



## Senator the Hon Helen Coonan

Minister for Communications,  
Information Technology and the Arts

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate

### Media Release

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#### **ACMA's Broadcasting Powers Strengthened**

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) will be given a range of new enforcement powers to strengthen its capacity to effectively regulate the broadcasting industry, Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Helen Coonan announced today.

"It has been clear for some time that ACMA requires a new range of powers to more effectively enforce broadcasting laws," Senator Coonan said. "That is why the Government released a discussion paper in November 2005 and consulted widely with industry and consumers on how to best equip ACMA to regulate the broadcasting industry."

"ACMA's current broadcasting regulatory powers are generally concentrated at the higher end of the scale. Criminal penalties or the cancellation of a broadcasting licence may not be a workable response when incidents are minor or where the offending behaviour is not repeated.

In most cases, the new powers are similar to those that ACMA already uses in its role as the regulator of telecommunications services.

The additional powers will include:

- the introduction of civil penalties for a range of breaches where only criminal sanctions are currently available, giving ACMA greater flexibility to address non-compliance;
- enabling ACMA to obtain injunctions where commercial broadcasting services are being provided without an appropriate licence;
- allowing ACMA to accept enforceable undertakings from industry in relation to its role in regulating the broadcasting, datacasting and internet content industries; and
- issuing infringement notices for minor breaches of the Broadcasting Services Act related to reporting requirements.

"The Government is introducing these changes to enable ACMA to be more responsive, particularly when it comes to ensuring compliance with broadcasting codes of practice and licensing conditions," Senator Coonan said.

"The changes, which have been in train for some time, will complement and build on the recently announced review of television codes of practice for reality television by ACMA and the Government's announcement in June this year that content safeguards would be extended to mobile devices and premium Internet services.

"These changes will give ACMA greater options for appropriately dealing with breaches of the Broadcasting Services Act and the power to negotiate enforceable outcomes that will achieve better long-term compliance."