

PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

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1. BROADCASTING AND TELEVISION AMENDMENT BILL (No.2) 1976
2. BROADCASTING STATIONS LICENCE FEES AMENDMENT BILL 1976
3. TELEVISION STATIONS LICENCE FEES AMENDMENT BILL (No.2) 1976

Date Introduced : 18 November 1976  
House : House of Representatives  
Presented by : Minister for Posts and Telecommunications,  
Hon. Eric L. Robinson

SHORT DIGEST OF BILLS

1. Purpose

These Bills seek to implement Government decisions on the licensing, regulation, planning and administration of the Australian broadcasting system.

The Broadcasting Stations Licence Fees Amendment Bill 1976 and the Television Stations Licence Fees Amendment Bill (No.2) 1976 are consequential machinery amendments dealing with the accounting period for assessing broadcasting and television station licence fees. They will omit from the Principal Acts a direct reference to the Australian Broadcasting Control Board in relation to the future application of sub-section 106(2) of the Broadcasting and Television Act 1942.

2. Provisions

The Broadcasting and Television Amendment Bill (No.2) 1976 provides for:

- . the disbandment of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the establishment, with transitional arrangements, of an Australian Broadcasting Tribunal. The Bill specifies membership of the Tribunal and transfers to it the Broadcasting Control Board's present functions and responsibilities regarding licensing and public inquiries; the administration of present standards of broadcasting practice; the determination of standards to be observed by licensees in the broadcasting or televising of programs; the conditions subject to which advertisements may be broadcast or televised; and the hours during which programs are or may be broadcast or televised.

- . the restructuring of the Australian Broadcasting Commission to consist of nine part-time Commissioners (one from each State plus three others) of whom at least two shall be women.
- . the removal of the need for Public Service Board approval on ABC staffing positions involving salaries below minimum salaries at Second Division Public Service levels.
- . the establishment of a Joint Consultative Committee comprising representatives of the Australian Broadcasting Commission and officers and full-time employees of the Commission.
- . the licensing of public broadcasting and television stations under this Act instead of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1905.
- . the payment of Commonwealth Government financial assistance to commercial broadcasting and television stations to ensure that programs of adequate extent, standard and variety are provided.
- . the extension of the functions of the Postal and Telecommunications Department to include the planning of the physical development of the Australian broadcasting system.
- . the establishment of a Broadcasting Council to be consulted by the Tribunal and the Department in the performance of their functions.

The Broadcasting and Television Amendment Bill (No.2) 1976 is an interim legislative measure. According to the Second Reading Speech, the new Broadcasting Tribunal will ultimately be granted all the powers presently available to either the Minister or the Control Board in the administration of ownership and control provisions applicable to broadcasting licences.

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