

CanWest

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One of the witnesses associated with CanWest had said that "business in Australia comes to a standstill from Christmas to the last week in January". Just as well, it seems, although one wonders if CanWest's financial advisers admit that the whole country's been at the beach for five weeks when they're sending the bills.

CanWest has chosen, for its own reasons, a fabulously complicated way out of its control of the Ten Network. There were many others. They could have put an ad in the *Trading Post* and it would have been over in a fortnight. Tops.

Why public policy should still be waiting, nearly a year on, for so blatant a breach of this law to be corrected, is anyone's guess.

Jock Given

Kroger's appointment rattles ABC watchers

The federal government's announcement on February 5, 1998 of the appointment to the ABC board of banker Michael Kroger was greeted with dismay by the Labor Party, Friends of the ABC groups and several newspaper columnists who claimed that it was a political appointment designed to further undermine the national broadcaster's independence, if not its future.

The facts are as follows: Mr Kroger, 40 has business credentials. He is chief executive of Melbourne-based merchant banker J.T. Campbell and Co. Mr Kroger has no experience in broadcasting (apart from listening to ABC radio and being a "long-term watcher" of ABC television).

According to Senator Richard Alston, the Minister for Communications, Mr Kroger brings to the job "extensive management experience in the finance, legal and political fields gained through his involvement in J.T. Campbell, his operation of a successful law firm, and as a former office holder of the Liberal Party, including a term as president of the Victorian division".

It is this last credential which worries those claiming that Mr Kroger's appointment is a political one and, therefore, potentially damaging to the ABC's independence. As president of the Victorian Liberal Party and a

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How to be in pictures, according to summer school

The Melbourne University Summer School in film-making, held between January 12-20, informed, educated and entertained students ranging from recent VCE graduates to grandparents.

"In the beginning was the word" was how the screenwriting day commenced. Many words later, the audience knew a lot more about pitching a concept, writing a treatment, and producing their own script. Only one thing more was needed – a good idea to base it on.

Students were instructed how to visualise a script by way of camera and lighting use, and how important production design and production management were to a successful product.

The production manager is the organiser of the film world. He or she has to know all, keep schedules, and be able to soothe sometimes irascible, directors, producers, writers and actors.

In production, marketing and distribution, it was taught that film-making is three things: a business where risk is minimised; a creative enterprise based on collaboration; and a complex technical enterprise. It should also be good fun, but that is optional.

Alan Finney from Village Roadshow talked about distribution. Only two out of 10 films make money, he said, and if a film doesn't work in the first week, it's over. This was the case with David Parker's recent film *Diana and Me*.

Students learned that comedy is

something that makes you laugh. Good comedy makes you laugh a little, cry a little and think a little, and this is not easy to do.

On the final day of the course Nadia Tass ran a director's masterclass. She emphasised that research and an excellent knowledge of the film's subject was what gave life to her films. And she revealed her special filmmaking secret: graphs. Using numerous graphs, she said, enables her to understand at all times during shooting what is happening with the story, and where the characters are.

But as one ex-maths student in the class was heard to sigh, "graphs are what I'm trying to get away from".

Bruce Shearer