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Australian television predominantly local

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'This is a very pleasing result,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman. 'It marks the final stage of the implementation of higher targets for local content set by the ABA in 1996. Some stations have well and truly exceeded the transmission target, with Nine in Brisbane achieving 67 per cent local programming between 6.00 a.m. and midnight.'

In terms of evening viewing (between 5.00 p.m. and midnight), the Nine network screened 63 per cent Australian programming, Seven more than 55 per cent, while Ten's Australian programming was 48 per cent in the evening.

Foreign drama was the top ranked program category for Seven network and Nine network stations between 5.00 p.m. to midnight. Levels of foreign drama in this time period reached as high as 38 per cent for Seven Sydney and 33 per cent for Nine Melbourne.

For Ten network stations, overseas-produced light entertainment and drama were

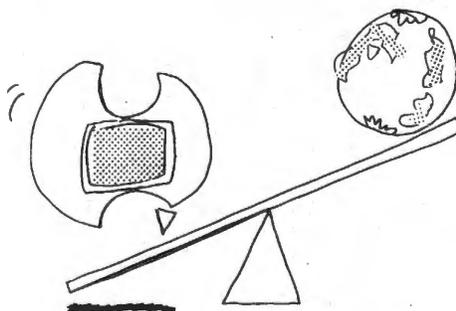
the top ranked program categories in the evening. These categories occupied roughly equivalent amounts of screen time and together accounted for 46 per cent of programs broadcast between 5.00 p.m. and midnight.

News and current affairs was the largest single category of Australian programming, occupying about twenty per cent of evening broadcasts for all networks.

'Notwithstanding the importance of foreign drama in evening schedules, the ABA is happy that requirements for first release Australian drama programs have been more than met. This represents a considerable expenditure for the networks,' said Professor Flint.

First release drama

The ABA's Australian Content Standard requires a minimum amount of Australian first release drama broadcast between 5.00 p.m. and midnight. The requirement is measured in points, with a drama score of at least 225 points required in any one year, and 775 over three years. In 1998 the Seven network achieved the highest drama score of 301 points for its Adelaide service and 295 points for the other cities. All networks met the points requirement for 1996-98, with



Seven Brisbane achieving 895 for the three years.

In 1998 Seven's Australian first release drama was mainly serials (115 hours) and series (82 hours) and totalled 205 hours between 5.00 p.m. and midnight. Ten's 230 hours was mainly serials (192 hours), and Nine included series (83 hours) and serials (40 hours) in a total of just under 140 hours.

'The Australian content standard delivers a choice of Australian drama styles while guaranteeing viewers minimum amounts of new product each year,' said Professor Flint. 'From the differences in the Australian and foreign programming profiles of each of the networks, it is clear that the Australian content standard is flexible enough to allow broadcasters to deliver the service they believe best suits their audiences.'

All networks also met their obligations for new Australian documentary, with some

Seven and Nine network stations exceeding the 10 hour minimum requirement for first run Australian documentaries many times over. Nine Sydney screened 39.7 hours of new Australian documentaries while Seven Brisbane screened 27.5 hours.

C quota

All network stations exceeded the overall C quota of 260 hours of children's C classified programs, with Australian programs dominating the C programs broadcast in 1998. For example only 13.5 of Nine's 169.5 hours of C programs were from overseas. ▶

Further analysis and detailed information is contained in *Compliance - Australian Content and Children's Television in 1998*, part of the ABA's *Trends & Issues* series is available from the ABA price \$10, or on the ABA web site <www.aba.gov.au>



IN THE NEWS

The requirement for first release Australian children's C drama increased from 28 to 32 hours. As well as meeting this target, all networks exceeded the eight-hour quota for repeat C drama programs many times over. Nine broadcast 52.5 hours of repeat Australian C drama.

The 1998 network results are the first to have been generated by a new ABA compliance database that collects more detailed information about all programs broadcast. The new system allows all Australian and foreign programming broadcast during 1998 to be categorised and compared.

Australian content review

In 1998 the ABA reviewed the Australian Content Standard to remedy the inconsistency with the Trade in Services Protocol to the Australia New

Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement (CER). The new Broadcasting Services (Australian Content) Standard 1999 and consequential Children's Television Standard variation came into effect on 1 March 1999. These are also available on the ABA's web site.

In 1998 only two hours of New Zealand programming, the movie *Once Were Warriors*, were broadcast. This was by the Seven network. However in future, under the new standard, any New Zealand program broadcast from 1 March 1999 will decrease the broadcaster's minimum Australian content requirements.

The Australian Content Standard has two main mechanisms: an overall transmission quota and minimum quotas for specific types of programs. The transmission quota for

1998 set the overall annual minimum level of Australian programming at 55 per cent between 6.00 a.m. and midnight. (First release sports coverage commencing before midnight and finishing before 2.00 a.m. can also count towards the quota).

There are specific quotas for annual minimum amounts of first release Australian programs in the following categories: drama; documentary; and children's (C classified) programs, including children's drama. There is also a requirement for a minimum amount of Australian preschool (P classified) programs.

The attached table presents the performance of the Seven,

Nine and Ten network stations against the Australian content requirements. It also presents the performance of the commercial television licensees against Children's Television Standard (CTS) 3. CTS 3 requires licensees to broadcast 260 hours of children's C classified programs each year, half of which (130 hours) must be first release Australian programs and 130 hours of Australian preschool P classified programs.

The Australian children's C drama requirement, which increased from 28 to 32 hours in 1998, forms part of the 130 hours of first release Australian C programs.

The formula for scoring drama programs is:
Score = Format Factor x Duration of program.

The format factors for drama are:

- 3.2 for one-offs (including feature films, telemovies, mini-series);
- 2 for series/serial produced at the rate of one hour or less per week; and
- 1 for series/serial produced at the rate of more than one hour per week.

Compliance 1998

	Australian programs	Australian drama	Australian documentary	Australian children's C drama		Australian children's C programs	Children's C programs	Australian preschool P programs
run	all	first release	first release	first release	repeat	first release	all	all
measure	(%: 6am -12mn)	(total annual score)	(total hours)	(total hours)		(total hours -includes all C drama)	(total hours C programs)	(total hours total hours)
Seven network								
ATN Sydney	55.9	295.0	20.5	33.6	29.0	131.6	265.6	130.5
HSV Melbourne	57.2	295.0	13.0	33.6	29.5	131.6	265.6	130.5
BTQ Brisbane	58.0	295.0	27.5	33.6	28.5	131.6	264.6	130.5
SAS Adelaide	61.6	301.2	26.0	33.6	28.5	131.1	265.6	130.5
TVW Perth	58.1	295.0	18.5	33.6	26.5	131.6	265.6	130.5
Nine network								
TCN Sydney	64.7	252.6	39.7	32.0	52.5	133.5	269.5	130.5
GTV Melbourne	64.0	249.8	37.7	32.0	52.5	133.5	270.5	130.5
QTQ Brisbane	66.8	252.7	38.2	32.0	52.5	133.0	269.5	130.5
Ten network								
TenSydney	56.1	277.8	11.5	32.5	32.0	132.5	263.5	130.5
ATV Melbourne	56.1	277.8	11.5	32.5	32.0	132.5	263.5	130.5
TVQ Brisbane	56.1	277.8	12.5	32.5	32.0	132.5	264.5	130.5
ADS Adelaide	56.1	277.8	11.5	32.5	32.0	132.5	263.5	130.5
NEW Perth	56.2	277.8	11.5	32.5	32.0	132.5	264.0	130.5
Minimum annual requirement								
	55	225	10	32	8	130	260	130