

NEW APPROACH TO CONSULTING COMMUNICATIONS CONSUMERS

ACMA recently announced the membership of its new communications Consumer Consultative Forum (CCF), which will enhance the dialogue between consumer representatives, industry bodies and regulators about communications issues affecting consumers.

ACMA Chairman Chris Chapman said the forum represents a fresh approach to consumer consultation by ACMA. 'We have been greatly encouraged by the positive response from consumer and industry representatives and look forward to working together in a highly focused way on a series of emerging issues. We have selected a range of individuals with extensive experience in communications issues to represent consumers. They also have extensive links to consumers through their current and past positions.'

Mr Chapman congratulated the successful appointees and thanked those who expressed an interest in being considered, some of whom may be appointed to ACMA's Specialist Expert Resource List, which will be finalised in coming months.

'While the CCF is an important near-term focus for ACMA, there will be many opportunities for interested

parties to provide input to ACMA, including through the Specialist Expert Resource List and the annual CCF consumer conference, as well as ad hoc consultations on issues of interest,' said Mr Chapman.

The seven consumer representatives appointed to the forum after a vigorous assessment process are:

- Gordon Renouf, General Manager, Policy and Campaigns, Australian Consumers' Association
- Maureen le Blanc, Consultant, Australian Council of Social Services
- Gunela Astbrink, Policy Advisor, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
- Rosemary Sinclair, Managing Director, Australian Telecommunications Users Group
- Teresa Corbin, Executive Director, Consumers Telecommunications Network
- Mark Needham, Policy Officer, National Farmers' Federation
- Myra Pincott, National President, Country Women's Association.

They will join three representatives from industry bodies involved in self-regulation:

- Chris Althaus, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Mobile

- Telecommunications Association
- Anne Hurley, Chief Executive Officer, Communications Alliance
- Peter Coroneos, Executive Director, Internet Industry Association.

The forum will also involve representatives of regulators and policy-makers, including Louise Sylvan, Deputy Chair of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, John Pinnock, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, and Fay Holthuyzen, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. The forum will be chaired by ACMA Deputy Chair Lyn Maddock who has a strong interest in seeing the benefits of developments in the communications field flow through to consumers.

Section 59 of the *Australian Communications and Media Authority Act 2005* requires ACMA to continue to hold a consumer consultative forum to assist it to perform its functions in relation to matters affecting consumers. ACMA predecessor Austel established a Consumer Consultative Forum in 1995 and the Australian Communications Authority retained the forum to provide it with advice about telecommunications consumer

issues and as a mechanism for information dissemination.

The key elements of ACMA's new CCF are:

- a balanced membership of workable size which allows representatives of the key consumer sectors the opportunity to discuss issues with representatives of industry organisations and regulators and policy makers
- a Specialist Expert Resource List (yet to be finalised) which will allow qualified consumer representatives to be involved in more specific issues of interest and
- an annual consumer conference co-sponsored by the Communications Alliance.

The criteria used by ACMA for assessing and selecting CCF members were:

- expertise and experience in establishing links with Australian consumers
- links with organisations representing Australian consumers
- ability to identify and prioritise issues affecting the interests of Australian consumers
- ability to actively represent these views through the CCF and other ACMA consultative processes
- knowledge of and experience with regulatory processes and
- ability to provide information about regulatory issues to Australian consumers.

CHILDREN'S AND PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS PROGRAMS GRANTED CLASSIFICATION, NOVEMBER 2006

Program title	Series	Episode description	Program style	Program type	Country of origin	New/renewal	Class	Decision date	Applicant
<i>It's Academic</i>	4	IAC4/01-IAC4/65	Live Action	Light Entertainment - Competition/Game Show	Australia	New	C	6/11/2006	Seven Network (Operations) Limited
<i>It's Academic</i>	5	IAC501-IAC5/65	Live Action	Light Entertainment - Competition /Game Show	Australia	New	C	6/11/2006	Seven Network (Operations) Limited
<i>Raggs</i>	2	66-130	Live Action /Animation/Puppetry	Light Entertainment - Variety	Australia	New	P	29/11/2006	Southern Star Entertainment Pty Ltd

Class - Classification, C - C Classification, CD - C Drama, P - P Classification, PRC - Provisional C, A classification expires five years after the date it was granted or renewed.