



How Pay TV Could Look

The following program schedule is an alternative approach to pay TV programming proposed by consultant Richard Rowe. It covers one day on a pay TV system with five channels, programmed to attract different target audiences at different times of the day.

Monday	1	2	3	4	5
09:00	Live coverage: final round of international golf	Prospects: What's on in politics, business arts, etc	Movie: <i>Storm Boy</i>	Australian segment of the Financial News Network	Age of Reason: the John Farnham concert
12:00	Interview: Peter Garrett on the environment	Movie: <i>Sweetie</i>	Nature Watch: Co-produced by NHK of Japan and TVOnt.	Jag vs Mercedes: a motoring or investment decision	Off Campus France in words and music
15:00	Movie: <i>Midnight Cowboy</i>	Distant Seats: <i>A Doll's House</i> from Belvoir Street Theatre (pay per view)	1989 World Surf Circuit	Oscar Petersen in Concert	The Art and Science of the Architect
18:00	Do It Yourself: How to program your PC	Coverage of the Contemporary Art Fair from the Royal Exhibition Bldg Melbourne	An Inside Look at Industry: the making of paper	The India of Salman Rushdie: from the Discovery Channel	Virginia Slims International Tennis

Big Holes Gaping in BS Act

The Federal Court recently rejected an application by the Communications Law Centre to take part in the proceedings brought by Steve Cosser against the decision by Minister for Communications Bob Collins to bar the use of MDS for pay TV. The court also ordered the Centre to pay Cosser's costs.

The CLC wanted to represent the interest of Australian TV viewers in the action. The Court found however that no matter how well intentioned and useful the Centre's role may be in presenting a broader perspective and a more neutral focus than the other parties, its participation was 'not necessary' to the determination of the issues before the court.

Acting Director of the CLC, Michelle McAuslan, said that the Court's decision marked a return to the bad old days of broadcasting regulation where interested persons or groups - other than station licensees - had little or no chance of being heard in the resolution of broadcasting disputes. 'The Centre is particularly concerned to ensure that the ABA carries out its functions independently of government interference and in the public interest', Ms McAuslan said.

Although the Centre is grateful that Steve Cosser has waived the payment of costs, the fundamental problem of

lack of public process in the Broadcasting Services Act remains, she said.

The Centre has now written to the Minister seeking amendment to the Act to make it adequately reflect the Government's stated commitment to take account of the public interest in broadcasting decisions.

In the same letter, the Centre drew the Minister's attention to the seven month period that has elapsed since it first sought information from the ABA on licensees' compliance with the advertising time standard, to assist the Centre in making submissions on the FACTS draft codes of practice.

During the drafting of the Act, DOTAC had told the Centre that such information could be obtained under Freedom of Information legislation. In practice, the Centre has found that the FOI Act is 'wholly unsatisfactory' as a means for the public to gain access to information.

The Centre called on the Government to implement regulations to:

- restore the previous ABT system of an open inquiry file;
- provide for all documents considered by the ABA to be publicly available;
- recognise the standing of any person to participate in ABA investigations and hearings. □