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ered through the same customer receiving equipment.) But a typical system would receive all or most of its programming from a program supplier who would deliver by satellite or Telecom bearer for MDS retransmission.

A simple but effective super-VHF transmission studio can be set up for under \$100,000 a channel, Johnson said, and would allow a franchised wireless cable operator to deliver channels specifically suited to its market.

If these costs are reasonably accurate, we could be seeing some interest in MDS very soon from the community TV sector.

Some Words of Caution

Barney Blundell of AAP, Australia's first MDS user, acknowledged the pluses of MDS like its cheapness, especially relative to satellite and cable, fast roll-out and the potential for inserting regional programs.

At the same time, he sounded some warning notes based on AAP's experience. He said he still needed convincing that digital signals would work on MDS, especially where there are conflicting signals from main transmitters.

In his view, MDS would never get near 100 per cent coverage in any city. Trees and rain present significant problems with reception, and small repeaters or 'beam benders' are not a solution for trees.

As for satellite, some local councils are already objecting to satellite dishes, on aesthetic grounds and this is an issue the industry has yet to come to terms with, Blundell said.

On the issue of cable, half a million houses a year would have to be passed by cable to achieve claims that are being made for cable roll-out, and the problem remains of getting the cable into the house. □

Press Council: Speaks for Itself

Letter to the Editor

Dear Madame/Sir*

I refer to your CU comment 'Another Look at the Press Council' (*Communications Update*, November 1992) which has come to hand.

I would like to draw your attention to some points which would balance or correct points of your report.

1. At the time of the Herald and Weekly Times takeover, the Council was divided not on concern about further concentration of media ownership but rather on the possible establishment of a statutory tribunal to deal with media takeovers.
In fact, the Council went on record expressing its concern over the further concentration of media ownership.
2. One of the AJA representatives did resign; however two (not one, as you report) of the three AJA representatives stayed on the Council.
3. You assert that the Council is dominated by the publishers. They, in fact, have 10 out of the seats of the present 21 member Council and could thus be out-voted by other members - although voting is rarely if ever along 'party lines'.
4. New public members are appointed after advertisement and they are not people of similar age and background. We have attempted to have a balance of representation on the Council so that there is a gender balance, a balance of readers of metropolitan and country newspapers, a geographical balance across Australia and a balance of the major segments of the Australian multicultural community.
5. The Council's annual reports have included brief summaries of the complaints which did not proceed to adjudication since the first annual report. This is **not** an innovation.
6. I do not believe that there is any contention between our two roles of a defender of freedom of speech and of the press, and of the need for a responsible press. These go hand in hand, they are two sides of one coin.

Yours sincerely
David Flint
Chairman

*For the record, the editor of CU is Ms Gil Appleton.