

News

The decision by the The Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) to impose licence conditions on Sydney Radio Station 2UE was welcomed by the CLC, who had played an active role during the 19-day inquiry in October to December last year.

CLC's Julie Eisenburg said that the conditions imposed involved clear and frequent disclosure of relevant commercial interests, backed up by a compliance program. In addition, the requirement that the Web site and physical registers of interest to disclose the broad financial arrangements means listeners will get the full picture about which commercial interests are behind 2UE presenters and producers, she said.

Four interim take-down orders for sexually explicit materials located on Australian-based Web sites have been issued by the ABA since the new Online Services Act took effect from January 1, 2000.

The first site to be issued with an order - <http://www.teenager.com.au/> - was relocated to an offshore server on January 20, within 24 hours of the take-down notice. In so doing it retained the same web address (URL) which it had when served from a local server. Following the issue of notices to the content hosts, the offending materials are referred to the Office of Film and Literature Classification Board.

Steven Nugent, ABA's Manager of Online Content Regulation said he

wasn't surprised that the materials had been relocated offshore and acknowledged that they were aware that relocation to an offshore host was an option for offending sites. Several sites with sexually explicit materials moved offshore prior to January 1 in anticipation of the new law, he said.

Nugent expects the number of complaints to increase with the implementation of a hard copy and online banner advertising campaign to inform the targeted areas of concern about the ABA hotline.

Reporting the story of the first ABA take-down order, front-line American news service, *WiredNews* headlined the story as "The Aussies Went and Done It" (<http://www.wired.com/news/politics/0,1283,33750,00.html>). The outcome follows years of speculation by the pioneering World Wide Web community who have monitored endeavours by governments to regulate the Internet.

Seven Network's Kerry Stokes further fuelled the argument about regulation of the Internet by pronouncing on Radio National's *Media Report* on February 3 that the Internet was not capable of being regulated. Web developers and content creators argue that it cannot while simultaneously the Australian - as well as other governments - seek to maintain an equivalent level of control to that which can be implemented across other media forms.

The Launch in Sydney this month of the new Commander® Vision phone system by PlesTel is a further manifestation of the shift towards globalisation in the telecommunications industry. The Commander is a hybrid telephone system designed and manufactured by Irish technology company, Lake Communications and marketed in Australia by PlesTel - an alliance of the South African company, Plessey (70%) and Telstra (30%). The market targeted by PlesTel is small to medium-sized businesses in rural and outback Australia.

Will the marketing power of the old media companies succeed in capturing the biggest slice of the local and international calls market? One.Tel - with its big shareholders Packer PBL and News Ltd - have a current television advertising campaign which has a \$40 million budget compared to the smaller, innovative AAPT, which has a monthly marketing budget of \$1 million. In TV viewing terms, this translates broadly into repetitive 90-second commercial times for One.Tel compared to notably less frequent 15-second commercials by AAPT.

Online security matters: US Attorney General, Janet Reno, revealed details on January 10 of a new anti-cyber-crime scheme, LawNet. She told the National Association of Attorneys General at Stanford University the program would include computer crime prosecutors and investigators, regional forensic computer laboratories, and a new interstate agreement to help ensure enforcement of cross-boundary legislation.