

Sport?

I think sport is culture too.

You have a very broad definition of culture.

Yes I do, particularly if we are talking about television. When looking at the commercial and national carriers we are talking about popular culture. It encompasses sport and a whole lot of other material and events that perhaps a view of the arts, with a capital 'A', would probably not define as culture.

The merging of the Arts and Communications portfolios has led to the suggestion that cultural issues are likely to be given greater prominence in discussions of media and communications issues.

Do you think that is a good thing?

Yes, my impression is the dialogue is happening. I don't think it is possible any longer to have separate strategies for arts and communications. The two parts of the portfolio are interdependent.

Do you think the merged Department will be of benefit to the arts community?

I think it will be of benefit to the communications industry as well. There are mutual benefits in all this.

The Government is to release a cultural policy statement soon. What would you look for in such a document?

I hope it will tackle some big ideas about the way arts and communications can work together.

What effect do you think convergence is likely to have?

I think we are going to find there are more opportunities opening up for Australian talent which will flow through into multi-media. At the moment there are not a lot of opportunities, except in drama and advertising to a limited extent. For example, with convergence we could find the gulf between educational and entertainment programs, and drama and the arts start to close. I think the conventional boundaries

6 The ABA's approach seems to be spot on. As a result of Australian content regulations in the last few years, we have a clear demonstration that the audiences are out there for Australian programming, indeed often prefer it over imported culture.9

will start to break down. We will have a much more interesting flow through, which will be good for creators, that is, the individual artists who can adapt to new media, performing arts groups and special projects. I see a lot of opportunity there. But we urgently need to get the copyright issues right so as to maximise artist's incomes.

Television ratings suggest Australian audiences like watching Australian programs, the same applies to books. What are the implications for cultural policy?

In some areas of publishing, such as educational, more than 80 per cent of materials used are Australian in origin. That is terrific, but we can't just assume that high level will remain, because this market is very small and very expensive and we have not yet developed good export networks. Every other major English-speaking market that I

am aware of has developed an export market. We need to develop exports and make ourselves profitable and develop more in the way of joint venture. Government does have a role here, but basically the producers have to do it for themselves in a competitive environment utilising and developing Australian talent. For example, education is rapidly becoming screen-based. Computer games are in the class-

room as well as in the home. But there is very little locally produced material yet. It is so easy to buy-in and minimally adapt for local consumption. We could do much more.

So the aim is to avoid being swamped by another culture rather than keep out the best things?

If we get this right, we can have the pick of the lot but still have our own producers providing 50 to 60 per cent of what people see. We need an industry strong enough to enter into partnerships and produce for other markets. I think that is very important. The whole notion of Australian content will be more interestingly defined as this develops. We are not talking any more about work made in Australia about Australia. I think we are talking about work made here with an Australian eye on the rest of the world. ☐

PROGRAMS CLASSIFIED C OR P

The following table contains programs granted 'C' or 'P' classification by the ABA between 15 August 1994 and 13 September 1994. Producers interested in submitting programs for classification should contact Liz Gilchrist on (02) 334 7840.

Title	Origin	Classification	New/renewal	Decision date	Applicant
Sebastian and the Sparrow	Australia	C	renewal	26.8.1994	Network TEN Australia Limited
Ship to Shore 2	Australia	CAD	new	26.8.1994	Barron Films (Television) Limited
Young Adventurers; The	Australia	PRC	new	26.8.1994	Ben Cropp Productions Pty Ltd

CAD C Australian drama.

PRC Provisional C.