




ABA reminds broadcasters of the importance of adequate community safeguards

In considering a number of investigations recently, the ABA has noticed that some broadcasters do not have adequate community safeguards that, in particular, protect children from exposure to program material that may be harmful to them. In order to comply with relevant code provisions, the ABA reminds broadcasters that they must take care in providing programming, in particular, at times when children might be listening or watching.

The ABA supports the provision of vibrant and innovative programming, however, this must be done in a way that is mindful of the potential audience. This requires broadcasters to be vigilant, including having in place adequate policies and practices that minimise the risk of broadcasting programming that might not comply with relevant code provisions, in particular, content that expose children to material that might be harmful to them. In this regard, policies and practices would include guidance on the time at which broadcasts take place. 

2FBI Sydney

Protecting children from harmful material

Complaint

On 21 November 2003, the ABA received a written complaint concerning the broadcast, at 3.52 pm, of a music track containing explicit and offensive language. The complainant was concerned that the broadcast took place at a time when children may have been listening.

Decision


The ABA determined that, during the Arvo program, broadcast on 29 October 2003 at 3.52 pm, the licensee of community radio service FBI, Free Broadcast Inc:

- breached sub-clause 2.4 of the Community Broadcasting Code of Practice 2002 in relation to the establishment of

programming practices which protect children from harmful programming material and

- did not breach sub-clause 2.2 of the code in relation to the consideration given to audience, context, degree of explicitness, propensity to alarm, distress or shock, and the social importance of the event.

Action taken

The licensee advised that in light of the ABA's findings, it had decided to develop a policy guideline to distribute to broadcasters and make available to listeners. The Station Guide-Sheet includes a number of points to consider in relation to broadcasts including the time of day the material is to be broadcast and possible audience characteristics. 

TND Darwin

Breach of the Children's Television Standards

The ABA has found that Telecasters Australia Ltd (TND Darwin) breached the Children's Television Standards (CTS), in April 2003. TND broadcast an unclassified program in children's program time periods.

The CTS provide that only children's (C) or preschool (P) programs classified by the ABA may be broadcast within C or P periods and claimed towards a licensee's annual sub-quota requirements.

One of the main objectives of the CTS is to ensure that Australian children have access to a variety of quality programming made specifically for them. The ABA considers the broadcast of non-C classified material within C periods as a serious matter.

Investigation reports : breach findings

To view the full report on these investigations, go to the ABA web site: www.aba.gov.au/tv/investigations/breach_findings/ or www.aba.gov.au/radio/investigations/breach_findings/ where the reports are arranged according to month of completion.

Action taken

TND notified the ABA of the breach when it discovered its error and scheduled extra C programming to ensure that its