



Communications & the Arts:

Policy	Labor	Coalition	Democrats
Telstra Privatisation	Retain in full public ownership.	One third sale in first term. Proceeds of sale to retire debt and fund \$1 billion in environmental protection and other initiatives.	Neither full nor partial privatisation.
Telstra Network Upgrade	\$3billion program to digitalise all exchanges by 1999. Metro areas, fully digitalised by mid-'97 and country areas by mid-'99. ISDN introduced under current FMO for \$300m. Broadband rollout to more than 4m homes by 1999.	Require Telstra to provide ISDN digital access services. Telstra to accelerate digitisation of exchanges by July 1997. ISDN into the price cap regime from 1/7/96.	Telstra to reach its 100pc digital switching targets (1997 in metro areas; 1999 in rest of Australia). Telstra to spend \$1billion over 3-4 years to upgrade the customer access network in remote areas.
Universal Service	Labor has legislated for the standard telephone service to be provided as a USO. Review underway to determine whether the USO should be extended to standard telecommunications service.	Maintain Telstra's community service obligations and Universal Service Levy. Maintain untimed local calls (for residents and business). Examine definition of standard telephone service.	Should address affordability and geographic availability. Should require service which supports fax, data and telephony. Must be upgraded over time.
Media Ownership	No change to current policy - control cap at 15 per cent. Legislation introduced to tighten control test re: 'company interest'.	Review to be conducted of existing cross media regime. Attention to ownership in the context of plurality, diversity, competition, technology advances, local content. Media related foreign investment applications on a case-by-case basis.	Tighten 'control test' so it includes holders of significant economic interests in the licensee. Establish a Foreign Investment Review Commission to review foreign press ownership. Extend cross-media rules to pay TV.
Australian Content	ABA to look at requirements for Australian content on pay TV music channels. Investments made in Australian content for on-line services. Current levels of support for Australian film and TV production (\$150m in 95/96) to be maintained.	Endorse ABA's recently updated levels of Australian content on free-to-air TV. Streamline the definition of 'Australian' so as not to preclude co-productions containing Australian content.	Strong Australian content rules for commercial broadcasters. Amendments already introduced for review of Australian content on pay TV.
ABC	Editorial and programming independence guaranteed. Funding on a triennial basis. Australia TV and Radio Australia to continue. ATV to get \$18.6m over next 3 years.	Existing funding maintained. Resources policy to reflect geographic spread of audience. Support extension of Triple J. ATV to stay. \$6m for captioning ABC & SBS news. Maintain ban on advertising and sponsorship.	Continued independence from Government funding continued on a triennial basis, on appropriate indexation process, with full funding for overseas services.
SBS	Funding and commitment to SBS to continue. \$6m over next 3 years for captioning of ABC & SBS news. Extend SBS further into regional Australia.	Existing funding maintained. Extra \$10.5m over 3 years to fast-track SBS extension. Extra \$3m over 3 years to support expansion of multicultural broadcasting sector.	Maintain current funding levels.
Community Broadcasting	Continued support as shifts in broadcasting escalate towards national networking. Funding of \$5m for a national indigenous communications network guaranteed. Encourage cable consortia to make available capacity for community broadcasting.	Develop a long-term community broadcasting strategy. Extra \$1.5m over 3 years for infrastructure investment for the sector. Community radio to digital sound.	Use sixth channel for community TV. Ensure more open access of community broadcasters to cable delivery systems. Accept BSEG recommendations for \$10m over 3 years for communications services for community sector.
Commercial TV	Review of 3 networks due by mid-'97 to look at future development, opportunities for targeted programming such as family channel or educational channel and the introduction of digital TV. Ensure major sporting events are not lost from free-to-air TV due to pay TV.	Explore all options in coming review for sixth free-to-air channel.	
Sixth Channel	Future of channel is part of review of the TV broadcasting industry required under legislation.	No to family channel. Content regulation to ensure 'family-oriented' material. Review of all options to be undertaken.	Support continued use of sixth channel for community TV or possibly educational channel.



How the parties stack up

Policy	Labor	Coalition	Democrats
Cable Retransmission	Reliance on existing copyright and broadcast law. Cable retransmission of local signal free-to-air only within licence service area.	Cable operators to pay for retransmission of free-to-air signals.	Support recommendations of Copyright Convergence Group for creation of 'transmission right' to protect all works, however delivered (b/cast or cable).
Australia Post	Continue parliamentary review of postal services in rural & remote areas. Consideration given to improving postal services.	Maintain Australia Post in full Australian ownership. Maintain CSO to provide a standard letter service. Establish a charter of responsibilities for Australia Post. Twice weekly mail for remote households.	Retain in full Government ownership. No further deregulation. Increased roadside deliveries from one to two.
THE ARTS			Support continued funding for the Arts. More emphasis on supporting new or different art forms with support outside the capital cities.
Copyright	Extension of copyright to 70 years; extension of performers' copyright; establishment of an Australian Copyright Office.	Legislative recognition of moral rights; consultation with arts community to devise performers' copyright legislation.	
Film, TV and Multimedia	National multimedia, film and TV centre on Essendon Airport site, feasibility study to commence within two months; \$200,000 over 3 years to establish Tasmanian Film Office; \$4m over 2 years to foster development for youth programming for TV.	Possibility of additional tax incentives for film investors; \$1m towards cost of Performing Arts Multimedia Library; \$10m over 3 years for provision of hardware and software for cultural institutions.	
Performing Arts	\$1.6m over 4 years to establish National Theatre of Cultural Diversity; \$1m a year to State-based dance training institutions; \$200,000 a year to Australian Ballet School; \$3m for concert hall in Hobart; \$5m to establish Independent Music Development Corporation.	\$2m over 3 years for Contemporary Music Export Fund. Managerial autonomy of ABC orchestras.	
Visual Arts	Pilot scheme for up to 1% of a Commonwealth building's budget allocated to artists; increase on limit of exhibition indemnification scheme to \$800m a year.	Establishment of Ausart scheme to promote emerging artists.	
Indigenous arts	\$3m for film production seed funding; \$1m to SBS for production of drama series; \$220,000 a year for 4 years for staging of an Indigenous Youth Music Festival; establishments of Indigenous Copyright Group, to report within 6 months.	Establishment of a Gallery of Aboriginal Australia; priority to rectifying the deficiencies in existing copyright legislation.	
Australia Council	\$400,000 over 4 years for granting of creative development fellowships; \$400,000 over 4 years to promote regional artists to a national audience.	Four State opera companies be invited to join Major Organisations Board; Australian Artists' Creative Fellowships (the Keatings) to be replaced by a \$3m Emerging Artists' Fund.	

Sources: Coalition's *Better Communications* and *For Arts Sake*, SMH, 20/2/96
Democrats and ALP Election Platforms