



The ABA has decided to investigate whether ACE TV, which is currently operating on channel 31 in Adelaide, should continue to participate in the Government's ongoing trial of community television.

ABA begins investigation into ACE TV Adelaide

On 22 February 2002, the ABA decided to investigate whether ACE TV, which is currently operating on channel 31 in Adelaide, should continue to participate in the Government's ongoing trial of community television.

The ACE service in Adelaide has been the subject of persistent allegations that it is not operating in accordance with the purposes of the trial. Under the terms of its licence conditions, ACE TV must provide an open narrowcasting television service for community and educational non-profit purposes. The ABA believes that an investigation is necessary to address these matters and to ensure that ACE TV is complying fully with its community access, educational and non-profit obligations.

Background

In 1993, the government of the day reserved spectrum on channel 31 for community television purposes. The spectrum was made available to eligible community groups to conduct a trial of community

television services. Community groups in Lismore, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Hobart and Bendigo have been issued transmitter licences, at different times, for the purpose of providing a community television service.

The trial has been extended by the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, most recently until 31 December 2002, while the government considers the future of the trial and whether and how community television might become a more permanent feature of the media landscape. Of the original participants in the trial, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth are still participating.

Adelaide Community and Educational Television Inc (ACE TV) joined the trial in May 1994. As with all applicants for a transmitter licence, the ABA assessed the application from ACE TV by considering the extent to which it was proposing to safeguard community access and community participation in the operation and management of the service. The ABA published

an 'Access Statement' setting out the matters it would consider in deciding whether to issue a transmitter licence. These matters included openness of membership; access to programming air time; the existence and fairness of grievance mechanisms for members; and access for the community to participate in the operations and management of the service.

The ABA decided to carry out an investigation into ACE TV at its meeting on 31 January 2002. The decision was as a result of information the ABA had received about ACE TV during its evaluation of the trial of community television services throughout Australia and serious allegations that have been made in the press about the ACE TV service.



Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the investigation into ACE TV may be found on the ABA's website at www.aba.gov.au.