

The Convergence Review Final Report

24 May 2012

Recommendations at a glance

On 30 April 2012, the Minister for the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy released the Final Report of the Convergence Review Committee. The Report includes detailed analysis of Australia's existing media and communications regulation and its effectiveness in achieving policy objectives in a converged media landscape.

The Committee found that the convergence of media content and technologies has made Australia's existing system of regulation out-dated, and the Committee made far-reaching recommendations for substantive changes to the current regulatory framework.

Key among the Committee's recommendations include:

- the establishment of two new regulatory bodies:
 - a new statutory communications regulator to replace the Australian Communications and Media Authority; and
 - a new industry-led and funded body to oversee journalistic standards in fairness, accuracy and transparency);
- the replacement of platform specific content regulation with a technology-neutral approach to content regulation (significant enterprises controlling professional media content would be regulated based on their size and scope, rather than by platform);
- a detailed new uniform Australian content scheme (which includes amendments for free to air and subscription television and new rules for significant enterprises and the national broadcasters);
- a new uniform spectrum licensing scheme and the removal of content and broadcasting licences; and
- a "simplification" of existing media ownership rules (but an expansion of them beyond traditional media to significant enterprises), and the introduction of a new "public interest" test.



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Confronting convergence:

An Industry – Focused Review of the Convergence Review Final Report

The Panel

Louise McElvogue

Louise McElvogue, Principal Macleod Media, and Member, Convergence Review Committee. Louise was a founding partner of Macleod Media, which has consulted on strategy, programming and technology since 2004. Established in London the company relocated to Sydney in 2008. Macleod Media clients have included Channel 4, Fremantle Media, Discovery Channel, BBC Worldwide, ITV, Freeview, ABC and BskyB. Projects include the award-winning 4oD and SeeSaw VOD platforms in the UK. Louise worked on the three-person Convergence Review Committee for Minister Stephen Conroy.

Louise previously worked in the executive team of London consultancy netdecisions, where clients included McDonald's, Invensys and hp. netdecisions grew from 100 to 1000 staff in her five years with the company. Louise began her career as a journalist with Encore magazine in Sydney and worked for outlets including the New York Times, The Sunday Times, The LA Times, The Guardian and the BBC in the US and UK. Louise was appointed to a specialist board of the UK domain agency Nominet, the Charity Technology Trust board and an industry patron of the NSPCC.

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Julie Flynn

Julie Flynn has been the Chief Executive Officer of Free TV Australia since 2001.

Free TV is the industry body that represents all of Australia's commercial television licencees. In her time as CEO, Free TV has been at the forefront of the transition to digital television services and has developed an industry voice to market the strengths of free-to-air television in an increasingly competitive market.

Julie joined Free TV after a distinguished career as a journalist and media executive. She was a senior executive at Radio 2UE and prior to that she was a Political Correspondent in the Canberra Press Gallery.

Julie is a Walkley Award winner and was President of the Canberra Press Gallery.

Julie currently sits on the Ronald McDonald House Charities Board. She has also been a member of the Public Service Medal Committee, the Walkley Awards Advisory Panel and the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Advisory Board.

www.freetv.com.au

Petra Buchanan

Petra Buchanan is the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association (ASTRA). In this role she leads the peak industry body; progressing policy reform and industry development.

Petra has specialised in building brands and reputations for twenty years both in the U.S. and international marketplace.

She is an executive with solid experience in the international television industry leading marketing, communications and public affairs initiatives. She has worked in the information technology industry with responsibilities in the Asia Pacific region. Previously Petra worked for over a decade in various roles with Discovery Communications during a time of tremendous international expansion.

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Samantha Yorke

Samantha Yorke is a digital media and technology lawyer and policy advisor with over thirteen years experience working within the consumer technology sector both in Europe and Australia. She advises on issues as wide-ranging as child online safety, privacy, abuse escalations, consumer contract law, trade practices, employment matters, intellectual property creation and licensing, intermediary liability and dispute resolution.

In her most recent role as Legal Director for Yahoo! Asia Pacific, Samantha represented Yahoo! in conversations with Government, and collaborated with industry peers on submissions, relating to the convergence review, Copyright Act reforms, and the development of the best practice guideline for online behavioural advertising.

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