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lishers have kept revenue stable by increasing rates, according to Mike Porter, media director of Melbourne agency Young & Rubicam.

'Quiz a salesman to justify the increases (and) the answer will inevitably be some combination of increasing circulation/increased labour costs/increased distribution costs/increase newsprint costs,' wrote Porter (*B&T*, 4 December 1992).

'The truthful answer, however, is that with fewer titles, greater concentration of ownership and, in some markets, total domination of the market by a single title, newspapers increase rates because they can.'

Porter does not deny the publishers 'the right to run their business profitably or to take full advantage of prevailing market circumstances'. But he warns them that current strategy could be dangerous as there is 'some evidence that newspapers' share of the total advertising cake has been declining'.

Any change of heart would however appear to be a vain hope if the existing media operators are allowed also to dominate the developing new technologies such as Pay TV.

Circulation Down All Round

Newspaper circulation in 1992 confirmed the trends identified in the two previous annual ownership updates. Total circulation continues to fall behind population growth. In 1976, one in 3.4 Australians bought a daily paper. By 1986, only one person in every 4.4 did so, while last year circulation was down to one paper per 6.5 persons.

Tabloids are losing the most readers, while broadsheets are increasing sales, modestly on weekdays and more handsomely on Saturdays.

The Australian circulation trend mirrors those in the US and Britain. According to the US Newspaper Advertising Bureau, readership of dailies lags behind population growth. But half of the country's papers report improved Sunday sales (*Quill*, October 1992).

In Britain, total sales of national newspapers fell six per cent over the past five years. However, sales of serious quality papers have risen 15 per cent since 1982 (*British Journalism Review*, vol. 3, no. 4 1992).

Queensland may offer an interesting spectacle this year. News Ltd's *Courier-Mail* seems incapable of rising to the challenge which the State's rapid economic and population growth seem to offer. Meanwhile Fairfax, which is already producing a Queensland edition of its *Sydney Sun-Herald*, is to enter the Gold Coast market with a joint-venture weekly, a challenge to the News Ltd *Gold Coast Bulletin*.

The Irishman, Dr Tony O'Reilly, unsuccessful bidder for Fairfax in 1991 and owner of a clutch of lucrative regional dailies in Queensland and northern NSW, must be watching closely. □

Paul Chadwick

Chronology of Ten Network Sale

November 1992

16 Canwest Global Communications Corp. announces that it has concluded final agreement with Westpac Banking Corporation of Australia whereby Westpac agrees to sell its 100 per cent ownership of the Channel Ten Television Network to an Australian consortium of investors in which Canwest is a significant member.

17 ABA asks Channel Ten for details.

December 1992

2 Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance calls for public inquiry into Ten sale.

8 Australian Broadcasting Authority advises it is 'monitoring' the progress of the transaction.

Communications Law Centre presses ABA to accept MEAA as an interested party and to address MEAA's concerns on the impact of a change of control of TEN.

22 MEAA provides further submissions regarding the suitability of the licensee of the then TEN Network, Westpac.

CLC writes to TPC to investigate possible breach of s.50 Trade Practices Act.

23 ABA notifies CLC it is exercising its information gathering powers under the Broadcasting Services Act, and that parties have met ABA and supplied documents and information regarding the transaction on a commercial-confidence basis. ABA refuses to disclose documents to MEAA/CLC.

30 ABA announces it has been notified about the make-up of the Oltec Ltd consortium which will buy the TEN television network (Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane stations). The ABA continues to monitor events.

SMH reports that Westpac is expected to complete the sale of TEN, by formally transferring control of the TV stations to a consortium headed by the Canadian broadcaster-CanWest.

January 1993

6 ABA notifies CLC that it does not consider that the new owners of Ten are in breach of the Broadcasting Services Act 1992, and that no public hearing will be held.

13 CLC requests ABA to clarify what matters it took into account in deciding it was 'not satisfied that Westpac was not suitable'; and to consider whether transaction involved any temporary breach under the Broadcasting Services Act.

19 Formal Complaint lodged under s.147 of the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 requesting ABA to investigate suitability of new licensee, Oltec, and in particular who controls the Ten network.