



## Public hearings in Melbourne and Perth – 1-2 September

# Digital television – who's buying it?

Network broadcasters will debate options for encouraging consumer interest in digital television and expanding content at a public hearing in Melbourne on Thursday 1 September. The Interactive Television Research Institute will discuss its role in the industry at a public hearing in Perth on Friday 2 September. The hearings are for the inquiry into the uptake of digital television by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications Information Technology and the Arts.

The rollout of digital television in Australia began in the major metropolitan areas in 2001. Although the scheduled rollout has passed the half way mark, it is anticipated that digital television will be taken up by less than 50 per cent of Australian households by 2008.

The **Seven Network** is recognised as Australia's largest commercial television network. Seven operates a specially designed digital production and broadcast centre linked to the Telstra Dome.

**Southern Cross Broadcasting's** media interests extend from metropolitan and regional television to metropolitan radio, together with Australia's largest independent film and television production and distribution house. Southern Cross Broadcasting has program affiliations with the Ten, Nine and Seven Networks, as well as being a supplier of programming to each network through Southern Star.

**WIN** is the holder of regional television licences throughout regional Australia with the exception of the Northern Territory. **NBN** is the holder of a regional television licence in Northern NSW.

The **Interactive Television Research Institute's** (ITRI) research facilities provide dedicated infrastructure for the study of interactive television viewing. ITRI research claims that the digitisation of television enables a wide range of interactive services, and that such interactivity can enhance the viewing experience.

**Movies Online Ltd** has primarily been involved in development and marketing of media entertainment and interactive multimedia services to broadband network providers in Australia, and looks at how digital technology could be compatible with emerging internet technology.

Committee Chair Jackie Kelly said digital television can deliver high quality transmission. "However, currently there's not the range of content to drive consumer interest. People are either unaware of digital technology or adopting a 'wait and see' approach," Mrs Kelly said. "Given that analogue services will be phased out from 2008, we need to ensure that the Australian public is ready to switch on to digital."

The Federal Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Helen Coonan, has requested the Committee to inquire into progress on the rollout process for digital television and options to encourage greater consumer interest in the uptake of digital television.

### Public Hearing Program – Thursday 1 September

**Venue:** Legislative Council Committee Room, Parliament House, Spring St, Melbourne VIC

**9.00am**            **Seven Network** (Submission 49)  
**9.45am**            **Southern Cross Broadcasting** (Submission 64)  
**10.30am**          **WIN Corporation & NBN Ltd** (Submission 56)

### Public Hearing Program – Friday 2 September

**Venue:** Club Murdoch, Murdoch University, South St, Murdoch WA

**10.45am**          **Interactive Television Research Institute** (Submission 46)  
**11.30pm**          **Movies Online Ltd** (Submission 43)

Further details on the inquiry, including the terms of reference, membership of the Committee and advice on making submissions can be obtained at [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cita](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cita) or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4601 or emailing [cita.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:cita.reps@aph.gov.au).

**Media comment**, please contact Emily Tinson (Jackie Kelly's media officer) on (02) 4732 2844  
**Background information**, please contact the Committee Secretary on (02) 6277 4601 or 0413 085 765