



Would-Be Doco Makers Sought

Australia has a strong and vibrant tradition of documentary making, and in recent years documentary makers like Bob Connolly and Robyn Anderson (the Joe Leahy trilogy), Dennis O'Rourke (*Good Woman of Bangkok*) and Mark Lewis (*Cane Toads*) have kept the flag flying both internationally at home.

Many of our most successful documentary makers were nurtured in the ABC in the days when several ABC departments were making documentaries and features, and the volume of in-house production was high. These days there is no equivalent benevolent patron which allows would-be documentary makers to try out their developing skills or translate innovative ideas and approaches into reality.

MICRODOCS, a new joint initiative by the AFC and the ABC, is therefore to be welcomed. The scheme involves inviting applications from documentary makers to submit ideas for short form documentaries, seven minutes in duration. Preference will be given to emerging filmmakers

with fresh concepts, whose programs together reflect the cultural diversity of Australian society. Up to \$40,000 will be available for each documentary.

The ABC has undertaken to screen the results, which will probably be shown next year in the Big Picture timeslot on Wednesday nights, possibly to fill the gap between the end of the main program and the following news bulletin.

The AFC's Fiona Robson emphasised to *CU* that the MICRODOCS initiative does not replace the Documentary Fellowship Scheme which has now been operating successfully for several years, and has benefited some of our most experienced documentary makers. At the moment, MICRODOCS is seen as a one-off initiative, but if it proves successful it could be repeated in future years.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Fiona Robson, AFC Sydney (02) 925 7333 or (008) 22 66 15; and Brenda Nash, AFC Melbourne (03) 690 5144 or (008) 33 8430. □

Children as Audiences and Consumers

Get 'Em While They're Young!

Radio operators in the United States are beginning to see children as 'an untapped market poised for growth', reports *Broadcasting* (8 Feb 93).

The 24-hour Children's Satellite Network, call sign Radio AAHS, recently began operating after three years of local broadcasting over a Minneapolis AM station. By the beginning of April, it is expected to be available in nine markets, including some of the largest.

The programs include music for children, 15 and 30 minute stories, lullaby music and 'brain games' for parents to play with children. Local stations are able to insert eight minutes per hour of advertising, while CSN sells two minutes of national advertising.

The network is convinced that national advertisers will come to the party. A spokesperson for CSN is quoted as saying that national advertisers already spend \$US800 million a year on children's television. The task ahead will be to divert some of this money to radio, which may be difficult in the absence of any ratings system for children's use of radio.

ABC Radio is also thought to be developing a children's format for its Satellite Music Network, though it is not yet clear whether this will be a 24-hour service or blocks of programs.

Some observers are seeing the revival of radio for children as a saviour for languishing AM stations.

Hard Sell for the Tiny Tots

“Marketing to children is a multi-billion dollar industry. James U McNeal, the leading researcher and consultant in the field, provides the essential do's and don'ts for tapping into this mega-market. With interviews, observations and analysis, McNeal discloses the hard-won secrets of marketing and selling to children. He discusses children's buying habits and economic motivations and how kids can be successfully influenced by marketing strategies. He also looks at the future of the children's marketplace, discussing the concerns of consumer advocates, regulators and parents, and what they mean for marketers.”

A sales blurb for *Kids as Customers: a Handbook of Marketing to Children* by James U McNeal, in a brochure issued by the Australian Marketing Institute. □