

NEWS *Str* e a m

AAP's Newsletter to the Broadcast Industry

August 1995

Big changes have swept the radio industry since the last AAP newsletter to its broadcast news partners.

And AAP has seen some changes too.

Mergers and takeovers have resulted in new radio networks emerging and some long-established stations changing hands while several capital city call signs are awaiting new owners as a regulatory result of the shuffles.

AAP Information Services has restructured this year (details inside) and a challenger in the provision of commercial radio and television text news has vacated the field.

The restructure means that I have moved on from Media Marketing Director based in Melbourne to Director of Marketing for all AAPIS news and information business based in the Sydney head office. Former Broadcast Services Marketing Manager Ian Lane joins me as Market Development Manager.

I have enjoyed working closely with the radio industry, particularly during the recent campaign, and I look forward to continuing contact on the broader issues of our future marketing relationship.

Again, thanks for your business. We appreciate it.

*Robin Strathdee
Director of Marketing
AAP Information Services Pty Ltd*

AAP Calls for Return to Pricing Agreement

AAP has proposed to the Australian commercial radio industry that it consider returning to the traditional industry-wide agreement on a pricing formula for the supply of international and national news.

Until late 1993, AAP had negotiated with the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters on a news service pricing structure to suit all sections of the industry.

This consultation had been a feature of the AAP-FARB relationship for more than 20 years.

At least twice, the basic AAP pricing formula was changed at FARB's request to take into account changing conditions within the commercial radio industry.

In 1993 AAP had been discussing with FARB ways of adapting the formula to reflect new trends when the ABC announced its ill-fated venture into commercial news syndication, through a vehicle named Broadcast News Australia. FARB subsequently endorsed both service providers and left it to each network or station to make individual arrangements.

It was not then possible for AAP to maintain the industry-wide arrangements.

BNA fell silent last month after losing money and failing to attract more than a handful of stations to its service.

The expensive episode highlighted that supplying a comprehensive world and local text news service to the relatively small Australian television and radio industry is difficult and costly.



Australian broadcast news: reporting events as they happen

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It certainly did reinforce AAP's long term commitment and loyalty to the market.

AAP has now written to FARB suggesting that the time is right to think again about working with the industry towards evolving a common price policy.

Significant developments to be considered include major population increases in some markets, increased sharing of newsrooms and a greater trend for group ownership of stations.

When BNA was launched, it claimed it would enter 1994 with up to 50 per cent of Australia's commercial radio stations as clients.

In March this year, the Senate Select Committee report on ABC management and operations stated that BNA had suffered a net loss of \$678,451 in its first six months.

Not long after, the ABC board announced that it had endorsed a decision by the ABC Radio Division to close BNA.

AP Moves Into TV

AAP has long made use of the global service of one of the world's great news agencies, Associated Press of America, to help compile the international component of its news report to Australian radio and television stations.

Now, Australia television is also receiving world video news direct from the AP's new television news arm, based in London.

AP text news has been part of the AAP radio television news service for more than 20 years.

AAP has the exclusive distribution rights to the AP text news in Australia as well as the sole rights to the AP's renowned photo service, now delivered to Australian newspapers in digital colour.

The AP, founded in 1848, is the dominant news agency in the United States and has grown into one of the major international providers of news through wire copy, financial information through AP-Dow Jones, photos, audio and now television.

Its new television news venture employs 130 television professionals and draws on the resources of the AP's 93 bureaus in 67 countries.

An APTV spokesman said: "APTV has been providing material to the Australian television industry for more than three months. As well as covering all the major breaking and ongoing international stories for the Australian networks, APTV has had comprehensive coverage from Mururoa, as well as reaction from around the world on France's announcement of nuclear testing in the Pacific."

A senior producer heads APTV operations in Australia, working out of the AP's Sydney office (02 262 2999).



Picture courtesy of AAP Photo Library

Elizabeth Hurley and Hugh Grant - one of the biggest 'rock 'n' roll' news stories of recent times

ROCK 'N' ROLL NEWS DRUMS UP A FOLLOWING

By John Williams
Austereo Group News Director

It was 65 years ago when philosopher George Herbert Mead suggested that there were two models of journalism.

One form he called *the information model*. Information journalism reported the facts only, it emphasised the truth value in news.

The other journalistic form Mead called *the story model*. Story journalism emphasised the enjoyability and consumatory value of news, story news was presented in such a way as to create satisfying aesthetic experiences and to help people relate events to their own lives.

For years "traditional" news critics have fretted about *story journalism*, but the entertainment gloss of the news won't take over, so long as editors exercise good judgment, taste and values.

In contemporary radio, this so called *story journalism* has developed into what some call "Rock 'n' Roll news," and from our point of view has meant a "lifestyle information service" touching people's lives in a different, enjoyable way. That is, it is clear, concise and where possible is positive information free of jargon, journalese and common reporter cliches.

It's hardly news to anyone that the big journalistic success stories of the past decade involve practitioners of "the story model"... 60 Minutes, Entertainment Tonight, Who Magazine and, I must add, Austereo Radio News.

THE NEWS - WHEN WE'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE

By Des Foster

There is a story of a lion and lioness and their two cubs stalking across the veldt, when suddenly two gnus are spotted. The parents take after the gnus, which elude capture. As the parents return, one of the cubs remarks: "That's the end of the gnus, now here again are the head lions."

This is an excruciatingly old story. I first heard it when I was at 2UE, 40 years ago. In fact, the joke is so old that it will probably sound new to the current crop of radio journalists and radio managements.

More to the point, they will get it, despite its age.

How is it that a joke which was conceived in the days of "steam radio" can still have currency today? That a gag which preceded transistors, photocopiers, FM, fax machines, computers, satellites and digitisation is still funny?

Because, although news today is handled and delivered faster and more comprehensively than ever, 40-year-old phrases like "here again are the headlines" are still being used.

The chilling truth, it seems to me, is that in 40 years the presentation style of radio news has barely changed, the only major advance being the introduction of voice inserts in the latter '60s.

What's more, the way voice inserts are handled today is identical with the way they were handled three decades ago.

The journalists' sign-off ("Bill Bloggs - Ottawa") mindlessly perpetuates a technique which in the '60s really meant something, because it was designed to impress listeners with the stations' "world wide resources".

But today, listeners have come to expect those kinds of resources in the gathering of news. It is no longer

remarkable to have a correspondent or an eye witness in Bosnia, Beijing or Barcelona.

There is every indication that, for many stations, news is one of those ingredients programmers no longer think about.

Newspapers have made enormous adjustments to their style and presentation over the last 20 to 30 years, in response to the challenges presented by changing life-styles in the community and competition from the electronic media.

But so much of radio news presentation is still locked into the presentation and style of generations past. It has become a cliché.

Some stations have substituted "main stories" for "headlines", but in the main, not much else has changed.

There are, of course, some progressive broadcasters who are constantly reviewing and refining all aspects of their programming, including news.

But for the rest, is it not time for a little more experimentation, a little more risk-taking?

Why are weather forecasts read so quickly that they barely have time to register with listeners? Why isn't there more interpretation and explanation of news events? Why is there so little humour?

And why do we use newspaper terms like "headlines"?

The "world-wide resources" which back radio today have never been better or more comprehensive.

But wouldn't it be great if we could get to the point where the story of the lions and the gnus produced a blank expression and the response: "I'm sorry, but I don't get it".

Des Foster is a former newspaper and radio journalist who gravitated to radio management and later became FARB President and FARB Federal Director. He is Managing Director of the broadcast consultancy, Foster's Broadcast Management Services.

"The chilling truth, it seems to me, is that in 40 years the presentation style of radio news has barely changed"

Providing Running Sports Coverage Keeps Journalists Moving

AAP was the first news organisation to provide running cover of all the USPGA tour events in which Australian golfers are involved, with hourly updates for radio from at least 30 tournaments a year.

US-based Andrew Both covers the tour full-time, as there are usually four or five Australians, sometimes more, playing in any given tournament.

“Seven Australians - Greg Norman, Steve Elkington, Brett Ogle, Craig Parry, Wayne Grady, Ian Baker-Finch and Steve Rintoul - are full members of the American Tour, which means they must play at least 15 events a year,” Andrew said.

“I always file my radio stories well in time to make the hourly bulletins. This means, for example, that I update Norman’s score every four or five holes.



Picture courtesy of AAP Photo Library

The world’s number one golfer, Greg Norman. Golf is just one of the major sports covered around the world by AAP

“Although my emphasis is on keeping Australian golf fans informed of the progress of their compatriots, I try to do so in the context of the tournament.

“Especially in the final round, I concentrate on updating the progress of the leaders. If an Australian is on the leader board, all the better. Otherwise I’ll always mention the best-placed Australian somewhere in the story.

“When a tournament ends, I file a final summary within a couple of minutes, wrapping up what, in a typical week, will be about my 28th radio report.”

Golf is but one of the major sports round the world from which AAP journalists provide blow-by-blow cover, said AAP News Editor, Colin Burgess.



Ian Jessup from AAP’s Sydney newsroom and Australian cricket captain Mark Taylor share the joy at the press conference after Australia had won the fourth test in Jamaica, and the series 2-1

“This year, Ian Jessup from the Sydney newsroom was in the Caribbean to report the Australian cricket team’s historic win over the West Indies, while Cole Hitchcock from Brisbane went to South Africa for the rugby World Cup.

“We had Karen Noack, Don Woolford and Justin Brasier at Wimbledon and Justin then joined Mike Hedge at the British Open. Karen also covered the World Netball Championships in Britain.

“And, of course, AAP will provide its usual full, detailed coverage of the Olympic Games in Atlanta next year. Our journalists will be on the spot to provide fast coverage of all events that matter.

“All this is in addition to our comprehensive coverage of domestic sport,” Col added. “This is becoming very demanding with the creation of more national competitions and successful campaigns to lift the profiles of different codes.”



Steffi Graf is embraced by Arantxa Sanchez Vicario after their women’s singles final at Wimbledon in July. AAP provided full coverage of the event

Picture courtesy of AAP Photo Library

Committed, Responsive & Customer Focused

Like the media clients it serves, AAP has become a leaner, smarter, more cost-effective organisation with a sharp customer-focus following a recent corporate restructuring, said Deputy Chief Executive of AAP Information Services (AAPIS), Barry Wheeler.

"The restructuring leaves us better-placed than ever to serve the broadcasting industry's need for fast and comprehensive national and international news, finance and sport," Barry said.

In what has been an eventful year for the independent national news agency, Barry has streamlined key sections and rationalised others to cut costs and enhance services

Barry returned to AAPIS (AAP's news and information division) after four years at the helm of AAP Telecom-munications. Before this he was AAP Editor-in-Chief.

Sales and Customer Service for all information services (excluding real-time financial data) were merged into a single division headed by Sales Director, Michael Harker.

As well as focusing on serving AAP's media and other customers, the division will take advantage of the exciting new opportunities on the information superhighway.

Michael, who has held a number of senior sales and marketing positions, said: "Our claim to be the broadcast industry's news partner is no hollow boast.

"We are totally committed to providing high quality services at competitive prices. We will be responsive to clients' needs and will strive to offer excellent customer service."



Senior Account Manager, Media, Richard Davison and Sales Manager, Media, Leigh Mackay



AAP's new corporate headquarters in Sydney

AAP's Sales Manager, Media, Leigh Mackay, and Senior Account Manager, Media, Richard Davison, are responsible for AAP's radio, television and print media clients.

"It's been an eventful year for the Australian radio industry as well as for AAP," said Leigh.

"We've seen Australian Provincial Newspapers (APN) buy first the Wesgo network, then the Australian Radio Network (ARN), the merger of the Austereo and the Triple M networks; continuing cost-consciousness amongst all stations, and a trend towards merged newsrooms," he said.

Leigh and Richard recently completed negotiations for the return to AAP's Radio News Service of ARN's Mix 106.5 in Sydney, TTFM and Gold 104 in Melbourne and FM 106 in Canberra, as well as Triple M, 4BH and QFM in Brisbane and Sea FM and Gold 92.5 FM on the Gold Coast.

The AAPIS rationalisation included consolidating the production, communications, technical development and editorial systems sections and support staff into a new Information Technology Group, ITG, headed by its Director, Geoff Want.



Sales Director Michael Harker

Peter Brown remains in charge of news output as Editor in Chief.

Coinciding with the restructure, AAPIS moved from what is traditionally called the 2GB building to new headquarters in Lang Street, Sydney. The 42-storey building, formerly the World Trade Centre and for some years the home of Qantas, has now been named AAP Centre.

Radio An Important Medium for AAP Too

AAP shares with its radio and television clients a history of using radio waves in its business.

But the news agency uses the spectrum for specialised communications purposes rather than for program broadcasting.

First use of radio waves goes right back to AAP's formative years in the 1930s and '40s when radio teletype and shortwave monitoring brought overseas news into Australia.

Now, radio technology in the shape of mobile data networks is being used to deliver a new product that will provide AAP with a significant edge in Australia's competitive financial markets.

Market Edge is a mobile platform that delivers live equities, futures and money market information and news to any laptop or desktop PC in the major metropolitan areas without the need for costly telephone links or dedicated lines.

The wireless modem which receives the data is not much larger than a roll of film.

"It lowers the entry level for people needing a financial markets service to about one-third of current prices and gives AAP a break of at least a year on our competitors," said Craig

McIvor, Executive Director, AAP Financial Markets.

"It also establishes an effective two-way link between a broker and their clients, allowing the broker to e-mail his research reports and buy/sell recommendations to the client and the client to e-mail back his orders.

"The client can also receive immediate confirmation of his trade electronically and update his spreadsheet to get a live profit and loss analysis."

AAP Communications Services is Australia's leading company in the provision of microwave radio services.

Vodafone has recently more than doubled its contract for AAPCS to install microwave links around the nation - from 200 in 1993 to a total of 500.

The total value of its contracts with Vodafone is in excess of \$50 million, including the provision of maintenance services nationally to June 30, 1988.

"Microwave links are more cost effective than fibre systems for hops over about five km and they also provide the reliability required for



A microwave communications tower

cellular systems," said Bernie Seth, Manager of the Radio Systems Division.

"The use of microwave links has become a significant element of competitive advantage for operators such as Vodafone."

AAPCS also recently won two major contracts in Perth to provide high speed communications links for the city's four universities based on a 34 Mb microwave broadband network.

In New Zealand, it is also providing microwave radio links for Clear Communications, that country's second telecommunications carrier.

Premier Sports Channel Relies on the AAP Sports Desk

Galaxy TV's Premier Sports channel, Australia's first 24 hour sports network, has been using AAP's fast and comprehensive sports wire since going live on Australia Day.

The AAP sports service delivers news, previews, results and interviews on major sports here and abroad, and includes coverage by AAP's specialist sports writers who cover Australian teams touring overseas.

"Our telecasts of the Australia versus West Indies cricket, US and European PGA golf, NBA basketball and a host of

other sports events have earned us the thumbs-up from viewers," said Head of Production at Premier Sports, Rik Dovey.

"The Premier Sports service includes up-to-the-minute results and news reports that bring viewers the latest developments in the sports world, and the AAP sports wire has proved to be a very valuable source of information."

Dovey said that Premier Sports is expanding its coverage of world sport, including golf, basketball, boxing and soccer, while a range of locally produced programs will also rely on the AAP sports wire as a news resource.

RADIO - IT'S HAPPENING!

By Kathy Brown
Manager - Marketing
Radio Marketing Bureau

Advertising that involves, that arouses, that stirs up mental pictures, that moves the listener to think positively about the product, remember its name and buy it. That's what radio advertising is all about.

Revenue is up

National revenue figures for the radio industry are up 10.5 per cent for the year ended 30 June 1995, reflecting growing confidence in the potency of radio as an advertising medium.

Creative interest and expertise are up

The radio industry is offering a \$100,000 (pre-tax) prize to the writer of the best commercial entered in the 1995 Golden Stylus Awards. Commercials aired in Australia in 1995 will be eligible for the prize.

Thirty five Australian and New Zealand top agency creatives 'surf' the radio waves at the annual Radio Writer's Workshop which was held at Newport Mirage, on Sydney's Pittwater, from August 2 to 6 this year.

The intensive four-day workshop has empowered these senior writers to craft radio spots that 'show' the product on air. Hold it up for the listener to see, to consider, and to vividly demonstrate its benefits.

At work listening is up

More people are tuning in at the office, in shops, factories, and warehouses, and that accounts for 25 per cent of all radio listening. Advertisers can influence business and private purchase decisions closer to the time and place of use and the time and place of purchase.

Radio positions a brand closer to working people and triggers their response.

In-car listening is going up

Increasing mobility and urban congestion will lengthen the amount of time people spend on the road. Increasing flexibility in working conditions will also spread the duration of morning and drive time slots.

Radio, the mobile medium, is uniquely able to catch busy people such as occupational group ABs and working mums on the go.

All in all radio is on the up-and-up!

Advertisers such as the NRMA, McDonalds, John West's Ally Salmon brand and The Com Store have taken advantage of radio's ability to deliver timely and relevant messages, to reach millions of people in an intimate, personal way, and to be sensitive to their needs, moods, values and experiences.

Radio - it's definitely happening!

In an increasingly hectic and impersonal world, radio is uniquely able to catch people on the run and provide them with reassurance, confidence and support in their purchasing decisions.



A Case of No News Is Good News?

It's hoped the marked decline in the number of messages on AAP's Radio and Television News Response Line signals an increase in customer satisfaction, said AAP's Broadcast Desk Editor, Joanne Williamson.

AAP established the service more than a year ago to encourage feedback from newsrooms.

Using a 1 800 number, news operators can leave non-urgent voice messages about the AAP news service from anywhere in Australia, and for no cost.

Initially news directors and journalists used the service extensively to praise or criticise (usually constructively) various aspects of the news wire.

Comments and suggestions have been carefully considered and acted on where possible.

"But we appear to be doing something right, judging from the few messages being left these days," said Joanne.

The News Response Line is a useful supplement to - but in no way replaces - the direct contact that clients have with the AAP Broadcast Desk on urgent editorial matters and running stories.

**AAP Radio and Television News Response Line:
1 800 815 896**



AAP's Broadcast Desk day team: (from left) Digby Beacham, Joanne Williamson, Martin Kwakwa, Jeremy Vermeesch and Gabrielle Rish

COMMUNICATION OR SERVICE DIFFICULTIES? CALL AAP CUSTOMER SERVICES CENTRE

008 023 176

Sydney: Tel: (02) 692 1999 Fax : (02) 692 1050

Please have the following details available when you call:

- *Your service ID number*
- *The name and site address of your organisation*
- *Contact name and phone number*
- *Product or service name*
- *Severity of the problem*
- *Please record the fault number given to you by our Customer Service Representative for any follow up enquiry or future correspondence.*

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS?

CALL AAP'S RESPONSE LINE

1800 815 896

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