

AAPT WINS \$100 MILLION SA GOVT TELECOM CONTRACT

AAP Telecommunications has been awarded a two-year, \$100 million contract to manage the South Australian government's telecommunications business in an innovative deal that will also provide cheaper phone calls for business.

From July 1, AAPT will supply more than 140 state government agencies with local, long distance and international voice and data services.

In what is believed to be the first contract of its kind, AAPT will aggregate the whole of government telecommunications traffic to provide discounts of up to 40 per cent to the commercial sector.

Similar discounts will be extended to home phone users early next year.

Chief Executive Larry Williams said the South Australian contract highlighted the growing influence of AAPT in the marketplace and would act as a catalyst for it to become the telecommunications supplier of choice in that state.

South Australian Premier Dean Brown said the government would save \$6 million over two years by having all its local, long distance and overseas telephone, fax and data services handled by AAPT.

"This is the first time a state government has used its purchasing power to lever huge discounts for the private sector," he said. "Anyone can take advantage of the same low costs as the government simply by ringing a phone number.

"This will not only increase the individual competitiveness of South Australian companies but will make the state as a whole a more attractive centre in which to do business."

Mr Williams said AAPT hoped eventually to capture about 30 per cent of the South Australian telecommunications market.

"We will take advantage of the government's backing to become a dominant player in

South Australia," he said. "We expect to gain a significant share of the South Australian corporate and commercial market, and the greater the volume of organisations using the AAPT network, the greater the flow-on benefits."

AAPT won the SA contract over bids from several other companies including Telstra, Optus, Pacific Star and EDS Australia.

Awarding of the contract was the front page lead in the Adelaide Advertiser and also won extensive play on Adelaide television and radio stations.

To help manage the new contract, AAPT will locate a Customer Service Centre in Adelaide, creating up to 40 jobs, as well as broadening its telecommunications network throughout the state.

It plans extensive followup advertising including full page newspapers ads, billboards and ads to be carried on the backs of the city's buses.

AAPT, Australia's third largest long distance telephone company, now has more than 80,000 customers and expects revenues of around \$400 million in 1996.

Pictured at the signing ceremony are South Australian Premier Dean Brown (second from right) and AAPT Chief Executive Larry Williams, flanked by AAPT Director, Sales and Customer Operations, John Stuckey (left) and Ray Dundon, Chief Executive, Department of Information Industries.



Contents

4 Senator Alston opens AAPT's Network Management Centre

6 AAP is terrific, says Robbo

10 Digital ADS and Picture systems

14&15 Great new pictures of the AAP Centre

20 Staff travel feature

23 Long service awards

26-28 AAP sports news



The first husband and wife team to receive long service awards, Steve and Maureen Dettre with daughter Emma.



ATUG award winners Brian Perkins and Neil Tuckwell are pictured together at the ATUG dinner sponsored this year by AAP Telecommunications.

Brian Perkins Honoured with ATUG Award

Brian Perkins, Director Regulatory and Legal with AAPT, was honoured with the award of Outstanding Contributor of the Year at the Australian Telecommunications Users Group annual conference in Melbourne in May.

Brian, who is also Chairman of SPAN - the Service Providers Action Network - is one of the best known figures in the industry after nearly 50 years in telecommunications.

His award citation said he had made an outstanding contribution to the industry, particularly during 1995, playing a leading role in the introduction of competition to the provision of telecommunications services to users.

"He has fought to establish a regime of fair, open and robust competition in an industry moving from Government control and dominance by one player to one of industry self regulation and of many competitors.

"He has brought practical determination to the enhancement of the access to and interfaces between Carriers and Service Providers."

The winner of the Charles Todd medal for excellence in the communications industry was Neil Tuckwell, Chairman of AUSTEL - the national telecommunications regulatory authority.

Mr Tuckwell was recognised for the high level of efficiency he had brought to industry regulation, and for "fearless dedication" to service.

Brian was the inaugural chairman of SPAN which he was one of the moving forces in setting up in 1993.

SPAN now has 80 full members and 140 special and affiliated members including the three carriers, industry consultants, ATUG, FANS (the Federation of Narrowcast Services), pay TV, online and interactive operators.

"It has become quite a force in the industry and fills an important role," Brian said.

"My own involvement in the shaping of the 1989, 1991 and now the draft 1997 Telecommunications Acts has given me tremendous exposure to the issues and to the regulatory and legislative environment."

Brian, who also sits on the AUSTEL advisory committees on numbering and law enforcement, spent 34 years with Telecom, starting as technician in training in 1947. He worked as an engineer for 29 years and then for five years in marketing before joining the Herald and Weekly Times in 1982 to advise them on electronic media. He joined AAP in 1984 when it set up its first communications company, transferring to AAPT in 1991.

NEW VODAFONE CONTRACT DOUBLES AAPCS ROLLOUT

In a major extension to its Vodafone contract, AAP Communications Services will install and service more than 450 new microwave links around Australia over the next three years.

Chief Executive Terence Nickolls said the new contract, which will double the number of links installed and supported by AAPCS, will be worth about \$33 million.

"It confirms AAPCS' position as the largest microwave integrator in Australia today," he said.

Vodafone Managing Director John Rohan said, "The expertise and assistance provided by AAPCS during the last two-and-a-half years has enabled Vodafone to exceed its network rollout requirements."

Vodafone has awarded a similar contract to Ericsson Australia for 450 links, which will mean that six years after it started out as the third national digital mobile telephone operator, Vodafone will have some 1,400 links in place, giving it coverage over most of Australia.

AAPCS has already installed microwave links around all capital cities and currently has teams working in several parts of the country, from far north Queensland to southern Tasmania.

Vodafone also rents optical fibre links from Telstra but most of these are gradually being replaced by microwave, which is more cost effective over distances above five kilometres.

Director of Marketing Jeffrey Roll said the new installations would be using Nokia microwave platforms and other equipment from Mitec, an Australian-owned company based in Queensland.

"Vodafone recognise the skills that we have within AAPCS and acknowledge the value that we have provided to them over the past three years in assisting them meet their network requirements.

"As part of the new contract, we've appointed an account

manager, Ian Woodhead, who will be responsible for commercial negotiations and further developing the already close working relationship between the two companies.

"The success of the network rollout so far has been largely due to this close working relationship. At every stage, from initial planning, network design, installation and commissioning, AAPCS and Vodafone have worked together to ensure a smooth implementation program."

"Vodafone is committed to providing high quality digital coverage to the Australian market," Mr Rohan said. "The Vodafone network now provides coverage to more than 80 per cent of the population.

"Vodafone has also led the way in mobile digital fax and data services, recently launching a range of mobile terminating fax and short messaging services (SMS) called Vodafone Notes."

One of the hundreds of microwave base stations AAPCS is installing for Vodafone around Australia.



AAPCS Wins Endorsed Supplier Status

Purchasing Australia has registered AAP Communications Services as an Endorsed Supplier to the Federal Government.

Endorsed Supplier status is a prerequisite for admission to the Common Use Contract Panels used to select suppliers of goods and services to Government departments.

National Product Marketing Manager Brendan Linnane said Endorsed Supplier status was vital to the success of any company wanting to increase their business dealings with government departments.

"It is also a testament to the business community of AAPCS' standing in the communications services industry and to our continuing commitment to best practice standards," he said.

Brendan and Federal Government Account Executive Mario Vozella, based in Canberra, put many months of work into the project with assistance from Finance and Administration in Sydney in compiling the facts and figures required for the submission.

The application was made to Purchasing Australia, part of the Federal Department of Administrative Services and is subject to regular review by DAS and the Department of Science, Industry and Technology.

Brendan said AAPCS' AS3902 quality system certification achieved two years ago and its involvement in several major corporate projects around Australia had helped ensure the success of its application.

Alston Outlines Plans for 1997 Deregulation

The Federal Government was committed to ensuring that service providers, especially those who made large investments in the business, were encouraged to offer strong competition in Australia's fully deregulated telecommunications market, Communications Minister Richard Alston said.

In his first official function as the minister responsible for steering the post-1997 deregulation legislation through Parliament, Senator Alston used the opening of AAPT's National Network Management Centre to signal some of his priorities.

"In the runup to full deregulation and open competition in 1997, the government sees it as vital to have strong and committed, long-term participants operating in the market," he said.

"We want to see a fair fight."

Senator Alston said the government wanted the legislation in place by the end of this year, and promised it would promote open competition and a fair means of connecting to the national Telstra network.

"We are committed to that deadline. We do think it will be possible to have the post-1997 regime in place before the end of this current calendar year," he said.

"I would certainly expect that an interconnect regime will be a principal feature of that legislation.... certainly a compulsory interconnect regime will be part and parcel of it."

Senator Alston said the Government was reworking some



Senator Richard Alston with AAPT Chief Executive Larry Williams at the opening of the Network Management Centre.

concepts in the draft legislation, including the definition of a carrier.

Given a fairer regulatory environment, companies like AAPT which operated their own networks would be able to compete more strongly with the carriers and offer

Elle and High Water for the New Minister

Minister for Communications and the Arts
Richard Alston took it all in good part when he was waylaid by the ABC's Elle McFeast as he arrived at the AAP Centre to open the AAP Telecommunications National Network Management Centre.

McFeast, resplendent in evening gown at midday, emerged from hiding and roped in Senator Alston with her shawl to lead him before the television cameras for an impromptu press conference, shown on her regular Monday night program from Parliament House in Canberra.

After suggesting that a shortage of funds at the ABC had left her a little short of clothing, McFeast - Lisbeth Gore in real life - invited other journalists to question the minister.

Senator Alston responded to one serious question on management changes at Fairfax and was about to answer another when Elle released him, shooshed away her ABC colleague Ali Moore and said Senator Alston had an important meeting to attend.

"Thank you for all your assistance in getting me into the building," Senator Alston told his AAP hosts when he was welcomed at the door.

"I do apologise for being a little late but hopefully you'll understand what's required of ministers generally, but incoming ministers in particular I suspect," he told the formal press conference inside organised by AAPT.

"When I'm supposed to be nominally responsible for the ABC, they appear to regard themselves as being able to treat me as their personal property."

Officially opening the new centre, Senator Alston said

a wider range of value added services.

(Senator Alston later unveiled plans to bring the main industry players together as part of an experts working group to hammer out the new drafts.)

AAP Information Services Chief Executive Lee Casey said in his welcome to Senator Alston that 1995 had been something of a watershed year for AAPT with strong revenue growth and a healthy profit.

Subscriber numbers had now topped 85,000 and revenue of \$350 million was projected for calendar year 1996.

"The name of the game, we believe, is service quality. But it is getting increasingly difficult with Telstra engaging in price cutting exercises, which is putting pressure on the margins for all.

"It is extremely important for everybody in this burgeoning telecommunications industry that the regulations which are projected for mid-1997 are put in place in a genuine manner and that it does provide a genuine level playing field for all," he said. "I am sure Minister Alston will ensure that happens."

NMC Built to Take AAPT Beyond 2000

The National Network Management Centre, officially opened on April 17 by Communications Minister Richard Alston, is designed to take AAP Telecommunications to carrier status following full deregulation next year.

"In fact it will support us and our customers into the 21st century," AAPT Chief Executive Larry Williams said.

"The centre will offer existing and future AAPT customers improved service through state-of-the-art monitoring facilities," he said. "Its equipment has the ability to identify faults before they affect customers so that immediate remedial action can be instigated."

He said the centre was the only one in Australia comparable to those operated by Telstra and Optus and its principal objective was to ensure a high level of customer service.

Director of Operations and Engineering Trevor Harris said the NMC was a sales and support centre that stood with the quality of the AAPT network and managed both customers and operations.

It contained world class

management and monitoring systems and was staffed by engineers and technicians rather than operator level staff.

"The basic premise is that we want to be able to see what is happening before it impacts on our customers. We aim to advise our customers of fault situations before they contact us.

"We have the ability to dynamically change the network configuration in response to adverse conditions - that is we can reroute around the problem if the lines go down in any area."

AAPT also operates emergency backup sites in the Sydney suburb of Glebe and in Melbourne for the NMC, which is located at the AAP Centre, Sydney.

Mr Williams said AAPT had invested \$80 million in its network over the past three years and was the only telecommunications provider apart from the carriers with a full national switch-based service.

The NMC had cost \$500,000 to fit out not counting the cost of the equipment.

that both AAP and AAPT were companies of which Australians should be proud.

"You have made remarkable progress and you are a very good example of what we want to see in this country in terms of increased competition, higher quality of service and lower prices," he said.

"I've had a fair bit to do with AAP over the years and I have always been impressed with their professionalism. They don't ask for the earth. They seem to be getting on with it without constantly expecting the government to change the rules and solve the problems."

Senator Alston said the Network Management Centre contained impressive technology that would ensure AAPT was able to continue services to clients by rerouting around the problem when lines went down.

"It's the 21st century equivalent of Cobb & Co.," he said. "You are making sure the e-mail gets through, come hell or high water."

Or did he mean Elle and high water.



“AAP Are Very Good ... No Doubt About That”

2GB breakfast program host Clive Robertson is an enthusiastic user of AAP's news services, and a regular commentator on our good or bad points - mainly good.

One recent exchange with 2GB's Finance Commentator David Koch, who relies on AAP's Financial Markets AMQ service, was typical.

Koch: *AAP are very good and have very good machines, no doubt about that, and we use it in the office. I find it terribly, terribly informative.*

Robertson: *I'd be lost without AAP.*

Koch: *But sometimes there's a bit of a glitch in it.*

Robertson: *It's usually a truck, you know those cleaning trucks. Sometimes they park on the cable.*

Koch: *Could be too.*

Earlier that same week, Robertson was reading through AAP's Daily Diary, which summarises the major events scheduled around the country for the day ahead.

Robertson: *We'd be lost without AAP. Aren't they a nice lot. By the way, you could have AAP on at home. If you want a wish list or something, you've retired, and you want to keep in contact, you ring up the nice people at AAP, say Robertson sent you to call, and they'll give you all the details.*

You get a line out to your home. Just a telephone line there. A little man from Telstra comes out, puts a modem in. You can cuddle him and pay him in kind, all that jazz. And then you have a computer there and up comes this stuff all day. It's terrific.

It's really, really good stuff.

On another occasion:

Robertson: *There's a press conference with Phil Mason, the National Chair, it says.*

AAP, what is a national chair? What is that? One leg in Western Australia, another one in Queensland? Do you mean Chairman by any chance, do you AAP?

“I think it's one of the best newspapers around.”

Later in May, Robbo, who receives the service both at home and at work, was again praising the AAP news wire. But in his inimitable, stream-of-consciousness style radio, mixed in with the praise was a barb or two.

Robertson: *I really like AAP.*

If you are actually in business and have got a bit of money to spend, might I recommend again - they don't pay me at all to say this, but simply since I've dealt with AAP for so long - why don't you get a line put in to AAP and have AAP on your desk.

Clive Robertson on air in his 2GB studio



You can open little directories of things. Say you are into metallurgy. You open a little directory and put the words metallurgy, or something, any reference to metallurgy would appear in that directory.

For example, if you worked at 2GB or in radio, you'd put all the call signs out. Any reference at all would appear then. You can see what the other people are doing. You can't get that with a newspaper. It's like an instant scrap service.

So contact the people at AAP, say Robertson said, he says I should get it on and they will say certainly sir, or madam. And if you are retired, got a bit of dough and you are fed up with your spouse already, then in your own den you could have AAP there and just whizz through it, you see. It's a good system. I think it's one of the best newspapers around.

Even if they use “set to” all the time. But that's more journalists, you know what they're like. I mean they never came top of the class. They're sort of, you know, it wasn't easy for them. “What are you going to do with your life, Smith?”

“Oh, I dunno, I think I might be unemployed, or if things get really bad I'll become a journalist.”

Stick with the unemployment lad.

Off air, Robertson says, “I call AAP the ultimate newspaper, because it provides something that newspapers do not and that is the chronology of things.

“And I like that. It builds up the picture, even if there are kills and corrections along the way. It tells you how events unfolded and there is no deadline when everything has to stop.

“AAP is a 24-hour newspaper and I think you should make more of that.

“Whatever I say about AAP comes from the heart. I mean it. I like AAP, warts and all. And the warts are important. It's not possible to be perfect.”

AAPIS Takes 5% Stake in Vodafone

AAP Information Services Pty Ltd has taken a five per cent stake in the digital mobile telephone company Vodafone Pty Ltd.

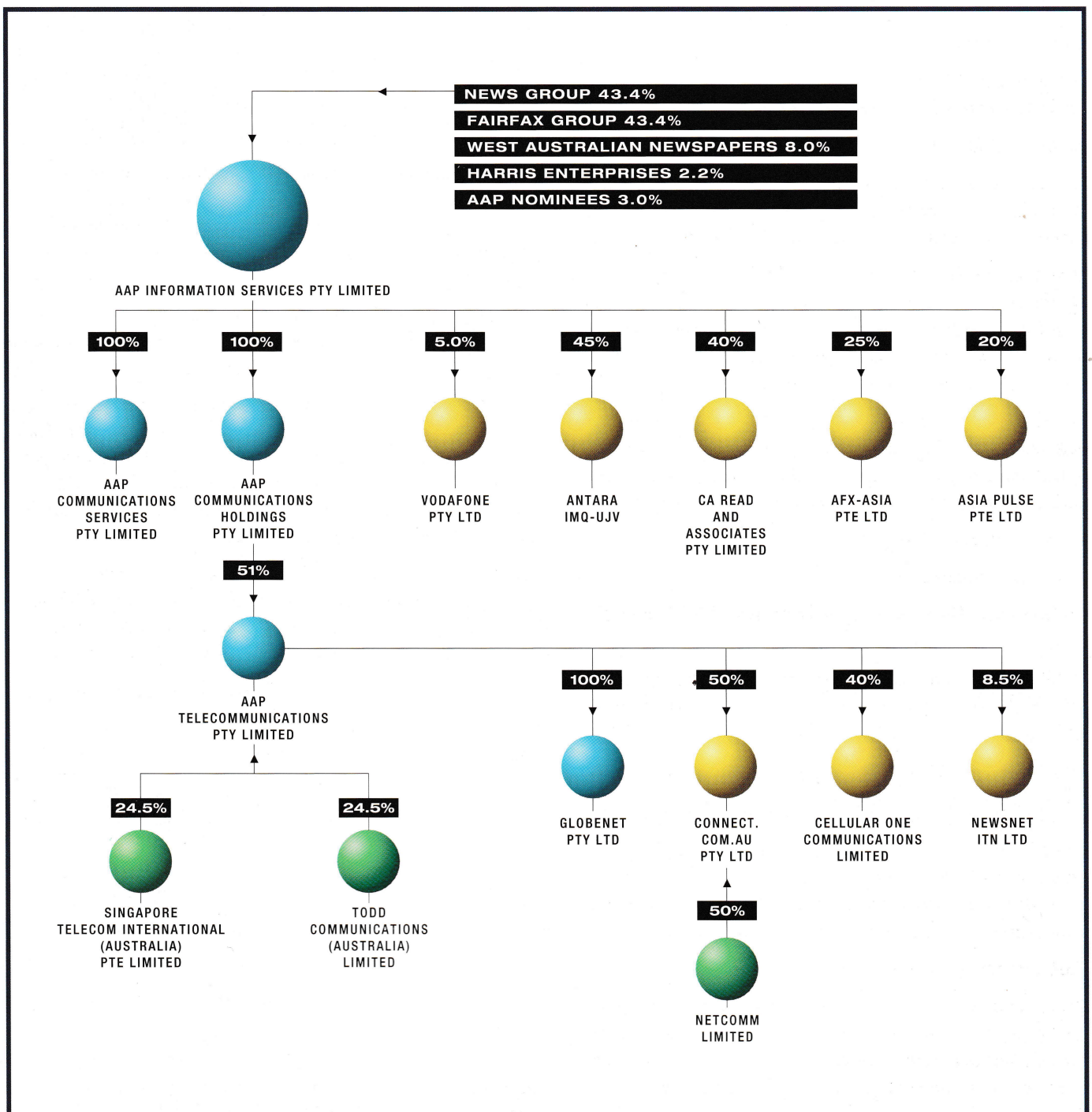
Chairman and Chief Executive Lee Casey said Vodafone had granted AAPIS the share option in late 1992 in recognition of its involvement in the preparation of the British company's successful bid for Australia's third mobile phone licence.

"The shareholding fulfils our desire to own a small but strategic stake in a dynamic mobile phone operator such as Vodafone," Mr Casey said.

The purchase price of the shares was not disclosed, but the acquisition entitles AAPIS to one seat on the Vodafone board, which will be filled by Mr Casey.

The two AAPIS subsidiaries, AAP Telecommunications and AAP Communications Services, also have close business relationships with Vodafone. AAPIS is a designated Vodafone service provider and AAPCS has a major contract to install microwave links for Vodafone around Australia.

With this acquisition, the AAP Group ownership chart is now as shown below.



Strategic Buys Broaden AAPT's Capabilities

In its fourth strategic investment announced in recent months, AAP Telecommunications has acquired a 40 per cent interest in Queensland-based mobile phones retailer Cellular One, which expects to list on the Australian Stock Exchange later this year.

Chief Executive Larry Williams said the purchase, announced at the ATUG Conference in Melbourne on May 1, was a strategic investment to position AAPT in the mobile phone business.

Cellular One Communications Limited is a Vodafone service provider with 35 stores in Southeast Queensland and 15 in Melbourne and a \$10 million line of credit from National Australia Bank guaranteed by the Vodafone Group.

"Cellular One is a leading mobile phone service provider in Queensland and we intend to assist it in capitalising on its existing customer base and plan rapid aggressive expansion throughout New South Wales and the rest of Australia," Mr Williams said.

The company will be renamed to include the AAPT name, but would continue to be run by David Baird, its founding Chief Executive and Managing Director.

"This will allow us to stay focussed on our own business," he said. "AAPT recognises the mobile phone market is a very specialised market in both operations and service.

"I like to think of mobiles as a market that moves at 1,000 miles an hour compared to the long distance telecoms business which moves at about 100 mph."



AAPT Chief Executive Larry Williams with Cellular One Chief Executive David Baird at the ATUG Conference in Melbourne

AAPT has in recent months purchased GlobeNet outright, taken a 50 per cent stake in connect.com.au Pty Ltd and bought an 8.5 per cent share of NewsNet ITN Ltd.

Marketing Director Steve Picton said AAPT would have a number of other acquisitions to announce over the next few months.

Mr Baird said Cellular One was an independent dealer network with a very substantial subscriber base and he expected to take the decision over the next few months to list.

Its shopfronts, in green and purple, are in very high profile locations.

"We are exclusively Vodafone. We discount the handsets and we have substantial income streams. We have the lowest cancellation rate of any Vodafone service provider,"

Mr Baird said.

"We offer great customer service. Our customers are tradesmen, factory operators etc who use their phones. We have a 30-40 per cent higher air time usage than anyone else out there. We teach all our subscribers how to use the message facility. We average over \$100 a month per subscriber.

"But the business requires a great deal of funding and a big brother - a big name - is required. AAPT is No.3 in the market and rising.

"With the AAPT partnership, we will have services that will not be available to other service providers. Our shops will sell mobiles, long distance, fax services, Internet and eventually fax machines and modems as well."

BT Agreement Boosts AAPT Internationally

In a major addition to the series of international correspondent agreements it has negotiated, AAPT announced in April an agreement for exchange of international traffic with the UK carrier British Telecommunications.

The BT deal represents a significant step in AAPT's recognition as an international telecommunications service provider because the United Kingdom is one of the three largest traffic streams from Australia.

AAPT has now negotiated a total of eight correspondent agreements - the commercial structure carriers use to exchange international traffic.

The others are with MCI and Sprint of the United States, KDD of Japan, Singapore Telecom International,

Telecom NZ, GlobeTelecom of the Philippines and TeleGlobe of Canada.

"AAPT now has agreements with major carriers on high traffic routes to seven countries spanning the continents of Europe, Asia, North America and New Zealand. Other bilaterals are in the process of negotiation," Chief Executive Larry Williams said.

"We appreciate the opportunity to exchange traffic with BT. Our agreements with the large international carriers allow us to keep down our costs and maintain a high level of overseas service to our business customers."

A view of the AAP Telecommunications stand at ATUG, located right at the front entrance to the exhibition centre with Telstra and Optus on either side of it.



Trevor Harris New AAPT Director

Trevor Harris has been appointed Director, Operations and Engineering, at AAPT.

Trevor joined AAP Reuters Communications as a Senior Engineer (Radio Systems) in May, 1985, and was appointed Operations Manager a few months later.

When AAP Communications was established on July 1, 1990, he

transferred to the new company, which changed its name a year later to AAP Telecommunications. He was promoted to Deputy Director, Network Services, in October, 1994.

Trevor reports directly to Chief Executive Larry Williams and reporting to him are Mark Blum, Glenn Dewhurst, Steve Baker and the State Operations Managers.



Digital Rollout Gathers Pace with AAP ADS and Preserver Systems

The launch of a new advertising services product and the imminent introduction of new image technology is carrying AAP Information Services deeper into the digital age.

AAP ADS was launched in February to deliver advertisements in digital form direct to newspaper production systems.

And installation should start in July of a digital image archival database capable of storing

more than 250,000 pictures and graphical images.

Called the Preserver system, the database designed by AAP's long time news and pictures partner, the Associated Press of America, is one of the world's most advanced

It is expected to boost significantly AAP Image's presence in the commercial picture market as well as adding a new dimension to the company's photo service to its

traditional newspaper customers.

Manager Media Robin Strathdee said both services utilised advanced digital technology and offered the potential for solid new revenue.

"Just as importantly, both initiatives demonstrate that AAP continues to seek and find new ways of enhancing our value to our owner newspaper industry," he said.

AAP ADS- Good News for Advertising

The AAP ADS system came through its most public test with flying colors when it was used to send sensitive ads dealing with the Port Arthur massacre aftermath from the AAP booth at a newspaper conference in Hobart to newspapers around the country.

Soon after Robin had addressed newspaper owners, managers, editors and production executives on the virtues of the new system, advertising agency Ogilvy and Mather were in touch through trade house and big AAP ADS client Showads.

The Tasmanian Government wanted two advertisements relating to Port Arthur placed urgently in capital city newspaper Saturday editions.

So Showads and the agency sat down early Friday afternoon at the AAP stand at PANPA and prepared the ad, reproduced at right, on the Showads Mediarite system which was networked to the AAP ADS machine for transmission.

Harrassed agency staff returned early Friday night in a panic - the Minister demanded changes.

"What would have been a logistic nightmare using bromides and interstate couriers was accomplished in a few minutes with AAP ADS," Robin said. "The original ads were called up, changes made and they were simply

sent again. All appeared in the newspapers the next day.

"It was something of a PR coup for AAP ADS because everyone at the conference got to hear about it.

"It demonstrated the speed and flexibility of our system and made true believers of the Hobart office of Ogilvy and Mather who we had pitched to in their boardroom just that morning."

AAP ADS uses the proven Artwork Display System software produced by Britain's Associated Newspapers, publishers of the Daily Mail and Evening Standard, and specialist ISDN software house 4-Sight International.

"This software has been extensively redeveloped to AAP specifications for Australian conditions and introduces the first ADS store and forward operation," Robin said.

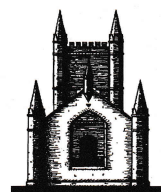
"The hub software developed in partnership with AAP has now been sold to South Africa and further sales are expected soon in Britain, Europe and North America. ADS is the dominant advertising delivery system in Britain and Europe with more than 800 sites."

Robin said that using AAP ADS, newspaper advertisements could be sent from Australia to any newspaper in the world equipped with ADS, and Australian newspapers using AAP ADS

can receive advertisements from overseas.

Extensive use is being made of ADS overseas to deliver colour ads," Robin

HELP US OPEN OUR DOORS



There is something you can do to help the people of Port Arthur. What the staff and local community need more than anything is a return to normality. That is why the doors of Port Arthur are re-opening to the public from Saturday May 4.

Full facilities and services are not available at this stage. However visitors are encouraged to pay their personal respects and visit what still is, and will always be, a site of historical significance and beauty.

Admission will be free until such time as normal services and facilities are restored.

The people of Port Arthur and the Tasman Peninsula need your support.

The best way you can help is to be there.



added. "For example, in Britain the Mirror Group is using ADS exclusively for digital delivery of its colour ads.

"Danish newspapers have also selected ADS as the standard for electronic ad delivery including colour and its use is growing in Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Spain and Norway, while trials are also underway with the Newspaper Advertising Association in the United States.

"Colour can be sent through AAP ADS now either as a single file or as separations. Several tests with the Melbourne Age have produced good results and a test program is now underway with News Limited.

"We believe our colour capability combined with our

superior communications system, infrastructure and capacity will be telling points as the numbers, but more importantly the ad file size volumes grow with greater general take-up of digital delivery," Robin said.

Robin said AAP ADS would be making heavy use of AAP Telecommunications new Frame Relay flexible data rate service to drive home its inbuilt communications infrastructure advantage.

So far the service operates from a central Sydney hub located at AAP's 24-hour Glebe computer and communications centre. A second hub will operate from AAP's Collins Street Stock Exchange office in Melbourne and others in Perth and Brisbane will follow.

Newspapers on line to AAP ADS include The Sydney Morning Herald, Australian Financial Review, Sun Herald, The Australian, Daily Telegraph, Weekend Australian, Sunday Telegraph, Herald Sun Melbourne, Sunday Herald Sun, The Age, Sunday Age, Adelaide Advertiser, Sunday Mail, Adelaide, the West Australian, Hobart Mercury, Sunday Tasmanian, The Courier Mail, Brisbane, Sunday Mail, Canberra Times, Geelong Advertiser, Toowoomba Chronicle, Cairns Post, Gold Coast Bulletin, Illawarra Mercury, Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth, Cumberland newspapers and Quest suburban newspapers in Brisbane.

Agencies and trade houses – prepress speciality production companies who prepare and send advertisements to newspapers on behalf of agencies and big advertisers – signed on with AAP ADS include Recruitment Decisions, a division of George Paterson Bates, Austin Knight, Charterhouse, Showads, Gasworks, David Graphics, Black and White Graphics, Novagraphics, Typographical Services, Photolith, Grey Advertising, Ball Partnership, Eleventh Hour, Color Solutions, Color Imaging, Adtype Color, Ingraphics and Network Graphics.

Preserver Provides a Push for Picture Sales

The \$150,000 Preserver unit will provide AAP with a powerful marketing tool to push its picture sales outside the traditional daily news media, Robin said.

"It's a quantum leap forward in Photo Library marketing in Australia, giving us the flexibility to offer images to newspapers, magazines, Internet and online sites, book publishers, advertising agencies – in fact every possible outlet where images are needed."

The Preserver system will be used to store and deliver high quality digital current news and feature photographs as well as archive progressively in digital format AP's vast picture library built up since 1848 when the agency was founded.

AP deploys five Preserver systems around the world for its own images and has sold more than 40 others to newspapers, news agencies and non-media clients.

AAP's Sydney-based Preserver will be linked to the five AP systems in New York, London, Tokyo, Milan and Frankfurt to provide instant dialup access to millions of images

from the world's leading photo agency as well as building a local digital image archival database.

AAP has the exclusive rights to distribute AP news and pictures in Australia and New Zealand. The two agencies have enjoyed a close working relationship for nearly all of AAP's 61-year history.

Susie Carr, AAP Image Photo Sales Manager, said, "We will use the Preserver to store current and historical photos and provide easy, high speed access to our customers through telephone, ISDN and Internet Netscape browser software.

"We're also looking at the possibility of managing the picture archives of some of the smaller newspapers or other organisations who would not want to face the expense and administrative overheads of setting up their own

electronic archives.

"The Preserver is not limited to AP pictures although we do expect the major revenue stream to come from marketing the AP archive, feature and stock images. Nor is it limited to pictures. News and feature graphics can also be downloaded."

Susie said that AAP Image staff would handle many of the searches on behalf of clients but a number of major users would be able to dial in and do their own searches. "All they will need is an Apple Mac or PC with Photoshop software, and a high speed modem."

Manager Media Robin Strathdee shows AP's International Sales Director Marty Cammarata around the Image Centre



Port Arthur - a Story Like No Other

The Port Arthur massacre was probably the biggest single news story in Australia in recent years. It tested AAP's resources to the maximum, and as is the case on all really big stories, AAP's journalists were seen at their best. The main burden fell on Hobart correspondent Karen Polglaze, and the two newly-appointed senior correspondents, Mike Hedge and Doug Conway, were scrambled from Melbourne and Sydney to assist. None of them emerged unscathed by what they saw and heard.

Mike Hedge provides a personal view:

You don't know what to expect when you start off on a story like Port Arthur, and now, a month or more on, it seems as though I'm none the wiser.

From the moment we began to gather the facts on the massacre and then to write them down, the whole thing became more of a numbing, heartbreaking experience than a story.

At first it was difficult to comprehend what had happened; that all these people had been killed in a place like Tasmania, no less a place like Port Arthur. It's no easier to understand now.

For AAP, the story began with patchy radio reports, firstly of six or seven people shot dead. Within a short time the figure had grown to 12, but without any confirmation or detail until Karen Polglaze's persistence provided the world with its first confirmed report of the tragedy around 3.45 on the Sunday afternoon.

It soon became apparent that the toll was significantly more than 12 and I was despatched from Melbourne.

By the time I got to the airport in Melbourne, 30 had been confirmed dead and by the time I arrived and had driven from Launceston to Hobart it was 32; and by the next night it was 35.

After that, journalistic instincts seemed to be in constant competition with horror and grief. In the end I think it was the same for Karen as it was for me - horror and grief won.

Almost from the time I arrived in Hobart around midnight that Sunday, the magnitude of what had happened hit me in the stomach. Within 20 minutes of checking into my hotel I had heard a first-hand account of how 20 people were murdered while they ate their lunch and how almost everyone in the little cafe at the old penal settlement had thought they would be shot dead.

The people I found that night who had witnessed the killings were part of a group which had gone to Port Arthur on the last day of their holiday in Tasmania, and ended up thinking it would be the last day of their lives.

Miraculously they all survived, although two were badly wounded.

It seemed strange at the time, but they were all keen to talk as if speaking about what had happened would somehow erase it from their minds.

It was hard to believe they could speak so clearly and willingly at that hour about the greatest horror that anyone could imagine. I saw some of them the next day and it had caught up with them; they were in a terrible state in each other's arms.

Karen, who had been at the police roadblock about 10 kilometres from Port Arthur all afternoon and all night arrived back in Hobart briefly to collect a pillow and a sleeping bag, then turned around and drove the 100 kms back again so she could attend a 5 a.m. press conference.

Karen spent most of those first two days at the roadblock, racing up the road every hour or so to the nearest high ground from where the mobile phone would work and allow her to get her stories through.

It was on the Monday, after the suspect in the killings had been captured, that Karen and other journalists were taken by police to the scene of the murders.

It's difficult to image how she was able to put her words together after going in there and seeing where the bodies



Mike Hedge in more relaxed mode back in the Melbourne newsroom.



View of Port Arthur

fell, especially those of the two little girls who were killed with their mother as they tried to run away.

To her enormous credit, that was one of a string of fine stories she wrote, all compiled under extreme circumstances.

The next day we began to piece together the incredible story of Martin Bryant, the man accused of the most awful crime in modern-day Australian history. Bryant's life story would have been absolutely bizarre even if it had been told before the Port Arthur killings. He had, among other things, inherited a large house and a substantial income from an old lady who was an heir to the Tattersalls lottery fortune and who had died in a weird car accident; he was also supposed to have wandered around his country property at night with guns; driven around with a miniature horse on the back seat of his car; threatened to shoot neighbours; and had a habit of sleeping with his pet pig. He then allegedly went and shot 53 people, killing 35 of them.

On Tuesday evening, the Royal Hobart Hospital organised for one of the wounded survivors to speak to a small group of media.

That was the first time for most of us that the adrenalin stopped pumping and the impact of the thing descended on us.

The three who were chosen to do the interview spent around 15 minutes with the wounded man and his wife in his hospital room, returning with tears streaming down their faces.

They played their tapes of the interview for the rest of us and soon we were all wiping away tears and feeling ill as we heard what he had to say.

A day later the emotions got another battering with the visit to Port Arthur of John Howard, Kim Beazley and Cheryl Kernot. The three leaders came to lay wreaths outside the cafe where most of the killings had occurred and like everyone there that morning they were overwhelmed by the tragic beauty of the place.

By that time, the only clues to what had happened were the outlines in yellow paint on the road approaching Port Arthur of the bodies of the little girls, Alannah and Madeline Mikac, and their mother, Nanette.

Back in Hobart on that Wednesday, an event that quite possibly was the most moving this country has witnessed together brought Karen and me and most everyone else there completely undone. That was the memorial service at St David's Cathedral, attended by 4,000 people and watched by millions around the nation.

Fortunately, Doug Conway arrived from Sydney the next day to do the difficult work of mopping up and covering the reopening of the Port Arthur settlement to the public. Doug spent four days in Tasmania dealing with the aftermath and Karen is still dealing with it.

The week after returning to Melbourne, I covered the funeral of the Mikac children and their mother. Through the words of their father and husband, Walter, I gained my first bit of hope after the Port Arthur tragedy.

"Remember that the power of love and creation will always triumph over the power of destruction and revenge," Mr Mikac told the mourners.

"Never take your partner for granted; never take your children for granted; and never take tomorrow for granted. Celebrate life and let it continue."

His heartfelt words were about the bravest I'd heard.



Hobart correspondent Karen Polglaze

THE AAP CENTRE A SYDNEY LANDMARK

The AAP Centre has become a much photographed building since the big AAP signs on top were completed just over a year ago. It stands out as a city landmark by day or night and features in the lead-in to the Channel 7 News bulletins and other stock TV footage of the Sydney CBD.

On these two pages, we've published a selection of our favourite shots of the building, which have featured in corporate advertising and promotional brochures across all three companies.

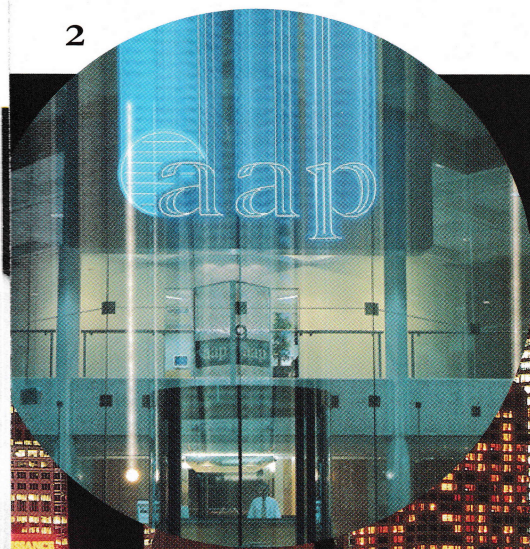
Pictures clockwise from the bottom of Page 14:

1. *A view of the city at night from McMahons Point.*
2. *A multiple image shot of the front foyer off Lang Street.*
3. *A patch of green in the city looking at the AAP Centre from Observatory Hill.*
4. *A unique view of the AAP Centre taken from the Sydney Harbour Bridge.*
5. *A panoramic view of the city and Darling Harbour at night taken from high up in the Governor Phillip building in Phillip Street.*

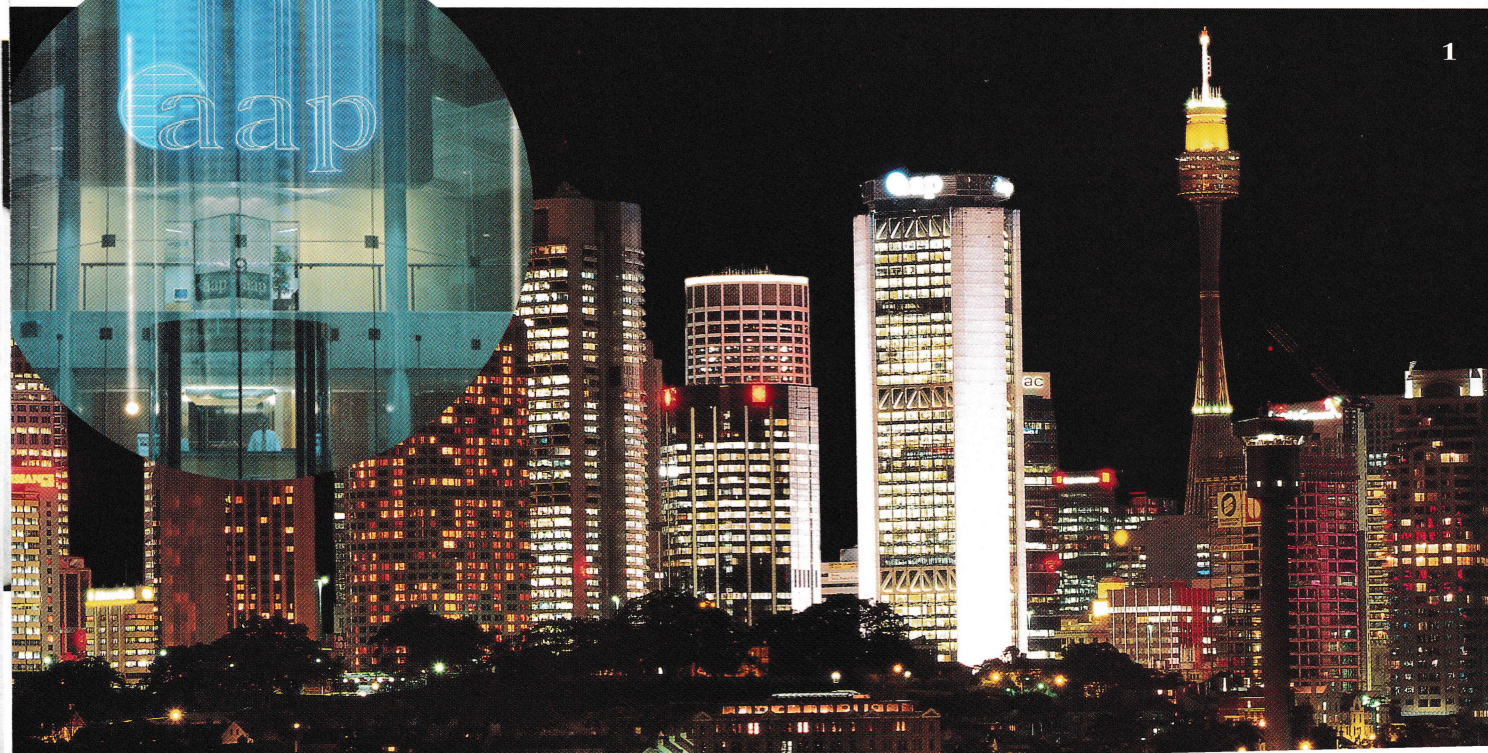


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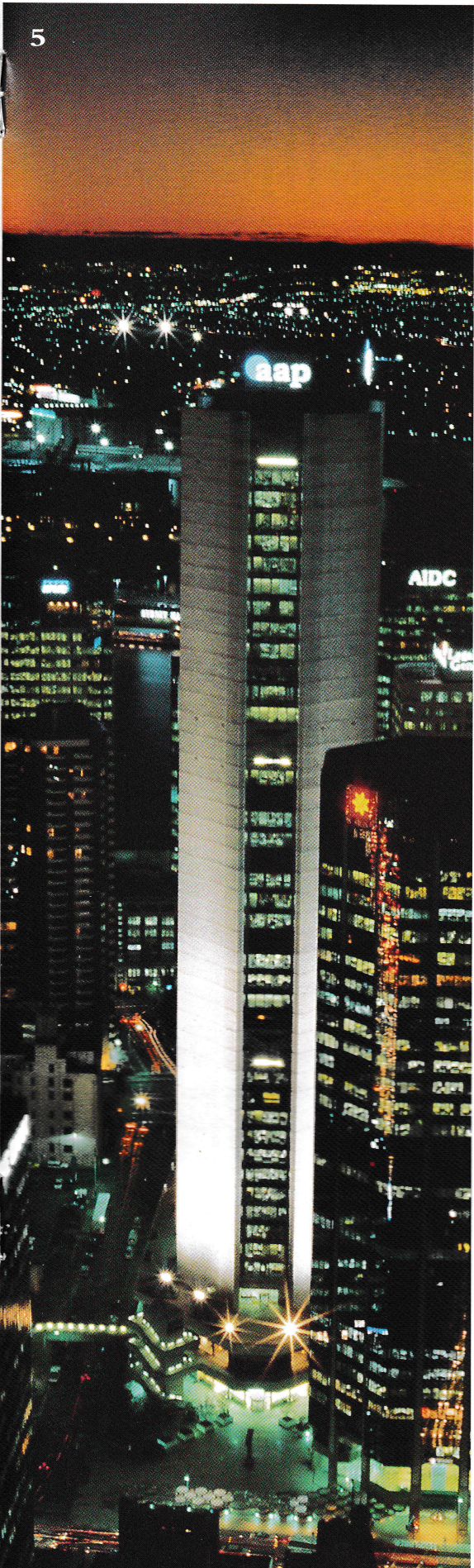
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AUTOMATIC



Minister Launches AAP's Indonesian Joint Venture

Indonesia's national news agency, Antara, and AAP officially launched their joint venture financial markets service known as IMQ - for Indonesian Market Quote - at a major function in Jakarta on March 27.

Secretary of State Moerdiono told the gathering of more than 500 leading members of Indonesia's business community, government officials, diplomats and media that the new service would provide real-time stockmarket data and quotes, news and graphics to domestic and international business and financial decision makers.

AAP and Antara entered into the joint venture in April, 1995, to take advantage of Indonesia's rapidly developing capital markets, with IMQ based on the software platform used for AAP's Australian financial markets service AMQ.

Deputy Chief Executive Barry Wheeler said, "In Antara's capable hands this same product has now been adapted to meet the particular needs of the Indonesian financial markets."

The joint operation was a key element of AAP's international business strategy, capitalising on AAP's long-term expertise in news, information and communications products.

Barry said that IMQ, which began operations late in 1995,

already numbered some of the biggest broking, banking and financial companies in Jakarta among its clients. AAP and Antara were confident that with its real-time data, news and graphics on the equities, commodities and money markets, IMQ would meet the growing demand for specialised information on the Indonesian economy.

Pictured below at the launch of Indonesian Market Quote (IMQ) in Jakarta are Antara's Managing Director and General Chairman Handjojo Nitimihardjo, Indonesian Secretary of State Moerdiono and AAP Information Services Deputy Chief Executive Barry Wheeler.



OLYMPIC NEWS ON THE INTERNET

AAP's InfoCentre gives Internet users the inside running on the Atlanta Olympic Games.

Sports junkies can keep up with the latest in Australian Olympic news by accessing a new Olympic hotspot within the AAP InfoCentre web site on the Internet.

The Olympics page features the latest news on Australia's preparations for the Games, which open on July 19 and run until August 4.

It includes coverage of leadup competitions and Olympic trials and interviews with key athletes and officials. Readers will also be kept up to date with stories about the organisation of the Games, which hold special significance given Sydney's success in winning the right

to host the 2000 Olympics. And there are hot-links to other important Olympic sites, including that of ACOG, the organising committee for the Atlanta Games.

Australia will send a 450-member team to Atlanta, its biggest ever Olympic commitment. The Australian team will be the fourth largest, behind only the US, Germany and Russia. AAP will have its own team of 18 journalists, photographers and technicians in Atlanta and a large support team in Australia will produce a comprehensive round-the-clock Olympic sports service.

AAP InfoCentre can be accessed free of charge at <http://aap.www.com.au>

Joanne Leads Way for Women in Editorial



Joanne Williamson has become the youngest executive in AAP's editorial ranks with her appointment as Filing Editor.

Joanne, 29, who was told of her promotion on her birthday on March 1, said it had been greeted with enthusiasm by the younger women on the staff in particular. "They said things like 'Wow.Great.' and were really excited to see one of us make it to that level.

"It's been a long time coming but it does show AAP realises the importance of women in its future. Next we have to crack the Glasshouse."*

Joanne joins Phil Dickson, David Eskill and Noel Masters as the four Filing Editors, or FEDS, who have replaced Editors in Charge as the senior Sydney newsroom editors responsible for the smooth and efficient running of AAP's national editorial production processes.

Their main role is to oversee the central Newsdesk operation but they also have an overview of the Broadcast, Sports, Finance and Foreign desks and the interstate bureaus.

They select the national picture casts, deal with subscriber queries, handle staffing and rostering matters and are the senior newsroom staffers when the editor and news editors are not on duty.

Margaret McDonald has been appointed Sydney Bureau Chief, replacing Steve Dettre who will head the

Pictured left to right are Joanne Williamson, Susan Briggs and Margaret McDonald

Olympics Desk AAP has established in the lead up to the Sydney Games in 2000.

Aside from coverage of Olympic stories and liaison with the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) and the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG), Steve's role includes the development of plans for AAP to exploit business opportunities arising from the Games.

Susan Briggs succeeds Joanne as Broadcast Editor.

Joanne has been with AAP for five years after working through her cadetship and early career in journalism on Queensland and New South Wales regional newspapers.

She worked first on the Broadcast Desk, which provides a specially scripted service for radio and television stations, then on Police Rounds and for the past two years was Broadcast Editor.

In other newsroom changes, Terry Stayte has been appointed Foreign Editor, and two Senior Correspondents have been appointed: Doug Conway in Sydney and Mike Hedge in Melbourne.

The senior correspondents, two of AAP's most experienced and skilful writers, have the freedom to write in-depth stories and features beyond the normal confines of agency reporting.

**The offices of the Editor, News Editors and Editorial Managers*

Sherrill off to London with Cathay Pacific

Sherrill Nixon of the Canberra bureau has won the 1996 Jim Macdougall Media Scholarship and will spend a month in the UK, based in AAP's London office later this year.

The scholarship, jointly sponsored by AAP and Cathay Pacific, is in recognition of the work done by the late Sydney journalist and public relations consultant Jim Macdougall in establishing Cathay Pacific in Australia.

Sherrill, who covers the Health, Administrative Services, Attorney-Generals, Justice and High Court rounds, won the trip from a high quality field of 12 applicants with an entry described by Editor John Coomber as interesting, balanced and well constructed.

Researchers to Publish AAP's Early History



A media sociologist and an historian are combining to produce a publication on the history of AAP between 1935 and 1947, the first 12 years of its existence.

Neville Petersen, a former ABC foreign correspondent and now lecturer in Media Studies at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean, has been given a grant by the Australian Research Council for the project, which he hopes to complete early in 1997.

His university has also committed special funds to allow Dr Terhi Rantanen of the University of Helsinki, regarded by her peers as one of the world's leading news agency historians, to spend six months in Australia working with Neville.

"Research and other funding is very tight, and this has affected our choice of a time span, but ultimately we would like to complete the full history of AAP with the agency's approval.

"The period we're looking at is, however, logical as it was during this time that AAP emerged as a world force in journalism and by 1947 was regarded as a major news agency," Neville said.

"News agencies have tended to be marginalised in the past. They tend to be regarded as formless, unlike newspapers which develop their own profiles. They deserve much closer attention because they were so influential in newspaper content.

"AAP's history is extremely important. The role AAP played, particularly during the Second World War, in keeping Australians

informed of events overseas is not well known or documented.

"It was also the Government's main source of news at this time and was also important for the Government in actually reporting the Australian war effort to the rest of the world.

"We will be researching government files in Canberra along with Sir Keith Murdoch's papers in the National Library," he said.

Neville spent several weeks in London earlier this year researching records at Reuters and at the BBC.

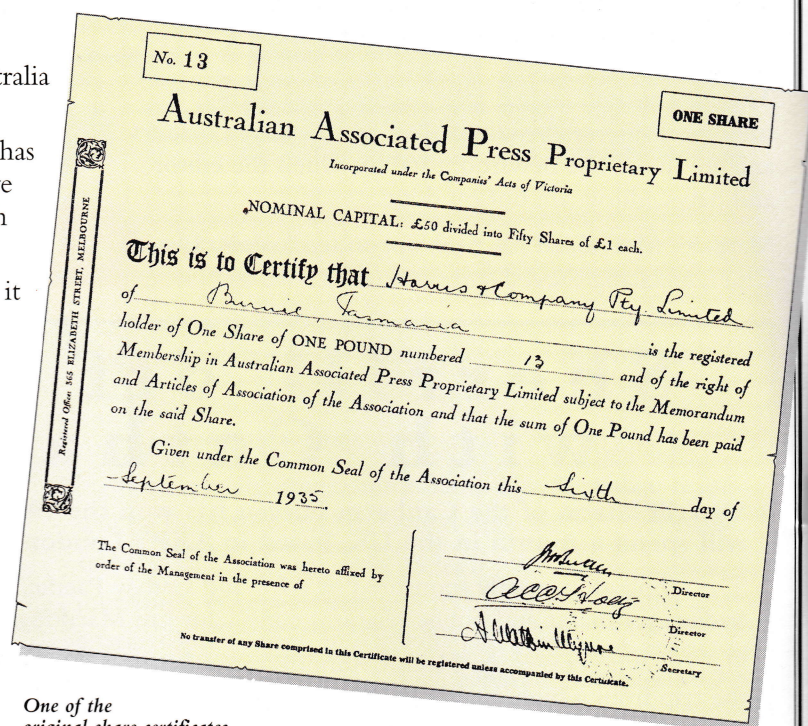
"There's some significant material about AAP's relationship with Reuters and the BBC. Acting to protect its own interests, AAP was responsible for disrupting the relationship between the BBC and Reuters. AAP had exclusive rights to Reuters stories in Australia and when the BBC permitted Australian radio stations to use BBC overseas news, most of which was Reuters material, AAP let it go for about two days and then stepped in to stop it.

"Both the BBC and the ABC were incensed about this and so was the British Government.

"At one time AAP seemed about to cause a major rift between Reuters and the Associated Press of America. It will make fascinating reading."

Neville, had his first book "News not views — the ABC, the press and politics 1932-47" published in 1993 and is working on a second book on the ABC, which he left in 1978 to take up a position at the University of New South Wales before moving to the University of Sydney in 1980.

His second book looks at how policies were developed and how external and internal forces determined how news was handled and defined between 1947 and 1970 when the organisation started its independent news service.

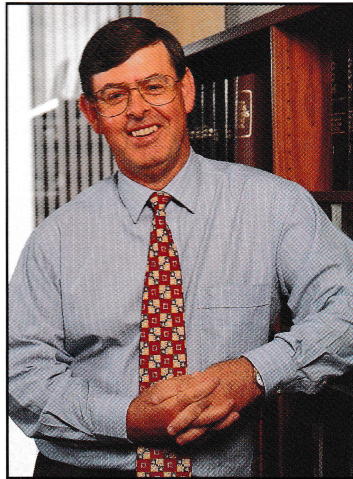


One of the original share certificates

Free Professional Help to Solve Staff Problems

A free, confidential counselling service is being provided on a trial basis to assist AAP staff and members of their immediate families cope with personal or work-related problems.

“Counselling will be available for any issues that individuals see as causing some stress or conflict in their lives,” Director of Human Resources Neil Hope said.



Neil Hope

“The scheme will be completely invisible to the company with regard to who is making use of it. We will receive only limited reporting confined to usage trends and work areas where there are specific recurring issues.”

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is being run for AAP by ACCESS Programs, which provides trained counsellors and psychologists for short term assistance - defined as being for up to three visits.

Help is available 24 hours a day in all states and at several locations. In Sydney for example, there are offices in the city and at Bankstown, Chatswood, Parramatta and Gosford.

“The service is voluntary, confidential, impartial and free to staff. The payback for AAP is that we believe it will help resolve any problems they may have more quickly and without interference with their work.”

Personnel Administration Manager Judith Peake said, “Essentially it’s a support mechanism for staff to help them become more productive in the workforce.

“It is there for when staff feel they need an alternative channel of communication for workplace issues, or when personal problems are weighing them down.

“These could range from marital or relationship problems, to divorce, child care, financial difficulties, grief and loss, alcohol, drug or gambling problems or general stress, anxiety or depression. Problems in one area are rarely isolated and can affect every other area of our lives.

“The program provides an opportunity to talk things out. It is a practical way of getting over the difficulties in our lives.”

“AAP is starting out with a pilot program to gauge acceptance and usage,” Neil said. “Experience from the many other companies which use an EAP service is that about six per cent of staff take advantage of it.

“If the rate for AAP is significantly different than that it would indicate underlying problems which we could then address. We don’t expect that to happen. With a total staff of close to 1,200, we are very much a cross section of the community; in fact we are a community.”

The ACCESS scheme extends initially only to AAPIS and AAPCS employees, though AAPT is also looking at joining.

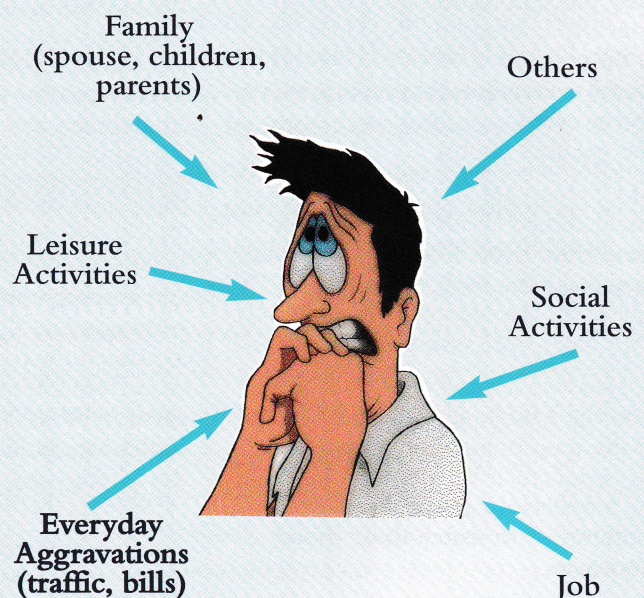
The only identification staff will need to contact ACCESS is a pay slip or staff Photo ID Security Card.

Neil said that in the workplace, a supervisor or a work colleague may suggest to a staff member that he or she consider using the EAP service, but it will be an individual’s own decision whether or not to take up that suggestion.

“Your supervisor will not receive any information from ACCESS about your personal circumstances, unless you determine with your counsellor that disclosure of some information to your supervisor or another person may be appropriate to help resolve your situation,” Neil said.

Counsellors, like other professionals such as doctors, may be legally bound to disclose information in certain circumstances, involving risk to persons, including the client.

contributors to **OVERLOAD**



THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

AAP has many intrepid travellers. For some, it is just part of their working life – part of the job. But for others it is a most exciting part of their life away from work.

Few will have travelled more widely than Executive Secretary Hazel Sproule, who has just returned from four weeks in Syria, Israel and Turkey, but it was the former which captivated her.

Pictured are the ruins of Palmyra and some of Hazel's travelling companions in Moslem garb

accepted as being the earliest known alphabet. It was adapted by the Greeks

then the Romans and it is from this script that all alphabets today are derived.

We were told it would be too dangerous to tour Lebanon as planned. To our delight we did manage to get in for one day as far as Baalbek and saw this amazing structure – okay more Roman ruins – but they were awesome. The remaining six columns from the great Temple of Jupiter have become a symbol, along with the cedar trees, for Lebanon.

Footnote: Only three of our intrepid travellers visited the "Hamami" and had a Turkish bath, and yes I was one of them. I recommend it. It's a great way to have a good scrub.

JETSET OFFERS STAFF TRAVEL DISCOUNTS

Jetset, which was recently appointed AAP's Corporate Travel Agent, is offering discounts to staff members on its domestic and overseas holiday packages.

Discounts range from three to five per cent on cruises, to four per cent on Jetset Australian holidays, five per cent on international packages and 10 per cent on travel insurance.

The discounts are only available at the Jetset locations that service AAP's company travel account – North Sydney and George Street in Sydney, Queen Street, Queens Road and Maribyrnong in Melbourne, Adelaide Street and Sunnybank in Brisbane, Leigh Street, Marion and Tea Tree Plaza in Adelaide and Gould Street in Perth.

Ever since Sunday School days, the mention of The Road to Damascus has stirred my imagination and here at last I am. St Paul where are you?

The past and present come together throughout the Middle East, ancient/biblical history is everywhere. Syria's history dates back to King David, the Assyrians in 732 BC, Nebuchadnezzar then the Persians in 530 BC. In 333 BC it fell to Alexander the Great. The Greeks, Nabataeans and finally the Romans in 64 BC.

Its history since then has been equally problematic up to and including the Turkish and German forces using it as a base in WWI. The French, with a mandate from the League of Nations, occupied Damascus from 1920 to 1945 when Syria finally became independent.

Damascus is the largest city in Syria – busy, dusty, noisy, and the car horn concerto continuous. President Assad (a thorn in the flesh of the western world) is omnipresent, looking over you at every turn from large, larger and gigantic photos.

The Syrians are very friendly and unconcerned about the tourists so there is no hassle from vendors. And they make the most wonderful biscuits in the world, small cookies with dates, nuts, sesame seeds etc.

If Syria was located anywhere other than the Middle East, it would be one of the most popular destinations in the world. As it is, it remains a delight for travellers – a country that has monuments to match those found anywhere.

They include the imposing Crac Des Chevaliers, the castle of Saladin, the citadel of Aleppo, the splendid

Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and, above all, the desert city of Palmyra – and all combined with wonderful hospitality.

PALMYRA

From Damascus we travelled along the desert road through a vast world denuded of vegetation. A fork in the road, in the middle of nowhere, and a sign saying BAGDAD this way, then after three more hours of travel – PALMYRA.

Its slender creamy beauty rising up fantastically in the middle of the hot sand is lovely and unbelievable, with all the theatrical implausibility of a dream – courts and temples and ruined columns – one of the great historical sites covering some 50 hectares.

Palmyra dates back to the 2nd century and was an important link on the old Silk Route from China to India to Europe. It was destroyed by a devastating earthquake in 1089 rediscovered in 1678 by two Englishmen and finally excavations started in 1924.

CRAC DES CHEVALIERS

The Castle of the Knights is an incredible sight, very well preserved and looking much as it must have 800 years ago. The Crusaders built and expanded the fort over some 100 years from around 1150 to house a garrison of 4,000 – one of the eight castles they built during their stay in the Middle East from the 1st Crusade of 1096 to the 8th and final in 1270.

Another interesting revelation from Syria – UGARIT, once the most important city on the Mediterranean coast and a centre of trade, where a dig found written clay tablets widely

From Rugs to Riches...

A Passion for Fine Carpet



“Tell people that you’re interested in oriental rugs, and the typical response is: ‘Oriental what?’” says Leigh Mackay.

A journalist for many years and now AAPIS Sales Manager, Media, Leigh was captivated by these sensuous, hand-woven textiles while traveling and living in Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan in the 1970s with his wife, Margaret.

In 1980 they helped establish an Oriental Rug Society in Sydney that is still thriving. It has mounted major exhibitions at the Powerhouse Museum and the Botanic Gardens, and last year organised a day-long seminar and exhibition at the Art Gallery of NSW. Leigh occasionally writes and lectures on the topic.

The term oriental rug includes more than the traditional Persian carpet. It covers various types of rug woven across Central Asia, from Turkey and the Caucasus to India and western China. The more highly-priced examples are coloured with vegetable dyes.

Leigh says that most oriental rugs today are woven in commercial workshops, or in the homes of villagers who sell them to local merchants for export. The most popular designs are floral.

While the commercial pieces are often beautiful and finely-made, Leigh and Margaret are particularly keen on older rugs with boldly-coloured geometric designs woven by tribal people for their own use.

“It’s an ancient and extraordinarily

powerful folk art – a blend of colour, pattern and tactile qualities – and almost entirely the art of the women of the tribe,” Leigh said.

“Our initial education came while sitting for hours on soft, glowing carpets spread across the floors of rug shops from Istanbul to Kabul, sipping green tea and talking with dealers, or watching rugs being woven in village homes.

“Looking and asking — that’s how you learn appreciation and identification — but the basic rule is buy whatever pleases you and fits your budget.

“We also learned to spot some of the tricks practised by less scrupulous dealers. Some paint the colours back into faded rugs. Many also antique a new carpet by spreading it across the roadway for a week while the sunlight and traffic mellow the rather stark, synthetic dyes and impart that indispensable used look.

“In Iran, carpets are ubiquitous, part of the economy. While we were living in Isfahan in southern Iran, a local breadwinner was hit and killed by an American army vehicle.

“A court ruled that the army should

compensate the bereaved family with a set of fine silk rugs.

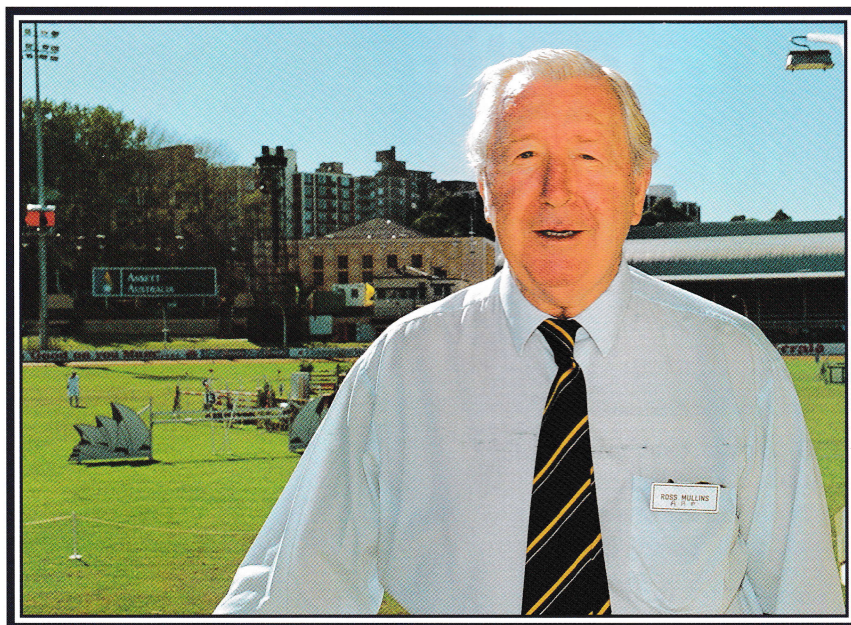
“Museums and private collectors are paying huge prices these days for fine old rugs and trappings that were once within the range of a journalist’s income,” says Leigh wistfully.

“By patiently searching through auctions and dealers showrooms, plus haggling over the cost, you might still procure a beautiful but relatively inexpensive piece, but bargain-hunting is becoming harder.

“I’ve noticed that the people who pursue oriental rugs tend to be as interesting and diverse as the rugs themselves. They range from eccentrics, adventurers and artists to lawyers, academics and business leaders.

“It’s the sort of mixed milieu in which many journalists feel at home.”

Ross Made Life Member of RAS After 50 Shows



Former senior sports reporter Ross Mullins has been awarded honorary life membership of the Royal Agricultural Society for his coverage of 50 consecutive Sydney Royal Easter Shows.

“It was very pleasant to be recognised in front of my peers at the annual media luncheon, and we reminisced a bit about shows past and present,” he said. “I’ve always got a deep satisfaction out of the show and it’s a record that’s unlikely ever to be broken.”

Many changes came on the show scene over those years, Ross recalls, from as mundane yet essential as the addition of doors to the men’s toilet cubicles, to the then contentious issue of Sunday opening.

“Sir Vincent Fairfax was totally opposed to it when he was RAS President. I can recall him saying that the show would open on Sunday over his dead body, but it came to pass before that happened.”

Ross covered his first Royal Easter Show in 1947 at a time when the Fairfax family, the owners of the Sydney Morning Herald where he worked, were extremely influential in the RAS.

“Our job was to collate the

thousands of results from all the livestock and produce judged at the show,” he said. “In those days, when Sir Warwick Fairfax bred cattle, the SMH printed the results down to wherever his entries were placed.

“It was intensely detailed work and often meant sitting for the full day and well into the night in the main ring and around in the sheds and pavillions.

“We had experts in every area, from cattle to sheep and pigs, and events like the woodchopping, and because of that expertise, we got a lot of stories out of it. We also saved the RAS embarrassment from time to time by checking the judges’ cards.

“My own particular early passion was the woodchopping events and more latterly wheat and wool stories.”

Ross joined the Sydney Morning Herald, where his father and mother had worked in the accounts department, as a copy boy at the age of 14 in 1937. “My wage was five shillings a week,” he said, “which I supplemented by helping out on the sports desk at weekends.”

Though Ross became a senior advertising representative with Fairfax, he continued to cover sport at weekends and the show every Easter and eventually switched to

journalism full time.

Now aged 73, Ross said he’d had very few employers in a working life spanning more than 50 years.

He worked for the SMH for 25 years up to 1961 when he left to edit his own trade magazine. Then followed a period in radio and as Public Relations Coordinator for the NSW Trotting Club for two-and-a-half years until he joined AAP in 1976 as a senior sports reporter.

“Somehow I managed to hang on to the show coverage for the SMH through those years, and when I came here AAP took over compiling the results for the newspapers.

“At AAP, the show just fitted in nicely between the cricket and the rugby seasons and later the AFL which I covered when the Swans came to Sydney in 1982, up to my retirement in 1988.

“Since then, I’ve returned every year to manage the show coverage for AAP although this year’s probably was the last one I will cover. The RAS has used its own computers for the past few years to deliver the results direct to the newspapers.

“But the published details are not as accurate as when we did it all by hand,” he said.

Vu Wants to Build Australia-Asia Ties

Vu Ngoc Pham, whose family was sponsored by AAP when they migrated to Australia from Vietnam 16 years ago, wants the company and its staff to know that they made a good investment.

Vu, 22, who has just won three prizes in the final year of his Bachelor of Science degree at the University of New South Wales, is now working as Assistant Brand Manager with a major international company.

"In the long term, I would like to work in an area where I can improve relationships between Australia and Asia especially in the economic and commercial field," said Vu, who is also studying French, which is spoken fluently by his mother, and working on his Cantonese.

His father, Pham Ngoc Dinh, who has worked for AAP since 1980, was first in charge of stores at the Glebe technical centre and is now Document Controller with AAP Communications Services.

"(Chief Executive) Lee Casey spoke to me when I was eight years old and told me I should study hard," Vu said. "My English wasn't good enough then to understand what he was saying so Dad had to explain it to me in Vietnamese. AAP's whole attitude towards my family and helping people settle here has been much appreciated. "Dawn Willis, David Jensen, Norman MacSwan and Mick Connolly are just some of the other people who helped us a lot."

Vu won a \$10,000 a year scholarship to the UNSW for his four-year course, under a co-op program which is in part sponsored by AAP.

Earlier this year he was awarded the R.J. Webster Prize

for the best performance throughout the Bachelor of Science degree in Textile Technology/Management, the Textile Institute Prize for the best performance in Textile Technology and shared the J.B. Speakman Prize for the best undergraduate thesis in the final year.

"AAP has encouraged not only its employees but also their families to work hard and apply themselves to their studies. I have always been pushed by Dad to do well and contribute as much as possible back into Australia," Vu said.

Mr Dinh, as he is popularly known at AAP, was Reuters Office Manager in Saigon throughout the war years and was a good friend to the many AAP correspondents based there between 1964 and 1973.



LONG SERVICE MEDALS

Ten year long service awards were presented to Sydney and Melbourne staff in April.



In Melbourne the recipients were Sales Manager, Southern Region, Asia Business Services Wendy Coombs, News Editor, Victoria Tom Hyland, senior copytaker Kaye Cremin and Technical Supervisor RF with AAP Communications Services Marco Pantazi. The awards were presented by Director, Human Resources Neil Hope.

In Sydney, Deputy Chief Executive Barry Wheeler presented awards to Comnews Manager Rosemary Bridge, FMS Engineering Supervisor Jan Kulisiewicz and Sydney bureau journalists Maureen Dettre and Margaret Scheikowski.

Power Shutdown But All Services Stay Up

The mains power has been turned off and the entire building is in darkness save for emergency centres on Levels 2 and 7.

There are no lifts, no air conditioning, and extractor fans and large, long plastic tubes pump out hot air into the stairwells.

Not a scene from some apocalyptic vision of the future, just a glimpse of the successful ITG and Building Services operation when power to the AAP Centre was shutdown for six-and-a-half hours on May 25/26.

The Power Factor Correction, as it was termed - an exercise to ensure the efficient use of the building's mains supply - was imposed by Energy Australia and the building owners. Similar shutdowns are taking place at major buildings all round the city.

"There will be ongoing benefits to AAP with a significant reduction in power costs expected to result

from it," Director, Information Technology Group (ITG) Geoff Want said.

"Our major concern was to maintain services to clients and to ensure minimum disruption of services during the blackout," he said. "The key areas affected were AAPT's National Network Management Centre, the newsroom, our communications links with clients and the switchboard.

"Property managers Colliers Jardine wanted to vacate the entire building but we persuaded them to allow us to have small emergency teams from AAPIS and AAPT to watch over our systems.

"We were able to run emergency power to the computer room on Level 7 and we ran power from the NAB building next door to keep the Network Management Centre up and running."

Geoff said the systems were powered down and brought up again without a hitch in an operation that was totally transparent to clients. An emergency mini newsroom operated from the Glebe technical centre throughout the outage.

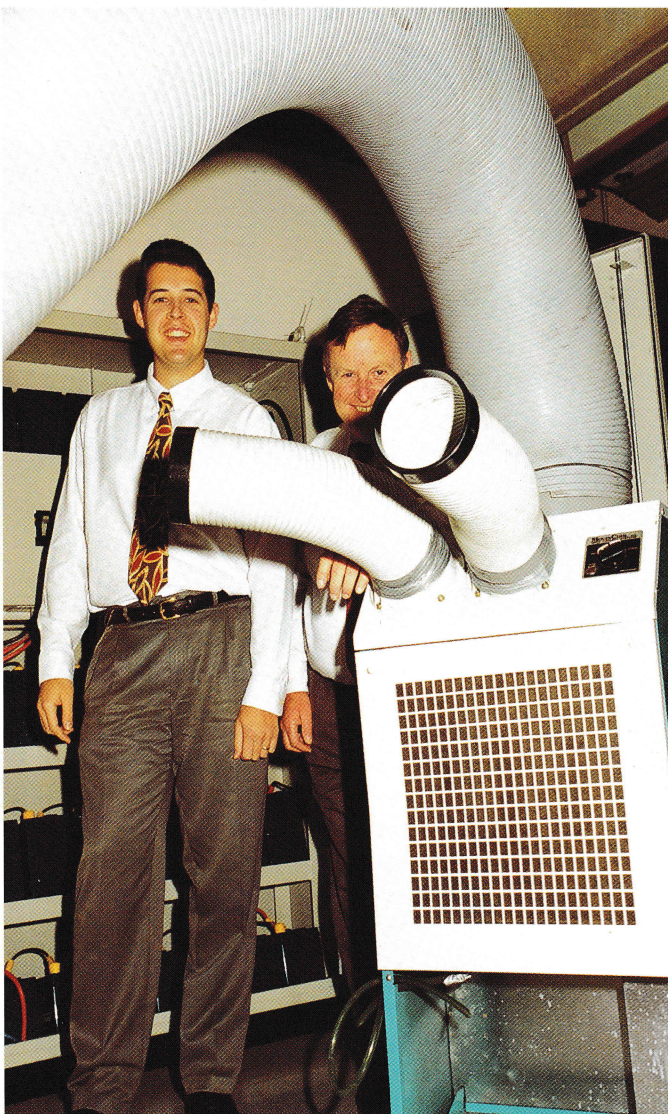
"There was a great spirit of cooperation from everyone involved. The whole operation showed the value of planning, starting weeks before the event and including daily project meetings over the couple of weeks preceding it."

The extractors, which acted like giant vacuum cleaners, were used to suck the hot air from the computer room and pump it via the tubing down the stairwells.

The shutdown was from 11 p.m. Saturday to 5.30 a.m. Sunday with project managers Graeme Mercer and Paul Buttie supervising operations between those hours. Geoff and Systems and Technology Manager Glenn Smith were on duty in the hours leading up to and immediately after the shutdown.

Deputy Chief Executive Barry Wheeler in a note of thanks said: "The services did not miss a beat and that is the ultimate accolade. No greater tribute can be paid to ITG than to record the fact that the process was completely transparent to our customers.

"You have my thanks and admiration, and that of the company and your colleagues, for all the work, the planning and the foresight that you brought to the process."



Building Services Manager Graeme Mercer (right) and Assistant Engineering Manager Paul Buttie with one of the extractor fan units used to pump hot air out of the 7th floor computer room.

360 Flying Fingers Cope with ComNews Overload

To cope with the peak demands of the quarterly reporting season, AAP Financial Markets set up a team of 36 top typists to cope with the ever-increasing flow of companies reporting to the Australian Stock Exchange.

The team worked in two shifts from 9.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. to keep pace with the reporting peak on April 29 and 30 and May 1 and 2.

Comnews Rosemary Bridge said 16 typists worked the day shift and 20 more were on duty during the evening.

"We moved in total more than 600 company reports," she said.

"With the centralisation of ASX operations, AAP has closed down its Company News operations in Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide and covers all the traffic from Sydney.

"Normally our staff of 12 are able to handle the daily flow of company reports to the ASX," she said. "But at peak season, we'd be absolutely overwhelmed by the volume.

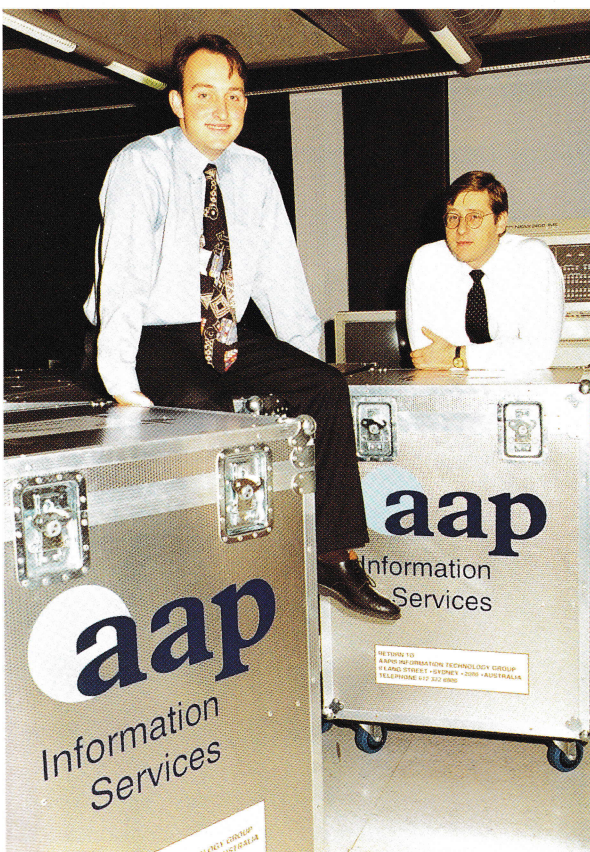
"So we hired a team of talented typists experienced in keyboarding this type of traffic from Julia Ross Personnel to help us through the peak reporting period."

An area of Mezzanine Level 3 at the AAP Centre was used as the temporary nerve centre of the Company News operation. Andrew Meagher, FMS Product Marketing Manager, set up a bank of 20 PCs for their use.

Completed reports were transferred by disk for

transmission from the Comnews office on Level 11.

AAP's Company News Service is carried on AMQ and Bloomberg, Equinet, Beacon, Iress and Bourse Data.

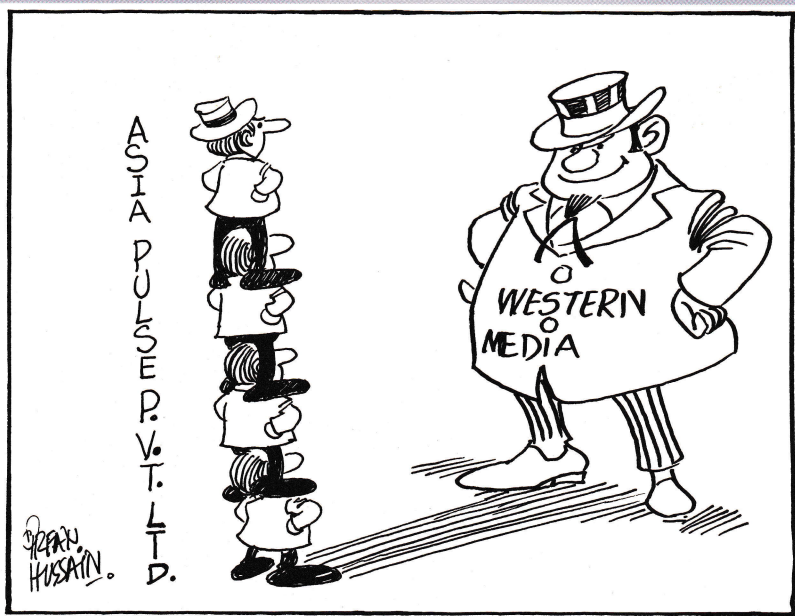


Atlanta Bound

System Manager Michael Gourlay (right) and engineer Scott Frain with some of the seven new packing cases specially designed to ship AAP's computer equipment to Atlanta for our Olympic Games newsroom. AAP will have a team of 18 in Atlanta including 13 journalists and three photographers with an additional reporter covering the yachting events at Savannah. Michael and Scott will also be part of the Games team. Editor John Coomber, who will head the team, said the newsroom would be operational by July 9 for the Games which run from July 19 to August 4. Information technology Group Director Geoff Want said the shipping cases would be available for use by all other AAP departments after the games, with booking to be made through Engineering Supervisor Kerrie Bray.

They are made of plywood and aluminium laminate with heavy foam padding and compartments designed to hold a PC box, monitor and peripherals. "We had our own crates made because of the need to ensure that our equipment arrives in good working order," Geoff said. "In the past we've used an assortment of packing cases and regularly lost something or sustained damage to the equipment.

"We thought it was time to get something done that would protect our equipment adequately and reflect our professionalism in these matters."



This cartoon appeared in *The Pioneer*, a major Indian daily newspaper published out of Lucknow, along with a detailed story on the setting up of Asia Pulse announced in Sydney on February 22.

Asia Pulse Chief Executive Chris Pash said it shows how the service is being perceived in the region and how everyone around Asia is prepared to work in concert to present their own domestic information outside the region.

“For the first time, they have an electronic information service which is owned, written and marketed by the people who know and live in the region.

“Up to now, most of the news about Asia which the rest of the

world saw was gathered by transnational or multinational media organisations - the way the world viewed Asia was determined, if you like, by foreign organisations.

“Through Asia Pulse, the news organisations of Asia will play a major role in informing the rest of the world about the region.”

Chris said framed, enlarged copies of the cartoon had been presented to the Asia Pulse directors and were also being used as a promotional tool to present to major customers.

Asia Pulse shareholders are AAP Information Services, Japan’s Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Indonesia’s Antara News Agency, The Press Trust of India and South Korea’s Yonhap News Agency.

Staffers Star on Wheels & Water

Two AAPT-sponsored staff super stars have continued to excel in their chosen sports - on wheels and on water.

Melbourne-based sales representative Ben Savage, 24, won the Rookie of the Year award and finished second overall in the 1996 Auscar-Sportsman racing season.

Ben’s said his ability to mix it with Australia’s leading drivers in his rookie year had created great interest among the motorsports public to the benefit of AAP Telecommunications as his major sponsor.

His most popular victory was in his home state at the Adelaide International Raceway where he downed the ultimate championship winner Shane Houllahan.

Fitting in the demands of motor racing with work is not always easy. Getting to meets in Sydney and Adelaide means driving all night on Thursday night for the practice and time trials on Friday and the race on Saturday. He then faces the drive back to Melbourne on Sunday and work Monday.

The Sportsman class is for the older Commodores and Falcons made obsolete by the newer, more powerful models and Ben said his ambition now is to step up into the full Auscar ranks when the news season starts in October.

“The new cars are much more expensive

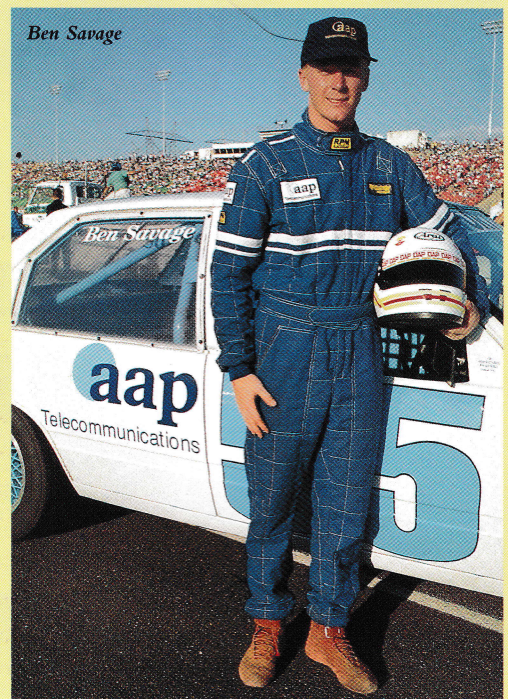
EXCELLENCE AWARDS FOR AAPCS STAFF

AAP Communications Services has introduced monthly excellence awards for staff with the winners entitled to personal expense claims to the value of \$150.

The awards are decided by an Excellence Award Management Selection Team made up of Greg Tocknell, Ian Smith, Jeff Roll and Mal Chandler.

Award winners for February were Phil Brady, System Design Engineer - Radio Systems, Tony Sanna, Field Engineer - Support Services and Grahame Miles, Pre-Sales Engineer - Services.

Award winners for April - there were no nominations in March - were Ian Carr, Installation Coordinator - IDS, Josephine Ward, Sales Administration Support and Pat Herety, Customer Services Representative (Voice).





Jenelle Hunt

to race so I'll have to find more sponsorship dollars. But it's a 10 times higher profile competition and the cars up front get very good television coverage," Ben said. "They draw crowds of up to 30,000 at Calder Park here."

Australia's top ranked water skier Jenelle Hunt is off to the US in October to compete in the US Nationals at Mission Bay, San Diego, and in the San Francisco Bay race behind powerful offshore boats.

Jenelle, 21, a billing services team leader in Sydney, won the right to represent Australia at the championships, which attract the top skiers from all round the world, over a series of five races following her second placing in the Australian championships in Gladstone when her rope broke at the start of the race.

She also has her heart set on representing Australia at the world championships in South Africa in August, 1997.

"AAPT has made it much easier for me to compete by sponsoring all of my equipment and my travel and accommodation," Jenelle said.

Her other recent achievements include a 3rd placing overall in the 10-race men's open series and a second placing teamed with her brother, Peter, in the Gold Coast Classic over the June long weekend, where she was the only woman skier in the 85 boat field.

TWO CONQUER FORSTER IRON MAN TRIATHLON

Two AAPT staffers Mick Watts and Craig Ridley completed the punishing Australian Ultra Distance Iron Man Triathlon at Forster at their first attempt.

The event, contested in April each year as a qualifier for the World Championship in Hawaii, is made up of a 3.8 km swim, a 180km bike ride and a 42km run - with a 15-hour time limit for competitors to complete the course.

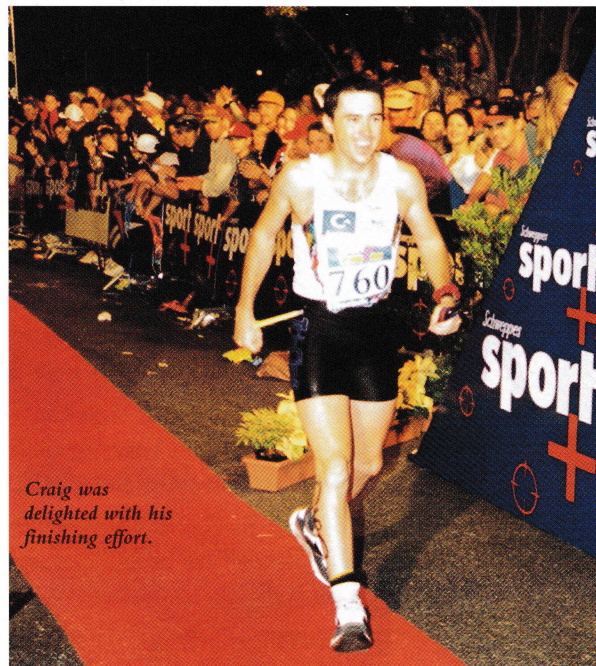
Just over 1,000 people started in the event and 898 finished, including more than 100 women.

Mick, 38, who works on AAPT's Corporate Help Desk, said, "I've wanted to do it for 10 years and it was great to finally realise the dream."

But lack of experience took its toll and Mick, who dehydrated badly on the marathon run, had to spend two hours in the recovery tent on a drip to restore his fluid levels.

"I had a great swim leg and went reasonably well on the bike until technical troubles struck and I had to stop four times to make minor adjustments. But I blew it on the run by not taking in enough water."

Craig, 25, who works in the National Network Management Centre, had



Craig was delighted with his finishing effort.

his worst moments at the opposite end of the course.

"I got hit a few times by other swimmers in the mad scramble over the first few hundred metres and that was a bit daunting," he said.

"But the run was my best effort. I felt good and gradually built it up and managed to overtake most of those who went past me on the bike leg."

Mick finished the event in 12 hours 36 minutes and Craig in 12:55 - with about half their times taken up by the bike ride.

"We are not real strong cyclists and it was a rough road," Mick said. "The crowds were fantastic though. When you came back into Forster on the bike circuit it was like something out of the Tour de France. They lined the streets several deep. And then over the last kilometre of the run they really lifted you."

Despite the pain, both enjoyed the experience. "I will have another crack at it if I get the chance," Craig said. "But you will have to qualify for future events. They are just being swamped with entrants."

Mick said the event made big demands on work and family life. Both he and Craig put in 11 months training in preparation for it. "It just takes control of your life," Mick said.

Mick Watts emerges from the water after a strong swim leg.

Big New Golf Days At Top Courses

Major golf days for AAP Group staff are to be sponsored by AAPT and AAPCS at Riverside Oaks and Camden Lakeside in March and October each year.

The first AAP Communications Services Golf Day will be at the Riverside Oaks course on the Hawkesbury River near Cattai on Sunday, October 13, this year.

The booking is for 40 players with hitoffs from 9 a.m. to 10.15a.m. with a barbecue lunch to follow at the end of the round - or at the halfway mark for the later starters.

The normal cost of the day - with golf carts included - would be \$75. But the AAPCS sponsorship will reduce the cost for players to \$35 each.

The AAP Telecommunications Golf Day - also for 40 players - will be at Camden Lakeside on Sunday, March 16, 1977 - with reserved tee times from 9.08 to 10.20 a.m.

The subsidised cost there for players will be \$37 per head including lunch and a cart, or \$25 including lunch for those who choose to walk.

The courses are two of the best available for social club use in the Sydney region and a strong turnout of players across the three companies is expected.

Advance bookings are being accepted now by Graeme Mercer and Neil Hope on Level 15 in the AAP Centre, John Radovan on Level 5 and Ian Smith of AAPCS at Glebe.

Because of the anticipated demand, payment is required with your booking.

Graeme, honorary President of the Social Golf Club, said the two sponsored days were part of a concerted effort to revive support for the Group's oldest organised social outlet.

"We have a number of other golf days booked for the rest of this year and into 1977 and anyone working for AAP and, when numbers permit, their friends and family, are welcome to take part.

"To boost our cash reserves, we've launched the Sydney Golfers Numbers Game. It costs \$2 a number to play and the prize is \$50 each week. You can either enter on an ad hoc basis and take whatever number's available, or you can buy your favourite number for three months at a time.

"The winning number is the first one to drop in the Monday night NSW Lotto draw."

AAP Information Services has been a major sponsor of the Social Golf Club since its inception and that support will continue through the provision of golf balls and other items offered as prizes at its regular monthly competitions.

Social Golf Club bookings for 1996			
Chatswood	7 a.m.	July 7	\$20
Wakehurst	7.30 a.m.	August 18	\$20
Glenmore	9 a.m.	September 29	\$15
Riverside Oaks	9 a.m.	October 13	\$35
Eastlakes	8.18 a.m.	November 24	\$17

AAP GROUP REGATTA IN PERTH

Overcast conditions and 20-30 knots winds failed to dampen the enthusiasm of competitors in the inaugural AAP Group Regatta, sailed on the Swan River in Perth in March. The event was sailed in six Foundation 36

yachts with keen sailors among the 72 guests from the three companies divided into teams. The non-sailors followed proceedings from the comfort of a motor boat. Perth office manager Jesse Flottman said the day was a



great success with no last minute cancellations despite the weather. "The strong winds made for some exciting moments out on the water," she said, "and the first time the sun came out was just as the boats were mooring for the barbecue on the lawns of the Royal Perth Yacht Club."

Pictured left to right is the winning crew: Delaine Weeks (Plumbing World), Phil Crighton (Krupp Australia), Simon Weedon (Coflexip Stena Offshore Asia), Cliff Gibson (Gibson Quait & Associates), Jake Petoom (Pacific Mutual Australia), the Skipper Michael Manford (Paterson Ord Minnett), Brett Fraser (Pont Securities) and Len Wright (AAPT)