

NEWS

Campaign for audio description

On 3 October, 2012, Australian blindness and consumer organisations launched a national campaign to promote audio description currently being trialled on ABC TV, and to make the service permanent. More information available here: <http://www.audiodescription.com.au/>. Further information on the trial is available on the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy website at: http://www.dbcde.gov.au/television/audio_description_trial

ACMA Research: Online Video Content Services in Australia

On 10 October 2012, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) released research on the online professional video content market in Australia, from both the consumer and industry perspective. The report is available on the ACMA website at: http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_600063

ACCC Announcement on Seven Group Holding's proposed acquisition of Consolidated Media Holdings

On 11 October 2012, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) announced that it would oppose the proposed acquisition by Seven Group Holdings of the balance of shares that it does not already own in Consolidated Media Holdings. The ACCC's media release and further information is available here: <http://www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/1084351/fromItemId/2332>

Australia in the Asian Century White Paper

On 28 October 2012, the Prime Minister launched the Federal Government's White Paper, Australia in the Asian Century. The Minister for the Arts, the Hon Simon Crean MP, said cultural diplomacy is vital to Australia's engagement across the region, and that the Federal Government will work with arts and media organisations to better coordinate their engagement with Asia. Further information is available here: <http://asiancentury.dpmc.gov.au/> Minister Crean's media release is available here: http://www.minister.regional.gov.au/sc/releases/2012/october/sc198_2012.aspx

Review of the Freedom of Information Act

On 31 October 2012, the Federal Attorney-General announced that former senior public servant Dr Allan Hawke AC will conduct an independent review of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) and the *Australian Information Commissioner Act 2010* (Cth). Under the Terms of Reference, the review is due to report to Government by 30 April 2013. Further information,

including the Terms of Reference, is available on the Attorney-General's website at:
<http://www.attorneygeneral.gov.au/Media-releases/Pages/2012/Fourth%20Quarter/31October2012ReviewoftheFOIAct.aspx>

Australian Content Investment and Employment Survey

On 31 October 2012, the results of ASTRA's Annual Australian Content Investment and Employment Survey were announced at Parliament House in Canberra. The survey revealed an investment of \$667 million in Australian content by subscription television (STV) platforms and channels in 2011–12. The figures released by the Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association (ASTRA) highlight an increase of 13% from financial year 2010–11. The Survey includes all STV genres of programming. ASTRA also presented Deloitte Access Economics estimates which place the overall direct contribution made by STV to the Australian economy at \$1.4 billion million in 2011–12 and at least \$7 billion overall since the start of STV in 1995.

Survey figures also show that the STV industry employed 6,461 people in 2011–12 with 4,657 staff employed directly by ASTRA members in salaried, part time or contract positions. There is near-gender equality in the industry with women comprising 44% of the workforce.

Further information on the ASTRA website: <http://www.astra.org.au>

EVENTS/BRIEFINGS

Privacy in the 21st Century

The Privacy in the 21st Century symposium, hosted by the Communications Law Centre, UTS at the University of Technology, Sydney will bring together international and national speakers, including policymakers, politicians, journalists, lawyers and commentators, to address privacy regulation, policy reform, an introduction to a tort on privacy and privacy in a digital world in Australia. Speakers include Lord Justice Brian Leveson, Chair of the UK Leveson Inquiry. Further information is available on the CLC Website:

<http://www.law.uts.edu.au/comslaw/conferences/index.html>

ASTRA ACTIVITY

- **ACMA: Australian Radiofrequency Spectrum Plan update discussion paper** – The ACMA is updating the Australian Radiofrequency Spectrum Plan. The spectrum plan is a legislative instrument that divides the spectrum into frequency bands and specifies the general purposes for which the bands may be used. The ACMA sought comment on the various changes to the spectrum plan that are required or proposed. ASTRA made a submission to this discussion paper on 25 October 2012.
- **Long term spectrum arrangements for television outside broadcasts (TOB) in alternative bands to the 2.5 GHz band** – ASTRA continues to work with the Government and the ACMA to ensure a sustainable long term solution for TOB spectrum arrangements. ASTRA's proposal for equitable TOB spectrum sharing was submitted to the ACMA in June 2012 and is available on the Submissions page of the ASTRA website.
- **Terrestrial television restack** – ASTRA is working with the Government to ensure that free-to-air television services received by STV subscribers are not affected by the 'restack' of

digital terrestrial television services. Further information on restack is available on the DBCDE website at: http://www.dbcde.gov.au/television/achieving_the_digital_dividend_-_restack

- **Captioning** – ASTRA continues to work with the ACMA in relation to operational aspects of new captioning obligations on STV under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*. An outline of the ACMA's approach to new provisions is available on the ACMA website at: http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_410404
- **Anti-siphoning legislation** – ASTRA and its members have continued active consultation with relevant stakeholders on aspects of legislation to reform the anti-siphoning scheme, currently before Parliament.
- **Live odds in sports broadcasts** – ASTRA will continue discussion with the Government and the ACMA regarding the inclusion of provisions dealing with live odds in sports broadcasts in the ASTRA Codes of Practice. On 29 June 2012, the Government announced an agreement with broadcasters on measures to reduce and control the promotion of live odds, available here: http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/media_releases/2012/106
- **ASTRA Codes Review** – ASTRA's review of the ASTRA Codes continues, in consultation with the ACMA.

ASTRA submissions are available on the ASTRA website at:
<http://www.astra.org.au/Menu/Policy/Overview/Submissions>

DISCUSSION PAPERS/REQUESTS FOR COMMENT

Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) Inquiry: Copyright and the Digital Economy – Issues Paper

Under the Terms of Reference for the Copyright Inquiry, the ALRC is to consider whether exceptions and statutory licences in the *Copyright Act 1968* are adequate and appropriate in the digital environment and whether further exceptions should be recommended. On 20 August 2012, the ALRC released an Issues Paper to help frame discussion and encourage public consultation at an early stage. Submissions close **16 November 2012**. Further information is available on the ALRC website at: <http://www.alrc.gov.au/inquiries/copyright-and-digital-economy>