

The ACMA invited to share knowledge at South Africa's Community Television Workshop

Phyllis Fong, Manager, Community Allocations and Information Section, represented the ACMA at the recent Community Television Workshop in Boksburg, South Africa. Ms Fong was invited by the South African Department of Communications (DoC) and was one of just two international representatives at the three-day workshop, which was held from 24 to 26 May.



The ACMA's Phyllis Fong.

The focus of the workshop, which was attended by more than 120 members of South Africa's communications sector, was the development of community television (CTV) in South Africa.

Mamodupi Mohlala, Director-General, DoC, used her opening address to encourage participants to take advantage of the workshop to enable the DoC to further develop South Africa's community television sector. In particular, she referred to the draft charter for community broadcasting purposes that the government had released for public consultation, noting that the community television sector had not made any submissions.

Ms Fong was an active participant throughout the workshop, speaking about the CTV sector in Australia and raising questions for consideration during panel sessions. During her presentations, Ms Fong drew from the ACMA's draft *Community Broadcasting Participation Guidelines*, which have been developed to assist Australia's community broadcasting sector comply with licence conditions relating to community interest and participation. Her presentations covered licensing arrangements, compliance requirements—including community participation in the operations

Delegates also heard from Dr Mashilo Boloka, Director of Broadcasting Policy, DoC, who discussed possibilities for the future of CTV in South Africa. During his presentation, Dr Boloka noted that South Africa has reached a comparative level of development in the community broadcasting sector to pioneer countries such as Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, South Korea and Canada.

Dr Boloka hoped that a sustainable business model for CTV services would result from the workshop, including details on areas such as governance and community participation. To arrive at such a model, he considered the workshop would need to discuss a number of issues, including the regulatory regime for CTV services and capacity-building and funding options. If this were to transpire, the result would inform the community broadcasting strategy to be developed by DoC and enable the finalisation of the draft charter for community broadcasting purposes.

In closing, Mr Gift Buthlezi, Acting Deputy Director-General, ICT Policy, DoC, thanked participants for their active involvement over the three days. Mr Buthlezi was pleased with the outcome of the workshop, which included the formation of South Africa's

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and programming of CTV services—and support for the CTV sector. Ms Fong also chaired a panel session on content generation and program funding.

Further international perspectives were provided by Catherine Edwards from the Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations. Ms Edwards outlined international CTV models and workshopped the draft charter for community broadcasting purposes.

Community Television Network (CTVN). He was encouraged by the three business models presented by the CTVN: the consortium model, a hybrid model and a semi-commercial model. He said that the options would enable DoC to develop a community broadcasting strategy, including a sustainable business model for CTV services. He acknowledged the wealth of detail discussed during the workshop in areas such as the regulatory regime for CTV services and community participation. This information will enable DoC to finalise the draft charter for community broadcasting purposes. 🗣️