



AAPT Stars in ASX Debut



Chairman and Chief Executive Lee Casey and AAPT Chief Executive Larry Williams at the ASX on the morning AAPT listed.

AAPT made a successful debut on the Australian Stock Exchange, soaring to a high of \$2.23 in first day trading and closing at a 19 per cent premium to its issue price of \$1.85.

In the first float by a domestic telecommunications carrier, 41 million shares or 16 per cent of AAPT was floated on November 7 in an initial public share offer to raise \$76 million.

The prospectus valued the company at \$473 million but its market capitalisation had increased to \$557 million at the day's closing price of \$2.18.

Employees of the AAP Group were offered up to 1,500 shares each at a 10 per cent discount at \$1.66 each, and 348 people took up the offer.

AAPT listed 10 days ahead of the giant Telstra float which also returned investors a sizeable profit, closing at \$2.67 against its issue price of \$2.00.

AAPT shares traded at a high of \$2.41 on the day of the Telstra listing.

Chairman and Chief Executive Lee Casey said he was delighted with the AAPT result given recent share

market volatility and on a day when the overall market was down 2.2 per cent.

More than a million shares traded in the first 15 minutes and strong institutional buying pushed turnover for the day to 4.86 million, or almost 12 per cent of the shares on offer.

AAPT Chief Executive and Managing Director Larry Williams said, "We always thought we had priced the issue fairly. We wanted to offer value in our stock and hoped that on listing there would be an opportunity for some increase and not a decrease in its value."

Mr Casey said the funds raised would be used on network expansion, acquisitions and infrastructure development.

AAPT's existing shareholders, AAP Information Services Pty Ltd, the parent company of the AAP Group, Singapore Telecom and Todd Corporation continue to be major shareholders.

As a result of the float APPIS' shareholding reduces from 51 to 37.3 per cent, and SingTel and Todd from 24.5 to 20.6 per cent each.

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AAPT Serves up an Ace with Scud

The personable, big-serving tennis ace Mark Philippoussis has become the star player in AAPT's saturation advertising campaign to promote its Smartchat residential service.

Philippoussis, with the AAPT logo prominent on his left shirt sleeve, has been used in several full-page newspaper ads with tag lines like "Call the US and heckle your friends" and "At 40c a minute to the US, everyone's a winner."

AAPT's sponsorship of the 20-year-old Australian coincided with the US Open championships and the Davis Cup tie against the United States.

The campaign will be extended over the coming months to support Philippoussis at each major tournament he contests.

"Mark Philippoussis represents many of the values upon which AAPT prides itself," Director of Marketing John Matic said. "He is young, up-and-coming and most importantly, he is making a serious mark on the competition."

"We are proud to be supporting such an outstanding young Australian sportsman."

Mr Matic said the Philippoussis sponsorship was AAPT's first initiative as a carrier to target the residential market by using a popular sports identity, and "we believe it will greatly enhance our positioning in the consumer market."



VicOne the Big One for New Carrier AAPT

The Victorian government has selected AAPT to put the whole state online in a wide area networking deal estimated to be worth \$500 million over five years.

The VicOne network, which will be fully in place by June next year, will link 3,100 state government offices and agencies on a high bandwidth ATM network offering public access 24 hours a day seven days a week.

The network will include links between schools, hospitals, police, courts, local councils and community services. It will support the requirements of the rapidly growing telecommunications and multimedia industry and the Internet in both metropolitan and regional Victoria.

AAPT, through its wholly-owned QNET Communications subsidiary, will build, operate and manage the network.

Victorian Treasurer and Multimedia Minister Alan Stockdale said the state government would spend up to \$150 million to deliver its full range of online services by 2001, and AAPT is expected to receive some \$350 million in additional revenue through the use of the network by the private sector.

"The government chose AAPT ahead of Telstra for this contract because we're happy with AAPT's price and technology solution," Mr Stockdale said, adding that Telstra would still play a significant role through the carriage of trunk services.

Mr Stockdale said the network would be one of the most advanced government networks anywhere in the world.

Its major beneficiaries would be the people of regional and rural Victoria.

He said that in addition to Melbourne, services would become available to Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat, Shepparton and Morwell from early 1998 and to other regional centres by the middle of next year.

AAPT Chief Executive Larry Williams said VicOne would be a catalyst for online industry growth in Victoria and deliver significant long-term cost savings to the Victorian government, public and business community.

"AAPT is very excited to be providing a fully-managed network which will enable all of Victoria to access the future," he said. "The network will provide an 'any-to-any' solutions-based network throughout the whole of Victoria."

He said 35 full time jobs and up to 100 contract jobs would be created as a result of the installation and maintenance requirements.

The network will involve 34 major nodes and 3,100 access points, bandwidth of between 64 kbits and 34 megabits/sec and be ATM and Frame Relay capable. The major points will also provide modem access.

Its lead client is the Victorian Education Department with each school having access to central IT resources for administration and development of curriculum, plus a range of multimedia services including videoconferencing.

The Victorian contract comes just over a year after AAPT won a two-year \$100 million contract to manage the South Australian government's telecommunications business.



AAPT Director Regulatory and Legal Brian Perkins and Director Strategic Development Stephen Picton.



AAPT Director Customer Operations John Matic, Director Carrier Operations Robert Dewstow and Director Operations and Engineering Trevor Harris.

Deputy CEO Outlines AAPIS Strategic Plan

AAP Information Services will develop direction and focus across the organisation, its products, technology and the markets it serves under its new Strategic Plan, Deputy Chief Executive Barry Wheeler said.

He told the AAPIS Sales Conference in the Hunter Valley that the plan was broadly based on two elements - increased emphasis on the collection, storage, management and access to commercially valuable content, and the development or acquisition of transaction systems on which to overlay information services.

Barry said the Strategic Plan was predicated on the need for traditional information vendors to reposition their products and strategies and to broaden their role in the overall commerce and trading value chain.

The plan outlined a course of action for AAP to exploit the opportunities for new business directions provided by Internet-based technologies.

These included data warehousing of AAP and third party material, joint ventures or distribution arrangements, transaction and broking services, more specialist content, channels to markets for AAP products and compiling Internet expertise across several disciplines.

The plan proposes that AAP should widen its direct market to include customers willing to pay as little as \$50 a month for a specific product and to wholesale its information to markets which returned less than that amount per customer.

“It should be the primary objective of the company to firstly make up lost ground and

then stay at the forefront of emerging developments since competitive advantage through appropriate use of technology is essential,” Barry said.

Organisations that failed to adapt faced the threat of encroachment on their position by their current information sources on one hand and their customers on the other.

The strategy for AAPIS’s future will embrace five elements - business and markets, technology, organisational structure, investment and international expansion.

The Strategic and International Business Division (SIBD) headed by Executive Director John Lowing has been given the responsibility for its implementation.

It will work closely with all business divisions to investigate, plan and cost initiatives before handing them back to the appropriate business units for implementation

James Cuming has been appointed Director Strategic Development within SIBD reporting to Mr Lowing and Andrew Meagher as Director, Strategic Development Content and Distribution.



Andrew Meagher (left) and James Cuming.

Seven Icy Weeks to Save Mawson's Huts



Members of the expedition pictured outside their hut during a training camp at Cradle Mountain, Tasmania are (left to right) Dr Estelle Lazer, Joan Russell, David Gillott, David Killick, documentary cameraman Malcom Ludgate, Dr Rod Givney, Alasdair McGregor, Allen Rooke, Geoff Ashley, Rob Easter, Alan Grant and Ted Bugg in foreground.

Nine men and two women set out from Hobart next month to spend seven icy weeks camped on the edge of Antarctica, working to save the fragile baltic pine huts built by Sir Douglas Mawson and his expeditioners in 1912.

The AAP Mawson's Huts Foundation has chartered the Antarctic expedition vessel *Akademik Shokalskiy* from Southern Heritage Expeditions of Christchurch to carry the team, their supplies and equipment to Cape Denison and back.

The first voyage departs Hobart on December 11 and returns to Bluff in New Zealand on January 4, 1998.

The working party, led by Brisbane surveyor and landscape architect Alan Grant, includes AAP Sydney bureau journalist David Killick.

Other team members are conservation architect Geoff Ashley, painter and photographer Alasdair McGregor, archaeologist Dr Estelle Lazer, medical officer Dr Rod Givney, camp manager and chef Joan Russell, carpenters David Gillott, Gerard Bugg and Paul Delaney and communications operator Allen Rooke.

The working party will have 51 days at Cape Denison to complete the project which includes extensive work on the Main Hut used as the base for Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition (AAE) of 1911-14.

The *Akademik Shokalskiy* leaves Bluff on January 22 on the return journey to pick up the team and lands them back there on February 16.

Spare berths on the ship, which carries 38 passengers,

have been sold to the public to help defray the \$750,000 charter fee.

Adventurous travellers, who have paid around \$12,000 each per voyage, will have several days to explore the site and be able to help the team unload supplies and set up base camp.

Mawson's main hut is now largely ice filled and sections are in danger of collapse from the weight of ice and snow. The roof too is in danger of being torn away by the fierce katabatic winds of up to 300 kph which sweep down from the polar regions and which caused Mawson to call Cape Denison "the windiest place on earth" and to title his book, "The Home of the Blizzard."

The AAE was a scientific expedition, which uncovered a wealth of information on Antarctic geology, biology, meteorology, magnetism and oceanography and used radio successfully for the first time on the continent to link with Australia.

It also established Australia's claim to a large slice of the polar continent.

When Mawson next returned to his huts at Cape Denison - in January, 1931 - it was at the head of the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition (BANZARE) during which he formally proclaimed the 42 per cent of Antarctica which is now Australian territory.

The AAP Mawson's Huts Foundation was established late last year to raise \$2 million to fund the most urgently needed work this summer and to establish a continuing care and maintenance program.

Bangarra's New Home on the Harbour



Bangarra dancers perform at the opening of their new theatre at Walsh Bay.

Bangarra Dance Theatre, which AAP has supported since its establishment eight years ago, has a splendid new home on Sydney Harbour under a 20 year lease granted by the New South Wales Government.

Director Administration Dawn Willis, who has been a Director of Bangarra since 1993 said, "Apart from financial help, AAP has provided Bangarra meeting space and secretarial and managerial assistance for many years.

"We've been very proud to see Bangarra go from strength to strength and take its place as one of Australia's leading dance companies with a growing international reputation."

NSW Premier Bob Carr handed Bangarra the keys to its new \$3 million theatre space at Walsh Bay's Wharf 4/5, which he said had been designed to meet Bangarra's needs, on June 11.

The premises, on the level below that of the Sydney Theatre Company, includes a 280-seat theatre, rehearsal and sound studios and reception and administration areas.

Mr Carr said Bangarra had faced tough times in its early days without a home and restricted to small performances.

Governor General Sir William Deane, Chief Patron of Bangarra, which means "to make fire" in the language of the Wiridjuri people, said the company was the spiritual voice of Aboriginal Australia and now established at the forefront of contemporary dance groups.

Major corporations often used Bangarra as a means of demonstrating Australian history and culture, Sir William said. Bangarra now needed large scale corporate sponsorship and it was time some of those same companies came forward to support it.

Their recent productions include the acclaimed performance of *"Fish"* at the Edinburgh Festival, their participation in the Festival of the Dreaming and their performance of *"Fish"* at the Sydney Opera House.

In November, Bangarra collaborated with the Australian Ballet company to perform Stravinsky's *"The Rites of Spring"* at the Victorian Arts Centre in Melbourne.

That performance, said Dawn, was a fusion of contemporary indigenous dance and classical ballet evoking strong emotion. "With their new home and growing recognition both in Australia and overseas the future is very exciting for Bangarra."

No End to the Talents of AAP Copytakers



Philippa Allan shows what she thinks of the musical talents of her editorially-gifted father. And above, a more composed Philippa.

Philippa Allan, daughter of Sports Editor Bill Allan and a Sunday morning sports desk copytaker, has won one of Australia's top orchestral music scholarships to study for a year in Berlin.

A final year student at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Philippa, 21, was awarded the inaugural \$25,000 Deutsche Bank Berlin Philharmonic Orchestral Academy Scholarship.

Philippa said she was "shocked but thrilled and excited" to win the award. "It was such a surprise," she said. "My mother cried when I told her."

Her year at the academy, one of the world's most prestigious, began on September 1.

Philippa, who began violin lessons at the age of five, toured with the Australian Youth Orchestra to the US and Europe in 1994.

But playing in Berlin is something she has dreamed about for years.

"I've always wanted to go where the history of music is," she said. "Music comes from the people and the language. You can learn about it externally but there's something about going to the actual place where a piece was composed or where a musician actually lived. It's like

a pilgrimage. You can truly live the music."

Philippa will study with the first concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic Toru Yazunaga.

"As well as taking private lessons, I will be playing chamber music with other students at the Academy," she said. "I will be able to watch any rehearsals of the Berlin Philharmonic and go to all their concerts too."

"Eventually I want to come back to Australia to play with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra," she said. "But my special interest is in chamber music and I would like to form my own quartet in a few years time."

Does music run in the Allan family? "Dad is tone deaf. Mum learned piano for a couple of years, but my younger brother and sister are talented. Both play piano and violin," Philippa said.

"Vincent, 19, is in first year at the conservatorium studying violin, and Sonia, 13, has a music scholarship to Pymble Ladies College."

And the copytaking? "It's not as strange as it may seem," she said. "The mindset for sport is actually very similar to that in music. We all have to perform and practise. Musicians just do it with instruments rather than bats and balls."

We Bought the Phone Company and Still Didn't Like the Bills

Even if you own a telephone company, it can be hard to ensure that your business in paying the lowest rates for its telephone services.

But AAP Information Services has provided a very good example of the savings which are available to businesses if they use AAPT to analyse and consolidate their telephone accounts.

Director Administration Dawn Willis said AAPIS had made a saving of \$86,000 a year by rolling all AAP Group voice traffic into the one account, thus earning an additional 5.63 per cent discount from the carrier AAPT.

AAPT Corporate Account Manager Markham Lane migrated all AAP Group phone bills onto AAPT's new Switch On product which calculates its discounts on Telstra's standard rates.

Dawn said that while companies in the AAP Group had previously achieved considerable savings through AAPT, various levels of discount applied to the different divisions and departments depending on what phone plan they had signed on to and at what time.

Discounts under AAPT's Vista and Vantage call plans ranged between 27 and 34 per cent.

The grouping of all accounts under the Switch On product achieved additional discounts of up to 10.7 per cent with an average additional saving across the Group of 5.63 per cent.

The savings were calculated on a detailed 10-page analysis of one month's call traffic prepared by Markham at Dawn's request.

This established that on an average monthly telephone bill of \$128,00, the additional annual saving to AAP would be \$86,000.

Markham's call destination analysis also showed that local calls account for 36.2 per cent of AAP's total voice traffic, long distance national calls for 60.7 per cent and international calls for 3.1 per cent.

In total, 73.5 per cent of all national traffic was carried during peak period and 51 per cent of all national traffic was between capital cities.



Dawn Willis with Switchboard Supervisor Leonie Price.

Asia Pulse Book a Best Seller

Asia Pulse, the commercial intelligence service managed by AAP on behalf of a regional joint venture, has produced a book which is fast becoming a best seller.

"Business Etiquette in Asia, An Overview" is a 55-page run-down on how to conduct yourself in business dealings in 15 countries.

A press release in the USA about the book produced more than 400 email requests for copies. To date more than 550 copies have been distributed, mostly by email.

"This is a great result and gave us good qualified leads in the USA, which is now the largest market for Asia Pulse," said Chris Pash, the CEO of Asia Pulse. "We're now seeing those leads being converted to paying subscribers."

The story about the etiquette guide was picked by WCBS in New York, where one million listeners got a 40 second interview with Chris every hour for 12 hours one day.

"And WIRED magazine in September printed a very short piece, around 25 words, which gave our email address to get the etiquette guide. We've had 4-5 requests each day since that.

"United Airlines plans to promote the guide on its web site, so we're expecting another wave of requests shortly."

Asia Pulse compiled the guide by asking its writers throughout the region to offer tips to foreign business people. Some of the highlights are:

- In the People's Republic of China (PRC), never write notes using red ink. This suggests that the writer will die soon. Avoid using the number four at all costs because this, too, signifies death.
- In Malaysia, many leading businessmen have been conferred with a titled name. Care must be taken that they're addressed properly.
- In South Korea, don't fondle or scribble on your host's business card. He or she might be offended.
- In India, the significance of a business arrangement is often determined by the amount of time spent in negotiations.
- In Indonesia, never touch a person's head, or point with your forefinger, as this is considered impolite.
- In Thailand, it is considered offensive to show the sole of the shoe or foot to another. It is therefore necessary to take care when crossing your legs.
- In Japan, never expect a junior person to make an on-the-spot decision. Hierarchies must be respected and important decisions are usually made by senior executives.

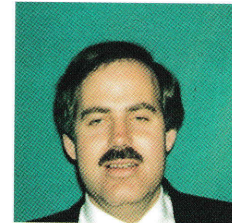
The Way We Were - 10 Years Ago

What a difference 10 years makes!

The photos on this page are taken from the first batch of staff security cards issued by AAP in 1987. They were unearthed by Building Services Manager Bill Glance during a routine clean up a few weeks ago.

Director, Human Resources, Neil Hope said the cards were duplicates made in case any of the originals issued to staff members were lost.

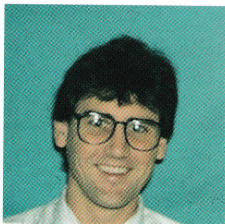
They provide an interesting social record of the way fashions have changed. And also of those who appear to have discovered the secret of maintaining their youthful good looks.



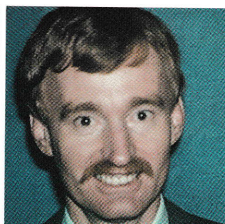
Neil Aveling



Venetia Babbington-Lees



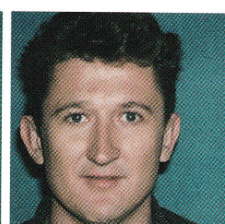
Paul Bland



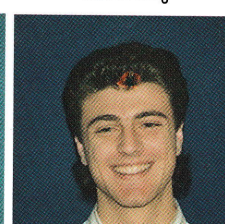
John Coomber



Lara Diespecker



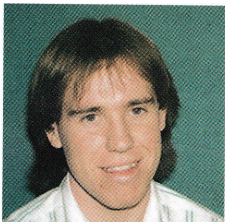
Graeme Finley



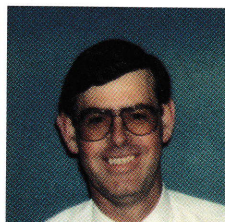
Marco Giuliani



Virginia Goldhagen



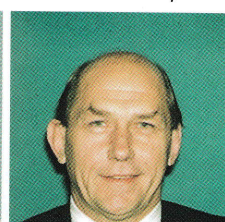
Brett Gorman



Neil Hope



Nick Hughes



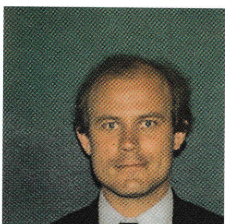
David Jensen



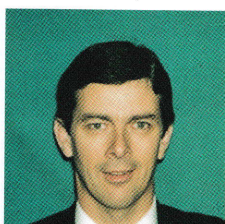
Richard Knights



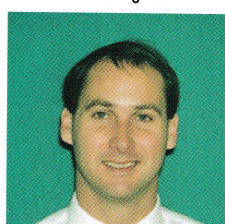
Jan Kulisiewicz



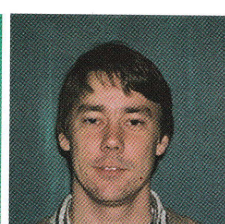
Mark Lever



John Lowing



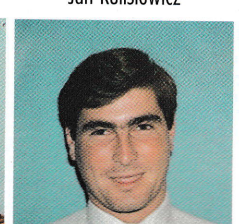
Craig McIvor



Andrew Marwood



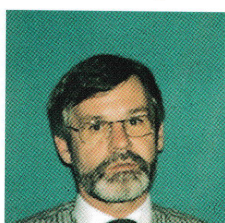
Elsie Matangi



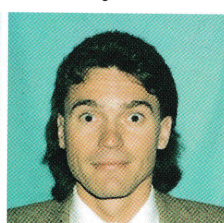
Andrew Meagher



Graeme Mercer



Les Murphy



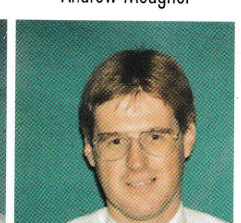
Michael Osborne



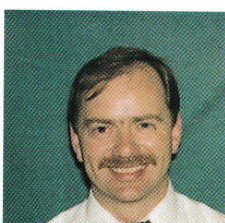
Jennifer Parkes



Chris Pash



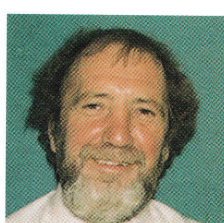
Paul Reid



Michael Sloan



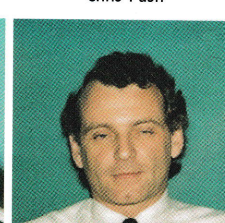
Andrew Stokes



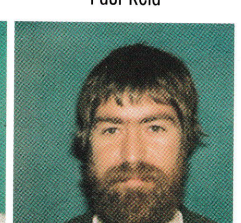
Ian Telford



Effie Vlahos



Barry Wheeler



Peter Woods

SHERRY SUICIDE NOTE A MEDIA CAUSE CÉLÈBRE

AAP had a major exclusive with the delivery of what was intended to be Senator Nick Sherry's suicide note. But when he survived, our sensitive handling of the note's searing contents provoked a behind-the-scenes media controversy of its own.

Canberra Bureau Chief James Grubel handed the note to Opposition Leader Kim Beazley's press secretary and they in turn passed it on to the Australian Federal Police.

Neither source would release the note to the media and AAP ran only an edited text, deleting some highly personal material.

Coming as it did at the end of two of the most turbulent weeks in Federal Parliament in years, the media's determination to obtain the full text of the note placed enormous pressure on senior AAP executives.

Deputy Chief Executive Barry Wheeler said the decision not to run the full text of Senator Sherry's letter was based on sound ethical principles.

"Publication of the letter was clearly intended by the Senator in the event that he was no longer around to witness its contents being carried by every newspaper in the land," he said.

"The fact that he was in a hospital bed and expected to make a full recovery changed the way we had to treat the letter.

"Balanced against that obligation was the public interest; Senator Sherry was, after all, a federal politician whose name had suddenly dominated the print and electronic media over the previous few days.

"That's why Editorial took the proper decision in the best traditions of a responsible news agency."

Editor in chief Tony Vermeer, who was called in from holidays, said, "It was the most difficult ethical dilemma I've had to face at AAP.

"A lot of the note was intensely personal. Although it was headed press release, it read more like a will."

Barry said that although some newspaper editors advocated that AAP should have published the letter to allow them to make the decision (on whether or not to print it) "that would have been the coward's way out of the dilemma; AAP would have sidestepped its responsibilities as a news organisation.

"That's why news organisations subscribe to AAP; so that we can generate stories and apply sound agency news judgments to the Editorial file regardless of whether the customer is radio, television, tabloid, broadsheet, serious, sensationalist or anywhere in between.

"To have abrogated our responsibilities in this difficult matter would have justified a future scenario where defamatory stories could populate the wire in the expectation that newspapers can make up their own minds.



Leader of the Opposition

Mr John Coomber
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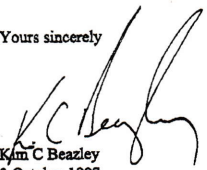
Dear Mr Coomber

I am writing to commend the performance of your Canberra Press Gallery reporters throughout today's sad events surrounding Senator Nick Sherry.

The way the whole matter has been handled by Sarah Timms, James Grubel and Mark Lever - from receipt of Senator Sherry's letter early this morning to reflection this evening - is a refreshing change from events earlier in the week.

They have been responsible and professional in every way, and a credit to your organisation and your profession.

Yours sincerely


Kim C Beazley
3 October 1997

Parliament House, Canberra, A.C.T. 2600 Phone (06) 277 4022 Fax (06) 277 8495

Mr Beazley's Fax to Editor John Coomber

It's nonsense, of course.

"It's simply because news agencies are different that we get leaks or are entrusted with material such as the Sherry letter. And that's why Editorial got a tough one absolutely right."

Senator Sherry, from Burnie in Tasmania, wrote the three-page letter addressed to AAP after having dinner with Mr Beazley and members of the Labor Party's federal parliamentary leadership team on Thursday, October 2.

The letter was delivered to AAP by a Parliament House security officer when Sarah Timms opened our Press Gallery office at six the next morning. Sarah immediately realised the seriousness of the situation when she opened the letter about an hour later, and called James at home.

Police later broke into Senator Sherry's Canberra flat and found him seriously injured with his wrists slashed. He was taken by ambulance to Canberra Hospital and released after a six-day stay.

Senator Sherry had been the target of vigorous government attack over the parliamentary travel rorts saga which had also led to the resignation of three government ministers and two of Prime Minister John Howard's senior staff members the previous week.

Twin Tragedies Bring Out the Best in AAP Coverage

There's nothing like a big story to bring out the best in AAP journalists, and in recent times they have excelled in two of the biggest for some time.

The death of Diana, Princess of Wales, was easily the biggest international news story of the year. In terms of its impact on the public (as opposed to its historical importance) it may well be the biggest single-event news story since the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963.

Editor John Coomber said old newsroom hands tossed around big stories like Harold Holt's disappearance, the moon landing, Watergate, Cyclone Tracy, the Whitlam dismissal, Azaria Chamberlain, the Port Arthur Massacre and various bushfire disasters. But they could not recall a story having quite the same jolt on ordinary Australians.

The public interest was simply extraordinary, and for the next few weeks publications all over Australia placed heavy reliance on AAP for words and pictures to satisfy the public demand for information.

The first break of the story was shortly before 10 a.m. Sydney time on Sunday, August 31. Martin Parry, a relative newcomer to the demanding copytaster's position on the news desk, was "tasting" the international wires during what is normally the quietest time of the week - late Saturday night in Europe. Agence France-Presse moved the first item on the Paris car crash, and the other agencies soon joined in with reports that Dodi Al-Fayed and the driver were dead, and that Diana was in hospital with unspecified injuries.

The first credible report of Diana's death was moved at 1.20 p.m. on Sunday Sydney time by the domestic



Princess Diana pictured in Sydney wearing a Versace evening dress when she was guest of honour at a Victor Chang fund raising dinner.

The photograph was taken by AAPT's very own celebrity photographer Brigitte Riffis, pictured with camera at the ready.

British agency PA, quoting government sources in London. Within a minute or so AFP matched the report, quoting the French government.

John said that as usually happens with a big story, off-duty AAP staff rang in to offer assistance. Selina Day and Belinda Tasker gave up their days off to contribute to a comprehensive file which included backgrounders on Diana's links with Australia, interviews with people connected to her and reaction from all quarters.

The production desks worked smoothly to move as much copy as possible (Judy Skatsoon deserves a special mention for a top effort on the Broadcast Desk) and AAP Image handled a flood of pictures and graphics.

In London, Louise Robson was about to close up after the Saturday evening shift when the first reports came through, and ended up working through the night until Chief European Correspondent Steve Connolly came in on Sunday morning to relieve her. They led our coverage from London for the next week, culminating in the

funeral where they were among the first to seize on the significance of the Earl of Spencer's eulogy and its veiled criticism of the royal family.

Many of AAP's subscribers rang to say how much they appreciated the quality and breadth of coverage of both events.



SURVIVAL IN THE SNOW

A week in the snowfields will never be the same for AAP reporters after their efforts covering the Thredbo landslide tragedy.

All through the coverage, reporters endured sub-zero temperatures as they monitored the rescue operations day and night for more than a week.

Despite the hardships, AAP demonstrated its ability to mobilise resources quickly for a major breaking story.

Canberra journalist Liz Rudall arrived home just after midnight on July 31 after a late shift when she heard of the disaster.

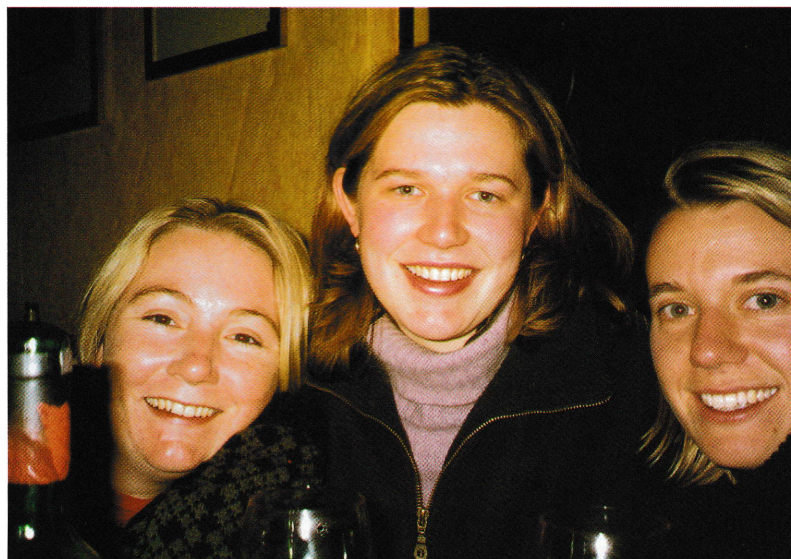
She rang the police for confirmation, filed her first report of the disaster, packed some warm clothes and headed off for the three-hour drive to the scene.

Filing Editor Phil Dickson was woken at home while two more Canberra staff Mark Lever and Maria Hawthorne were roused in the early hours and sent to the scene with a carload of borrowed clothing for the icy nights ahead.

Senior correspondent Doug Conway, on holidays at neighbouring Perisher, made his way to Thredbo to help out and Finance Desk staffer Catherine Munro also gave up her skiing weekend to contribute to our comprehensive coverage.

In the early hours of Saturday, AAP broke the news that Stuart Diver remained alive in the rubble after three full nights in sub-zero conditions. Again AAP sent extra staff to the scene as the Canberra bureau juggled rosters and rental cars to relieve those on the frontline.

We had extra staff on hand in Canberra to cover his arrival at hospital and to update his condition at 10 o'clock that night. As the interest of other media began to wane after the dramatic rescue, AAP continued to file on a regular basis until the last body was dragged from the rubble eight days after the landslide.



Pictured left to right Maria Hawthorne and Liz Rudall of the AAP Canberra bureau with Trudy Harris of The Australian show their relief after the most remarkable survivor of the Thredbo disaster was taken to hospital.

40 Years on, PNG Still a Key Posting

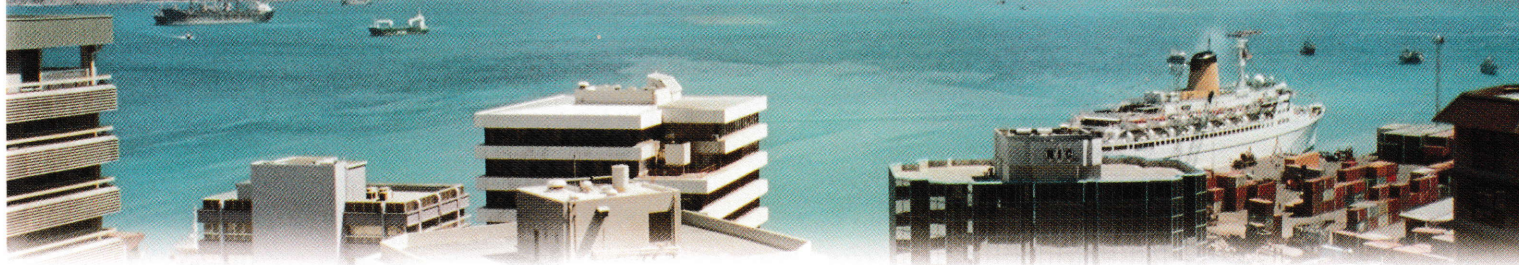
AAP opened its Port Moresby bureau 40 years ago - in June 1957 - on a six months trial basis. It has been staffed continuously ever since and the following list of correspondents, the year they took up their postings and where they are now, reveals many familiar names:

Year	Correspondent	Present Position
1996	Paul Ruffini	AAP correspondent, Port Moresby
1994	Lucy Palmer	SMH correspondent, Port Moresby
1993	Belinda Goldsmith	Reuters, Stockholm
1991	James Grubel	AAP Canberra Bureau Chief
1990	Chris Falvey	Ministerial adviser, Canberra
1987	Ian Vallance	Freelance, Singapore
1985	Craig Skehan	SMH Canberra
1983	Chris Pash	Chief Executive Asia Pulse, Sydney

1981	Kevin Ricketts	AAP Sydney Bureau
1979	Chris Lee	Scriptwriter, Sydney
1978	Alan Thornhill	Freelance, Canberra press gallery
1976	Terry Stayte	AAP Foreign Editor, Sydney
1975	John Wasiliev	Freelance, Sydney
1974	Barry Wheeler	AAP Deputy Chief Executive, Sydney
1972	Peter Brown	Investor/student, Sydney
1968	Don Woolford	AAP Hobart correspondent
1967	John Mancy	Solicitor, Sydney
1965	Les Murphy	AAP Public Affairs Manager, Sydney
1965	Derek Round	Freelance, Martinborough, NZ
1964	Dick Beckett	Aka Sam Orr, deceased
1963	John Leggoe	Unknown
1962	David Stockand	Unknown
1962	Tony Curtis	News Ltd, Sydney
1961	Alan Ramsey	SMH political columnist, Canberra
1959	Peter Smark	SMH columnist, Sydney
1958	Bill Gasson	Retired, Wellington, NZ
1957	Dick Myerscough	Deceased

* Kerry O'Brien (ABC 7.30 Report) filled in for seven weeks as holiday relief for Don Woolford in 1970.

Paradise Live



Papua New Guineans like to say "expect the unexpected" of their country. For some "expats" the PNG experience is an intimidating time, for others an exhilarating roller coaster ride that finishes all too quickly.

Violent crime, political corruption and decaying and inadequate services are popular media images of this fledgling country. And it would be wrong to understate PNG's many problems.

But against that is a country rich in culture and tradition, mineral wealth and lush, breathtaking scenery - "Paradise Live" according to the local tourism authority.

AAP Correspondent Paul Ruffini says foreign journalists based in Port Moresby can certainly expect the unexpected - from being teargassed by police trying to break up a riot to being suddenly elevated to VIP status.

"On assignment with former Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan in the remote eastern highlands village of Lufa during the June general election, I was graciously accepted as part of the visiting delegation and taken to the makeshift grandstand.

After the politicians and local officials had been introduced, the master of ceremonies urged the crowd to "Welkam Paul Ruffini, em pilot bilong helicopter."

Uncertain of what to do, I stood up to take my bows and greet the warm applause while a composed Sir Julius motioned for me to sit down knowing full well that I wasn't the brave chopper pilot at all.

A mumbled aside from Sir Julius to the MC to explain that I was in fact a journalist led to the quick correction that I was a "niusman bilong Australia." Barely a ripple of applause this time and I didn't bother to stand up.

When the teargas came in Port Moresby as I was frantically trying to call Sydney on my mobile phone a small barefoot boy - no doubt amazed by my sense of priorities - tugged at my sleeve urging me to run.

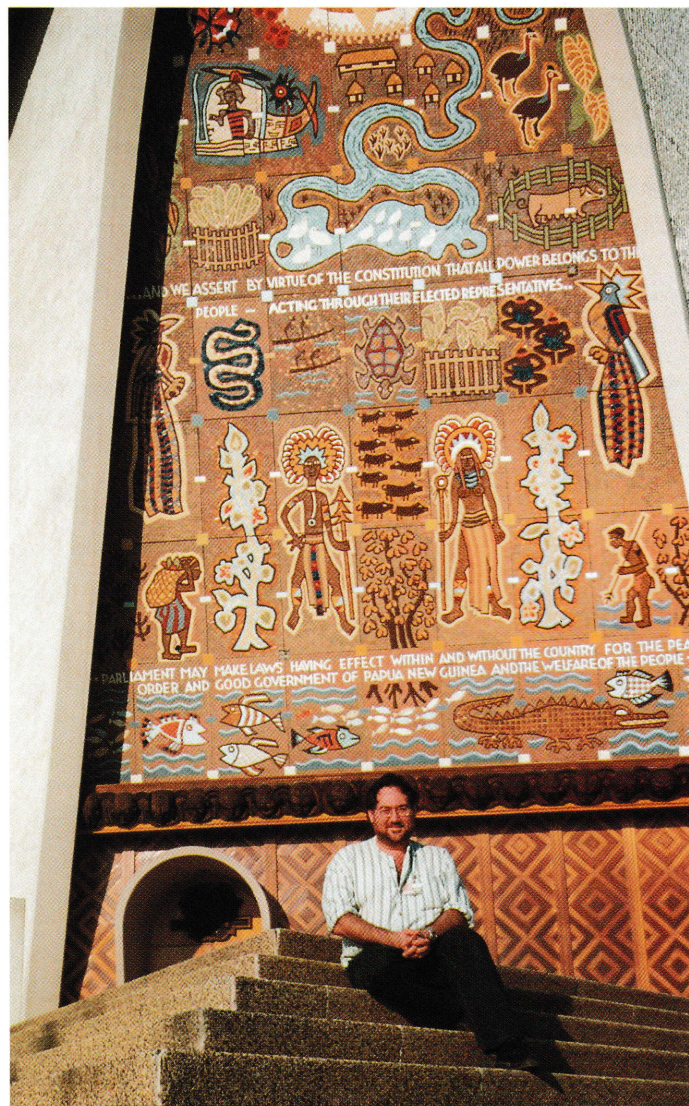
I'd never been teargassed before and thought 'How bad can it be?' as I held the dead phone to my ear. Soon my face and lungs were burning and my eyes stinging. All thoughts of filing a story had disappeared as I stumbled across the road and joined my choking Australian colleagues.

Minutes earlier we'd been lumbering up the Sir Hubert

Murray Highway - a posse of unfit journalists pursuing the rioters on a sticky March afternoon.

My small friend, who had tried to teach me the value of running when teargas is fired at you, took us to a tap where we could wash our faces. Some of the rioters sitting nearby were laughing, whether in relief at their own escape, or at us, I could not tell.

These are but brief sketches of a country many Australians struggle to understand as our perceptions of our only former colony begin to change."



Paul Ruffini on the steps of Parliament House, Port Moresby, and above, the city's splendid harbour.

Editorial Signs for New Cybergraphic System

AAP has signed a contract with Melbourne-based Cybergraphic Systems to install their new Genera editorial system in late 1998.

The PC-based Cybergraphics system will replace the current editorial system, affectionately known as Baudrunner, commissioned in 1983 and which still relies on some 100 of the original Coyote terminals, although the central Tandem system has been upgraded several times.

As a word processing and routing machine, the present SII system is still highly effective but maintenance of terminals in particular has become expensive with parts impossible to buy.

"We believe the change to Cybergraphic will give us a state of the art editorial system with special developments incorporated to meet news agency requirements," Editor in Chief Tony Vermeer said.

"These mainly relate to wire handling but copyflow in an agency also differs from newspapers where Cybergraphic has proved its worth in recent years."

Editorial also needed to move from a proprietary system to an open system so it could access other platforms within the company, including the horse racing database and the Internet, and improve its ability to handle email and other developing technologies, Tony said.

Initially the new system will run 150 PC terminals but be immediately expandable to 200 terminals with potential for further growth.

About half the units will be in Sydney and the remainder in other capitals where bureaus range in size from 25 in Melbourne to one each in Hobart and Darwin.

AAP journalists will work with the CyberNews application on PCs running Windows NT4 or later software, which has been used in News Limited bureaus worldwide for the past two years and which was recently installed at Fairfax Community Newspapers in Melbourne.

The newly developed Genera Database running on Windows NT SQL Server using DEC hardware will provide the central primary and backup systems. Smaller DEC servers will be used for a test system and a portable special events system.

AAP will install Cybergraphic's WireStream product to handle incoming copy from around the world and to output to subscribers in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Fiji.

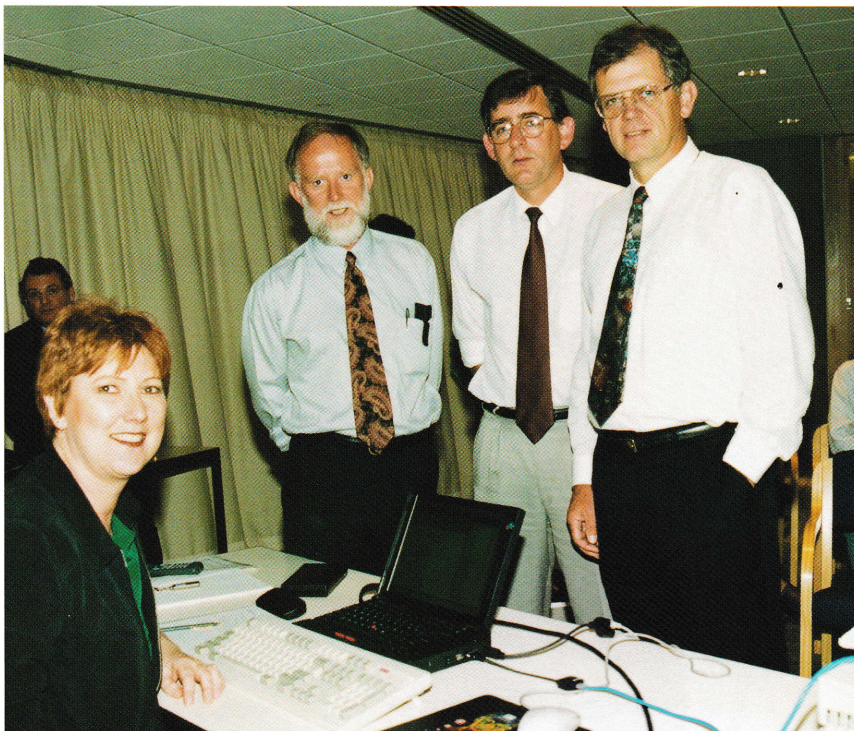
Currently, AAP supports 26 different input formats from major worldwide news suppliers with 14 different character sets, most of which are not under its control. I

also uses 46 outputs to deliver its services to newspapers, radio, television and government and business subscribers.

Cybergraphic Managing Director Bernard Grinberg said, "We're very excited by this project. AAP have very special requirements which Cybergraphic is uniquely placed to be able to deliver.

"This is a very important order for us as it will be our first editorial system solely based on our Genera Database and will see the development of WireStream for the complex routing and copy handling features required by AAP and other similar publishing organisations."

Special routing requirements must also be provided so that subscribers who want to use AAP's communications network can file directly to an individual target newspaper.



Pictured (left to right) at a demonstration of the new system's capabilities are Cybergraphic Sales Executive Toni Ferrari, AAP Editorial Manager Col Burgess, Cybergraphic Project Manager Richard Furneaux and AAPIS Major Projects Manager Nick Hughes.

Satellite Network Gives Way to Net Technology

Eleven years after it was established, AAP's national satellite network, developed principally to service regional daily newspapers, has been dismantled.

The 73 satellite delivery sites running in an arc from Cairns to Hobart and across to Perth, Adelaide, Darwin and Alice Springs have all been transferred to new delivery systems using Telstra digital data lines and the Internet.

The satellite network was decommissioned without ceremony in July.

Garry Dawson, who worked on the system from its inception in August, 1986, marked its passing with a brief email to AAPIS Information Technology Director Peter Woods and Technical Services Manager Graeme Finley, who coordinated the transfer of clients to other systems, stating:

"Please note that the AAP SDSVSAT System will be shutdown at 0700hrs Monday the 21st July.

"Civil engineers will be performing major work on the Glebe antenna with the intention of moving to PanAmSat during the week. Grateful for your patronage over these years and would hope to look at new business opportunities in the future."

PanAmSat will be used by AAPT Sat-Tel Pty Limited, which was set up to take advantage of new, low-cost satellite technology which has emerged in the broadcast arena.

"SDS provided good coverage to the daily newspapers in regional areas over many years," Graeme said. "But it has been superceded by newer, cheaper, more efficient technology including the Internet, which we are now using to deliver financial information, pictures and graphics.

"Some of our smaller media subscribers may also switch to receiving their news services via the net in the near future."

All 37 regional daily newspapers plus major regional television and radio stations have been transferred to Telstra's Fastway service, a 2400 bps digital data line.

Some 20 financial markets clients now receive their information via WinFrame, the dialup AMQ service via the Internet.

Other clients such as CentreBet, which has its

headquarters at the Pioneer Park Racetrack on the outskirts of Alice Springs, now receive their news services via NewsTrack for Notes on the Internet.

"Our broadcast regional picture services have been replaced by the Preserver with clients either dialling in directly or accessing it via the Internet," Peter said. "The Preserver provides the great advantage of allowing them to browse thumb nail images of all the pictures available and make their own selections. Picture advisories are still sent out on the wire to keep them abreast of the latest offerings.

"Capital city newspapers now receive their world pictures direct from AP in London via AsiaSat2.

"Clients who'd had problems with the satellite were very happy to see the end of it and it has saved us a lot of money," Peter said.

"Our delivery costs have come down by more than one-third and are likely to drop further as more services are delivered via the Internet."

"We're providing faster, more reliable delivery which is very much easier for us to manage, and if communications problems do occur, we might lose one subscriber rather than the whole lot with the satellite," Graeme said.



Pictured (left to right) on the roof of the Glebe building are Garry Dawson, National Manager Satellite Development, AAPT Sat-Tel with Graeme Finley and Peter Woods

Low Cost Long Distance Calls for Residential Customers

AAPT cut up to 60 per cent off the cost of national and long distance calls with its Smartchat product in its first foray into the residential market as soon as it had gained carrier status.

Chief Executive Larry Williams said, "AAPT is once again setting the benchmark in the Australian telecommunications industry. Our business customers have enjoyed our competitive rates over the past six years and now residential customers can also reap the benefit of our community service with Smartchat.

"Our new residential service is yet another example of our commitment to push the boundaries of competition."

"It also allows us to significantly increase our existing strong base of business customers, adding to our growth as a full service telecommunications player."

Director of Marketing John Matic said AAPT was able to offer such massive savings because of its highly efficient network. "Our Smartchat rates are sustainable and they are here to stay."

On national calls, AAPT has introduced three simple flat rates for residential calls to anywhere in Australia:

national long distance call rates

Peak times 9am - 6pm weekdays

Off Peak times 6pm - 9am weekdays and all weekend

Economy times 6pm - midnight Fridays and all weekend

peak 25c per minute

off peak 15c per minute

economy 9c per minute

A 12c flagfall applies to all national and international calls.

continued from page 1

Mr Williams said AAPT was forecasting significant growth in earnings for the year to December 31, 1998, with the availability of non-code access, reductions in service costs, growth in existing services and new markets such as the residential sector.

The prospectus said that no dividend would be declared for the year to June 30, 1998, but that AAPT would endeavour to provide shareholders with fully franked dividends in subsequent years.

The company forecast a net loss of \$5.2 million for the year to June 30, 1998, but said it expected to turn this around to post a net profit of \$28.4 million for the six months to December 31, 1998.

AAPT posted a net loss of \$28.29 million for the 18 months to June 30, 1997.

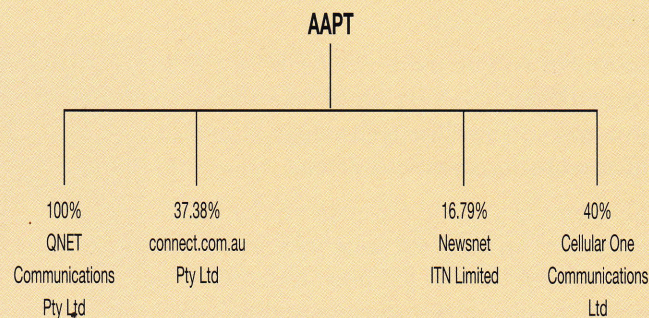
AAPT's authorised capital is currently \$1,000 million divided into 10,000 million ordinary shares of 10 cents each.

The company floated at 7.1 times estimated earnings for calendar year 1998.



Larry Williams (left) and Lee Casey (right) with Warwick Smith Minister for Family Services and Minister representing the Minister for Communications, Senator Richard Alston in the House of Representatives.

AAPT's Structure - 1997



AAPT Shareholding Structure Post Issue

	Shares (millions)	%
Shares offered for subscription	41.00	16.0
Existing Shareholders:		
AAP Communications Holdings Pty Limited	95.27	37.3
STI (Australia) Holding Pty Limited	52.54	20.6
Todd Communications (Australia) Limited	52.54	20.6
Utilities of Australia Pty Ltd	12.61	4.9
AAP Group Executives	1.49	0.6
Total	255.45	100.00

AAPT TO OPERATE FULL CARRIER QUALITY NETWORK

There was a big difference between AAPT and some of the other new players in the telecommunications market, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Larry Williams said.

AAPT operated a full carrier quality network comparable with Optus and Telstra and "we intend to continue expanding our network," he said.

AAPT had been formally accepted into a number of major international submarine consortia giving the company cost effective access to the key markets of Asia, North America, Europe and the Middle East.

"The company has also established commercial arrangements with 12 of the world's largest telecommunications companies for AAPT's international traffic," he said. "These international arrangements will lower AAPT's costs of the carriage of its international traffic."

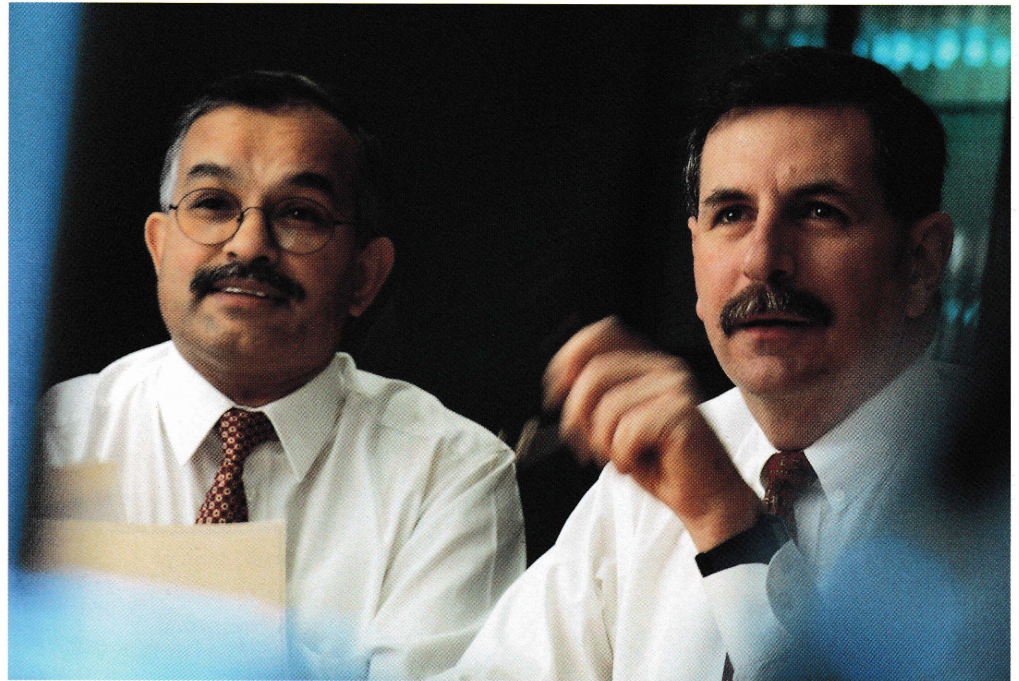
Domestically, AAPT's network consists of six major switching exchanges in six capital cities and 13 nodes in regional centres, with a further 17 nodes to be installed by the end of next year.

OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

AAPT believes that the major benefits of deregulation, in particular non-code access, will not contribute significantly to earnings until early in 1998.

The company is forecasting significant growth in earnings for the year to December 31, 1998, for the following reasons:

- Non-code access allows it to carry a greater proportion of its traffic on its own network which increases the gross profit margin. AAPT forecasts that by



AAPT Company Secretary Anil Sharma and Director Finance and Administration Tony Rogge.

the end of this year, some 65 percent of its current long distance resale customers will be on non-code access, increasing to 90 per cent by September 30, 1998. (Non-code access allows customers to use a network without dialling an access code - 1414 in AAPT's case - and will mean AAPT can transfer a higher proportion of its customers to its network.)

- For outgoing international traffic which AAPT carries on its network, the company will generally receive return traffic, which would previously have been carried on other carrier's networks.

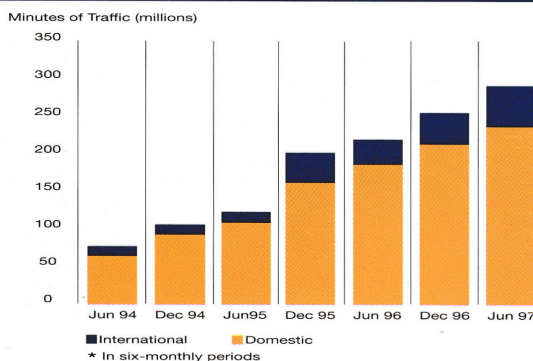
The availability of non-code access and the resultant return traffic are estimated to contribute an additional gross margin of \$60 million.

Other reductions in cost of services are estimated to contribute some \$18 million in gross margin. Continued growth in revenue from existing services and increased revenue from entry into new market segments are estimated to add \$20 million to the gross margin.

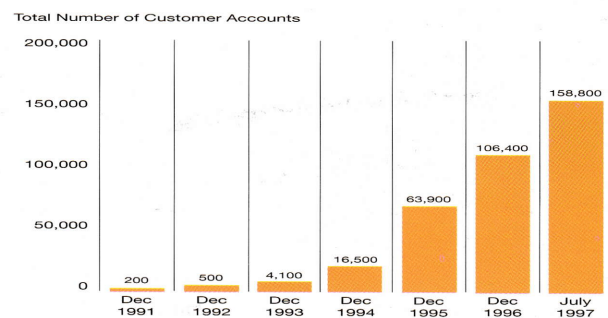
An anticipated increase in operating overheads will add some \$30 million to costs.

continued on page 19

Traffic Growth*: June 1994-June 1997



AAPT's Customer Accounts 1991-1997



\$305 Million Industry Plan

AAPT intends to invest \$305 million and double staff numbers over the next five years under an Industry Plan lodged with the Federal government.

The plan is aimed at making a significant contribution to the growth of a world class national and international telecommunications industry in Australia.

Director of Operations and Engineering Trevor Harris said AAPT was committed to developing opportunities for local business to benefit from Australia's growing telecommunications industry.

"We are committed to ensuring maximum local Australian involvement in all our systems and platforms," he said. "We will be looking to Australian industry to deliver significant proportions of our hardware and software requirements within the next three to five years.

"The emphasis will and must be on maximising Australian involvement in the design, production and ongoing development of current and future platform requirements."

According to the Industry Plan, AAPT plans to spend \$45 million

over the next five years on information technology, \$35 million on submarine cable, \$19 million on toll switches, \$90 million on transmission equipment, \$12 million on an intelligent network, \$33 million on regional cable, \$22 million on mobile services and \$20 million on CBD fibre.

Staff numbers were projected to grow from 600 to about 1,200.

AAPT has the third largest switched network in Australia and plans to add 40 more centres to its existing six metropolitan and 19 regional locations by next year.

AAPT has major nodes in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Canberra, Townsville and Newcastle. It has regional nodes in Darwin, Gympie, Ipswich, Murwillumbah, Nambour, Southport, Toowoomba, Bundaberg, Cairns, Coffs Harbour, Dalby, Gladstone, Lismore, Mackay, Maryborough, Mt Isa, Pinalba, Rockhampton, Roma, Pt Claire, Wollongong, Orange, Wagga Wagga, Dubbo, Broken Hill, Geelong, Burnie, Launceston, Hobart, Bunbury and Kalgoorlie. Auckland also has a regional node.

Read any Good Books Lately?

A staff book exchange has been set up in the meeting room of AAP Human Resources on Level 15 of the AAP Centre in Sydney to provide both a reference resource and a lending library for the bookworms of the company.

The book exchange will be staffed by volunteers between noon and 2 p.m. Monday to Friday.

The room has a table and chairs and Building Services Manager Bill Glance performed his usual weekend heroics to install the bookshelves.

Staff Relations Manager Judith Peake invites anyone in the AAP Group to donate books to the library or to exchange them for other books- fiction, non-fiction, academic or reference material.

"The price is right - free - and all staff are welcome to participate. In fact the more people who do, the more successful it will be," she said.

Queensland Cable Ltd

AAPT has acquired Queensland Cable Ltd, giving it access to the utility's vast distribution network.

QCL was created by two regional licensed cable companies, Rowcom and Paynet, in bidding for access rights to the distribution infrastructure of the Queensland Transmission & Supply Corp Group in late 1995.

Their successful bid gave them access to QTSC's poles, transmission towers and some ducting through-out Queensland, but outside the South East Queensland Electricity Board (SEQEB) constituency, except for the high-growth area beyond the Pine River, north of Brisbane.

QTSC awarded QCL the rights early last year and the acquisition of QCL by AAPT was formalised in March this year.

Director of Strategic Development Steven Picton said

AAPT would focus strongly on regional markets across Australia that were still largely untouched by the forces of competition in the telecommunications industry, starting with the Queensland residential market.

The QCL acquisition is pivotal to AAPT's Queensland ambitions with new switching centres to be opened in the near future in Townsville and Cairns.

He said AAPT intended to forge equity and other partnerships to support its expansion and it would take advantage of the Queensland government's promise to direct some of its own assets to the delivery of services to ensure that areas less economically attractive to carriers and service providers are not neglected.

"AAPT does not want to invest in large infrastructure projects to expand its reach and will only resort to this when it is the way to gain access," he said.

Mobile Sat-Tel Gear Beats Great Outback

Satellite equipment provided by AAPT Sat-Tel enabled the media to supply instant coverage of the World Cup Safari Four Wheel Drive race across the Northern Territory and Queensland.

More than 200 competitors took part in the 7,500 km race from Cairns to Darwin and Alice Springs and through outback Queensland to the Gold Coast.

Right behind them all the way was the AAPT Sat-Tel equipment mounted on a trailer and towed behind one of the support team buses.

“Through the use of some of the most sophisticated satellite technology ever seen in Australia, the international media were able to beam video, photos and telephone calls from some of the remotest locations in Australia to people all over the world,” Queensland Tourism Minister Bruce Davidson said.

“AAPT Sat-Tel provided state of the art satellite communications technology that allowed high quality pictures of the safari to be transmitted instantaneously to the world media.

“Queensland’s outback was showcased to the world via some of the biggest media outlets on the planet,” Mr Davidson said. “And all of this from a piece of



The mobile equipment used to provide communications for the World Cup Safari.

equipment small enough to be towed behind a four-wheel drive - and strong enough to survive a fall off the back of the trailer one morning when it wasn't bolted down.”

continued from page 17

Domestic long distance minutes for the six months to December 31, 1998, are expected to increase by 135 per cent on the six months to June 30, 1997, mainly through the recruitment of residential customers. International outgoing and return calls are expected to increase by 290 per cent over the same period.

The Australian telecommunications market has grown considerably over the past five years, from \$16 billion in 1993 to more than \$25 billion in 1997.

GROWTH OF THE COMPANY

AAPT has successfully expanded its business from less than 200 customer accounts at its inception in 1991 to some 160,000 customer accounts today, with total revenue of \$528 million for the 18 months to June 30, 1997. Revenue had grown from \$99.2 million for calendar year 1994 to \$203.6 million in calendar year 1995.



Larry Williams (left) and Lee Casey (right) receive their certificate of listing on the ASX from the Manager of the Sydney Companies Department, Edward Grieve.

Earnings for the 12 months to June 30, 1998, are forecast at \$437.9 million and for the six months to December 31, 1998, at \$281.5 million.

By Train Through Spain

Where does a travel agent go on holidays? After 20 years jetsetting around the globe on inaugural flights and trying out new hotels and resorts in the haunts of the rich and famous, all AAP's Travel Officer William Packman wanted was a relaxing, stress-free few weeks in the sun somewhere interesting.

When a good friend suggested Spain, I said, "Let's go." And with Morocco so close, why not start off with a visit to Casablanca and the medieval city of Fez.

Modern Casablanca, planned and built by the French, was modelled on Paris with wide tree-lined streets and footpaths. We were immediately struck by the large number of outdoor cafes frequented by men drinking coffee until late into the night.

In an Islamic country where alcohol is frowned upon, these cafes have replaced the bars, clubs and pubs, made famous by the classic Humphrey Bogart film, as a meeting place. Another Casablanca curiosity are the pedestrian crossings, whose purpose appears to be to encourage drivers to speed-up rather than stop or even slow down.

Less changed apparently was the old walled city, where we became lost in the maze of narrow cobblestoned streets and ended up in the local market areas without the comforting presence of a fellow tourist in sight.

Meat was on open display in 30 degree heat without refrigeration or even ice, but the chickens at least were fresh. Purchased live from a coop, their necks were broken on the spot, my startled reaction being a cause of

some amusement to shopowner and shoppers alike.

The ancient walled city of Fez, a five-hour train journey away, seemed to have the world's largest population of donkeys... and some interesting dining customs.

Eating at an outdoor cafe, we found that three orders given by us and other patrons were not on the menu. No problem. The waiter simply obtained the dish next door or from another cafe down the road.

A short flight had us in Madrid, a city in the grand European style, where we visited the impressive Royal Palace (used mainly for ceremonial events nowadays as the King lives elsewhere) and the extensive Picasso Museum.

The wonderful Spanish custom of afternoon siestas closes much of the city between 1.30 and 4.30, making for a late dinner hour, which means that all other nighttime activities continue much later than in Australia.

The enormous Retiro Park in the centre of Madrid with its lakes, statues, gardens and grand promenade area is a splendid spot for people watching, and the place we chose for our afternoon ice cream and R&R for the six days of our stay - which was a couple more than scheduled.

Lisbon was next on our itinerary but Madrid proved so interesting we decided to stay on there, do day trips to the medieval fortress towns of Toledo and Segovia, and catch up with our schedule at Seville.

The coastal city is linked by a "fast train" service to the capital, and as with all seven train journeys we took in Spain, the train departed and arrived on time. Seville and our next destination, Granada, are in southern Spain which was ruled by the Moors for several hundred years until the 15th century.

The architecture of the main cathedral in Seville is both Christian and Islamic and the spire, once used by the Muezzin to call the faithful to prayer facing Mecca, provides a fabulous view of the city.

Granada has a very well preserved palace and fort built by the Arabs on a strategic hill overlooking the city and obviously providing an opulent lifestyle for its occupants.

Strolling through the traffic-free cobblestone streets of central



William Packman playing tourist in the medieval city of Fez, Morocco.

continued on page 2

OCR Makes ComNews an Easier Read

Delivery of the ComNews service has been revolutionised with a system developed in-house when outside contractors could not meet the required specifications at reasonable cost.

Commissioned during the busy quarterly reporting period in September, the new system allows earlier delivery to clients of all company reports lodged with the Australian Stock Exchange, and gives AAP's Finance Desk a major edge over the competition.

Company reports are transferred as image files via a high speed line from the ASX to the AAP Centre and run through an OCR - Optical Character Recognition - Server which converts them to text.

The image file and text are then called up on large 21 inch screens for comparison by operators using Windows NT machines linked by a large local area network and then file into the editorial system.

"At peak times we were filing 3.25 million characters - more than half-a-million words - a day to line," Technical Development Manager Mike Sloan said.



Pictured (left to right) are Mike Sloan, Joanne Grant, Graeme Finley, Joanna Kinchella and Company News Manager Rosemary Bridge.

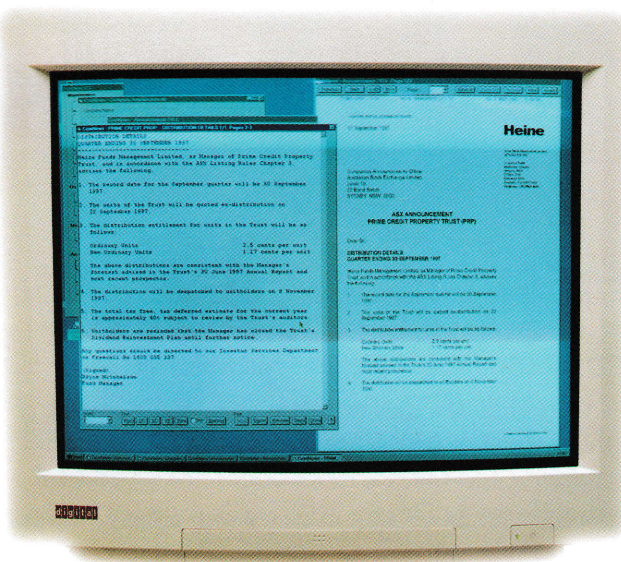
"The new system does the job well and will reduce the number of temporary staff we need to employ to handle the peak reporting times. It is faster and more accurate than the old system where every report had to be rekeyed manually, checked on one system and then transferred into another before it could go to line.

"The Finance Desk sees the original images as they are brought across from the ASX, which gives them the jump on Reuters and our other financial markets news service competitors."

The ComNews service is a verbatim report of all company notices filed with the ASX. It is sold to several hundred subscribers directly as well as to other financial markets service providers including AP Dow Jones, Knight Ridder and DFS. It is also archived for retrieval on AMQ.

"One requirement we didn't quite foresee was the need for extensive re-training of our permanent staff who had worked with the old system for up to 15 years and were using Windows for the first time," Mike said.

"But that hurdle was quickly overcome and the OCR Server will also be used by MediaNet and AsiaNet to speed handling of news releases, and it will have an interface with the new editorial system."



An example of OCR copy.

Schools News Service on the Internet

AAP has joined forces with OzEmail to provide a comprehensive news service to schools around Australia via the Internet.

The OzEducate News Service gives schools, TAFE colleges and universities access to the latest news stories from Australia and around the world, plus the ability to search back through news archives for up to 12 months.

Users logging onto the service are presented with the top 20 breaking news stories of the moment. From there students can do simple or complex searches of the news archives to bring up relevant earlier stories, background items and features.

Andrew Meagher, Director Strategic Development,

Content and Distribution, said new items were updated in real time 24 hours a day and covered the full range of stories issued by AAP as the national news agency including politics, current affairs, sport, business and finance, arts and entertainment and the environment.

OzEmail is the leading provider of comprehensive Internet services in Australia and New Zealand, and Business Services Manager John Butterworth said the service formed part of its commitment to providing the education sector with both excellent Internet access and content that was relevant and useful on a day to day basis.

The service will cost schools \$250 a year for a 10-user licence and provide links to a host of related current affairs and social science sites, including those of the major political parties.

"We've had positive discussions with the Queensland, Victorian, New South Wales and Commonwealth education authorities and expect to see a large number of educational institutions signing up for the service in the new school year," Andrew said.

The service can be accessed through www.news.ozeducate.aust.com

Hunter Valley Sales Training

After years of operating separately, AAP Financial Markets and the Media, Racing and Commercial departments united for two days of sales training in September at the Cypress Lakes Resort in the Hunter Valley.

The historic meeting of the full AAP Information Services sales team was addressed by Deputy CEO Barry Wheeler, who provided an insight into the AAP Strategic Plan.

The group was also brought up to speed on the latest developments in the world of the web by Internet specialist John Butterworth from Ozemail and by American multimedia guru Michael Bloomberg.

The group were given a four hour sales training refresh from experienced trainer Michael Dale, whose aim to sharpen a few skills and highlight some areas for improvement was well met.

The crew were also given detailed presentations by each of



Pictured (left to right) in Limbo mode are Andrew Meagher, Sue Cebula, Amanda James, Fraser Dix, Christine Gaynor, Charmian Grove (back to camera), Rochelle Borrelli, Richard Davison, Lara Diespecker and Frances L

the AAPIS business unit managers about the role they played in the makeup of AAP. Since the conference the level of cross selling between AAP departments has increased.

The sales team let off a bit of steam with a special dinner where the highlight was the large number of gaudy and quite tasteless Hawaiian shirts. Despite the low tone of the dress code a most enjoyable evening of great cuisine, local wines and dancing for the energetic was had by all.

Leading the WEY for Sydney Streetkids

Staff Relations Manager Judith Peake presented achievement awards to two young women who successfully completed AAP's pilot Work Experience for Youth (WEY) program.

AAPIS has agreed to trial workplace training for up to three people at a time after they have completed the five-week JPET (Jobs Preparation Employment Training) course run by the Salvation Army's Oasis Youth Care Centre. The WEY program provides paid work experience for homeless youths and streetkids from the Kings Cross area.

Young men and women from Oasis have been working at AAP over the past two years under the supervision of Building Services Manager

Bill Glance, mainly on Saturdays and mainly on tasks such as office and workstation relocation and general clean-up tasks.

Judith said the WEY program provided a more formal approach by offering long-term unemployed youths, or those who have never had a job, work experience two to five days a week for three to four weeks.

They would work in one, two or several departments depending on the availability of work and their own interests.

"A supervisor or case management worker from Oasis will continue to work with them while they are at AAP and we will assign an AAP staff member to supervise their work and generally help them settle in, along the lines of the 'buddy system' used in many organisations," Judith said.

"A member of the Human Resources team addresses youths at the end of the JPET program to provide an introduction to AAP and ensure they are aware of general expectations of employees, including dress code, time keeping, and responsibility to themselves and other members of staff.



Pictured (left to right) with Judith Peake and their achievement awards after successfully completing the WEY program are Kristal Mrkusich and Debbie Smith.

"Workplace involvement does offer a clear pathway for these young people to gain full employment and self reliance, which are crucial elements for most in maintaining self esteem and confidence.

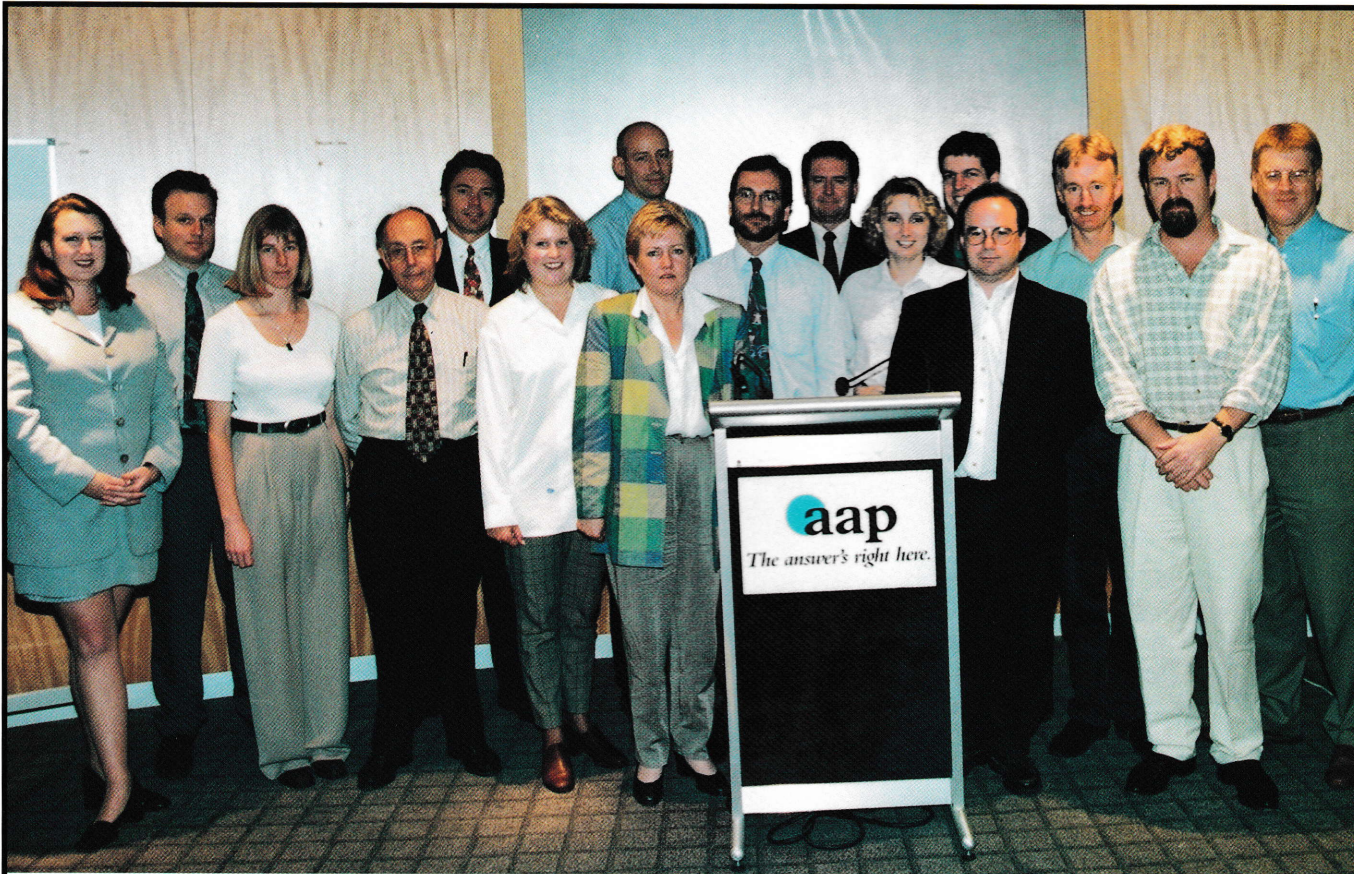
"Without opportunities such as this, they may see limited options available to them despite their best efforts at rehabilitation."

Judith said AAP could already point to several success stories for the program including:

James, who graduated from Saturday work to casual employment with ITG's engineering section and then to fulltime employment with a company at North Ryde.

Work at AAP was a catalyst for Adrian, who was a regular on the Saturday shift, and who graduated to fulltime employment after completing a course as a fork-lift driver.

Jason, who Bill Glance remembers as being much better at dismantling workstations than reassembling them, moved on to fulltime employment with a firm which was aware of his background, and which was willing to give him a go. He is still working for that firm.



Editorial's bureau chiefs gathered for a weekend conference in Sydney recently - a rare get-together of the people who shape the AAP news file.

Pictured (left to right) are Filing Editor Joanne Williamson, Finance Editor Andrew Stokes, Sydney bureau chief Susan Briggs, Sports Editor Bill Allan, News Editor Mike Osborne, Adelaide bureau

chief Sherrill Nixon, News Editor Stuart Parker, Racing Editor Caryl Williamson, Editor in Chief Tony Vermeer, acting Melbourne bureau chief Mike Hedge, Broadcast Desk Editor Jenny Napier, Darwin correspondent Wayne Howell, Canberra bureau chief James Grubel, Editor John Coomber, Perth bureau chief Rod McGuirk and Brisbane bureau chief Paul Reid.

News Releases Via the Net

As AsiaNet records tumble month by month, the focus is on quickly expanding the global press release business which has links from the Asia Pacific to the UK/Europe, the United States, Middle East and Africa.

Hard pressed to bring communications costs down, blow away the competition and answer challenges from US affiliate PR Newswire, AsiaNet is combining with MediaNet to build an email/Internet connection by the middle of 1998.

This will be capable of receiving and sending commercial media releases, on line editing for translation by AsiaNet's news agency partners and archival storage in the eight languages now available to clients.

PR Newswire's priority has been to roll out a system electronically transferring European languages such as Italian, German, French and Spanish. But this has been

extended to researching, in collaboration with AAP Development, the Asian languages to accommodate AsiaNet.

Time consuming fax communication in and out of AsiaNet's operational headquarters at the AAP Centre, Lang Street, will be eliminated. Dialup transmissions will disappear.

Automatic billing of AsiaNet's many and varied complex transactions will be part of the development program, in which AAP Accounts is also closely involved.

Running parallel to this, and already operational thanks to AAP Image, is AsiaNet's "Webpix circuit" - affectionately dubbed the Weetbix circuit - which is offering clients Internet picture storage, for a fee, on the AAP Preserver. This also makes it easier for AsiaNet Members to download photographs for distribution on their own national circuits.

Limited Edition Print of Mawson Expeditions a Collector's Item

A limited edition of 500 prints commemorating Sir Douglas Mawson's Antarctic expeditions of 1911-14 and 1929-31 will sell for up to \$1,000 each with the signatures of five Australian Prime Ministers and the Governor-General.

Signatories include Prime Minister John Howard and four former prime ministers - Sir John Gorton, Gough Whitlam, Malcolm Fraser and Bob Hawke, and the Governor-General Sir William Deane.

Founding director of the Australian Antarctic Division, Dr Phillip Law, who held the post from 1946-1969, Everest conqueror and Antarctic explorer Sir Edmund Hillary, the last surviving member of Mawson's second expedition Dr Alf Howard, and Mawson's two daughters Patricia Thomas and Jessica McEwin have also signed the print.

The high-quality print will be more than a metre wide wide framed and some 750 mm high.

"The print is elegant, informative and visually appropriate, a genuine collector's item," said its designer Paul Priday of Great Moments.

Prints 1-50 will sell for \$1,000 each. Prints 51-250 will also include a mint condition \$100 note from the



Some of the items featured in the print include a golliwog given to Mawson by the Russian ballerina, Pavlova, plus Mawson diaries and the famous balaclava and protective goggles worn by Mawson.



original Mawson series provided by the Reserve Bank of Australia and sell for \$750.

Prints 251-500 will not have the banknote, nor the prime ministerial signatures. These will sell for \$595 framed and include the signatures of Foundation Chairman David Jensen of AAP, Project Director Rob Easter of the Australian Antarctic Division, expedition leader Alan Grant and conservation team leader Geoff Ashley.

All prints will include a set of nine stamps featuring Sir Douglas Mawson and the complete collection of his many medals and decorations.

The prints will be individually stamped and numbered, accompanied by a certificate of authenticity, and a legend leaflet explaining the contents of the print.

They feature photographs of various historic

artefacts including the famous sledge Mawson cut in half with a pocket knife and hauled on his solo trek after the death of his two companions and their dog teams, expedition clothing and equipment, medical supplies, and wireless and other expedition items including scientific equipment, and personal messages.

It will also include the famous exchange by morse code cable between Mawson and his wife to be, Paquita Delprat, after his rescue, entries from expedition diaries and the log of the *SY Aurora* written by Captain John King Davis, and a list of members of the expeditions.

Other photographs include products supplied by the original sponsors of the 1911-14 expedition, the Proclamation written by Mawson, early photos of the huts and the Memorial Cross erected in memory of Xavier Mertz and Belgrave Ninnis, who perished on the long exploration journey by sledge with Mawson.

"The biggest challenge was what to leave out, there was so much marvellous material available," Paul said.



Sir Douglas Mawson's Polar Medals

MediaNet Revamps With New Image

MediaNet, AAP's long-running news release service, has been restructured with the appointment of Business Managers for northern and southern Australia.

Sales and Marketing Director, AAP Commercial, Brad Rosenthal said a strategic business plan had been formulated to ensure the business will achieve sustained, profitable growth into the next decade.

Amanda James has been appointed Business Manager Southern Region with responsibility for Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the ACT.

Venetia Babington-Lees has been appointed Business Manager Northern Region with responsibility for New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

MediaNet has adopted a new logo to identify it more closely with AsiaNet and MediaNet International, with which it will share staff and office space and work closely to establish joint marketing initiatives.

A MediaNet identification symbol will also appear at the bottom of each page of faxed copy and promotional messages will be carried on release confirmation messages.



Brad Rosenthal (right) pictured with newly appointed Business Unit Manager, Third Party Data, Richard Davison.

Brad said MediaNet's core product Media Direct would be the most effective way to release information to the media, using fax, email and the Internet. "New products planned for early next year will enable MediaNet to clearly differentiate itself from the competition.

"Our business growth will come from consistently meeting the needs of our customers and of the media better than our competitors, and making sure that both parties understand that," he said.

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Granada after dinner we came upon a square with a floodlit cathedral as backdrop to a classical orchestra. The other three sides of the square were lined with colonnaded buildings with shuttered windows and muralled walls.

Spaniards were sipping coffee in outdoor cafes or simply strolling and enjoying the music and the atmosphere - something not found in your local Australian shopping mall.

We arrived in Barcelona by train at 10.30 on a Saturday night to find the famed Ramblas so crowded you imagined the whole city population had converged on this one street - a two kilometre long mall.

Barcelona, with its wide tree lined streets and interesting

architecture (especially the art nouveau designs by Gaudi) has a vibrant population and nightlife which seems to go very late every night of the week. Fortunately I was on holidays and not expected into the office for my normal 7 am start.

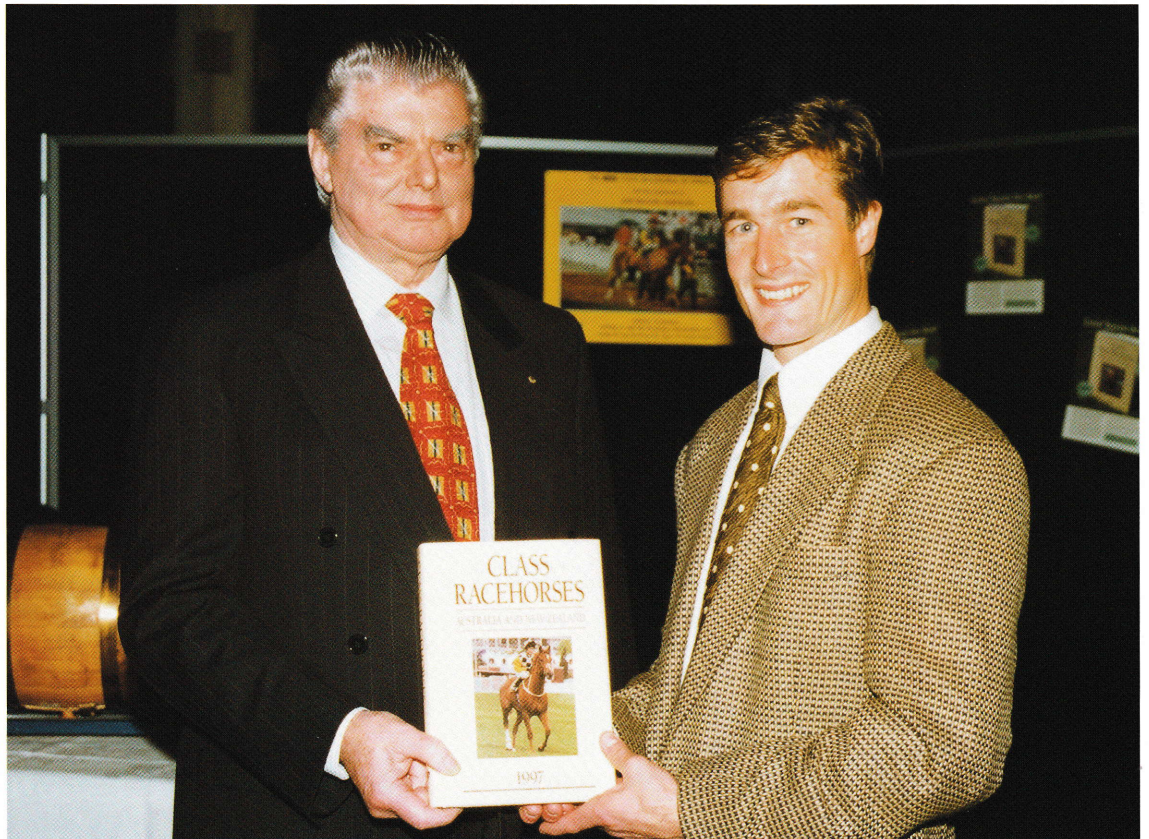
We spent our last three days in the coastal resort town of Sitges, south of Barcelona where the scenery is similar to that of Southern France - with hills meeting the sea and small, picturesque towns nestled in the valleys - and where the seafood paella served by its beachside cafes is highly recommended.

After three weeks in Spain in summer, the lasting impression is of the lifestyle of the people, much more laid back than in most other countries.

“You’ll have to read the book,” says Bart Cummings

It started out as a labour of love by the AAP racing team who felt strongly that producing a quality annual recording the feats of racing’s elite each season was badly needed by the racing industry.

Now 14 seasons later, *Class Racehorses* is AAP Racing’s flagship publication, sought-after by racing enthusiasts, collectors and thoroughbred industry professionals who rely on it as an essential reference resource.



Bart Cummings and Darren Beadman

The esteem in which it is held was underlined at the recent launch of the latest edition, when many of the industry’s most familiar faces turned out to hear master trainer Bart Cummings and jockey Darren Beadman speak as special guests.

“When we first decided to publish *Class Racehorses* it was way back in the year Strawberry Road won the Cox Plate,” AAP Chief Executive Lee Casey told the 180 guests. “It was a labour of love by AAP staff to produce a book that could become a reference book for the racing industry, and I am very pleased it has become so.

“Back in 1983 we thought it would be very nice if we could establish credibility along the lines that Timeform had in being relied upon by the industry (in the United Kingdom) and we hope this will ultimately be the case.”

AAP Editor John Coomber said he was a schoolboy in short pants when Cummings won his first Melbourne Cup with Light Fingers 30-odd years ago.

“Now, nine Melbourne Cup winners later, tonight is as much about launching this book as it is a salute to you,

Bart, and Darren Beadman and of course to the horse from heaven, Saintly,” he said of the star stayer who graces this year’s cover.

“Only three others have won the Cox Plate-Melbourne Cup double, Nightmare in 1929, Phar Lap in 1930 and Rising Fast in 1954. It is a feat that is part of Australian folklore and so it should be.”

John said production hiccups were overcome to get the book on shop shelves six weeks earlier this year than ever before.

Racecaller John Tapp, the master of ceremonies, was determined to find out when he interviewed Cummings which one of his 10 Cup winners was his favourite?

“You’ll have to read the book to find out,” said Bart, who also revealed that he expected Saintly would return from his devastating bowed tendon injury to participate in the 1998 Melbourne Spring Carnival.

Class Racehorses, which sells in the leather-bound edition for \$95, and for \$49.95 in soft cover, is available to AAP Group staff for half price from AAP Racing Services on Level 6 at Lang Street.

PC Training Centre Opens

A computer skills Learning Centre has been established by AAP Human Resources on Level 9 of the AAP Centre open 24 hours a day for all staff.

Initially, the centre provides self-directed, self-paced courses in Windows 95, Office 97, Word 6.0, Lotus Notes and Windows NT4 and an opportunity to learn to touch type in six hours.

"The centre is an attempt to provide staff with an experimental electronic environment where they can either learn new skills or improve existing ones, hands-on, without fear of causing any harm to operational systems or networks," National Training Coordinator Debra Kilby said.

"The centre is a corporate resource and all the learning materials available there, including books, user guides, course notes, videos and computer-based learning materials, are intended for use by all AAP departments.

"Staff can use the centre during office hours if they have management approval or during their lunch hours, after work or at weekends. All they need to do is make a booking with Human Resources and arrange to collect an access card and key for after hours use.



Pictured (left to right) trying out the Training Centre are Angela Alexander, Debra Kilby, Marcus Rodrigues and Cara Chiddy.

"It will operate very much on an honour system. If we find that any material or equipment disappears then we will have to change the rules or perhaps even close it down.

"But we're confident it will work well and that departments will over time donate extra resources to the library."

The centre, set up Debra and Senior Network Engineer Marcus Rodrigues, also includes a "technical lab" for technical staff who want to explore aspects of operating systems such as Windows NT.



AAPT TOPS TELCOS

The super-fit Cindy King led the men home to win first place for AAPT in the telecommunications section of the Corporate Team Challenge relay on Sunday, November 9.

Cindy, running first, completed the four kilometre run from the Domain and around Mrs Macquarie's Chair in 15 minutes flat. She was followed by Ian MacDonald in 16 min 30 sec, Andrew Vickery in 16:10 and Ben Gilbert in 15:22.

The AAPT quartet finished 23rd overall in a field of 290 teams but first in the telecommunications section in which seven other telcos competed. The event raised \$3,000 for the National Heart Foundation.

Cindy, Business Accounts Manager with AAPT at Glebe, said she was now looking forward to running in the five and 10 km events at the Corporate Games in March.

Pictured standing (left to right) are Ian and Ben and sitting Andrew and Cindy.

AAPCS Move to North Ryde

Most of the Sydney staff of AAP Communications Services have moved to new offices at North Ryde, leaving only a small marketing and accounts presence at Glebe.

AAPCS acquired the office space at 113 Wicks Road, North Ryde, late last year and it was used initially as the Network Management Centre, engineering workshop and stores.

Sales Director Ray Whitfield moved his NSW Sales group in October to align them more closely with the services organisation, and the plan is that the remaining staff at Glebe will move in the next few weeks.

Ray joined AAPCS from Digital (DEC) where he had worked for 16 years in the UK and Australia. For the past 10 years, he had worked as National Sales manager, Strategic Sales and Sales Manager for both channels and direct business. His main strengths include developing new business and solution selling.

Dieter Monch, who recently joined AAPCS as Marketing Director, has held senior positions in the computer and information technology industry for the past 25 years. He was Managing Director for Nixdorf Computer P/L in South Africa and Australia, Managing



Jack Crumlin, who has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of AAPCS, (centre) with Ray Whitfield (left) and Dieter Monch. Jack has an extensive background in the information technology, telecommunications and professional services industries, most recently with Coopers & Lybrand.

Director for Amtron Australia, Managing Director for Summit Communications and Managing Director for Pacific Communications (Holdings).

Dieter chairs a chapter of "The Executive Connection," a networking forum for CEOs and Managing Directors. He helped establish ACESA, now known as AIIA (Australian Information Industry Association) and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



1. Pictured at a lunch to mark Editor John Coomber's 25 years with AAP are several of his colleagues who can also boast more than 20 years service. They are (left to right) Ted Simmons, Bill Allan, Terry Stayte, Leigh Mackay, Hazel Sproule, John Coomber, Robert Laybutt and John Radovan.



2. One of AAP's most popular staff members Margie McDonald left the company after 16 years to become media chief for the Sydney Paralympics. Pictured (left to right) at her farewell are Belinda Tasker, Nhada Goodfellow, Margie (recovering from a minor eye operation), Shoshana Lenthén and Will Swanton.



3. Melbourne staff who received 10-year long service medals recently are (left to right) Wendy Kellett, Elizabeth Rennick, Rochelle Borrelli, Anna Zurzolo and Marilyn Fox.

50 Years of Journalism, and a World of Travel

AAP's longest serving, best travelled and most prolific journalist, Jim Shrimpton, has clocked up 50 years in the profession, including a record 38 years with AAP.

It all began on the morning of Monday, October 27, 1947, when he reported for duty as a copy boy ("the lowest form of editorial life") on the Evening Despatch in Birmingham.

Six years later, after being promoted to junior sub-editor and sportswriter, he fled to North America when he was being pressed to take up a job that he was assured would see him become the leading lawn bowls writer in the English Midlands.

"At the age of 21, I feared that was not my scene, so I took off for Canada," Jim said.

After two years there, he came to Australia and joined AAP in Melbourne in November, 1955, just in time to become part of the team covering Australia's first Olympic Games the following year.

"AAP had a total of seven journalists in Australia at that time," Jim said. "We functioned mainly as a clearing house for overseas news filed by our much larger bureaux in New York and London."

Jim went on to cover five Olympics and four Commonwealth Games. He was also the Australian team's press officer at a fifth Commonwealth Games.

He was twice posted as London bureau chief and was news editor for several years up to 1980 but says his career highlight came on May 14, 1987, when he was AAP's correspondent in Fiji.

Jim was the only foreign journalist in Suva when the then unknown Lieutenant-Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka staged his first coup. Rabuka cut off all communications into and out of Fiji except for AAP's leased circuit on



Jim Shrimpton noting down some essential details on assignment in Tahiti.

which Jim punched up his stories on tape for transmission through an archaic transmitter.

"How many times can a reporter claim to have hit the front pages of newspapers throughout Australia, plus the London Times, New York Times, Asahi Shimbun, the Times of India, Pravda and hundreds more around the world?" Jim asks. "For this reporter just the once."

Jim's service with AAP has not been continuous. He left in 1957 to return to Canada with his new bride, Val, whom he met when she worked as a telegraphist in the AAP office. They have four daughters, three of whom have worked for AAP, and the same car numberplate purchased to mark their wedding in January, 1957 - JVS 157.

He then worked in AAP's New York office in 1960 and the London office in 1961 and finally rejoined AAP in May, 1962.

Jim has been Features Editor for the past five years, which has allowed him to develop what has been perhaps the most rewarding role in all his years of journalism, that of travel writer.

"I would now travel 10 to 12 weeks of each year, mostly overseas," says Jim. "It has taken me to places I had never been and was never likely to go and I have thoroughly enjoyed it. I might be in Africa one week, Europe the next and then back to the South Pacific.

"Our travel stories get a tremendous run in the papers, especially the regional dailies which do not have their own travel writer, and in the Sunday Telegraph."

Proving that it's not only the navy you can join to see the world, Jim has always been an adventurous traveller. "In 1955 I paid \$99 for a 30-day tour of the United States which took me through 29 states," he said.

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"When I rejoined AAP in 1962 after six months on the Courier Mail in Brisbane, I travelled down to Melbourne on my two-stroke motorcycle, an unrecognised feat ranking with the great historical treks of this continent."

Over many years, being an AAP correspondent has enabled Jim to rub shoulders with many international notables. "To name-drop just a few, they include the Queen (in Canada, England, Australia and New Zealand) Prince Charles (cocktails at Buck House) Princess Anne (who tried to have me thrown out of an Olympic reception where press weren't allowed) Margaret Thatcher (cocktails at No. 10) US President Lyndon Johnson,

Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia, Sir Donald Campbell, Henry Cooper, James Michener, John Wayne, Cary Grant, Charlton Heston, Hayley Mills... and the list goes on and on."

Jim officially retires to Point Clare on the NSW central coast on December 13, though he will continue to work two days a week at AAP and avail himself of the occasional overseas trip.

And after all those years and the millions of words he has written, is there a book to come?

"I have a title, 'My Future Is Behind Me,' but no book," says Jim.

AAPT Storm the Ball Game



Chief Executive Larry Williams is pictured throwing the first pitch to start the first game of the season for the AAPT-sponsored Sydney Storm baseball team against the Hunter Eagles on Saturday, November 1 at Concord Oval.

AAPT Director of Marketing John Matic said baseball was the emerging sport of the 90s. "It is now an official Olympic sport and will be played at the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

"Sydney Storm were the 1996 Australian Baseball League champions and they hold the league record for the largest single game attendance at 13,800.

"The major league baseball competition, which brings together eight teams from all over Australia, is televised on both commercial and pay TV during the season which runs from November through February."

Kaia Hunter, AAPT Marketing Associate, said the AAPT Sydney Storm were previously known as the Sydney

Blues but had changed their name in July this year to gain a stronger identity in the NSW market place where state teams in several other sports are known as the Blues.

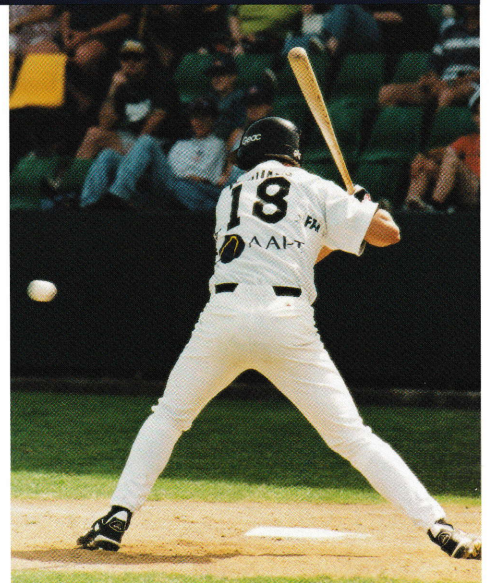
Other teams in the national league are the Brisbane Bandits, Gold Coast Cougars, Hunter Eagles (Newcastle), Melbourne Monarchs, Melbourne Reds, Adelaide Giants and Perth Heat.

Kaia said the Sydney Storm sponsorship entitled AAPT to its name and logo on the front and back of the players shirts, on their caps, at Concord Oval for all home games and on the season fixtures cards.

"It's a very exciting sponsorship and we've been very fortunate in our first venture into this area to have such a high profile team that is sure to generate plenty of media coverage," she said.

"Baseball is also very big in the schools. Baseball, Softball and T-ball, as the junior version of the game is known, is played by more than 750,000 Australians, most of them under the age of 12. Sydney Storm hold regular coaching clinics throughout the season."

AAPT Smartchat material and season passes have been mailed to junior players across Sydney.



Sydney Storm star Glenn Williams displays the AAPT Sponsorship.

Corporate Sails Race on Harbour



Sailing action on Sydney Harbour at twilight.

AAPT is the naming rights sponsor for a series of races sailed weekly on Sydney Harbour known as the AAPT Corporate Twilight Challenge.

Eight companies compete in identical Bruce Farr-designed 36ft yachts in each race of the series sailed from the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia at Rushcutters Bay between November and March.

Each boat carries a crew of seven plus a skipper cum host provided by the organisers, Sunsail Australia. Guests can take the helm and trim their own sails or leave it to the professional.

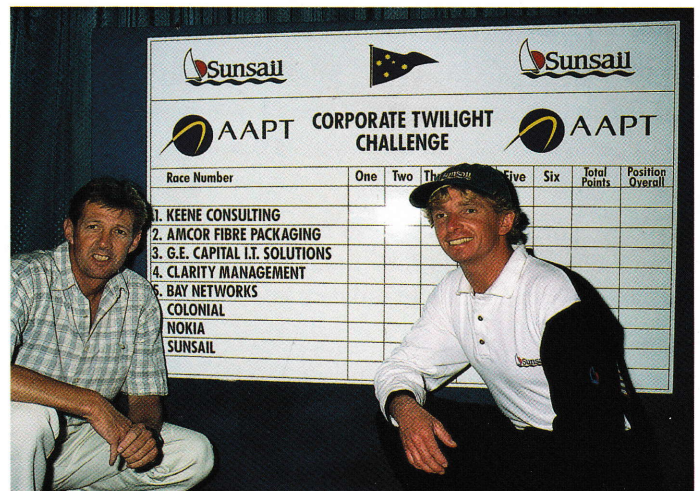
The competition is sailed as a series of five separate qualifying regattas consisting of three race days each (one each week for three weeks). The winner of each qualifying series will then compete in the final series.

Racing is followed by a three-course dinner and presentation ceremony at the Cruising Yacht Club, which provides a sponsor's board for the display of the results of each competition.

"Last year AAPT sponsored one of the boats and we had such a good response from customers we decided to sponsor the series this year," Director of Marketing John Matic said. "It has given us great brand exposure on the harbour and of course helped us sign up a lot of new business.

"The companies sponsoring boats get great value for their money. They invite their own clients or staff to crew their boat and the racing builds up tremendous camaraderie among the crews. We have some all-female crews and several mixed groupings as well as the all-male crews and they all compete on an equal footing.

"You can't miss the AAPT logo. It's prominently displayed on the sails of each yacht and on flags and banners in and around the clubhouse."



Pictured (left to right) are 18ft skiff champion Rob Brown and Sunsail director Toby Whitfield.