



Registration of the inaugural code of practice for community television is the result of extensive consultation between the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, community television broadcasters, and the ABA.

Community television code of practice registered

The ABA has registered the inaugural code of practice for community television. The code was developed by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA), and is the result of extensive consultation between CBAA, community television broadcasters and the ABA. CBAA also consulted with the public on a draft of the code.

'The ABA appreciates the efforts undertaken by the community television industry to develop its first ever code,' said Giles Tanner, Acting Member ABA and General Manager. 'The end result of the consultation process is a code that reflects the unique nature of community broadcasting and contains appropriate community safeguards.'

Key features of the code include provisions encouraging ongoing community involvement in the programming and management of community stations, the adoption of the classification guidelines of the Office of Film and Literature Classification, classification time zones to ensure programming is shown at times most suitable for likely viewing audiences, provisions to protect individuals' privacy, special provisions

relating to material dealing with Indigenous people, and a commitment to local and Australian program content.

The code will be reviewed in three to five years time to ensure it retains its relevance in a changing media environment.

Registration

The Community Television Code of Practice has been developed under section 123 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*. This provision sets out Parliament's intention that groups representing particular sections of the broadcasting industry will develop, in consultation with the ABA, codes of practice that are applicable to that section of the broadcasting industry.

Section 123 requires the ABA to register a code of practice if it is satisfied that the code provides appropriate community safeguards, is endorsed by a majority of providers of broadcasting services in that section of the industry, and members of the public have been given an adequate opportunity to comment on the code. The ABA is satisfied that all of these provisions have been met.

Code provisions

Code 1 Internal Governance: focuses on the need to have in place written policies and procedures for internal governance purposes. It covers governance, community access, volunteers and internal dispute resolution.

Code 2 Public Complaints: focuses on the handling of public complaints, and aims to ensure that complaints are dealt with promptly and fairly by licensees.

Code 3 Programming Issues: includes the promotion of Australian culture, the representation of diversity and the maintenance of community standards. It includes, at clause 3.5, the privacy provisions in the revised commercial television code, and also the additional safeguards against broadcasting the words or appearance of an identifiable person without their knowledge or consent.

Code 4 Children's Television: attempts to strike a balance in relation to children's programs on community television by, on the one hand, providing for written policies on how to protect children from exposure to programs that may be harmful, while, on the other hand, en-

couraging the fledgling industry to broadcast children's programs.

Code 5 Program Classification: deals with classification of programs and adopts the guidelines of the Office of Film and Literature Classification. It also deals with consumer advice, and sets out classification time zones.

Code 6 Sponsorship and Community Service Announcements: deals with the broadcast of sponsorship announcements.

Code 7 Review of Codes: provides for a review of the code every 3 – 5 years.

Community television

The ABA has issued four community television broadcasting licences, for Sydney, Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane. This concludes an extensive trial period for community television operators, when broadcasters operated on an open narrowcast class licence, and were required to comply with the code of practice for open narrowcasters. CTV licensees are now, for the first time, operating under conditions that reflect and are appropriate for the unique nature of the community television sector. ☐