



COMMUNICATIONS:

January

- 23: Coalition releases *Better Communications* policy statement.

February

- 7: ACCC rules proposed Foxtel/Australis merger likely to substantially lessen competition.
- 14: Albert Langer jailed for 22 days for contempt following breaches of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act*.
- 22: ABC enters into program distribution agreement for pay television with 50% Fairfax-owned Artist Services Group.
- 23: Justice Burchett delivers judgment in the 'Super League' case.
- 28: Three editors of La Trobe University's student newspaper Rabelais charged with breaches of the *Classification Act* for publishing an article relating to shoplifting.

March

- 2: Liberal/National coalition wins office.
- 6: James Packer appointed Managing Director of PBL.
- 15: Cameron O'Reilly appointed CEO of Australian Provincial Newspapers.

April

- 9: ABA finds News Corporation Ltd not in a position to control the Seven Network.
- 16: Board of John Fairfax Holdings resolves to seek resignation of CEO Bob Mansfield.
- 18: Testra sells 10.6% share holding in the Seven Network.
- 19: ACCC opposes proposed Foxtel/Australis merger.
- 19: Australis negotiates \$200 million funding package with Lenfest, PBL, the Guinness Peat Group and

United International Holdings.

- 22: Bell Atlantic Corp and Nynex Corp announce merger, creating company with a \$63 billion market value.
- 26: Free-to-air television broadcasters lose retransmission rights in court case against Foxtel Digital Cable TV Pty Ltd and Foxtel Management Pty Limited.
- 28: 35 people shot dead at Port Arthur, Tasmania.
- 30: Ziggy Switkowski appointed CEO of Optus Communications.

May

- 2: Coalition introduces *Telstra (Dilution of Public Ownership) Bill* into Senate.
- 8: Minister releases terms of reference for Ministerial Committee on the portrayal of violence in the electronic media.
- 20: Senate refers *Telstra (Dilution of Public Ownership) Bill* to Senate References Committee.

June

- 12: US Appeals Court rules *Communications Decency Act* unconstitutional.
- 20: ACCC rules exclusive program supply agreement in regional Australia between Nine Network and Golden West Network likely to breach s 47 of the TPA.
- 26: Bob Muscat appointed CEO of John Fairfax Holdings.
- 27: Optus launches local telephony service.

July

- 4: *The Australian Financial Review* reveals Telstra's 'Project Mercury' restructuring plans.
- 4: Minister announces inquiry into the future use of the sixth television channel.
- 7: Minister announces review of standard telephone



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

service.

- 5: ABA releases report on Investigation into the Content of On-line Services.
- 9: Donald McDonald appointed Chairman of the ABC.
- 9: Minister announces tighter controls on media violence.
- 10: Trumpet Software International succeeds against Ozemail in Federal Court copyright action.
- 10: BTCE reports 18.1% growth in gross product in communications industry during 1995/6.
- 15: Senator Alston confirms the government's commitment to phase out analog mobile phone technology by 2000.
- 16: Minister announces Mansfield Review of the ABC's role and functions, \$65 million funding cut (one-off \$10m cut in current financial year; \$55m cut in 1997-8 financial year).
- 17: Seven Network purchases MGM studios in \$1.6 billion joint venture with Kirk Kerkorian.
- 17: Time Warner and Turner Broadcasting Systems obtain FCC approval for \$US 6.3 billion merger, making it the world's largest media company.
- 18: News Corporation purchases New World Communications for \$3.1 billion.
- 22: Minister announces inquiry into the future use of the sixth television channel.

August

- 2: Justice Davies rules Australian Content Standard for commercial television inconsistent with the Australia-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement; on 26 August orders ABA to vary Standard by 31 December to include New Zealand programs.
- 17: First tranche of draft telecommunications legislation released.
- 22: Australis Media accepts \$250 million refinancing agreement with PBL and announces facilities sharing agreement with Optus Vision.
- 23: Minister announces review of government assistance to the film industry.

September

- 1: Senator Alston states that full privatisation of Telstra is 'inevitable' and 'highly desirable'.
- 9: Senate References Committee releases its report, *Telstra: To Sell or not to Sell?*
- 11: Federal Attorney General announces extension of Privacy Act to the private sector.
- 13: Second tranche of draft telecommunications legislation released
- 17: Telstra announces \$45 million refund to ServiceNet Maintenance Plan customers.
- 19: Geoffrey Cousins resigns as CEO of Optus Vision.
- 22: Prime Minister announces lifting of 'pall of censorship on certain matters'.
- 23: Lachlan Murdoch appointed Managing Director of News Limited.
- 26: Minister announces review of Australian content on pay TV.
- 27: Government announces new Telstra Board.

October

- 1: Third tranche of draft telecommunications legislation released.
- 1: Minister announces review of cross-media ownership rules.
- 4: News Corporation wins Super League appeal.
- 25: Seven Network commences proceedings against Optus vision for alleged breach of Shareholders' Agreement.

November

- 3: British Telecom plc and MCI Communications Corp announce \$US 26 billion merger.