Asia–Pacific Telecommunity Standardisation Program (ASTAP), held in Melbourne from 26–28 October 2005. The program aims to promote a harmonised approach to the development and implementation of telecommunications standards in the Asia–Pacific region.

The forum included a session on user and accessibility issues relevant to standardisation. This session discussed the importance of technical standards to broader social and policy objectives designed to ensure communications products and services can be used by all members of the community. A regional guideline to promote user involvement in standardisation activity and the incorporation of universal design principles in technical standards was also suggested. ASTAP has established an Expert Group to continue these discussions.

Standardisation issues relating to radiofrequency identifiers (RFID) were also discussed at the forum. Presentations by delegates from Korea and Japan canvassed future commercial applications using RFID, and the importance of robust global standards to deployment of RFID technology.

Regional preparations for the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (in Turkey in November 2006) were also discussed. ASTAP plays an important and active role, coordinating regional discussions on ITU Standardization Sector issues in preparation for the conference.

A separate workshop on next generation networks (NGN) and voice over internet protocol (VoIP) was held on 25 October. The workshop discussed:
*   the current state of NGN standardisation activity in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI)
*   regulatory approaches to VoIP in Korea and Japan and
*   the status of VoIP implementation in the Asia–Pacific region.

The different approaches to VoIP implementation in the region were highlighted at the workshop, including the nexus between service quality parameters and VoIP number allocation in certain jurisdictions.

ASTAP is organised under the auspices of the Asia–Pacific Telecommunity. The Director of the ITU's Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, Houlin Zhao, and ETSI Director-General, Karl-Heinz Rozenbrock, also participated in the meeting.

The next ASTAP meeting is expected to be held in July 2006.

For more information, go to the APT website, www.aptsec.org.

Communications Research & Strategy Forum

Lesley Osborne and Margaret Cupitt from ACMA's Policy and Research section presented a paper, 'Measuring Digital TV Take-up', at the inaugural Communications Research & Strategy Forum held in Sydney over 21–22 November 2005. Staged at the University of New South Wales, the forum considered a wide range of communications and media topics including ICT, digital media, telecommunications, broadcasting, communications culture, journalism ethics, internet and e-commerce.

The research-oriented focus of the forum provided the opportunity to focus on some of the methodological issues and possible future research questions arising from the findings of the Digital media in Australian homes project. Paul Roberts, who managed ACMA's Vision 20/20 project, and Simon Lardner joined with Alex Burns and Darren Sharp of Swinburne University's Smart Internet 2010 project in a presentation on communications futures.

ACMA's International Training Program 2005

ACMA played host to 61 international guests in November for its first International Training Program.

The training was conducted in three separate streams and in three locations—spectrum management and frequency assigning in Canberra and Melbourne, regulation of telecommunications, broadcasting and online content in Melbourne and technical operations in Hobart and Melbourne.

The trainees were given a comparison of ACMA's regulatory approaches to its broadcasting and online regulatory responsibilities with its approaches in radiocommunications and telecommunications.

Representatives from industry, consumer organisations and other regulatory bodies presented a variety of perspectives on the Australian communications environment. The program also provided an insight into the technical and commercial developments that led to the merger of the former ACA and ABA.

ACMA thanks the organisations that provided presenters or opened their facilities for the participants during their time in Australia: Australian Communications Industry Forum, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Australian Telecommunications Users Group, Communications Law Centre, Consumer Affairs Victoria, Consumers' Telecommunications Network, Department of Communications Information Technology and the Arts, Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner, Standards Australia, Internet Industry Association, Macquarie Telecommunications, National Farmers' Federation, Net Alert, Optus, Telecommunication Industry Ombudsman, Telstra, Tidbinbilla Space Research Centre and University of Canberra.

Dr Eun-Ju Kim, Director for Asia–Pacific Region of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), also attended for the first week of the Melbourne event. The ITU will provide seed funding for next year's training program, including fellowships for participants of developing economies. The Asia–Pacific Telecommunity provided funding for a number of this year's participants.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROGRAM