vague title of the section 'Policy challenges for the cultural media'. If there is a connecting theme, it would appear to lie in the policy determination (or policy evolution) process in communications, particularly as it affects the electronic mass media. Thus two papers (by Waterman and by Thomas) look at the development of 'public' televison and radio, and another two (by Ducey and Portale and by Valenzuela) consider the role for ethnic broadcasting.

While the papers collected together in this volume were presented over two years ago, the issues which they address remain of considerable relevance. Some readers, though, may find a number of the contributions either too lacking in substance or too concentrated on the particulars of the US system. Nevertheless, the contributions taken as a whole cover a wide range of topics, perhaps wider than is implied by the volume's main title, and if nothing else serve as an excellent source of references to a broad range of recent and not so recent work. (In total, there are 348 references to be found amongst the 29 papers.) Overall, the work stands as a useful encapsulation of a wide range of approaches to the variety of issues which face telecommunications policy makers both now and in the future.

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Technology Assessment in Australia *by Senate Standing Committee on Science, Technology and the Environment.*
(Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1987) pp. 111. ISBN 0-644-05265-1.

The Senate Standing Committee on Science, Technology and the Environment has finally released the report of its major inquiry into 'New Technology and Unemployment'. Entitled *Technology Assessment in Australia,* the just over 100 page report has taken nearly three years to produce since the Senate first referred the issue to the committee back in June 1984.

According to the report, the six man, all-party committee, chaired by Queensland ALP senator Gerry Jones, collected over 3,500 pages of evidence, and heard from over 100 witnesses, including peak business and trade union councils, major employers and unions, state and federal government ministries, and sundry scientific, educational and technological groups and organisations.

In terms of research effort then, the inquiry rivalled the Fraser Government's $2 million Committee of Inquiry into Technological Change chaired by Sir Rupert Myers, and the more recent National Technology Conference and subsequent failed National Technology Strategy development effort.

Unfortunately, just as with those previous efforts, this inquiry too, failed to reach any definite conclusions about the relationship between technological change and unemployment. Ordinarily then, such a report would be likely to be pigeon-holed and forgotten very quickly. However, the report contains a number of recommendations concerning technology assessment and industrial relations which are controversial, and which may well save it from instant oblivion.

Perhaps the most contentious of these is the recommendation that the government should introduce a *Technological Change (Sharing of Information) Act,* which would require employers to provide '. . . specific categories of information to employees and their unions in the course of consultation over technological change'.

The legislation is said to be necessary because of continuing unsatisfactory levels of consultation between management and unions over the introduction of new technology.

Such a recommendation is controversial, and not merely because, as the committee well recognised, employers will be opposed to it. The proposed legislation is very similar in effect to the ACTU's official policy on technological change, first adopted at its 1979 congress, which calls for the government to introduce a *Technological Change (Impact of Proposals) Act.* In fact, the Committee's report suggests its proposed legislation '. . . should specify in more detail, along the lines provided in a technology impact statement, what information should be provided'.

Moreover, the report suggests that technological impact statements should be routinely produced in management-union consultations over technological change (such as, for instance, in the agreement on technological change between Telecom and its unions, which the report describes as a 'pacesetter'), and even contemplates a situation where such impact statements 'become a legal requirement' (p. 92) at some indeterminate future stage.

However, Bill Mansfield, ACTU Assistant Secretary, said in giving evidence before the committee that the unions now believed that a consultative provision in the relevant industrial award, and not legislation, is '. . . the best method' of ensuring information sharing. But not all the unions which appeared before the committee endorsed this view, with representatives of the private banking, clerical, insurance and retail unions all complaining about lack of consultation over new technology and at least some of them calling for legislation in line with the ACTU policy.

It will be interesting to see how the government handles the report given that it has already rejected the ACTU's calls for this legislation not once, but a number of times in the past, and given that the ACTU, under the influence of a new, more accommodating approach to technological change espoused by the powerful metal workers union, now appears to oppose the idea of legislation.

Employer opposition to such legislation might be less of a problem for the report explicitly recognised that such opposition could be expected and so a contingency plan of an 'increased educational program' (p. 86) was mooted. Indeed, the need for an education campaign promoting information sharing is described as 'urgent', although 'The Committee is aware that the drafting of information sharing legislation . . . will involve a considerable lead time'.

Another recommendation also likely to attract attention is the Committee's support for the establishment of a Technological Change Council. The proposed council would have the right to carry out public inquiries into new technologies, and would report to the Prime Minister's Department. It would subsume the existing Technological Change Committee (hereafter TCC) of the Australian Science and Technology Council (hereafter ASTEC), and should have a broad range of part-time members representing '. . . business, unions, community groups, womens interests, labour market and sociological expertise'.

As the Senate Committee envisages it, the new Council '. . . should act as the place of lodgement of the technological impact statements produced in the

course of management/union consultation at the enterprise level'. The Council is also seen as being empowered to '. . . manage a scheme of financial assistance to unions and community groups who may wish to carry out technology assessment projects . . .' (p. 91).

The Chairman of ASTEC however, is reported to have told the Committee that only a minority of the members of the current 12 member TCC would support it being hived off to form the basis of the new council.

Nevertheless, the Senate Committee described the evidence before it as indicating that technology impact assessment work in Australia today is 'abysmal' and that 'this is partly because such assessment work is carried out by institutions whose primary concern has been to promote the rapid diffusion of new technologies' (p. 92). (It is unclear whether this is a reference to ASTEC or not. Certainly, ASTEC is normally seens as a technology promotion agency).

It concluded that while technology promotion is important, '. . . it is equally important for Australia to understand the nature of the social and general economic impact of the introduction of new technologies' (p. 92).

The report also recommends the establishment of an **information clearing house** on new technologies under the auspices of the new National Industry Extension Service. A feasibility study into the establishment of an 'industry data-bank' is also recommended to be carried out by the government as a 'matter of urgency', but neither of these recommendations is likely to be as controversial as the industrial relations recommendations.

Dr Robert King, secretary to the Standing Committee, said that the government was expected to respond to senate committees' reports within three months of their tabling, but that the convention was more honoured in the breach, than the observance. However, this report may well provoke an early response from the government, and it will be difficult for them to simply dismiss the recommendations because of their overlap with the current industrial democracy thrust of more information sharing and consultation. Yet if the government's record on technology matters in the past is anything to go by, don't hold your breath.

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Marketing of Technology: An Australian Perspective *by Peter Link*
(Nelson Wadsworth, Melbourne, 1987), pp. xiv + 285, ISBN 0-1700703-4.

Peter Link has performed a very useful service in writing this book. Those who teach industrial marketing in Australia have been looking for reference material, with an Australian perspective, to utilise in the growing number of courses in this area. His book will have far wider appeal though, indeed it will be of interest to all those involved in the process of industrial innovation, be it as educators or practitioners. The key to the book's contribution and value lies in its emphasis on the role of marketing in successful industrial innovation. Widespread research has shown that failure of new products is more often a question of commercial