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Through his Chairmanship of the Broadband Services Expert Group, Mr Johns has been at the forefront of debate on convergence.

One of the key points the ABA has highlighted in the debate on convergence is the importance of content. That is, it is not technology or the means of delivery that should be the principal focus of attention in the debate, rather the source and type of programming, information, software and games that are carried on the technology. The ABA has supported the view that the content on new networks should reflect the dynamism of contemporary Australian culture.

Within the broadcasting industry, the ABA has been reviewing the Australian Content Standard with a view to ensuring that commercial television continues to support Australian culture and industry through its programming. The ABA has also actively supported the establishment through Creative Nation of the Commercial Television Production Fund to encourage quality Australian production above the Australian Content Standard quotas.

## Codes Of Practice

The CLC has questioned the use of advisory notes, produced subsequent to the FACTS Code of Practice which took effect in September 1993. The ABA believes the advisory notes are a reflection that the commercial television industry has fully embraced the responsibilities of self-regulation it has been handed over the new regulatory framework.

## Community Television

The Act provides for the allocation of permanent community broadcasting licences which do not require broadcasting spectrum for service delivery. The ABA's former Chairman, Mr Johns, has publicly encouraged community broadcasting groups to think beyond the sixth channel in their future aspirations, a view which has received Government support in that cable consortia have been encouraged to make available some capacity for community access and education.

## New Challenges

The next year will present a number of challenges for the ABA. These include the implementation of the new Australian Content Standard, monitoring the implementation of the new subscription television services including the working of the 10 per cent Australian drama expenditure guidelines, and further developing ABA's stated positions on broadcasting regulation in relation to converging technologies.

The ABA looks forward to consulting with the public, interest groups, and the industry on these and other issues. □

# Cultural Diversity on TV

**The Communications Law Centre is to hold a seminar for the commercial TV industry on marketing to a multicultural television audience.**

Funding for the seminar has come from the Federal Government's Community Relations Agenda - a \$2.3 million initiative aimed at recognising cultural and ethnic diversity in Australian society.

Senator Nick Bolkus, the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs awarded the CLC a grant to conduct the seminar at a ceremony at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney on Friday 17 March.

The seminar, which will target TV and advertising executives, ethnic community representatives, policy makers and media analysts, is one of 15 media-related initiatives within the Agenda. The seminar will aim to:

- Identify and discuss unmet demand for programming and advertising reflecting the diverse cultural make-up of Australia;
- Discuss how different communities regard television and how audiences respond to cultural portrayals;
- Encourage community representatives, and television and advertising executives to address cultural diversity by increasing the market for mainstream programs and products;
- Canvass measures for improving the representation of cultural diversity in advertisements and programming; and
- Produce a set of industry seminar papers which accurately record the proceedings and further the issues.

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