

Summary of the Major Issues Raised by Members of the Public at the Public Hearing on 19 June 2009

I. Proceedings of the Public Hearing

1.1 The hearing was held from 7:00 p.m to 9:00 p.m. The hearing was conducted in Cantonese. English simultaneous interpretation was provided. Following the welcoming speech by the Chairman of the Broadcasting Authority (“BA”) and the short presentations by the representatives of Asia Television Limited (“ATV”) and Television Broadcasts Limited (“TVB”), members of the public were invited to express their views.

1.2 The BA Chairman delivered his welcoming speech. He briefly introduced the purpose of the event, which was to allow the BA to collect views from members of the public about the performance of ATV and TVB. The BA would take into account these views when making recommendations to the Chief Executive in Council on the renewal of the licences of ATV and TVB.

II. Panel Members

<i>BA Chairman</i>	Mr Ambrose Ho, SC, JP
<i>BA Vice Chairman</i>	Mr Duncan Pescod, JP Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development
<i>BA Members</i>	Mr Adrian Wong, MH Mr Kwok Lit-tung Mr Henry Tsang Mrs Marion Lai, JP Director – General of Telecommunications
<i>BA Principal Executive Officer</i>	Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing Ms Maisie Cheng, JP
<i>BA Secretary</i>	Assistant Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing Mr P L Po
<i>Chief Telecommunications Engineer, OFTA</i>	Mr P H Ma

ATV
Representatives

Ms Nancy Hu
Chief Executive Officer

Mr H Y Kwong
Senior Vice President – Corporate Development &
External Affairs

TVB
Representatives

Mr Stephen Chan
General Manager – Broadcasting

Mr S K Cheong
General Manager – Broadcasting

III. Summary of the Views Expressed

- A total of 175 people (including 32 representatives of Licensees) attended the public hearing.
- 33 members of the public spoke at the hearing. The public views expressed are summarised as follows.

A.	Broadcasting Issues: The BA will give careful consideration to the public views, as summarized below, in the mid-term review of the two domestic free television programme service licences.
(a)	<u>Programme diversity</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- There were frequent repeats of programmes, e.g. feature films and drama.- The Licensees should broadcast more current affairs programmes during prime-time and more informational programmes on Sundays.- TVB had broadcast too many drama series.- ATV had broadcast too many horse-racing programmes, which need not be simulcast on s HD and SD channels.- The programming of ATV was Mainland-oriented, and there was a lack of local productions, including station-produced drama series.- Members of the public considered that the licensees should broadcast a greater variety of programme genres including programmes on Asian culture, live broadcasts of sports programmes, non-mainstream sports events, educational programmes for children, cookery shows, music programmes, news analysis programmes, one-off drama, reality drama, programmes on Legislative Council and District Council meetings, arts and culture programmes, programmes for

	minorities and classic Cantonese feature films.
(b)	<u>Positive programme requirements</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were views suggesting that the existing requirements of positive programmes were reasonable and sufficient and the Licensees had made an effort to produce educational programmes. There were also views suggesting that there should be more broadcast of children's programmes with educational value; programmes for senior citizens should contain more information on health; programmes for young persons could be broadcast at later hours and should contain contents of moral education; the requirement on the daily 2-hour of children's programmes should be increased to 4 to 5 hours; more quality informational and documentaries in prime-time slots. - There were comments that the broadcasting requirements on programmes for young persons, arts and culture programmes and documentaries should be removed.
(c)	<u>Editorial freedom and independence of news</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TVB's news coverage is not comprehensive enough, e.g. favoured HK Government and Mainland China and limited coverage of councilors not in support of Government policy. - TVB self-censored its news reports. - Obstruction of freedom of speech by not permitting the posting of TVB news clippings on Internet forums.

(d)	<u>Programme standards</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depiction of drug abuse should be handled with care to avoid bad influence on the youth. - Violence in drama series should be handled discreetly. - TVB's game shows such as "Beautiful Cooking" were of bad taste, contained bad language and sensual shots, and wasted food and resources in the production of such programmes. The quality of these programmes should be improved. - Hosts in cookery shows of both Licensees were too playful and show no respect for food. - Regulations on children's programmes were too strict. - The current prohibition on the broadcast of programmes unsuitable for children during school holidays deprived programme choice of adult viewers. - The broadcasting restriction of adult materials on the free television services should be relaxed. - Regulation on animation should be included in programme code.
(e)	<u>Programme Quality</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were doubts on the methodology of audience ratings measurement in respect of some of ATV's quality programmes. - The programme quality of both Licensees was satisfactory, in particular news programmes and documentaries, and TVB's "Sunday Report".

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The factual inaccuracies/unreasonable scenes in drama series and poor quality programmes were not acceptable. - News anchors often made pronunciation mistakes.
(f)	<u>Programme Scheduling</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Licensees tended to broadcast programmes of similar nature in the same time-slots, such as cookery shows on Sunday evenings and CCTV 9 on English channels as well as late broadcast hours of programmes for senior citizens. - Inefficient use of spectrum by TVB in broadcasting the same programmes on its analogue and digital (Standard Definition or High Definition (“HD”) channels. - Children’s programmes should not be broadcast during 5:00 – 6:00pm on Sundays. - The scheduling of RTHK programmes should be more flexible. - At present, the licensees schedule Cantonese films in late nights, but these films could be broadcast earlier.
(g)	<u>Subtitling/Sign Language</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subtitling was a very important service to hearing-impaired viewers. All programmes on the English channels should be provided with English subtitles. - Subtitling was only available in news and informational programmes of TVB Pearl channel. More programmes on the English channels should be provided with English subtitles.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No sign language was available in programmes and news reports.
(h)	<u>Advertising</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were too many advertisements in ATV's "6:00 News". - There were too many advertising magazines and sponsored infotainment programmes which could be misleading.
(i)	<u>Digital Television Services</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Licensees should provide programmes produced in true HD format. Both Licensees should also broadcast foreign language programmes produced in HD format. - While ATV's upconverted HD programmes were not satisfactory, TVB's HD programming was acceptable. - There should be a public service broadcasting channel after the complete digitisation of the existing free television services.
(j)	<u>Competition in the Free TV Market</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More spectrum should be released to bring in new broadcasters in the free TV market as there is a lack of programme choice in Hong Kong as compared to other markets. But there were also views that two free television stations were sufficient for Hong Kong. - There were views dissatisfied with the dominant position of TVB, e.g. exclusive contracts with artistes. But there were also views suggesting that television stations should engage

	<p>in free competition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The competition between the two Licensees should be encouraged to ensure quality television services for viewers.
(k)	<u>Other Broadcasting Matters</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time-slots for educational television should be removed. - Programmes in foreign languages should provide Cantonese sound track on the NICAM system.
B. Technical Issues Relating to Digital Television: The public views on the technical issues and the BA's responses are as follows.	
Question:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you explain why black strips appeared on lateral sides of the screen in some High Definition ("HD") programmes broadcast on traditional analogue 4:3 TV sets? - Please explain why there was a 7-second delay between the same programmes concurrently broadcast on analogue and digital simulcast channels? <p>The BA has invited the Office of the Telecommunications Authority ("OFTA") to respond. OFTA's responses are as follows:</p>
Answer:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High definition TV programmes are broadcast in wide-screen format (i.e. aspect ratio of 16:9). If a 16:9 format programme is displayed on a traditional 4:3 format TV set, black strips will appear at the top and/or bottom of the TV screen. As most DTT receivers have a built-in feature to adjust the aspect ratio of display, users may manually make adjustment to display the programme in the aspect ratio of 16:9 on a 4:3 screen in order to eliminate the black strips.

	<p>If necessary, users may consult the suppliers of the DTT receivers for assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The existing four analogue channels (i.e. ATV Home, ATV World, TVB Jade and TVB Pearl) are simulcast in DTT. Technically, due to digital signal processing, it is normal that there would be a few seconds' delay between simulcast programmes broadcast in analogue and digital formats.
<p>C. Others: Other views received from members of the public are set out below. The BA, the relevant government departments and the two domestic free television programme service licensees all have their representatives attending the public hearing to collect views from the public on the performance of the two licensees. The BA would particularly like to express gratitude to members of the public for their views and comments on the arrangements for the public hearing and will make improvements in future accordingly.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some members of the public encountered difficulties when they signed up for contests hosted by the Licensees. - The Government should assist the Licensees in access to the Mainland market. - Some were concerned with the staff layoffs by both Licensees and that they should reinforce talent training. - The relationship between a former BA member and TVB could give rise to conflict of interest. - Some considered that arrangements for the public hearing have rooms for improvement, such as the seating capacity of the venue, number of public hearing sessions and the timely distribution of the public hearings booklets.