

## TOP CUSTOMER SERVICE IS GROUP'S NEW FOCUS

**The new look Customer Service division is spearheading a fundamental change in AAP from being a technically oriented company to a customer driven organisation.**

Chief Executive Lee Casey said, "We intend to focus on providing a much more comprehensive service to our clients covering all products and services delivered by the AAP Group.

"The extensive changes being made in the Customer Services area highlights our commitment to providing a top quality service.

"It takes a long time to gain a customer but only minutes to lose one."

Recently appointed Customer Service Manager Jeff Rollason is strongly committed to the customer-oriented approach.

"Given the state of the financial markets and the decline in the economy, it is imperative that AAP retains each and every existing customer by providing high standards of customer service satisfaction," he said.

"It has been estimated that the cost of gaining a new

customer is five times that of retaining an existing one. The financial benefits of keeping a customer must be clearly understood by everyone in AAP.

"The new customers that join AAP must be provided with a quality service level which exceeds any market competition.

"If we can say a product has support 24 hours a day, that it is maintained in Australia and that we have a rapid response

and restoration time, then a customer feels confident about buying the product."

To achieve Total Customer Service, Jeff is implementing a number of far reaching changes including having a bright new office built in Communication Services Glebe premises, which will be known as the Customer Assistance Centre, providing his staff with top quality uniforms and developing a comprehensive training program.

The Customer Assistance Centre will be behind the reception area on the ground floor and will be attractively carpeted and decorated.

"We will provide a professional environment for our staff," said Jeff. "where customers can walk in and recognise a first class organisation."

Customer Service staff will have a much more proactive role, including regular client liaison

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

*I would like to express my sincere thanks to all staff for your contribution to the performance of the AAP Group during the difficult economic climate experienced over the past twelve months.*

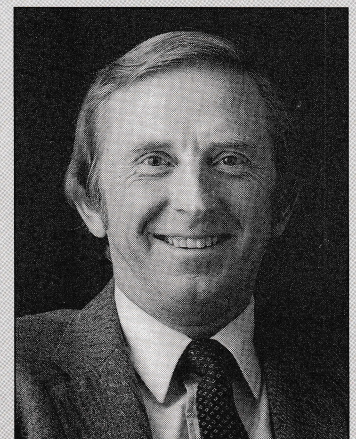
*It is a tribute to you all that the group continued to consolidate and grow.*

*As a result we will enter 1993 on a strong note with some exciting developments planned.*

*The Group is committed to further developing as Australia's leading news, information and communications company with a recognised reputation for reliability and excellence of service for all the products and services provided by the group.*

*Thank you again for your work during 1992 and my very best wishes for the year ahead.*

*Lee Casey*



Smart new uniforms are currently being designed. Men will get double-breasted blue suits and women check skirts, white blouses and blue jackets.

At the moment the only time a client speaks to a customer service person is over the phone, but in future Jeff's staff will be meeting AAP's clients on their own premises to establish personal links.

Staff will also visit other parts of the group, getting to know the finer details of AAP's products.

When the Customer Assistance Centre is up and running, AAP products such as TravelNet and AMQ will be alongside the fault reporting screens so staff can run through whatever problem a customer is

having. A technician provided by Field Services on a monthly roster is now part of the division.

Another area of Customer Service that will be upgraded is the telephone system which in future will monitor workloads so that staff timetables can be better planned.

The division already has a 24 hour a day toll free service, which from 9 pm to 6 am is on the ASPEN voice information processing system, but Jeff is looking to a totally live on call service.

Jeff also wants to enhance the already high calibre of staff with training programs and further recruitment.

In addition Customer Service intends carrying out



*Customer Services Manager  
Jeff Rollason*

surveys both inside the company and outside to find out what people think of the quality of its work. A suggestions box will also be installed.

Jeff is passing a lot of the responsibility for these changes to his staff, including his supervisors Sally Bland and Jenni Walsh, as well as the customer service representatives.

"My management style is to give staff the opportunity and responsibility so that they can succeed and achieve their career goals," said Jeff.

Jeff also wants to enhance the already high calibre of staff with training programs and further recruitment.

Jeff, who reports to AAP Communications Services Chief Executive Terence Nickolls, has worked in the communications industry for 20 years, during which he developed expertise in the customer service and network management areas.

He was formerly with NEC, as Maintenance Manager, Telepower and most recently Navigator Communications as Network Management Business Operations Manager.



*Customer Service supervisors Sally Bryant and Jenni Walsh seated at one of the work stations in the new Customer Assistance Centre located behind the reception area on the ground floor at Glebe.*

# AAP PART OF NEW MOBILE PHONE CONSORTIUM

**Chief Executive Lee Casey has welcomed the Federal Government's decision to award the third mobile telephone licence to the Arena GSM consortium, with which AAP is closely linked.**

"The AAP Group is very pleased to be associated with the successful bid," Mr Casey said.

"AAP's communications subsidiary companies, AAP Telecommunications

and AAP Communications Services, will be working closely with Arena to ensure the speediest possible roll-out of the new service during 1993.

"Arena will be using the advanced Vodafone micro cellular network technology enabling the company to offer very competitive low cost services to the community."

Mr Casey said the award of the licence to the

Arena group would ensure that Australians benefitted from a new level of competition in the rapidly expanding mobile telephone market.

AAP will provide a range of services to Arena including access to its high sites in the cities, and also its trunk communication network. AAP's strong corporate client base will present joint marketing opportunities to Arena, which paid

\$140 million for the licence.

The British-based company will set up its regional headquarters in Australia and has promised a multi-million dollar boost for local industry leading to the creation of some 5,000 jobs.

It will provide services in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra by September next year and in other capital cities by the end of 1993 in direct competition with the two existing operators, Telecom's Mobilenet and Optus Mobile.

# CANBERRA GOLF DAY RAISES \$28,000

**The AAP Group joined with the National Press Club this year to host their annual charity golf day in spectacular weather at Royal Canberra Golf Club.**

"We had more than 100 people from all walks of life in Canberra compete at the golf," ACT Group Manager Peter Monaghan reported.

"We had minders through to journalists, army through to lobbyists, and spooks through to industry leaders play. All were there to have fun and support The National Heart Foundation."

The day was sponsored by a range of corporations including Qantas, Westpac, British Airways, Telecom and Optus, plus a number of govern-

ment bodies including the Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce, Austrade and the Department of Defence.

Guest speakers at the presentation dinner at the National Press Club included Wallaby forward Peter Fitzsimons, with a fund of Rugby anecdotes, and Paul Lyneham from the ABC's 7.30 Report with his dry assessment of golf and politics.

First prize in the lottery draw - travel to the value of \$11,500 from Qantas - was won by Cathy Hales, a mother of four who works night shift and has never travelled.

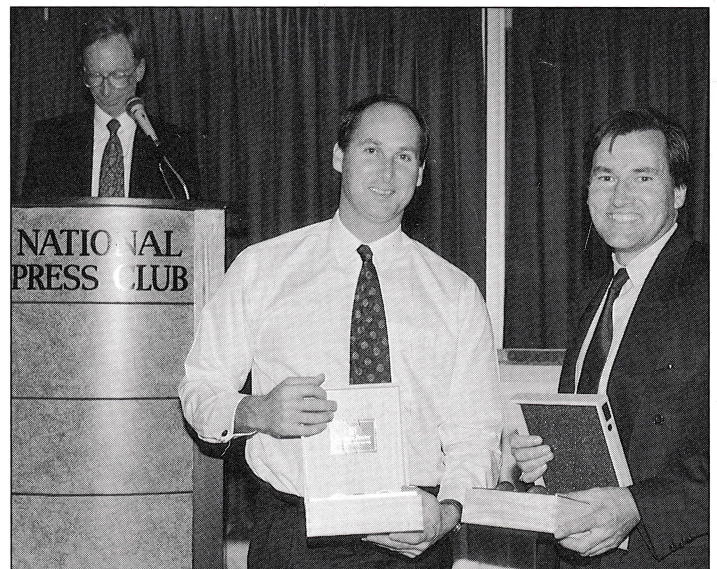
"She bought one \$2 ticket," Peter said, "and now she can take the whole family anywhere for a trip."

British Airways provided two auction lots of travel anywhere to the value of \$6,000.

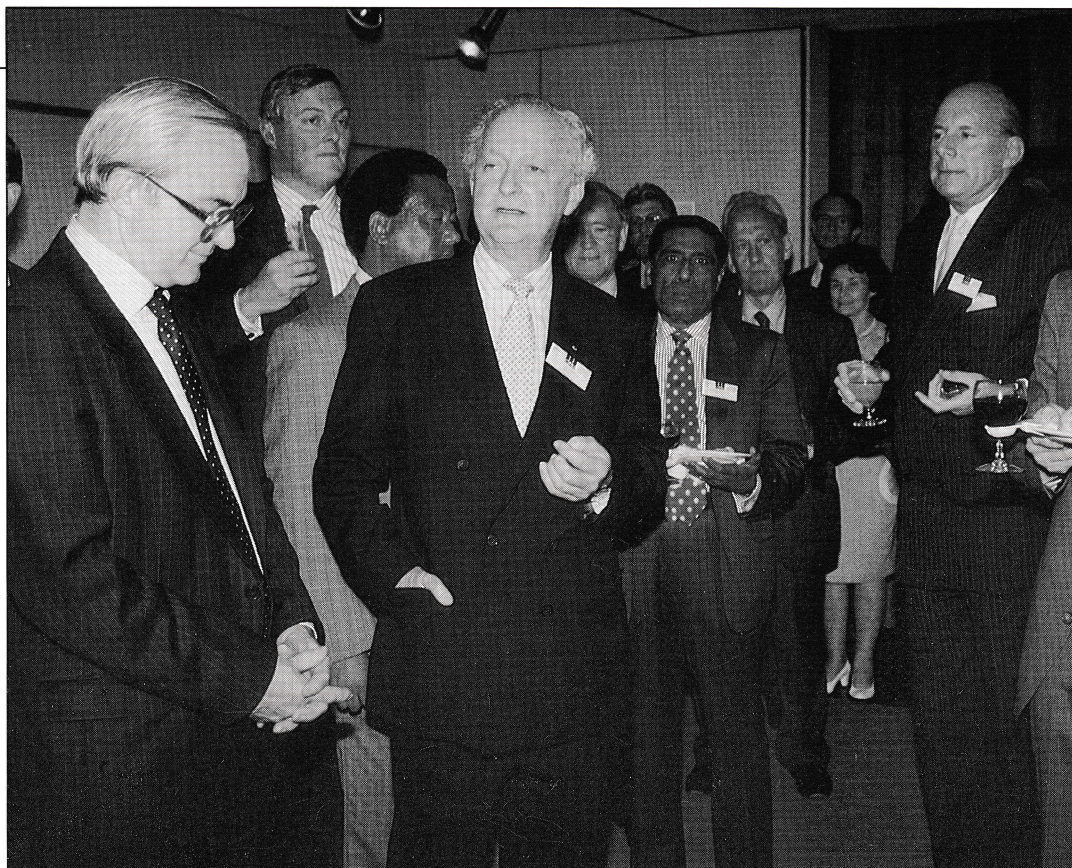
The major golf prize was shared by Craig McIvor,

Manager AAP RES, and his partner, prominent Canberra lobbyist Deane Russell.

The day raised \$28,000 for The National Heart Foundation.



*Craig McIvor (AAPRES, Left) Receives his prize with partner Deane Russell. Peter McGhie, Westpac's Managing Director's Representative announces the prize in the background. Westpac was a major sponsor of the golf day.*



## AAP JOURNALIST KILLED IN VIETNAM HONOURED

AAP was represented officially at the dedication of the Vietnam Memorial in Canberra in October to honour the memory of AAP correspondent Michael Birch killed in a Viet Cong ambush during the Tet offensive in Saigon in 1968.

Michael, 24, died along with Reuter correspondents Bruce Pigott, who like Michael was from Melbourne, Ron Laramie and Time Life correspondent John Cantwell, another Australian.

ACT Group Manager Peter Monaghan arranged for AAP to represent Michael's elderly mother Kay Birch of East Ivanhoe in Melbourne who was unable to make the journey because of illness.

Both Peter and Robin Strathdee, Media Marketing Director and Southern Region Group Manager, were seated with other relatives of Vietnam War dead in a special stand in front of the impressive memorial for the official dedication by Prime Minister Paul Keating.

Robin, a war correspondent in Vietnam and Cambodia

## BRIGHT FUTURE SEEN FOR AAP AT CPU CONFERENCE

**AAP Information Services Pty Ltd chairman Lyle Turnbull is pictured responding to a speech of welcome in Edinburgh by Magnus Linklater, Editor of The Scotsman, to delegates at the Commonwealth Press Union conference.**

Mr Turnbull was re-elected chairman of the CPU at the conference, held every two years with the aim of bringing together newspaper people from almost every country in the Commonwealth.

Apart from Mr Turnbull, AAP was represented by Media Marketing Director and Southern Region Group Manager Robin Strathdee, standing in for Chief Executive Lee Casey.

The company scored a plug during one of the sessions devoted to reports from each of the participating countries.

Australian presenter Graham Wilkinson, former Fairfax senior executive and now a director of the Queanbeyan Age, ended his report on the Australian media with a ringing endorsement of AAP.

He said, "Finally, I want to refer to another Australian media company not listed on the exchange and frequently overlooked. It is Australian Associated Press - no longer merely a great news agency but a major player as a national communications network, AAP has a future as bright as Australias."

Robin said that the conference schedule was daunting but it afforded valuable insights into how different newspapers around the world operated within their differing economic, social and political environments.

"I welcomed the chance to meet so many and enjoyed the opportunity to discuss news agency marketing with Canadian Press President Keith Kincaid and Press Association Chief Executive Robert Simpson," he said.

The packed Sunday to Friday program included receptions by the Queen at her Edinburgh palace Holyrood House where she met all delegates and by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

And yes, he reports, there was time to sip a wee dram of the water of life at a malt whiskey distillery.

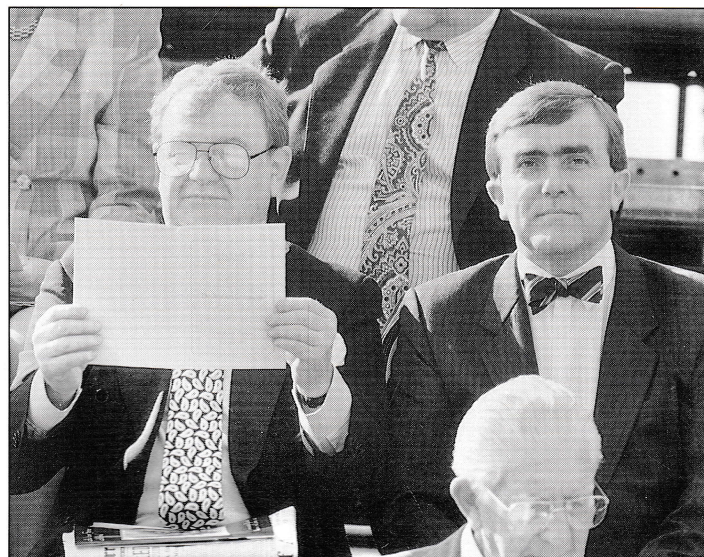
for both AAP and Reuters during 1969, 1972 and 1973, officially represented Editor in Chief Peter Brown who was overseas.

After the dedication Robin marched in the war correspondents group in special honour of Michael Birch and to represent other AAP correspondents who served in Vietnam. Bruce Pigott's sister Erica Fairbanks left the crowd watching the more than 20,000 veterans march to join the small band of correspondents in the parade.

Michael Birch's name is one of 504 war dead inscribed on a scroll housed in a container suspended within the central space of the memorial.

Mrs Birch was grateful AAP offered to arrange for her to travel to Canberra to take part in the ceremony but she explained she felt too frail.

She told Robin, "When you march please carry Michael in your heart."



*Canberra Group Manager Peter Monaghan and Media Marketing Director and Group Manager Southern Region Robin Strathdee at the Vietnam National Memorial where the name of AAP correspondent Michael Birch killed in Saigon in 1968 is inscribed.*



*Erica Fairbanks of Adelaide, sister of Reuters correspondent Bruce Pigott, who was killed in the same ambush as AAP's Michael Birch in Saigon during the Tet offensive in 1968, with Robin Strathdee after both had marched with the War Correspondents contingent in the big veterans parade following the memorial dedication.*

# NEWSTRACK

## WINS OVER COURIER MAIL

**Brisbane's Courier Mail has gone to press on time since it installed AAP's NewsTrack software as a wire handling front end to their aging editorial system in November.**

NewsTrack resulted in remarkable improvements in editorial efficiency and morale

among copy tasters and allowed management to reduce the number of senior staff tasting wire copy by one per shift.

Associate Editor (News) Simon Mellick said, "Since we started using the system the editions have been on time or early each night. The news wire tasting system is 100 per cent responsible for the on-time

editions."

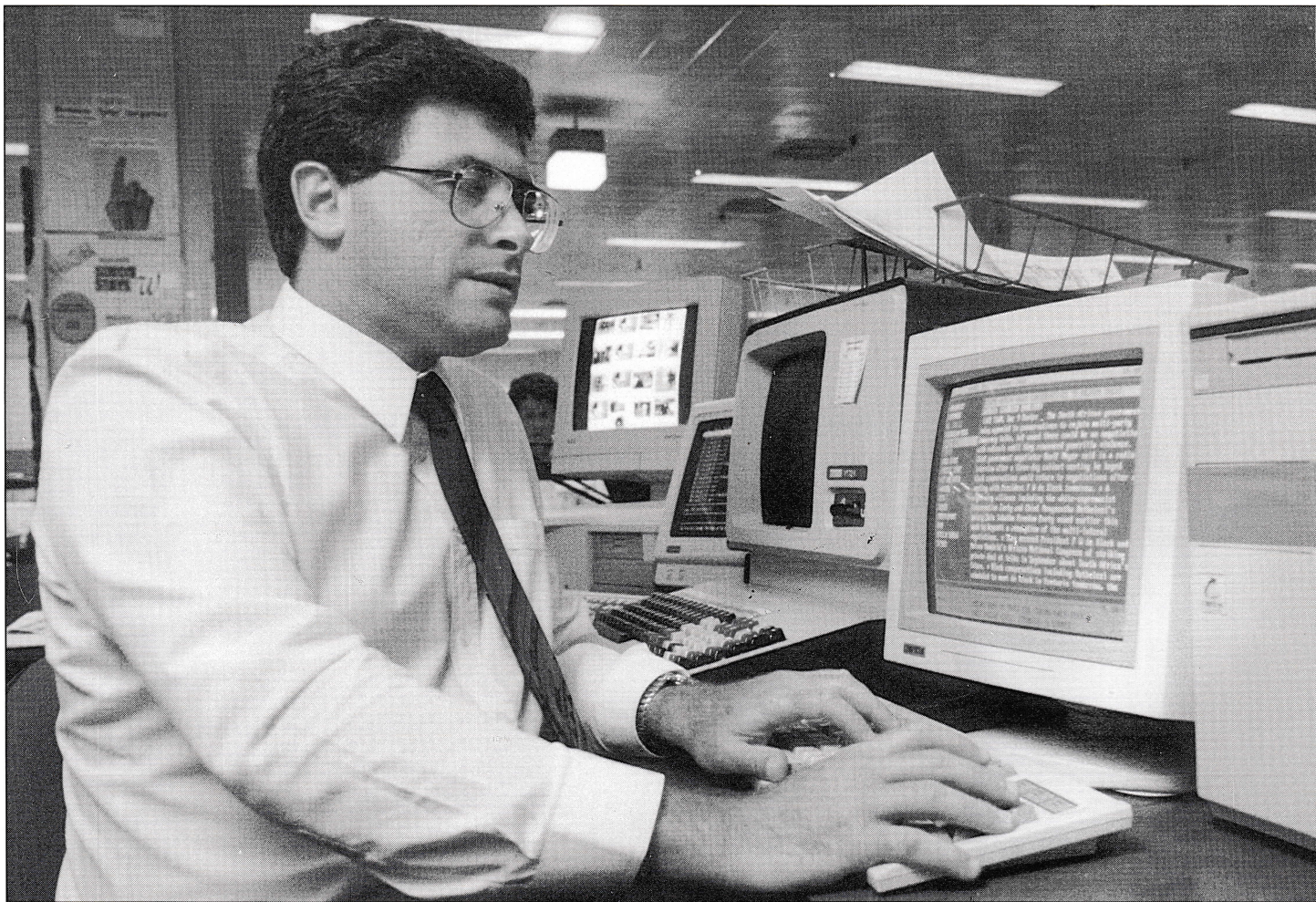
Mellick said that on one night shortly after it had been introduced, 120 stories had been set for the first edition by 9.30 p.m. "We wouldn't have had a ghost of a chance of being on time with the old way of copy tasting unless we had brought the news conferences forward an hour and thrown the early

stories in the back of the paper."

Senior editorial manager at Queensland Newspapers praised AAP's cooperation in the project, organised by Production Editor Geoff Want, and Andrew Pritchard for his hard work and expertise, particularly during installation.

Geoff expects the Courier Mail experience to lead to more newspapers around the country using NewsTrack to copy taste the AAP wires and other editorial inputs, freeing up space on the main systems.

"NewsTrack has been praised by Queensland Newspapers as the finest electronic copytaster they have seen



*Associate Editor (News) Simon Mellick seated at his NewsTrack terminal in the Courier Mail newsroom in Brisbane.*

- and that includes all the major editorial systems," Geoff said.

He urged others to consider NewsTrack when he outlined how it could benefit all publishers in a speech to the Atex Users Group Conference in Wollongong recently, attended by delegates from newspapers throughout Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

NewsTrack's flexibility could also see it used as the reception facility for news wires at all client sites as the company undertook a major project, commencing in 1993, to rationalise the distribution of editorial products.

"Rationalising our news wires is going to be a massive task with revised production procedures, a great deal of network planning and installation co-ordination, revamped security provisions and new reception equipment at each client site," Geoff told the Atex conference.

"AAP's preferred position is to move to datastreaming, with all material moved over one high speed circuit, including text, data and pictures. This can only be done in close liaison with our clients."

The project had become necessary, Geoff explained, because the volume and complexity of material moved by AAP had grown, particularly as communications had improved and become cheaper.

"It was a momentous occasion in the pre-war years if AAP exceeded processing a million words a year," he said. "Today, the overnight shift exceeds that before the sun is up."

## UPDATES ANTARCTIC BASES

**Australia's four remote Antarctic bases now receive their news and sports information live via satellite from AAP.**

The link helps overcome the isolation of the polar stations which previously relied on an uncertain radio telex link once a day for their news of the outside world.

### Tasmania

AAP's Australian and international news wires, plus its finance and sports services are delivered to the Australian Antarctic Division headquarters in Kingston, Tasmania.

Communications officers at the polar outposts of Casey, Mawson, Davis and Macquarie Island interrogate the Division's mainframe computer at will via Intelsat to pull in the latest material they require for their base news bulletins.

AAP has supplied news to the Antarctic bases since the early 1970s, but the new system, using NewsTrack software to provide a 24-hour, seven day a week service, represents a significant upgrade.

Antarctic Division communications network supervisor Patrick Haddock said, "The reaction has been very favourable. We have unlimited access to all the raw data. In particular the sports news is

very good.

"Communications officers at the bases access what they want from our NewsTrack service in Kingston and compile their base newspapers from the information. We looked at various systems and NewsTrack came up as the one that was most economic and viable."

NewsTrack allows a user to choose which categories of news they want to receive - politics, sport, finance or special interest items such as science and technology or the environ-

ment, for example.

Its fast keyword searches pick up stories that contain a specified word anywhere in the text. News alerts let users know whenever a new story has landed in any category of interest to them.

Other NewsTrack customers include Parliament House in Canberra, Federal and state government departments, major companies, law firms, lobby groups, libraries and universities.



## AND IN INDIA?

**More intriguing, is this sign spotted by Bill Bowen, Group Manager, WA, on his recent visit to New Delhi.**

He writes, "During my visit to India I could not help myself and spent some money on promoting our wonderful product. I felt a 24 sheet billboard on one of the major roads in New Delhi would be worthwhile. Please find photograph enclosed.

"All joking aside," he adds, "there's certainly some truth in the old adage that there's nothing new under the sun."

Bill took the photo from his taxi on the way to the airport and knows nothing more about the product advertised. Can anyone shed any light on what the Indian version of our famous namesake is or does?

# MEGA BILLING SYSTEM A BIG PLUS

**Commissioning of the MEGA Billing System in November represented a significant step forward for AAP Telecommunications.**

The task took nearly a year to complete at a cost of some one million dollars, and a large investment of man hours, both paid and voluntary.

"Few enhancements to our operation to date have consumed as much time and effort as the changeover to the MEGA billing system," Chief Executive Barry Wheeler said.

"Ironically, for such a technically sophisticated tool designed to present customers with a trouble-free window into their use of telecommunications, the lead up to commissioning has been a ritual of manual labour."

The MEGA system breaks new ground in more ways than one.

The host computer, an IBM ES9000 mainframe, is located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. AAP's Glebe operations are linked to it via two 19.24K channels, one on satellite and one via ocean cable.

The system will quickly become the heart of the AAP operation with nearly three-

quarters of its 120 staff - from sales and marketing to finance, engineering and customer services - using the system to some degree.

They access it through a local area network of PCs tied to a front-end processor at Glebe.

During the critical weeks of acceptance testing, volunteer staff from all divisions gave up weekends and evenings to work through the process of matching MEGA invoices against those from the outgoing CADS system.

The MEGA installation was managed by a team from MCI, second largest communications company in the U.S. and joint venture partner with AAP Information Services in AAP Telecommunications. The team is headed by MIS Manager Robert Tessaro, Billing Manager Maureen McGrath and Systems Support Manager Sheleen Welty.

The three are on two-year secondments to Sydney to manage the early operation of the system and the training of Australian staff to take over from them.

The MEGA system is used to enter, price and bill customers. It provides clients with the most detailed billing records available from any Australian communications company, and says Tessaro, "It helps us to win and to keep customers. They are very impressed with the information it provides."

Apart from the printed accounts with usage graphics, customers can elect to receive their call details on disk to enter into their own systems.

MEGA also helps AAP



Bernie Seth

reconcile the considerable range of charges it is billed for both domestic and international circuits by AOTC.

The \$1 million cost was to have modifications made to the MCI MEGA system to meet AAP's needs. AAP is planning to set up and maintain its own system at Glebe by mid-1994.

# MARKET PUSH FOR SATELLITE LINKS

**AAP Communications Services has launched a new marketing initiative in the Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSAT) satellite based communications market with the aim of making the system widespread in Australia and Asia as it is the United States.**

Part of the new initiative is the appointment of Bernie Seth as Business Manager, Satellite and RF Systems for AAP Communications Services.

"Our focus will definitely be marketing, we don't want to sell VSATs per se. We will be selling the benefits of the system to businesses," Bernie said.

VSATs are satellite dishes between 0.5 and 2.5 metres in diameter, which can be installed in a business premises and operate through connection to a central hub. VSATs are capable of providing a wide variety of communications solutions including videoconferencing, information broadcasting, voice messaging, business television, database access, EFTPOS, payroll and inventory management.

In the U.S. there are more than 60,000 VSATs connected to more than 300 networks. General Motors alone has 10,000 VSATs and other users include Holiday Inn, Dow Jones, Chrysler and Ford.

Bernie expects large corporations to be the initial customers in Australia, following the same pattern as in the US, but also expects users in remote rural areas.

"We can offer a variety of communications solutions to these people, such as voice, video and fax through VSATs," he said. "The advantages are that you don't have to have run



long microwave runs up and down the country and additional capacity can be provided at marginal cost."

Bernie also expects to see expansion in Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and China.

"These countries have poorly developed fixed communications and are geographically dispersed," he said.

Communications Services Chief Executive Terence Nickolls is enthusiastic about AAP's business prospects in the satellite area.

"AAP has fantastic assets it can leverage off," he said. "It has tremendous technical capability, it has earth stations in each capital city and over 100 VSATs connected to the hub in Glebe already. We are well placed to offer VSAT services to Australia and Asia."

## SATELLITE DREAMING

**AAP Communications Services has developed a unique satellite based video-conferencing network which links four remote Aboriginal communities in the Tanami Desert of the Northern Territory with each other, the rest of Australia and the world.**

The network was officially launched by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, The Hon Robert Tickner last month.

"This system is a shining



*A brief stop for refreshments miles from anywhere in the Tanami desert.*

example of the determination and dogged persistence of Aboriginal people in their quest for social justice, an initiative conceived by the Aboriginal people themselves, and which will have very real and long term benefits for the communities involved," he said.

The six-point network services the communities of Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Willowra and Kintore.

Run by an Aboriginal-owned company, Tanami Network Pty Ltd, the system will provide instant access to Government agencies and service providers in Darwin and Alice Springs in the first instance and further afield to other organisations as required.

The secretary of the Network, Robin Japanangra Granites, said: "Aboriginal people in our region have been thinking about modern communications and media for about 10 years and the Tanami Network is the most powerful

result of that work.

"It will be used nationally as well as locally to help people get things done."

"The Tanami Network is important for our family and our cultural life. It allows us to get news from family in other places and to make arrangements for ceremonies and community events."

The network was developed especially for the Walpiri and Pintubi people of the Tanami Desert communities to address problems which extreme isolation has brought about since the establishment of the communities 50 years ago.

Firstly, the traditional network of information and personal contact - which underpins Aboriginal culture and ceremonial life - had become severely disrupted. Face-to-face contact between community members and elders is intricately woven into the Aboriginal cultural and

social fabric.

Secondly, isolation had made it all but impossible to provide a range of services - including secondary education - to the Tanami communities.

The aim of the network is to improve areas of community and cultural interaction, education, employment, health, welfare, law and justice and dependant economics.

It will enable secondary and adult education courses to be delivered to the communities' for the first time and improve welfare support contacts.

Emergency illness cases will be able to be diagnosed more quickly and the network will also provide support for health staff through management input and in-servicing.

The network also provides an opportunity to reduce jail rates in favour of community detentions and promises less disruption to the community over court proceedings.

# TANAMI - HEAT, DUST AND HARD WORK

If a particular case does go to the courts, input via video-conferencing offers a cost-effective alternative to long distance travel and widens the opportunity for direct legal and financial advice. Opening the system to government and commercial users will significantly subsidise the cost of the system to the Tanami people and at least 20 agencies are expected to use the network initially.

The Tanami ConferNet system is a unique integration of PictureTel System 4000 video-conferencing units, with satellite transmission channels, supported by earth stations and linked through a multipoint bridge located at the Network Management Centre in Sydney.



Garry Dawson hard at work installing part of the Tanami network.

**Setting up of the Tanami network was one of the great adventures of modern AAP and its intrepid hero the tall, darkly-bearded Garry Dawson.**

Garry, 44, spent a total of four-and-a-half months roughing it in the outback in temperatures that regularly soared above 43 degrees.

"We were lucky we missed the big hot at Kintore (near the NT/WA border)," he said. "Three days before we arrived it had been 51 degrees. It only got to 46 during our stay."

The Tanami network is a \$1.8 million project linking the

remote aboriginal communities at Yuendumu, Willowra, Lajamanu and Kintore, separated by hundreds of kilometres of Central Australian desert, with Alice Springs and Darwin.

The project was a race against time as much as a battle with the conditions and during one stretch of nine weeks, Garry had only three days off.

"The shortest week we worked in one continuous period was 74 hours and the longest was 116 hours," he said. His colleague throughout was Ian Pick, an Englishman, who has fallen in love with the desert and has lived in the Alice for the past seven years.

Garry is also bush born and bred hailing from Inverell, in northern NSW, a useful background for someone required to live outdoors in that terrain for such a long stretch.

His career in the Australian Air Force where he was a specialist in electronics and explosives provided the technical expertise.

"I like challenges," said Garry, who has been with AAP for almost 15 years. "It was hard work but it suited me."

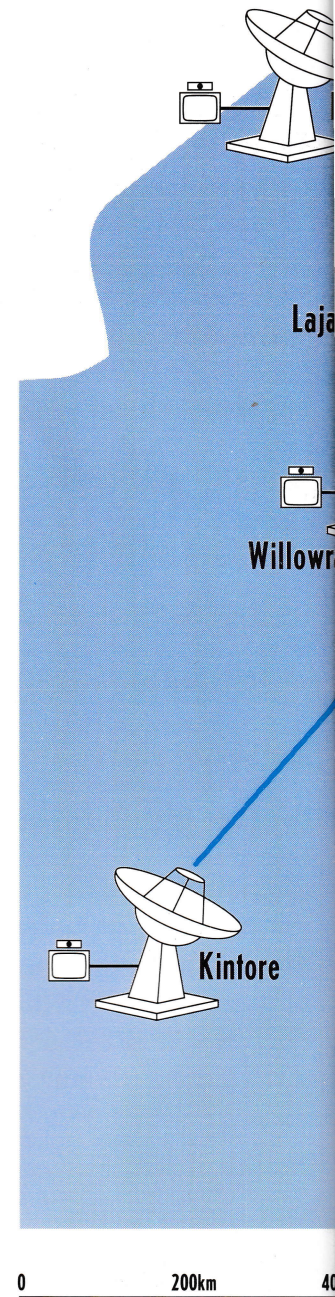
"We camped out on the ground most nights. I didn't have any great problems with it," he said.

"Facilities were often non-existent and we went up to four days without a shower. Food was mainly tinned though we ate as much fresh fruit as possible to help guard against

dehydration. "We worked through the heat of the day," he said, "and didn't stop until three in the morning on some of the long drives."

The importance of the

## CONFERNET THE TANAMI NETWORK



project for AAP Communications Services is that it has attracted international attention and is likely to provide a springboard into China and Southeast Asia and perhaps also North America.

Much work also remains to be done in Central Australia. An even larger project is being

looked at for the area north east and south east of Alice Springs for 12 sites and possibly eventually a total through the interior.

The project required great ingenuity and considerable resourcefulness including a custom-built 11.5 metre long trailer to cart the satellite dishes over unsealed outback roads

behind Ian's Toyota troop carrier.

Garry recalls one horror stretch on which they broke two axles on the trailer, sheared the wheel bolts off a third and had four punctures. He tells of the cement truck which made the 20-hour drive from Alice to Kintore and arrived minus brakes, its air tanks and hydraulic pumping system.

Another incident that called for on-the-spot improvisation was when the gear box on the crane used to lower the dishes into place broke at Yuendumu, 380 north, northwest of Alice Springs.

Apart from the cost they couldn't wait for a replacement so Garry and Ian rigged up their own lifting apparatus, which they then used on all remote sites.

The 4.6 metre dishes used were purchased second hand from the Department of Civil Aviation and ferried to the centre from Mascot, Tullamarine and Perth airports.

The smaller control and reservation dishes are the standard AAP VSAT dishes used at many other customer sites around the country.

The aboriginal communities linked by the network are a 10 to 20 hour drive apart and have only the most basic facilities.

They raised nearly a third of the money required for the project themselves by selling their traditional art and from the royalties paid for mining on their land.

An even greater challenge he would like to be involved with would be installation of

similar networks in China and perhaps Alaska.

The network provides video-conferencing via satellite that enables the four communities plus the Darwin and Alice Springs site to be linked simultaneously or several individual links.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Robert Tickner coined the phrase "satellite dreaming" to describe the new concept.

Dawson says, "We have taken a product designed to link boardroom with boardroom to the outback and used it to link remote to remote.

"The hope is that it will help preserve these communities. They can be educated without having to go to the cities and lose touch with their traditional ways."

One requirement of the network was that it had to be built to last. "You can't just call out a tech to those places if something doesn't work," said Dawson.

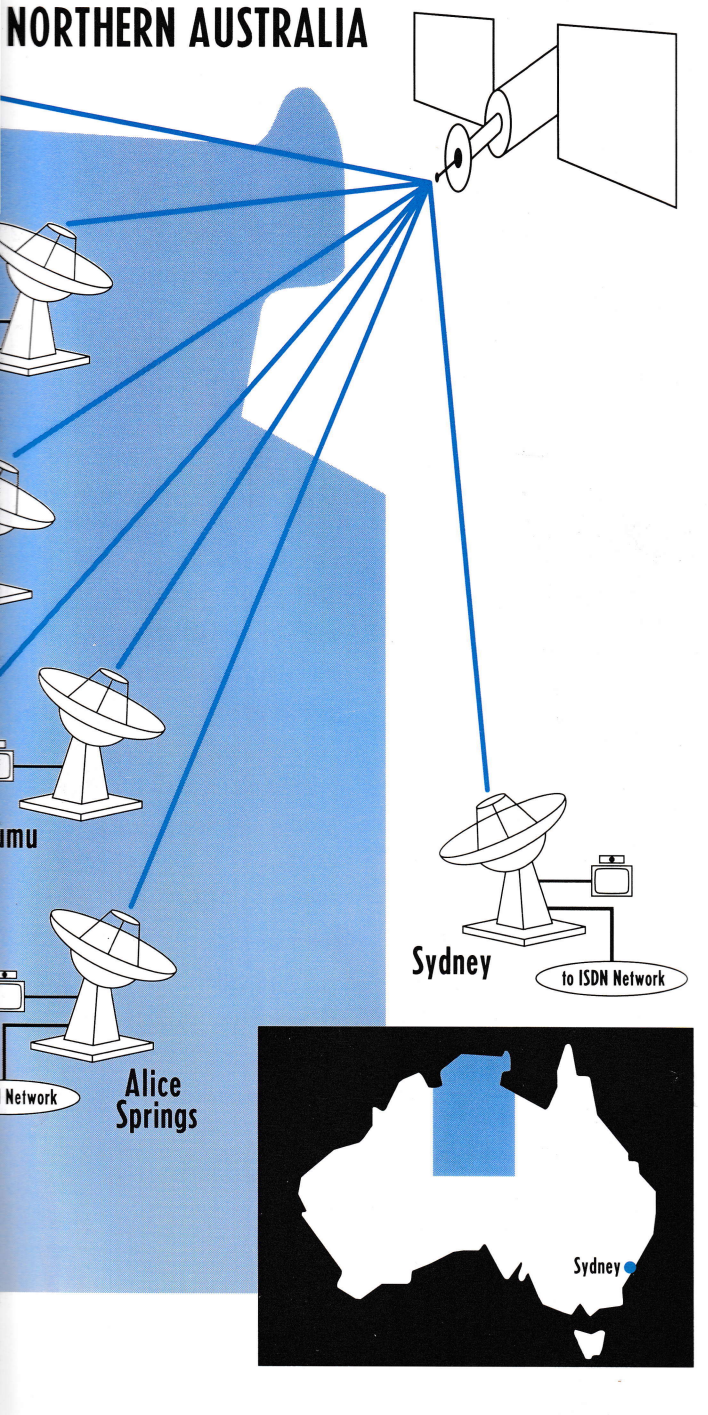
Some of the pads used to support the dishes took 11 metres of concrete which was trucked out as dry mix with water added at the site.

The communities are small. Kintore, for example, has a floating population of between 300 and 700.

The Darwin and Alice Springs sites are used by the Northern Territory Open College to provide secondary education courses for the aboriginal communities.

Other users are likely to be cattle stations and mining companies.

## IN ACTION NORTHERN AUSTRALIA



# WINNER NOT THE ONLY SURPRISE ON JAPAN CUP TRIP

**AAP's National Racing Editor Michael Cook flew to Tokyo for the 12th running of the Japan Cup, now the world's richest horse race with prizemoney worth \$4.6 million.**

It was the first time AAP has staffed the event and following is Mike's runyonesque account of the journey:

I was warned that covering the Japan Cup would be a mystery tour with curly problems at every turn. Right from my arrival at Narita International Airport, the advice was starting to ring true.

Tokyo is - to put it mildly - daunting. The two hour, non-guided, neon-light tour by bus from the airport to the hotel had me ready for the next flight back to Sydney.

Show me the racecourse, I thought, I might start to feel normal.

But meeting up with the large contingent of Australians who had invaded Tokyo for the race and experiencing the friendly efficiency of my hosts from the Japan Racing Association soon convinced me that I was taking part in something special.

The Aussie visitors were cocky and they had reason to be.

Naturalism and Let's Elope had thoroughly earned

their reputation as the best two representatives Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) had sent to the Orient.

As Jin Bowler, the VRC's chief handicapper, said before they left, "These two horses are something special," and their reputation grew with every track gallop.

But while it was impossible to overlook the credentials of the five runners from Europe and the USA who loomed almost larger than life, the prospects of

the seven Japanese horses remained a mystery to we foreign visitors.

The mystery deepened when looking down from the massive Fuchu Racecourse grandstand, I was forced to endure the din of 168,000 Japanese screaming support for Tokei Teio as he ground down Naturalism in the final 100 metres with Let's Elope sixth.

Japanese-bred Tokei Teio, the horse five Japanese racing journalists had told me couldn't win. Naturalism, the horse jockey Mick Dittman believed couldn't be beaten.

But Naturalism had injured a hoof just hours before the 2,400 metre battle and Let's Elope suffered a bleeding attack. Fortune didn't favour the brave Aussies.

A balanced view however records a marvellous result for Japanese racing, a further boost for our racing industry's international standing and further proof that the Japan Cup's standing among the world's elite thoroughbred contests grows every year.

## **TABs PRAISE AAP's JAPAN CUP COVER**

AAP Racing Services won considerable praise from TABs in Australia and New Zealand for its Japan Cup coverage.

Interest in the race has grown quickly in recent years with the victories of the NZ mare Horlicks in 1989 and the outstanding Australian galloper Better Loosen Up in 1990.

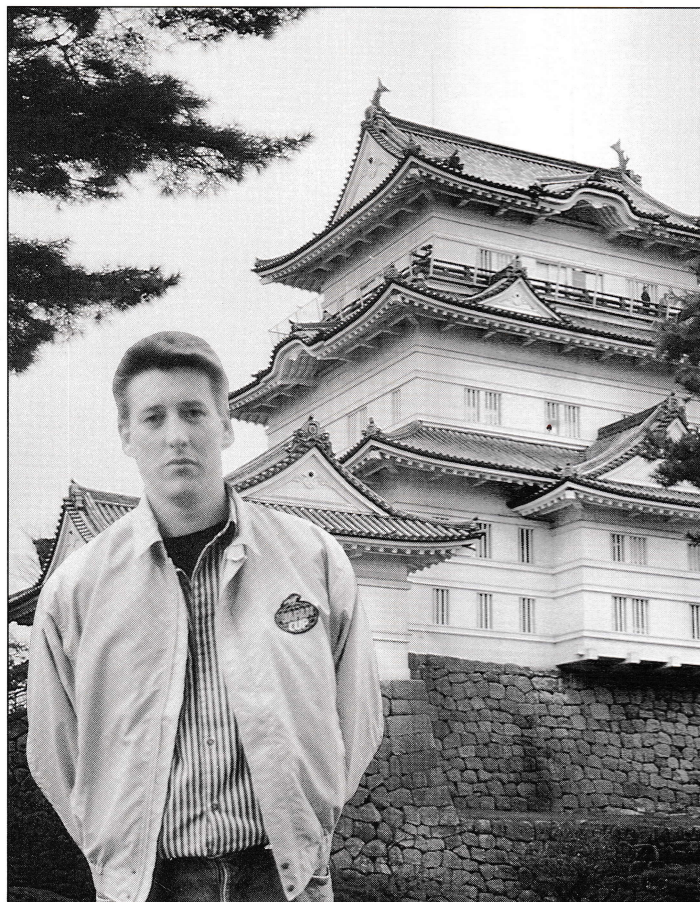
This year all TABs operated on the race with increased turnover across the board, thanks in part to AAP's coverage.

Detailed form on runners has always been difficult to obtain from Japan with even the final composition of the field with barrier positions presenting problems.

This year, with Mick Cook in Tokyo, AAP was able to provide full form comment well in advance of the race and the final field hours earlier than in previous years.

In a letter of thanks, Gordon Williams, Racing Manager of the NSW TAB, said: "Your organisation's ability to provide accurate details of the race field was most opportune, as our request to the Japan Racing Association for such advice did not prove fruitful.

"NSW TAB sales of \$581,515 (up from \$300,000 last year) established a new record



*Mick Cook takes time out to play tourist during his coverage of the Japan Cup.*

figure for an overseas event and I would like to express our appreciation for your cooperation."

In Victoria, the TAB holdings rose from \$283,000 last year to \$1.1 million, aided by their decision to open their branches on the day of the race, Sunday, November 29.

The NZ TAB also remained open with Michael Dore, from their Marketing Department, saying: "We had record turnover on the Japan Cup. The AAP comment was very good quality and it solved a lot of mysteries for New Zealand punters who had little knowledge of overseas form."



*Michele Cullen, Roy Bissett and Scobie*

## AAP RACING SERVICES BACKS A WINNER

**AAP Racing Services is set to achieve a higher industry profile with an intensive advertising campaign on the racing stations 2KY in Sydney and 3UZ in Melbourne, plus sponsorship of race days at Hawkesbury, Kembla Grange and Canterbury.**

The Hawkesbury race day was in October, Kembla in December and Canterbury is scheduled for February 17.

Racing Services products including FastForm and the TIS enquiry service which provides detailed pedigree information as well as racing form are demonstrated to racegoers in the special blue and white AAP marquee at the tracks.

Director of Racing Services Geoff Want, said: "This is a very effective and cost efficient way to reach our target market. We've had a lot of interest from punters who were amazed how easy it is to read the guide and how much information it contains."

Fastform provides a choice of fields with jockeys, or the last five, 16 or all starts for all TAB meetings. Other features include sectional times, full betting fluctuations, colours and detailed performance statistics. The information is available from as little as \$5 a meeting.

The latest edition of Class Racehorses, AAP's high quality racing annual, has also been extensively promoted with a

lucky draw prize for purchasers of the book before the end of January, 1993.

The prize is a trip for two to a race meeting of the winner's choice in Auckland, Sydney or Melbourne and includes first class return airfares, luxury accommodation for two nights, ground transport and members enclosure tickets.

The 510 page book, with some 70 colour photographs, reviews the racing season in Australia and New Zealand with separate stories on every Group One winner, their five generation pedigrees, a leading sires analysis and results of all Group and Listed races, plus feature articles.



*Hawkesbury Racecourse.*

# JO OUT OF CONTROL AFTER 22 YEARS

**Jo Parkes, who has been synonymous with Data Control for as long as most can remember, retired on December 18 after nearly 22 years with the company.**

She was presented with a silver tray by General Manager Financial Markets Services John Lowing at a dinner organised by her workmates at the Spanish Club

Jo was one of the few remaining staffers who had joined AAP at its original Sydney premises in Wynyard House, then spent many years in Sussex Street before making the move to Glebe.

Jo started out as a journalist at The Financial Review, but left when the demands of looking after a home and two children became too great.

When mounting bills determined it was time to return to the workforce she called up an old contact Wally Parr, who was then in charge of RES operations and began at AAP working 12 hours a week as a casual on the original MQT service.

This steadily increased as she moved to the RES desk where she worked with Tony Inglott and Max Gerlach. When Data Control was formed she joined that department which was then headed by Owen Keogh with Les Bonnett as supervisor.

In recent years, Jo has sat at the heart of the financial systems operation at Glebe, surrounded by Monitor, AMQ and

SMICS screens.

What does she plan to do with her retirement. "Enjoy myself and sleep in," she said referring to her customary 6 a.m. start.

Later she plans to travel. Her younger sister Jenny, who works in the same department, has been with AAP for five years.

"It has been a very enjoyable experience and I am going to miss it," she said. "I went from hot metal on the Fin Review to the pure cold metal of electronic systems now that are very quick and automated," she said.

"And naturally I've seen the company grow more than somewhat."

Data Services Manager Alf Santomingo said, "She has always been part of Data Control and when you talk about Data Control you automatically think Jo Parkes.

"Even if it's a project she's

not involved in, the notes are still addressed to Jo."

"She is a very dedicated worker and put many of the younger people to shame the way she tackled new technology as it was introduced and mastered it.

"What we will miss most is her market knowledge. When people wanted advice on how things worked they turned to her. We have done a lot of cross training to prepare for it but that background knowledge you can't replace."

Media Marketing Manager Leigh Mackay said: "Jo, like her sister Jenny, was part of the team that ran the SMICS system for producing daily newspaper share tables and was involved in devising its replacement, Stockset.

"Jo knew her job thoroughly, performed it skillfully and never wavered when things got tough - which was most of the time.

# AAPT GOES FOR GOLD ON COAST

**AAP Telecommunications has made a major commitment to Queensland by making it the first state with two AAPT switches.**

AAPT already has a major switch in Brisbane and will shortly commission a new switch to handle traffic into and out of the burgeoning Gold Coast area.

The new Gold Coast switch was commissioned early this month in time to cope with peak holiday season call traffic from major hotels in the area.

AAPT Chief Executive, Barry Wheeler, said business potential in Queensland is increasing rapidly.

"The South Eastern corner of Queensland is of course the fast growing area of



*Jo Parkes surrounded by the terminals, contact numbers and schedules that were second nature to her in Data Control.*

Australia and AAPT has a commitment to service this region," said Mr Wheeler.

"The potential for a third switch in the Cairns region is also a possibility with sustained growth in that region," he said.

## FIRST CHOICE TO SAVE MILLIONS

**AAP Telecommunications has launched a new communications service that is set to save Australian businesses more than \$500 million a year.**

FirstChoice gives 95 per cent of Australian businesses in capital cities access to telecommunications cost savings as well as billing and reporting.

FirstChoice will allow customers to access the AAPT network using standard business lines set up to allow calls to be passed through the local exchange to AAPT for long distance transport and termination.

Until now AAPT has catered for businesses with interstate and overseas communications expenditure in excess of \$5000 per month and located in capital city CBDs.

AAPT Chief Executive, Barry Wheeler, said the launch of FirstChoice was a major step forward for micro economic reform in Australian business.

"Savings on a huge chunk of business costs such as this go

a long way towards making Australian business competitive and efficient," he said.

AAPT has developed FirstChoice for the Australian market using experience gained in the deregulated telecommunications market as well as calling upon the experience of joint venture partner MCI in the USA.

## CANBERRA CALLING

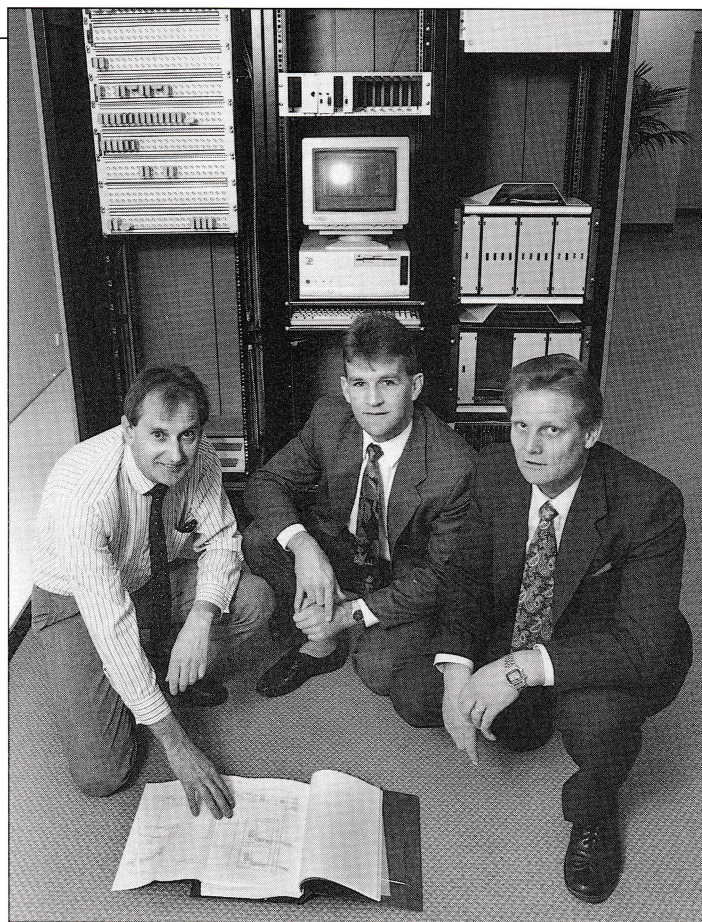
**AAP Telecommunications has commissioned a new SLI digital switch to cope with a major surge in call traffic in and out of Canberra.**

AAPT's Canberra call traffic has increased dramatically necessitating a rapid expansion in switch capacity.

New signings include several major Federal Government departments, as well as private contracts such as the Hyatt Hotel.

AAPT chief executive, Barry Wheeler, said: "Although small in population, Canberra is a high traffic hub because of its role as a base for so many nationally oriented organisations such as Federal Government bodies, trade and commercial associations.

"AAPT has already demonstrated an ability to reduce costs and improve telecommunications efficiency to major private sector companies. Reducing costs and improving efficiency is an important priority for public sector operations as well."



*AAP Telecommunications (AAPT) has just commissioned this new Nortel switch to handle increased call traffic into and out of Canberra. AAPT's Dennis Riding (left) supervisor network installation, discusses the new system with branch*

## THE WEST AUSTRALIAN SIGNS UP

**Perth publisher West Australian Newspapers expects to record significant cost savings and accounting improvements as a result of moving to AAPT for its long distance and overseas communications.**

The company's Manager of Production and Computer Resources, Ian Grundy, said past billing and reporting had not been comprehensive enough to track costs precisely.

"AAPT will be providing us with detailed accounts, enabling us to track cost centres and improve efficiency as well

as achieving price reductions on the long haul routes," he said.

"An efficient and cost effective telecommunications system is essential if we are to overcome the problems created by Perth's relative isolation."

WA Newspapers is Western Australia's largest publisher and has become AAPT's largest customer on the West Coast to date.

The company has almost 600 staff dialling through its phone system on a day to day basis.

# CLIENTS AT PLAY FOR A DAY ON THE BAY

Sunshine, blue skies and a 12-knot north-easterly provided perfect sailing conditions for AAP Brisbane's annual Yacht Day on Wednesday, November 18.

For the fourth year running, the AAP RES Brisbane Financial Markets Yacht Race - to list its full title - attracted strong support from more than 100 clients, most of them AAP RES customers but with a fair sprinkling of others who take AAP Telecommunications and/or Communications Services.

So popular has the day on the bay become that one Sydney-based client flew north for the third successive year,

Twenty-five yachts, including some of Queensland's finest ocean-going vessels, were provided for the use of and skippered by clients for several hours of social competition followed by presentation of prizes and refreshments at the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron at Manly.

John Lowing, General Manager Financial Markets Services, and Peter Jones, AAP RES Marketing Manager, came from Sydney to attend the Yacht Day. John presented the trophies.



Guy Jones  
Lance Jones Ltd

Geoff Burrell  
Burrell & Co

Renny Phipps  
Queensland Industry  
Development  
Corporation

Geoff Johnson  
CITEC Centre for  
Information Technology  
(Qld Govt)

John Lowing  
AAP

Organised by AAP RES Northern Region Sales Manager Clark Chappel and assisted by Group Administration support staff in Brisbane, the Yacht Day proved an outstanding success with business and government representatives.

Judging by the number of clients comments along the lines of "there'll be another one next year won't there" and "don't forget me on the invitation list" the day on the bay is an eagerly awaited event.

Among the amusing highlights of the day was one a certain client might prefer to forget. In the absence of proper "facilities" he fell overboard while answering an urgent call of nature.

He was quickly pulled back aboard, wet and somewhat embarrassed.

Needless to say he wants to be aboard again next year.

# IAN FIRST DUAL WINNER OF AAP GOLF TITLE

**Sussex Street Sports Desk journalist Ian Jessup has become the first person to win the AAP Social Club golf championship for the second time.**

Ian had 40 stableford points off his five handicap at the demanding Cumberland course on Sunday, November 22, to pip Human Resources manager Neil Hope by a single point.

The turnout of only 13 people was disappointing, but after overnight rain conditions were perfect for golf.

And in a bizarre start to the day, Ian told how he almost didn't make it to the course either.

"I set the alarm for six o'clock, woke up then turned it off and tried to sneak another five minutes. Fortunately I woke again at seven but I had to race to get there on time.

Ian kept his composure to shoot a one over par 72 and became the first ever two-time winner after his success at Muirfield in 1989.

"The tees were quite a long way forward and that helped a lot," Ian said of his win. "But what really did it for me was my chipping and putting. I had a great day around the greens."

Ian's prize was a splendid new putter donated by Reuters.



# 1993 GOLF CALENDAR

The 1993 calendar of events is:

Jan 24	Strathfield
Jan 31	Barnwell Park
Feb 21	Windsor
Mar 14	Warringah
Apr 4	The Coast
May 9	Long Reef
June 27	Tuggerah Lakes
July 11	Fairfield
July 24	Muirfield
Aug 8	Leonay
Sep 5	Cumberland
Oct 3	Glenmore
Nov 14	Mona Vale
Dec 4/11	North Ryde

## LONG REEF

The golfing gods then smiled on AAP as another 13 hardy souls strode to the first tee at Long Reef on Sunday, December 6 at six a.m.

Heavy rain from the Thursday night washed out the AAP cricket match against the foreign correspondents but couldn't dampen the enthusiasm of the golfers.

Not a drop fell while they were on the course but as soon as they left the 18th, down it came again heavier than ever,

Pietro Fu from Glebe won easily with a massive 44 points off his 30 handicap while Sussex Street sports journo and chief golf writer Neil Harvey was second on a countback

with 39 points.

Ian Jessup, who had been chopped by the handicapper for his championship win, still stole some of the glory by winning three of the four nearest the pin prizes.

Special mention also to David Smith from Glebe for a birdie 3 on the par 4 sixth hole. David is a regular off his 36 handicap and the birdie gave him a rare five points score for the hole.

The Social Golf Club is always on the lookout for new players. There are some great prizes to be won and some good courses to be played. Contact Barney Blundell at Glebe (Ext 1111) or Ian Jessup at Sussex Street (Ext 8753) for more details.

## CLARK WINS COMPETITION

AAP RES Queensland and Northern Territories Sales Manager, Clark Chappel, is now the proud owner of a sophisticated electronic organiser after winning a competition to rename a gossip column in the prestigious Australian Banking and Finance magazine.

Australian Banking and Finance was previously known as Sydney Banker and its gossip

column was titled "Pitt Street".

However with the relaunch of the magazine a new name for the column was required - and it held a competition to find the best one.

Clark's successful entry was: "Behind the Screens".

"I thought the play on words, scenes and screens, was quite witty, and so did the editor!" said Clark.

## RES LADIES BLOOM WITH WATERING

In medieval England young women who wanted to become pregnant would walk many miles to stand in the eye of a giant horse carved into a chalk hillside in Somerset and then chant a magic rhyme.

Nowadays the young women of AAP RES in Sydney take a drink of Neverfail Spring Water.

Sharon Murray, Jane Homburger, Eliza Chow and Belinda Ellice-Flint all partook of a cup of the health giving water and shortly afterwards

discovered they were expecting.

AAP Today phoned Neverfail and discovered that the company's receptionist and the wife of one of the sales managers was also pregnant.

However Quality Control Manager, Peter Molloy, denied there were any fertility given properties in the water.

"It's just your normal mix of healthy minerals," he said. "Though it might be good for our marketing if we could make something of this," he added.



## EDITORIAL HIJINKS

**Wonderful band, wild party-goers at the AAP Editorial Christmas drinks and dancing party at the Teachers' Club in Sydney on Friday, December 4.**

Highlights of the night included the skinny red-head on the microphone at the end of the night belting out a verse and chorus of "Wild Thing" (alias Deputy News Editor John Coomber).

And to show AAP has some wild women as well, EIC's assistant Noela May Blundell and State Parliamentary reporter Toni Allan followed JC up on stage to sing another chorus for the appreciative audience of 100.

Deputy sports editor Greg Truman had been a singin' all night as he brought his cousins, their guitars and amplifiers along to entertain the partygoers. Greg's band played great

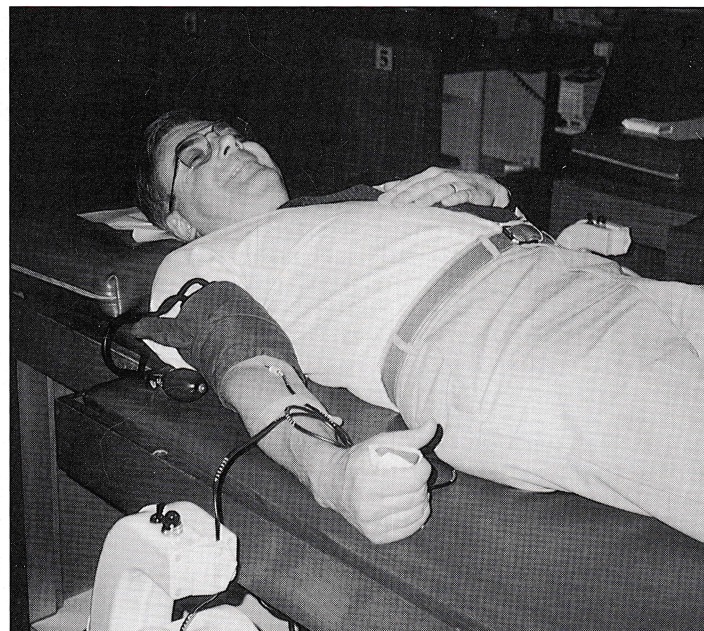
music for more than two-and-a-half hours without a break - which was just enough time to allow Hugo Uribe to dance with every woman on the floor.

The music was so good even other Teachers' Club patrons outside the AAP party area were tapping their feet and trying to rustle up five dollars (\$5.00) to get in.

The money paid for nibbles, the decorations and some drinks. AAP and NZPA generously helped finance the rest of the drinks and the band.

Though journalists dominated proceedings, other AAPers from the third, fourth, fifth and sixth floors at Sussex Street and from Ross Street at Glebe joined in.

The journalist awards comperes who compiled a script without comparison were Trevor Marshallsea (Broadcast Desk) and Ian Jessup (Sport).



**ROB'S 50th DEPOSIT WITH THE BLOOD BANK**

**AAP Telecommunications Rob Bradburn, Sydney, has just celebrated a golden anniversary.**

He has given blood for the 50th time.

Rob first began donating blood more than 10 years ago when he was based at Sussex Street and since then has visited the Red Cross Centre in Clarence Street about four times a year.

"It started when a whole group of us decided to give blood but I was the only one who went in the end," said Rob. "We now have quite large groups going from Glebe and Sussex Street."

A Red Cross bus picks up people who want to give blood and takes them to its centre in Clarence Street.

"It's a very worthwhile cause and I've found it gets easier every time," he said. "Plus you never know when you might need to make a withdrawal."



# AAP'S FOOTIE TEAM IS FAST AND FURIOUS

An AAP touch football team is setting playing fields in the Eastern suburbs ablaze with its fast running, attacking style.

The AAP Inerrant Informers take part in the Eastern Suburbs Touch Football Association series of matches.

Team organiser, Jerianne Verhille, said: "There is no tackling, rucking or kicking in this game. When a team member with the ball is touched for the sixth time it has to be handed over to the other side. So the faster a player runs the more chance the team has of scoring.

"It is not supposed to be a contact game but I broke my arm last year!" said Jerianne.

The Association has been running the games for only a few years but it has mushroomed in popularity with more than 100 teams now taking part.

Although a team made up



*The Inerrant Informers*

of people from AAP played in last year's tournament this is the first year AAP has officially entered.

The team was originally called the plain Informers but when competitors fronted up with names like the Tenacious Terodactyls it was decided to make the AAP name double-barrelled.

Group Corporate and Public Affairs paid for the team's entry fee and provided rugby shirts.

During the 14 game summer season the Inerrant Informers play every Monday at the Centennial Park Hockey Fields as well as practicing every Sunday.



*AAP's cricket team*

# CRICKET HAS BUMPER SEASON

AAP's cricket team is all set for summer with new gear and a bumper number of matches.

The team, made up mainly of journalists, takes part in a series of informal matches with friends which are usually held at the Jubilee Oval in Glebe.

Organiser, Deputy Finance Editor, Giles Parkinson, said: "Corporate Affairs gave us some money for new equipment so we now all set. The stuff we used to have was a couple of years old so we were looking a bit ratty around the edges. We didn't have any bales!"

"We will be playing about 10 games this summer as well as a couple of 'picnic games' which are more social."

The team has a pool of about 20 people to make up its team but is always looking for new talent.

"People sometimes aren't able to play because they worked a night shift and towards the end of summer people think more of the beach," said Giles.

"It's pretty competitive but good fun."

# AAP RACING SERVICES WINS THREE YEAR TAB CONTRACT

**AAP Racing Services has signed a three-year contract with the NSW TAB Agents Association to supply form on all TAB race meetings.**

The service will begin in January after an extensive trial period.

AAP will transmit the form from its Formguide database at Glebe to the NSW TAB's printing facility at Granville, Sydney, in the same way as with racing form for newspapers.

The form will be printed up on wall sheets by the TAB for

display in its more than 600 agencies and branches throughout the state.

The service is exclusively for these outlets and will not be available at Pub and Club TABs.

Director of Racing Services Geoff Want said the association had purchased the specially-designed AAP form service to supplement the information currently available to TAB punters.

In some cases they have no form for country areas because of the number of meetings now covered

by the TAB.

"This is an excellent contract for Racing Services," Geoff said. "Not only is it good revenue but it gives AAP terrific exposure and further improves our relationship with a very important part of the racing industry - the NSW TAB and the Agents Association."

Geoff stressed that the new AAP service would not replace the major form service for TABs, which is provided by the daily newspaper formguides, all of which also originate from AAP.

"The agents will continue to use newspapers as their primary information for local and major metropolitan meetings," he said.

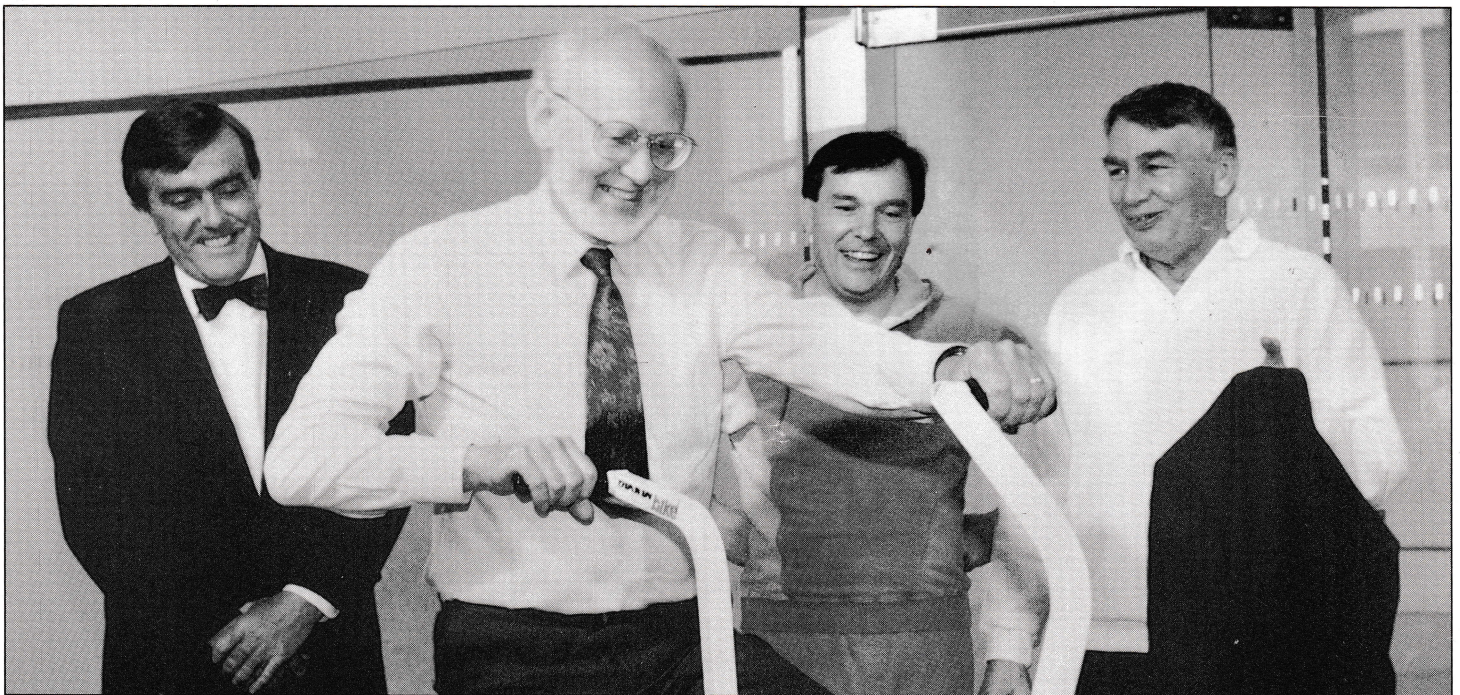
Racing is one of Australia's major industries, providing some 50,000 full time jobs in NSW alone.

In the last racing season, 3,659 meetings were held throughout Australia with the NSW TAB operating on between 25 and 30 meetings each week.

Another valuable promotion AAP has with the NSW TAB is the TAB Class Racehorse of the season.

Full colour posters of the chosen horse, with the AAP Racing Services logo, are displayed in all TAB outlets in the state.

## POLITICIANS TAKE FITNESS TESTS



*AAP Group Canberra Manager Peter Monaghan looks on as Democrat leader Senator John Coulter, Shadow Minister for Health Dr Bob Woods and Deputy Prime Minister and Health Minister Brian Howe prepare for fitness checks as part of a program supported by the ACT National Heart Foundation with funds raised by the National Press Club/AAP Charity Golf Day at Royal Canberra.*