



A new digital television group is formed

by Tim O'Keefe, Director, Digital Broadcasting Australia Limited



Tim O'Keefe

A new industry group has been formed for the provision of information about, and the promotion of, digital free-to-air television in Australia.

Digital Broadcasting Australia Limited (DBA) is a group consisting of:

- Australia's leading retailers of consumer electronics equipment (Retravisio, Harvey Norman, Beta Stores, Chandlers/Vox Group and the Narta Retail Group);
- major manufacturers and suppliers of consumer and industry electronics equipment to the Australian market (Sony, Panasonic, LG Electronics, Philips, Sharp, Nokia, Toshiba/Orion, Samsung, Fujitsu & ntl).
- commercial television groups (Seven Network, Nine Network, Ten Networks, Prime, WIN, Southern Cross, Telecasters Australia and NBN); and
- the ABC and SBS.

The board of DBA is chaired by Mr John Rushton of WIN Television. The four other directors are Bob Scullin (Managing Director Retravisio Australia), Ross Henderson (General Manager Matsushita Australia), Gerry Thorley (General Manager Network Operations Ten Network) and Christina Sharp (Manager Policy and Co-ordination, SBS).

Digital Business Consulting's Tim O'Keefe, Peter Webb and Nadia Mencinsky will manage the coordination of DBA's activities.

At the announcement of the formation of DBA, Mr Rushton said, 'The conversion to digital of Australian free-to-air television will be an enormous cultural change for all involved. Consumers, retailers, equipment suppliers and broadcasters will need to adapt to this change. DBA has been formed to help make the change as seamless as possible, to the benefit of consumers.'

'In particular DBA will help consumers with information about service availability and the functionality of receivers, and will also encourage training programs for sales staff, service technicians and antenna installers,' he said.

Other key objectives of DBA include:

- to promote a high standard of hardware and software in receivers so as to ensure viewers can receive their choice of uninterrupted digital free-to-air television services;
- to provide and coordinate information on the

digital transition to the wider industry, including software developers, content creators and hardware designers.

Mr Rushton added, 'The Australian free-to-air television industries — broadcast, supply and retail — face a very challenging time over the next few years. Coordination of the efforts of the people working in these sectors will help make digital conversion possible, and will provide consumers with useful information about the availability of services, interference issues, reception equipment and services, and programming'.

'The terms of the implementation scheme for digital free-to-air television conversion are quite complex, and consumers, retailers, manufacturers, broadcasters and installers will all need to be kept well informed of developments,' said Mr Rushton.

DBA's web site will be an authoritative source of information about progress with implementation of digital free-to-air television.

DBA will work principally through the following four Standing Committees of its members:

- Consumer and Retailer Education and Information (chaired by Scott Lindsay of Harvey Norman)
- Information and Research Coordination (chaired by Bill Lenehan of Ten Sydney)
- Hardware and Software Compliance (chaired by David Soothill of SBS)
- Installer Training and Information (chair by Colin Wright, Seven Network)

DBA will invite other parties to participate in the work of DBA. These other parties will include various associations of the installer and service industries, the Australian Broadcasting Authority, the Consumer Affairs section of the Federal Treasury, the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, and other parties whose contributions might, from time to time, contribute to the work of DBA.

For more information about DBA visit the web site at www.dba.org.au