
Sent: Tuesday, 15 February 2005 5:16 PM
To: ECITA, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Fw: antisiphoning

----- Original Message -----

From: Bob & Anne Wilson
To: ecita.sen@aph.gov.au
Sent: Sunday, February 13, 2005 11:29 AM
Subject: antisiphoning

COMMENTS TO COMMITTEE HEARING ON ANTI-SIPHONING RULES REFORM

I am a NSW country viewer/listener who can receive radio stations satisfactorily, except in electronic activity weather conditions, and four out of five free to air TV channels. The odd one out, 7, is received only in black and white, with poor picture quality.

I choose not to instal satellite pay-TV because of 1): the exorbitant cost of doing so; and 2): the amount of television watched by my wife and I does not warrant it.

The anti-siphoning regulations seem, by and large, to be serving their purpose. However, they need to be more rigidly enforced, and amended if necessary so that channel holders cannot be allowed to screen a product which is a delayed product, cut to its highlights, or otherwise reduced to a second-hand product.

I realise that rights administration is made more difficult by the pay/free-to-air cross-ownerships among media proprietors that now exist, but believe that the committee in its wisdom could find a resolution to this. A recent example of this is the Fox organisation manoeuvres to monopolise the forthcoming Ashes cricket coverage in England.

Is there any reason why pay and free-to-air rights cannot be even more separated, so that they are looked upon as two entirely distinct and unconnected transactions, completely devoid to commercial or other connections between them?

It is my belief that when a company buys the free-to-air rights for an event or tournament, it legally pledges to cover all that event or tournament, completely and live. If it finds itself unable to do so, it gives a reasonable, but regulated, period of notice, forfeits the entire rights to that item, and then is forced to sell them off to another free-to-air provider for the best price it can get. No excuses accepted. Basically, a bare bones "use it or lose it" policy.

I see from the Australian Financial Review of February 12-13 (page 5) that ASTRA is proposing a "use it or lose it" mechanism which would work strictly to its advantage, dilute and seriously undermine the very basis of the anti-siphoning system, and appears to pay no regard to the viewer.

Free TV Australia is similarly pushing its own barrow before the committee.

Please consider all the above the opinions of a layman and the everyday viewer.

I have no membership of any media lobby group, or any financial interest in any media company or organisation.

The above comments are available for use as the committee wishes.

Bob & Anne