
TELEVISION AND RADIO COMPLAINTS

The procedure for making complaints about radio and television programs has changed.

Until October this year, if you wanted to complain you contacted the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT). The ABT referred these complaints to television and radio stations to let them know what audiences thought of their programs.

However, on 5 October, a new era of broadcasting regulation was created and broadcasters now have primary responsibility for resolving complaints.

The ABA is not the first port of call when you want to complain about television or radio. Instead, you must first complain directly to the broadcaster who upset you.

They should explain how your complaint will be handled, and what opportunities are available to take the matter further if you're not satisfied with their response.

If you haven't received a reply within 60 days, or you're not happy with the response, you can complain to the ABA which will investigate and let you know the result.

This will apply to complaints about program content and compliance with codes of practice by commercial and community broadcasters.

Broadcasters are now expected to develop self-regulatory codes of practice on program content issues and complaints.

The codes will replace ABT program standards which the ABA has preserved to give industry time to develop codes. While the standards still exist, the ABA will continue to accept complaints.

Commercial and community broadcasters will report to the ABA about complaints they have received and how they have been handled.

Complaints about program content on our national broadcasters, the ABC and the SBS, should also be directed straight to them. If you've heard nothing within 60 days, or are not happy with the response, you can then complain to the ABA.

If you'd like more information, call Nick Herd at the ABA on (02) 959 7813.



PBAA CONFERENCE

A REPORT ON THE CONFERENCE HELD BY THE PUBLIC BROADCASTERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA, IN ALBURY NSW, 13-15 NOVEMBER 1992

The main issues raised at the conference related to the categorisation of licenses, the sponsorship code and community television. Of particular interest was the new broadcasting legislation and the role of the ABA.

The Minister for Transport and Communications, Senator the Hon. Bob Collins, announced at the conference that the Government had made an in principle decision to reserve the sixth television channel for non-commercial interests.

Members and staff of the ABA attended and participated in the conference, with representatives from both the Sydney office and the Canberra-based Planning Division.

ABA Member Tim O'Keefe and ABA staff Ed Jonker and Barry Melville, all from Sydney, addressed a plenary on Codes of Practice, whilst Bob Greeney and Mike Salloom from Canberra presented papers on planning processes and the technical aspects of broadcasting.

They combined to field questions on the ABA in two question and answer sessions. The focus was on the new legislation at the sessions as well as in separate private discussions. Information about the ABA was made available at the accompanying Expo.

NEW IN THE LIBRARY

THE ABA LIBRARY ALLOWS PUBLIC ACCESS TO ITS COLLECTION DURING NORMAL WORKING HOURS, HOWEVER BORROWING IS NOT PERMITTED. TO INDICATE THE RANGE AND DIVERSITY OF THE COLLECTION, THE FOLLOWING TITLES HAVE BEEN SELECTED FROM RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY:

ONE NATION UNDER TELEVISION: THE RISE AND DECLINE OF NETWORK TV

J. Fred MacDonald. - New York: Pantheon, 1990.

One Nation Under Television is a timely history of network television and of the decisions taken by ABC/CBS/NBC to create an America forever safe for national broadcasting. It is the long and controversial story of broadcast empires in conflict - from David Sarnoff's manoeuvrings to obtain the most advantageous broadcast regulations for RCA/NBC, to William S. Paley's efforts

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