

4.3 The Parliamentary Inquiry

The Saunderson Committee has received a large number of submissions from a wide range of interested parties (a list of submissions is provided at Appendix C. It has conducted several public hearings in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne, before which most of the organisations making submissions have appeared.

These submissions and hearings have demonstrated a high level of interest in the subject of pay television. Many of the submissions support its introduction, but some are opposed to pay television, or wish to see it introduced with strict controls to ensure high levels of local program production.

The most vigorous opponents of pay television are the commercial television operators. They see pay as only adding to their current financial difficulties and would like the moratorium to be extended to the late 1990s. The Saunderson Committee is expected to report to parliament in August.

4.4 The Strategic Technology Management Pay Television Study

Strategic Technology Management has just completed a major multi-client study of the options for pay television in Australian, and a 200 page report Pay Television: The Australian Options and Their Impacts is available for purchase. The starting point for the study was the DOTAC report discussed in 6.2 above.

Initial clients for the study are from industries which include government, cinema, equipment manufacture, television, program production, program distribution and telecommunications.

The report provides detailed quantitative analysis and projection of potential demand and revenue, and likely service provision costs. Consumer market research was undertaken to obtain an indication of likely market demand for pay television. The results of this research, together with available data on the Australian and US television/video markets, were used to formulate several demand scenarios. These demand scenarios were combined with a number of different supply scenarios, in order to evaluate the potential commercial viability of the various service business functions likely to be involved in the provision of pay television.