

10th ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PROGRAMME ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLISH TELEVISION AND RADIO PROGRAMMES (2004/2005)

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Annual Report by the Programme Advisory Committee for English programmes (PACE) covers the period 1 August 2004 to 15 July 2005. The Chairperson and members of the PACE were appointed by the Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts for a term of 2 years beginning 15 July 2003.

Terms of Reference

1.2 The terms of reference of the PACE are:

- Feedback on the range and quality of English TV and radio programmes, with a primary focus on the Free-To-Air platform given that the programmes are accessible nationwide, and offer suggestions for their improvement;
- Feedback and advice on the standards of TV/radio programmes and commercials;
- Advise MDA on its Programme, Advertisement and Sponsorship Codes; and
- Support MDA in its public education efforts, and the gathering of programme feedback.

Members

1.3 The PACE comprises members from a wide range of background and fields of expertise, with an age range from the 20s to the 60s representing the major racial demographics of Singapore. Annex A provides the background of members.

The Ethos of PACE

1.4 In its discussions, the PACE is mindful that there are a diversity of views from different segments of society and various stakeholders in the media industry on issues of range, quality and content. Its role is to assess the various viewpoints and achieve a balance between (i) the needs of the more prudent with those wanting greater room for experimentation; and (ii) commercial viability against the social responsibility of broadcasters.

1.5 While seeking an optimum balance is a challenge, the PACE firmly believes that a responsible broadcast media is an essential partner in ensuring social cohesion.

Specialisation & Communication

1.6 With more than 17 local Free-To-Air (FTA) analogue English TV and radio stations, the PACE has had a challenging task of assessing the many programmes on air. The committee also reviews selected cable TV programmes. To ensure an equitable spread of focus on specific areas, the PACE formed various sub-committees or Interest Groups for Programmes (IGP) to monitor and assess the different genres of programmes. Specific areas such as programmes for children or the elderly, entertainment, sports, cultural and info-educational content were therefore examined by members familiar or with keen interest in such areas.

1.7 Beyond the 7 meetings by the PACE and other ad hoc meetings, members communicated through emails for a continuous exchange of ideas.

1.8 In the course of its term, the PACE has held dialogue sessions with selected broadcasters to better understand the broadcast industry and the latest programming developments. This has enabled members to seek clarifications firsthand as well as provide more pertinent recommendations to the industry directly. The sessions include site visits as well as meetings with the programming staff of MediaWorks and MediaCorp. The committee also met with MediaCorp's board of directors and senior management in April 2005.

1.9 PACE members have also assisted MDA in facilitating the focus group sessions organised by the Authority to gauge public sentiments on public service broadcast programmes on free-to-air channels. For the year under review, 6 focus groups were conducted with interest groups such as students, working adults and ethnic communities for an exchange of views.

1.10 In addition, several PACE members assisted MDA by participating in film reviews along with the Films Consultative Panel.

SECTION 2: RANGE & QUALITY OF BROADCAST PROGRAMMES AND PACE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Range and Variety of Programme Choices

2.1 With the merger between the incumbent broadcaster MediaCorp, and the second Free-To-Air (FTA) TV broadcaster, SPH MediaWorks, as well as the closure of the latter's English station, Channel i (Ch i), TV viewers currently have a total of 6 FTA TV channels to choose from. The channels are Channel 5 (Ch 5), Channel 8 (Ch 8), Channel News Asia (CNA), Central (with three distinct programme belts--Kids, Arts, and Vasantham), Suria and Channel U, the latest addition to the MediaCorp group.

2.2 Radio listeners continue to benefit from the variety of FTA radio stations and programme genres offered by the 3 radio broadcasters, MediaCorp Radio, Safra Radio and UnionWorks. The various mass entertainment as well as niche programming radio stations offer a good a mix of entertainment content, info-education, news and arts programming.

2.3 On top of FTA TV channels, viewers have the option of cable TV subscription where StarHub Cable Vision has done well in continuing to source for and roll out new subscription channels, particularly digital channels, providing subscribers with increasing programming choices. With the number of subscription analogue and digital channels standing at 64, the channels offer programmes of various genres and languages. Subscribers can also enjoy a Demand TV, a Near Video-On-Demand service offering movies, and enhanced programming with StarHub's interactive channel, Hub TV as well as Tube Play, a digital TV games channel.

General Observations and Comments

2.4 The committee generally regretted that competition in the Free-To-Air TV market could not be sustained and members were divided in views on the closure of MediaWorks, recognising both the loss and benefits of the merger. While some members saw the merger as a positive and, in some ways, necessary step to stem the heavy financial losses of the competing broadcasters, there were also concerns that the lack of competition could have an impact on the quality of programmes on air.

2.5 In particular, concerns were expressed that the closure of Ch i means less Singapore-made and acquired English programme choices being available on TV as well as a loss of an extra avenue to showcase the works of local producers, directors and

screenwriters. At the same time the PACE notes that in terms of entertainment programmes, MediaCorp TV has made efforts to source for more new and fresh quality drama series (e.g. *Lost*) as well as produce some new local info-tainment and variety programmes (e.g. *Coffee Talks and Hawker Woks*). However, there could be improvements in the area of introducing well scripted and locally-produced dramas which Ch i had done well to offer before its closure with programmes like the series, *Life* and *Six Weeks*.

2.6 On the issue of content standards, the PACE is encouraged to note that in the period of review, overall there have generally been a lower incidence of and less major programme breaches for both FTA TV and radio, though a radio broadcaster was fined for indecent comments made on one of its programmes. This decrease in programme breaches could be attributed to the less likelihood of broadcasters trying to push the boundaries of decency to capture the audience's attention and gain ratings now that there is no direct competition. In general, PACE also noted that MDA had received few complaints about content standards on cable TV. There were however some viewers who expressed concern over footage with some graphic violence on the Tamil channel, Sun TV's news programme.

2.7 The following section contains PACE's observations and recommendations on the range and quality of broadcast programmes by genre. The committee has also reiterated recommendations for areas which broadcasters could improve upon.

Observations & Recommendations by Programme Genre

• Children's Programmes

2.8 The committee notes that there has generally been little change in the range of children's programmes. The usual staple of commercial children's programmes such as *Yu-Gi-Oh*, *Pokemon*, *Powerpuff Girls*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* still dominate Kids Central's prime-time weekend slots. These programmes also tend to be heavy on violence or focus on adversarial conflict. While there have been some efforts to provide programming for young teens up to the age of 14 years in Kids Central's 'Funky Tweens' belt, in general, the gap in educational programming for teens still remains.

2.9 On programmes for children, PACE recommends the following:

- (i) More Quality Educational Programmes on Weekends
Currently weekend belts on Kids Central tend to be dedicated to showing entertainment children's programmes like cartoons. With schools going full day and co-curricular activities being held on weekday afternoons, more quality educational programmes should be shown on weekends so that more children can benefit from these programmes.
- (ii) Widen Range of Children's Programmes
To promote interest in current affairs, the range of children's programmes can be widened to include content from the genre. For example, there can be a current affairs programme targeted at upper primary children or a weekly/bi-weekly programme that creates awareness and helps children to 'digest' certain topics of the day at a level that they can understand. Topics could include natural catastrophes such as the recent tsunami tragedy, terrorism, bird-flu and environmental issues. The format of the programme could include a segment where children can offer their views and opinions.

- (iii) Broadcaster-Agency Partnerships to Explore Issues Faced by Teens
Broadcasters can work with government agencies like the Ministry of Community Development Youth and Sports (MCYS), the Ministry of Education (MOE) or polytechnics to identify/explore topics of interest or issues that youths in Singapore struggle with. These could range from friendships, boy-girl relationships, sexuality, divorce, money, freedom and responsibility/trust. To attract and engage our youth, broadcasters can try out different formats for programmes such as merging TV and internet content. The skills and works of tertiary media students might prove to be a useful resource in this regard.
- (iv) Target International Awards to Benchmark Programmes
To benchmark its children's programming with the rest of the world, Kids Central can work towards winning an international award for their programming like the International Academy / UNICEF Award which is a special award given to broadcasters whose programming best captures the spirit of the International Children's Day of Broadcasting.
- (v) Bring Back Programmes which Profile Exemplary Children/Teens
Members encourage broadcasters to show programmes which profile children or teens who have excelled in certain fields or who serve as role models among their peers. One such programme was *Champs* on Kids Central which profiled children and teens who rose above adversities to excel in school or acted selflessly to help friends who were less fortunate than themselves. Such programmes are not only inspiring but impart good social and moral values to children drawn from real life experiences. Kids Central could adapt programmes with such themes shown on other channels including *TR Report* (Ch 8) and *Generation Next* (Arts Central).
- (vi) More Caution to be Exercised for Gameshows with Child Contestants
Previously, the committee had expressed concerns over gameshow formats for children, particularly in the case of quiz shows e.g. *Singapore's Brainiest Kid*. While members note that broadcasters would explain to contestants what to expect from the game and that participation is voluntary, the children may nonetheless be subject to unnecessary stress beyond what they anticipate and public scrutiny. The committee therefore would like to reiterate that broadcasters should exercise sensitivity and discretion during the broadcast of such quizzes. The host of the gameshow would also play an important role in helping the contestants to manage tense and stressful moments.
- (vii) Showcase Movies for Children
PACE reiterates its recommendation for Kids Central to feature a children/teens' movie festival series where various quality movies or telemovies targeted at a young audience could be shown e.g. films based on Roald Dahl's books. This would help add to the range of programmes available for children/teens and also cultivate an interest in films among young viewers.

- **Entertainment Programmes**

2.10 While members are heartened to see continuous efforts being made towards producing more local entertainment programmes, there is concern that the quality of some of these productions may be affected by the lack of direct competition. Ch i had previously made headway in the production of commendable alternative local dramas with unique

production styles such as *Six Weeks* and *Durian King*. While these dramas had likely appealed to a niche audience, they nonetheless served as a refreshing change to the other local productions that have been available on TV. Such programmes will be missed given that the dramas on Ch 5 tend to be more mass entertainment in nature. The PACE hopes that Ch 5 can look into bringing back some of these quality dramas produced by Ch i.

2.11 PACE makes the following recommendations for entertainment programmes:

(i) Improve Standards of Local Dramas and Sitcoms

With the lack of competition since the merger, members have concerns that there will be a decline in the standard of local dramas and sitcoms. While the stable of local artistes has expanded, the same faces could still appear in programmes based on their popularity. Standards of local sitcoms like *Phua Chu Kang* and *Police and Thief* have declined compared to earlier episodes and have substandard storylines as well as low brow, slapstick humour that have not been well-received by some viewers.

At the same time, members note that the broadcaster seems more adept at producing docu-dramas and commend efforts for series such as *True Courage* and *Missing* which are gripping with interesting premise and good production values.

(ii) Apply Programme Ratings and Viewing Advisories

The committee urges broadcasters to apply Parental Guidance (PG) labels with accompanying viewing advisories to programmes which may deal with more mature themes or contain graphic scenes e.g. *Nip/Tuck*. Trailers for these programmes should also carry the necessary ratings. It is noted that in most cases, broadcasters tend to edit programmes rather than label a programme PG. The rating of programmes would cater to the needs of more mature viewers and at the same time, provide the necessary information for parents to guide what their children watch.

For instances where programmes shown during family viewing hours may contain some graphic/sensationalistic images (e.g. an episode of *Extreme Gourmet* had a close up shot of a severed rabbit's head on a plate), broadcasters should consider placing viewing advisories at the start of such programmes or schedule them at later time slots.

(iii) Maintain Proper Standards of English in Local Productions

The casting of popular artistes from the Mandarin channels in English dramas and sitcoms is an effective way to increase the appeal and viewership base of English programmes. However, at times, as some of these artistes are less proficient in English, their pronunciation of the language is substandard, bordering on Singlish/broken English e.g. on the sitcoms *Police and Thief* and *My Sassy Neighbour*. While recognising that conversational Singlish is a colourful language legacy, the committee is concerned that this is excessively portrayed in national broadcast programmes, which may signal the wrong impression that Singlish is standard Singapore English.

(iv) Produce Programmes with More Complex Themes

Local dramas should take a cue from good foreign dramas, e.g. *CSI* where the issues dealt with in the plots are not simply a matter of black and white. Scriptwriters should strive for complexity and sophistication in storylines, with wittier dialogue, that go beyond simple, straightforward entertainment.

- (v) Concern for Proliferation of Programmes with Themes of Horror and Violence
Members noted that there seems to be a number of programmes with the trend of exploring the themes of horror and violence. While members noted that there will always be an audience for such programmes, broadcasters should keep them off prime-time or at family viewing times. Members are also concerned that broadcasters tend not to make efforts to refrain from scheduling such trailers during family oriented shows.
- (vi) Depiction of Youths in Teen Dramas
Members suggested that broadcasters should consider producing more dramas targeted at teens. These dramas should feature students from other disciplines beyond the commonly featured "hip" disciplines such as Mass Communications. Portrayal of students from other streams can also help to raise the profile of these disciplines and help to dispel the stereotypical view that campus life in some disciplines is boring.
- (vii) More Local Gameshows
Members found previous local versions of syndicated game shows enjoyable (e.g. *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*) particularly when the shows featured episodes based on various themes e.g. celebrities special, and suggest that broadcasters bring back more of such programmes or source for new engaging game show formats to acquire.
- (vii) Continue to Feature Programmes with Theme of Family Values
As previously recommended, programmes with the theme of family values should continue to feature strongly. It is important for such programmes to impart positive values to the youths watching the programme. Members feel that broadcasters should not stop producing or acquiring wholesome programmes with a family-theme e.g. *Like My Own* and *Everwood* just because the audience rating is low.
- (ix) Selective Acquisition of Reality TV Series
Members recognise that reality TV has been a popular programming format which has done well in international TV markets and hence, local broadcasters will likely continue to acquire such programmes. However, members would like to continue to encourage broadcasters to be more selective about the types of reality series they air and seek to acquire more quality series. The main concerns with a significant number of reality series and the type of programmes being aired are that too many of the same type of these programmes may result in less programming choices for viewers and some of the values in these programmes may have a negative impact on younger, more impressionable viewers. The committee also urges the broadcasters to be more discerning with the appropriate scheduling of such programmes which may deal with or contain more mature themes and content.

At the same time, the committee finds that it is a positive move to acquire and produce local versions of quality, popular international reality show formats or adapt similar formats. For instance, *Singapore Idol* was one such programme which not only enjoyed much success among viewers but served as entertainment for family audiences. The familiar locations and settings used in the video segments as well as its intimate focus on the contestants and their backgrounds found a common affinity with many Singaporeans.

- **Arts and Cultural Programmes**

2.12 Generally Arts Central has continued to do well in airing both local productions and acquiring good foreign programmes. Members find Arts Central's move to re-brand itself as a lifestyle and arts entertainment channel to be a good one. The introduction of lighter arts programming with some alternative entertainment programmes like British comedies (e.g. *The Office*) and anime (e.g. *Inuyasha*) potentially appeals to a wider audience and draws in more viewers.

2.13 The good mix of programmes on the channel also exposes more viewers to a variety of programmes and hence makes the more "artsy" programmes and films more accessible to a wider audience. However, the channel should not lose its focus on arts and cultural branding and continue to provide programmes of this genre.

2.14 In addition, the PACE applauds the channel for its focus on showcasing quality local productions since the beginning of this year.

2.15 PACE makes the following recommendations for arts and cultural programmes:

- (i) Screening of More Foreign Movies
Generally, there is a good mix of foreign movies from both the Asian and Western film industries. However, it would be good if the more popular classics, including those that appeal to families, could be shown regularly and not only during the festive seasons.
- (ii) Expand Scope and Improve Presentation Styles of Local Productions
The quality of local productions is getting better, spanning a wide range of interests and content. Some examples of quality local productions include: *No Strings Attached*, *Bandwidth*, *Hidden Dragon*, and *Stage to Screen*. However, the programmes could be improved with more lively presentation styles to engage audiences more. The content and scope of these programmes such as *No Strings Attached* and *Hidden Dragon* could also expand to cover other performances and visual art forms. Programmes such as *Generation Next* and *Self-Portraits* provide a good balance in showcasing the talents of both the young and more mature artists.
- (iii) Cross Promotion of Arts Programmes
Some good programmes such as *Arts Buzz* which was introduced last year could be also shown on Ch 5 as it has a broader viewership base. On a similar note, the more popular artistes from Ch 5 or 8 could be invited to host or participate in these productions to attract viewers who do not normally watch arts programmes.

- **News, Current Affairs and Info-Educational Programmes**

2.16 Members felt that more could be done to raise the quality of local current affairs programmes and to engage viewers. Noting that local current affairs programmes generally tend to be of predictable formats which hardly engage the viewers, members continue to recommend that broadcasters come up with current affairs programmes with more interactive formats and those which are pitched at a mass audience. Such formats encourage discussion of issues and meet the needs of viewers who are becoming more informed and want their views to be heard. CNA's attempt to take on such interactive formats for programmes like *High Stakes: The Casino Debate* is lauded.

2.17 While CNA has generally been able to provide viewers with up-to-date reports of newsworthy local and global events, being a news and information channel, CNA ought to be more up-to-speed in its coverage of breaking news events such as the tsunami tragedy. Nonetheless, members commended the channel for its comprehensive coverage of the disaster after the initial 24 hours which included the production of insightful documentaries such as *I Witness* focussing on the impact of the disaster in Asia and telecast of quality acquired documentaries on tsunamis.

2.18 It is also observed that CNA has been repeating a number of information programmes from Ch 5 and Arts Central (e.g. *Infusion*, *Jammin* and *InspirAsians*). While broadcasters are encouraged to make quality info-educational programmes accessible to the widest audience possible by repeating selected programmes from other channels, they should ensure that this is not done at the expense of reducing the variety of original programming and should be selective in their choice of programmes to repeat. English channels are also strongly encouraged to adapt quality info-educational programmes from minority language channels which may have limited viewership because of the language medium.

2.19 Specifically, the PACE recommends the following:

- (i) More Programmes which Engage Singaporeans in Discussion of Issues
Members hope to see more programmes which engage Singaporeans in the debate of issues in a constructive manner such as *High Stakes: The Casino Debate* and *i-Contact*. As the latter was a MediaWorks' programme, PACE hopes that MediaCorp would consider producing a similar programme. PACE also recommends that CNA explore programmes featuring dialogue between Singaporeans of different generations.
- (ii) More In-depth Interview Programmes
Broadcasters should produce more in-depth interview programmes along the lines of BBC's *Hard Talk* which covers more hard topics. It is also important that the anchor person or presenters of such programmes are not only capable of engaging both the viewer and studio guest(s) but also be able to ask more incisive and penetrating questions to provide greater insight into the views of the personalities featured.
- (iii) More Investigative Programmes
PACE feels that CNA can do more to produce programmes such as *Get Real!* which probe and investigate issues of interest, and examine different perspectives to an issue.
- (iv) More Original Programming for Viewers
Rather than rely on repeated programming to fill airtime, CNA should strive to provide more original programming for viewers and adapt quality programmes from non-English channels and be selective in the programmes it repeats from Ch 5 and Arts Central.

- **Sports Programmes**

2.20 The committee is pleased to note that there was some TV coverage of and related programming by MediaCorp on the 117th International Olympics Council (IOC) event held in Singapore where the host city of the 2012 Olympics was decided. The hosting of the IOC event is regarded as a milestone in Singapore's history as millions viewed the proceedings and our country was in the public eye. It was also a chance for Singapore to be viewed as a budding sports hub. In addition, the IOC event had international and national interest and

generated much excitement among local and overseas audiences. PACE hopes that the broadcaster will fully utilise such rare opportunities to propel its name into the international broadcast arena by serving as a broadcast partner.

2.21 On other sports-related issues, based on members' observations, there continues to remain a general lack of support by broadcasters for sports related events held in Singapore, though this has been an area which PACE has constantly encouraged broadcasters to pursue. Singapore holds a number of international sporting events, in particular the Singapore Marathon, Rugby Sevens and OSIM triathlon. These events are home grown sporting events but have since gone international. It is therefore not accurate to say that there is a shortage of exciting local sports events to broadcast but there appears to be a lack of interest by local broadcasters to provide comprehensive coverage on these events due to perceived low commercial returns.

2.22 PACE makes the following recommendations on sports programmes:

(i) Increase Coverage of Sports on FTA TV

Now that competition is of the past, the broadcaster should focus on acquiring sports programming which previously it was unable to due to the focus on fighting off competition. Members also noted that cost of sports programming may be increasing and highlighted that sports broadcast should as far as possible be covered by sponsorship dollars, lest cost be passed on to viewers.

The committee has also continually recommended that more should be done to cover local/ home grown international sporting events, international events featuring Singapore as well as sports personalities and icons which would be of interest to viewers particularly those who follow sports programmes. The broadcasters have put in some efforts to produce local sports programmes but these have been relatively minimal. Examples of events and personalities to cover include the Rugby Sevens, the Paralympics and local participants of the Paralympics. Such programmes could either be in the form of "live" or delayed coverage or even as part of a weekly sports magazine programme, which is currently lacking.

(ii) Partnerships with Various Agencies to Showcase Sports Events

Members suggest more communication and partnerships between the broadcaster and sports related government agencies e.g. Singapore Sports Council as well as other relevant organisations in order to pool funding resources as well as share sports programming ideas. This would help to increase the coverage and interest in sports events, particularly local sports.

(iii) Use Local Sports to Promote National Bonding

Sports can be a vehicle to promote national bonding and sports programmes featuring local athletes can help to do that. Local sports programmes can also instil an appreciation of a more sporty lifestyle and acceptance of foreign representation. In addition, such programmes can look at lessons in life that sports provide, such as acknowledgement of effort, disappointment and victory in life. Local sports programmes can also help excite the spirit of our nation.

(iv) Produce Sports Interstitials

Given the high cost producing sports programmes and the lack of interest from sponsors, the PACE would like to reiterate its proposal that broadcasters produce sports interstitials instead, as they are a means of transmitting bite-sized information about sports, health tips and sporting facilities to the public.

These can be produced at a lower cost and easily scheduled across time-belts on various channels for greater reach compared to full programmes.

(iv) Coverage of School Sports

The PACE suggests that youth groups, sports clubs in the schools and tertiary institutions tie up with the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore Sports Council, and the Ministry of Education to highlight sports at a school level. An alliance could then be struck between these agencies and the broadcasters to promote sports among the young.

- **Programmes for the Elderly**

2.23 Other than the series, *The Good Life* previously shown on Ch 5 which highlighted various activities that are available to retirees, PACE continues to note a lack of English TV programmes targeting the elderly compared to some programmes that are available on the Chinese channels such as dedicated variety programmes e.g. *Golden Age* and dramas adapted from Chinese classics. Reiterating the need for programmes which cater to the needs and interests of the elderly, PACE felt that more could be done to provide programming for this group of viewers. TV programmes could be used as effective tools to communicate information to the elderly, for instance, heightening the awareness of crime among the elderly, as is sometimes covered in *Crime Watch*, or offering health tips.

2.24 PACE makes the following recommendations:

(i) Research on Programmes which Appeal to the Elderly

To ascertain the type of programmes the elderly are interested in, PACE proposed that MediaCorp survey the elderly and at the same time, conduct a study on how countries like UK, US, Australia and New Zealand are meeting the needs of the elderly in terms of TV programming. Meantime, broadcasters could telecast re-runs of soap operas and past local programmes which have proven to be popular with the elderly viewers.

(ii) Programmes Fronted by the Elderly

To attract more of the older viewers and harness their wisdom and knowledge, broadcasters should consider producing information and current affairs programmes fronted by elderly personalities (i.e. aged 55 and above) on topics of interest to them and solicit their views on these issues. As a channel catering to an older demographic, CNA could consider taking up the idea of producing such a programme.

(iii) Programme Interstitials for the Elderly

Should full programmes targeting the elderly be deemed as commercially less viable, broadcasters could consider introducing programme interstitials or capsules to communicate important information messages such as crime prevention or health tips.

- **Radio Programmes**

2.25 Overall, PACE finds that the present range and quality of radio stations and programmes available adequately meets the diverse interests of listeners. The committee is also heartened to note that with the exception of one radio broadcaster which was penalised for indecent and sexual comments being made on air by the DJs, the broadcasters have generally acted responsibly in observing broadcast guidelines and community standards.

2.26 PACE notes the rebranding of NewsRadio 93.8FM as 938LIVE which is positioned as a more lively and engaging news talk station offering more 'live' and current content. While the station maintains its position as a news station, members noted that the 'harder' content will be balanced out with lifestyle segments that appeal to a mass audience. The rebranding is a welcomed change in recognition that there is a need for the revamp to make the station more appealing to both listeners and advertisers.

2.27 Lush 99.5FM was intended to be the new arts-centred radio station following the closure of the arts station Passion 99.5FM. However, so far Lush has been airing mostly contemporary lounge and jazz music since its inception in December 2004. There have been attempts to provide listeners with some local music and arts information in the form of event announcements and arts personality/celebrity interviews. Though not entirely arts-centric, the committee is also pleased to note that the station has recently started "YoungGrooves", programme segments which showcase information capsules on topics such as music and technology produced by tertiary students. On the whole however, the branding of the station appears to be that of a contemporary music and lifestyle station, offering interstitials with beauty/fashion tips rather than an arts dedicated station.

2.28 With expectations that Lush is a form of replacement for Passion, Lush still needs to look into providing more arts-related content. Although some of such information is already being aired, this is minimal and much more could be done to make such content accessible to the listeners. It is important for the gap in a central on-air source on radio for arts and cultural programming to be filled. Lush would also be able to play a crucial role in helping to promote the local arts scene.

2.29 PACE makes the following recommendations for radio programmes:

(i) More Arts Related Content and Anchor Programmes on Radio

The committee recommends that there should be some anchor and concrete arts related programmes on Lush 99.5FM so that listeners are able to tune in by 'appointment' for the latest arts scene happenings. The station could also be used as a platform to support events held by arts related academies e.g. announcing or profiling noteworthy performances by students.

Other than Lush, other radio stations could consider incorporating arts-related programme segments or belts into their programming in a manner that would still tie in with the branding of the station and appeal to their target audience.

(ii) Improve Standards of News Delivery

At times, when DJs deliver news headlines, some do not appropriately pace the delivery of news or have poor enunciation and intonation thus failing to capture the attention of listeners. At times, presenters also trip over words or mispronounced names. To ensure that standards of news segments are upheld, radio DJs who are required to read the news should undergo the proper training needed to grasp techniques of news delivery.

(iii) Lack of Radio Programmes for Children

Presently, there is little or no radio programmes for children. Previously, programmes like *Happy Talk* where children could interact with the puppet Charlie, were popular among listeners and encouraged children to call in with questions. Broadcasters could consider bringing back such interactive programmes which would encourage children to express their views and provide an alternative avenue to develop a child's imagination and creativity. Broadcasters could also consider introducing an interactive parent/child programme e.g. a game segment with the aim of parent-child bonding.

SECTION 3: PACE'S CHOICE OF PROGRAMMES

3 The PACE would like to highlight some examples of quality programmes on TV which it has observed, and to encourage and recommend to broadcasters to produce and acquire more of such good programmes for telecast on their channels. Titles illustrative of the PACE's choice of quality programmes are given in Annex B of this report.

SECTION 4: PACE'S AUDIT

4 PACE has been keeping track of broadcasters' responses and follow-up on feedback/recommendations made by the committee since the start of its term on 15 Jul 2003 as well as those made by the previous committee from 2001 to mid-2003. Members are encouraged to observe that the broadcasters have taken note of the feedback given and have also followed up on several of the suggestions made. However some concerns raised by PACE have not been fully addressed and there remain areas which broadcasters could improve upon.

4.1 To highlight areas which broadcasters have done well in addressing as well as those that could be improved, PACE has included in this report, an audit checklist summarising the committee's key recommendations over the past 4 years and the follow-up action taken by broadcasters. The audit is attached as Annex C of this report.

SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 The PACE observes that the need for broadcasters to improve local content standards remains and over the course of the committee's term, members have expressed views on what should be considered quality programmes and how to help raise standards of local programming. Since direct competition is now less of a concern, some members have suggested that in order to help raise the standards of local programmes particularly for the entertainment genre, the broadcaster should consider channelling resources to production training and skills upgrading. This has been lacking since MediaCorp closed its in-house training school. Adequate training would be particularly important in the areas of producing, directing and scriptwriting as these are essential aspects for the production of a good programme.

5.2 The broadcaster could also consider more outsourcing/collaboration with external production houses to ensure fresh ideas and diversity in the programmes produced. Competitions held by broadcasters and government agencies for scriptwriting and production are a good platform to scout for potential talents and new, alternative programming ideas.

5.3 Over the years, there has been some improvement to the quality of local programmes but the broadcaster needs to do more if it hopes to meet the viewing interest of the audience who are becoming increasingly sophisticated and have higher expectations, especially when there are emerging forms of alternative programme choices on other media platforms.

5.4 In order to help identify programming that the market lacks and what viewers hope to see, PACE will continue efforts to have dialogue session with various interest groups of viewers to gauge public sentiments. PACE will at the same time have regular dialogue sessions with broadcasters to communicate views from the ground.

5.5 Moving forward, the committee hopes that the broadcaster will think more about catering to various viewing interests instead of catering to the lowest common denominator to garner ratings given that there is no more direct competition. Members also hope that the broadcaster can harness its monopolistic position to take leadership and produce quality programmes. These programmes should also be supported with strong marketing initiatives as some of the quality programmes may not be immediately embraced but with proper marketing, they could attract more viewers.

5.6 In addition, the PACE hopes that the broadcaster will not adopt only a market driven role but also an educator's role to elevate media standards and appreciation.

5.7 PACE sees the following as continuing contributing factors in the development of the media industry and meeting the needs of viewers:

- (i) Striving for quality broadcast standards in terms of sourcing for and producing quality programmes, and ensuring that programmes shown are in accordance with broadcast guidelines and scheduled appropriately based on community standards
- (ii) Balancing the need for programmes which garner ratings with quality and responsible programming;
- (iii) Fulfilling the educating role of the media
- (iv) Fulfilling the role of the media as an enabling tool to strengthen national identity as well as represent and reflect the various cultures and communities which make Singapore unique; and
- (v) Profiling the media as an entertainment vehicle, through encouraging the use of more quality and high-level humour.

* End *

MEMBERS' PROFILE

Chairperson

Mdm Claire Chiang

Mdm Claire Chiang is the Managing Director of Banyan Tree Gallery. Besides being a successful business woman, Claire is also well known for her leadership in community services.

In 1999, she was awarded the Women of the Year Award. As a community leader, Claire has served as a Nominated Member of Parliament for 2 terms (between 1997 – 2001), where she raised many policy issues related to the social service sector, women, family, education and the disadvantaged.

She is actively involved in many public and private services, including business organisations, such as: Singapore Compact for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Family Matters - Public Education Committee on Family and Micro Enterprises Committee by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth & Sports (MCYS), Advisory Committee on Chinese Programs (ACCESS), Board of Governors of Raffles Girls' Secondary School, Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI), South West Community Development Council, Help Every Lone Parent (HELP) and many more.

In the business world, Claire is one of the first two women to be elected to serve on the Board of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry – after 89 years of being in a male dominated domain.

Key interest: Programmes for the elderly

Members

2. Mr John Ang

Mr John Ang is currently a Senior Lecturer of the Department of Social Work and Psychology at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Prior to that, he was teaching at Cornell University, United States and his doctorate was obtained from the University of Hawaii. Mr Ang also has an extensive social service record, having served in positions like the Director and Council Member of Singapore Red Cross Society, President of Fei Yue Family Service Centre and Counselling Centre, Vice Chairman of Family Resource and Training Centre at the Singapore Association of Social Workers, Chairman of the Professional Practices Committee of the Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore.

Key interest: Children's programmes

3. Mr Ang Peng Siong

Mr Ang is the Managing Director of APS Swim School, after bringing glory to the nation with the achievements such as World Masters Champion (2000 & 2002), Fastest swimmer in the world in 1982, two-time Olympian (1984 & 1988), NCAA Division One champion (1983), three-time US Open champion, Asian Games Gold Medallist (1982), Multiple SEA Games gold medallist and three-time SNOC Sportsman of the Year recipient (1982, 1983 & 1984). His dream is to build a vibrant aquatic industry and fuel the pursuit of

Olympic success in the sport of swimming, and feels that the media has a lot to contribute in this area. He is a University of Houston graduate, with a Bachelor of Science in Recreation.

Key interest: Sports programmes

4. Mr Bala Reddy PPA(P)

Mr Bala Reddy is a Senior State Counsel with the Attorney-General's Chambers. After his LL B (Hons) degree from the University of Singapore, and a Master of Laws degree from NUS, he went ahead to obtain a Master of Philosophy degree from Cambridge University. He also has extensive experience in the media industry, having served as a sub-editor of a Tamil newspaper as well as part time artiste with the then Radio Television Singapore and later Singapore Broadcasting Corporation, participating in radio and TV programmes. He has also scripted and acted in several Tamil TV dramas in the 1970s and early 80s.

Key interest: News/current affairs and dramas

5. Ms Caroline Balhetchet

Ms Balhetchet is the Director of the Youth Development Centre at the Singapore Children's Society. She obtained her training in psychology and counselling in Australia, where she graduated with a Masters of Social Science Counselling. Thereafter, she accumulated extensive counselling experience in organisations such as AWARE (family violence and family issues), Outram Secondary School and Kampong Kapor Family Service Centre. She also has extensive experience in public relations, advertising and event management.

Key interest: Children's programmes

6. Mrs Choo Cheh Hoon

Mrs Choo is the Deputy Director of the School of Film & Media Studies at Ngee Ann Polytechnic. She holds a Masters in Mass Communication and has over 20 years of experience in tertiary education, industry training/consultancy, management and project supervision. Besides teaching, she is in charge of the School's outreach and industry-related activities. Believing strongly in the importance of media awareness education for the community, she is actively involved in community work. She is currently serving as a resident judge of the Ministry of Education's (MOE) annual Schools Video Awards, a member of MDA's Film Consultative Panel, a member of SAFRA Radio's Executive Council, and is an Advisory Council Member of World Vision, an international relief organisation.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes (dramas/movies)

7. Ms Chan Lin Ho

Ms Chan Lin Ho is the Director at the Regional Training and Resource Centre in Early Childhood Care & Education for Asia (RTRC Asia). She holds a BA in Social Work & Psychology and Masters of Science in Child Development and Early Childhood. She is interested in the media and the impact it can have on children, hence her desire to serve on advisory committees such as the PACE.

Key interest: Children's programmes

8. Mr Chan Keen Len

Mr Chan is a lecturer at Ngee Ann Polytechnic's School of Interdisciplinary Studies where he teaches communication, entrepreneurship and life skills. He holds a Masters in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Communication Studies. While his career experience covers various managerial roles in the transportation, logistics and IT industries, he has a keen interest in media issues. Actively involved in the community, he serves as a Councillor with the South West Community Development Council. As a father of a son and two daughters, he strongly believes in the importance of having responsible content-based approaches to broadcasting standards and media awareness education that will help build media-wise families.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes

9. Ms Peggie Chua

Ms Peggie Chua is a consultant and project director with OGL Asia Pte Ltd, an events and communications company. Ms Chua is active in community service, and is currently the Secretary of the Yew Tee Community Club Management Committee and Assistant Secretary of the Yew Tee Citizens' Consultative Committee, and was awarded the Public Service Medal in 1996. She is also the President of the Teochew Drama Association. Her educational and work background include degrees in Psychology, Commerce (Administrative Studies) and MBA from the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, and service as Senior Public Relations Officer with the Housing & Development Board.

Key interest: Arts/cultural programmes

10. Mr Louis Chui Kian Hong

Mr Chui works as a manager in charge of industry development at the Workforce Development Agency. Previously, he was in charge of Lifelong Learning at the Central Singapore Community Development Council (CDC), where he organised learning activities and courses for people living in Central Singapore. Although his educational background is in business administration, he has a deep interest in films and the media.

Key interest: Sports programmes

11. Mr Chia Ti Yu

Mr Chia is the manager for finance and purchasing at the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), ITE College East. He is a certified public accountant and serves as the assistant treasurer at the Pasir Ris East CCC and the treasurer of the Pasir Ris – Punggol GRC Community Relations Committee. He is also volunteers in a number of voluntary welfare organisations.

Key interest: News/current affairs

12. Ms Sita Devi

Ms Sita Devi is currently the Principal of River Valley Primary School. A BA Hons graduate from NUS, Ms Devi also holds a Masters in Counselling and Human Development from the University of Iowa, USA. Her previous work assignments with MOE included Guidance Officer of Pupil Services Branch, Asst Director of Pastoral Care and Career Guidance Branch, Asst Director of Psychological and Guidance Services Branch and Vice-Principal of Woodgrove Primary School.

Key interest: Children's programmes

13. Ms Pearly Gan

Ms Pearly Gan's background is in Mass Communication (Master's Degree), Arts (BA/Hons) and Linguistics (Diploma). She works currently as Alumni Manager of Student Affairs at the Singapore Polytechnic. Previously, Ms Gan was in the corporate communications line. She is a keen TV viewer with an active interest in the broadcast medium.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes (dramas/movies)

14. Ms Zalina Bte Mohd Gazali

Ms Zalina is a Senior Assistant Director, overseeing Organisational Learning & Systems as well as Corporate Communications and Corporate Services in the National Youth Council (NYC). Through the NYC, she is involved in many programmes targeted at the youth sector and contributes actively in developing youth development ideas, strategies and directions. She has also been serving as an Associate Trainer with the National Community and Leadership Institute. Previously, Ms Zalina served on the PAC Subcommittee for entertainment programmes and currently also serves on the MDA's Publications Consultative Panel. She obtained a Bachelor of Social Sciences (Hon) in Sociology from NUS and she has a deep interest in writing and TV programming (both of which have helped fuel her desire to serve in advisory committees such as the PACE).

Key interest: Entertainment programmes (dramas/movies)

15. Ms Anna Leong

Ms Leong put her career on hold to devote her time and energy to her child. She has 14 years of varied work experience in banking, petroleum trading, education and social service. She obtained her Bachelor of Business Administration from NUS and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (Distinction) from NTU and the National Institute of Education. Ms Leong hopes to continue working towards raising the standards of children programming in Singapore.

Key interest: Children's programmes

16. Mrs Doris Lim

Ms Doris Lim is currently the Principal of Yusok Ishak Secondary School, as well as a member of the Inter Racial Confidence Circle (IRCC). She is a pioneer member of the PATHWAY (Promoting Action to Help Women and Young Children) with Loving Heart Multi-Service Centre (LHMSC) in Yuhua Constituency and Vice Chairman of Youth Functional Committee with South West CDC. Equipped with a Bachelor of Arts degree, she is interested in getting the media to help forge closer ties between various races in Singapore, thereby promoting inter-racial harmony. Her involvement with community groups helps to

bring about greater collaboration among partners to better the lives of people in the community. Her knowledge of students' interests and thinking brings to the committee a wider understanding of concerns involving youths.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes (dramas/movies)

17. Ms Sharen Liu Min Kune

Ms Liu is an Associate Professor at NTU. She heads the division of Electronic & Broadcast Media at the School of Communication & Information where she teaches broadcast journalism, intermediate and advanced television courses. Ms Liu also conducts TV training and media courses for professionals, government officials and academics. Before joining NTU, Sharen was a media professional for 11 years and has produced and directed stage productions, film documentaries, TV dramas, music variety shows and children's programmes. Initially trained by the British Broadcasting Corporation, she acquired advanced film and television techniques at the Australian Film and Television School, Sydney. In addition Ms Liu is a certified TV instructor from the Radio Nederland Training Centre in Holland and has taught TV production courses for 14 years.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes

18. Ms Lock Lai Yee

Putting her Chemical Engineering training to good use, Ms Lock is now the General Manager of Metmar Petrochemicals (Far East) Pte Ltd. Besides her service to PACE, Ms Lock also serves actively on MDA's Films Consultative Panel. Her community sensitivities and eye for details has enabled her to give valuable feedback to both advisory committees.

Key interest: Info-educational programmes

19. Dr Kenneth Lyen

Dr Kenneth Lyen runs his own paediatric practice at Lyen's Children's Clinic. Dr Lyen has very strong interest in the arts especially for music and staged productions as well as writing screenplays for film. He composes music and in 1995, his compositions were featured in the musical *Big Bang!* Other musicals by Dr Lyen included *The Magic Paintbrush* and *Yum Sing!* In 1997, he wrote *Catch the Rainbow*, a musical televised nationwide as part of the National Day celebrations. Prior to his appointment to PACE, Dr Lyen served actively on the PAC Subcommittees for Arts /Culture as well as Children's Programmes.

Key interest: Arts/cultural programmes

20. Mr Raymond Lye

Mr Raymond Lye is a lawyer and executive director of Pacific Law Corporation. In the early '90s, he served as Magistrate and Deputy Registrar. He has given active service previously on the Films Advisory Panel as well as the PAC Subcommittee for Entertainment programmes. Mr Lye has a keen interest in both English and Chinese TV programmes. Mr Lye is also active in community service. He is the Chairman of the Pasir Ris West Citizens Consultative Committee and a councillor in the Pasir Ris-Punggol Town Council. He also serves with various trade and clan associations as well as on school boards.

Key interest: Entertainment and sports programmes

21. Ms Braema Mathi

Ms Braema Mathi is a former teacher, award-winning ST journalist and corporate communications head at Alexandra Hospital. She was a Nominated Member of Parliament for two terms (2001 – 2004) and is currently a visiting research fellow (Regional Gender Studies Programme) at the Institute of South East Asian Studies (ISEAS). In addition, Ms Mathi is currently the President of the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE) and Chairperson of Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2). She also serves on the Singapore Children's Society's Social Work Committee and with the Singapore Association of Social Workers.

Key interest: Programmes for the elderly

22. Ms Pauline Mo Kit Ling

Ms Pauline Mo has a conviction to develop strong and stable families in Singapore. She is deeply concerned with broadcast programmes that encourage undesirable lifestyles and behaviour which would erode moral values and the traditional concept of family, thus weakening the family institution. She holds a Masters in Philosophy. Ms Mo is the Assistant Director of the Family Education Department of the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports.

Key interest: Children's programmes

23. Mrs Lay See Neufeld

Mrs Neufeld is the Principal of Tampines North Primary School. She is an English Honours graduate from the University of Adelaide. She also holds a post graduate certificate in Education from the University of London, UK and a Masters in Education from the University of Toronto, Canada. Mrs Neufeld taught in Raffles Junior College from 1985 to 1991. Thereafter, she worked as a Specialist Inspector, English language and Assistant Director, Languages & Library, at the Languages and Library Branch (Curriculum Planning Division) of MOE. She brings to the committee a wide perspective on the thinking and interests of the young.

Key interest: Children's programmes

24. Mr Ahmad Nizam Abbas

Mr Ahmad Nizam is an advocate solicitor with M/s Muzzamil, Nizam & Partners. He was a member of the Censorship Review Committee (CRC) 2003 and is an active member of the Malay Programme Advisory Committee. Outside of the legal profession, Mr Nizam is involved in various areas of community service where he has served as Chairman of the TRANS Centre and National Youth Forum and President of Mendaki Club. He is currently active as a member of the National Youth Council, Central Singapore CDC and Feedback Unit Supervisory panel. Mr Nizam also sits on the Board of Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore and the Singapore *Internationale* Advisory Panel of the Singapore International Foundation.

Key interest: News/current affairs

25. Mdm Nooraini Noordin

Mdm Nooraini Noordin is the Director of PropNex Pte Ltd, a real estate agency, and runs her own consultant business in management, Nooris Consultants Pte Ltd. She has a Masters in Education and was the winner of the Malay Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2000. Mdm Nooraini is very active in the community and her appointments include: President of the Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SMCCI) for the period of 2003 to 2005; Honorary Secretary of the Singapore Armed Forces Veterans' League; General Rapporteur to the World Veterans Federation Standing Committee for Asia Pacific and Secretary to its Working Group on Women.

Key interest: Info-educational programmes

26. Mr Andrew C. L. Ong

Mr Andrew Ong heads Drew & Napier's Info-Communication and Technology Business Group. His educational background includes an Honours degree from the London School of Economics and Barrister-at-law from Lincoln's Inn (UK). Andrew specialises in Information Technology, Telecommunication and Broadcasting Law (both regulatory and transactional). He also has an active practice in Leisure and Entertainment Law.

Key interest: Info-educational programmes

27. Ms Florence Oh

Ms Florence Oh was the Executive Director of the Association of Accredited Advertising Agents Singapore from 1997 to 2004 and was recently appointed as the Executive Director of the Designers Association of Singapore (DAS). Graduating in Arts from the University of Western Australia, she has, in her career, been actively involved in the fields of advertising, marketing, public relations and the media. She has served as committee member of the Advertising Media Owners' Association, Director on the Media Circulation Services Board and Vice-President of the Institute of Advertising of Singapore.

Key interest: News/current affairs

28. Mr Adrian Quek

Mr Quek recently joined Republic Polytechnic's School of Sports, Health and Leisure as an academic staff and is spearheading the diploma course in sports and leisure management there. He was previously the General Manager of Fitness and Health International Pte Ltd, a company that helps organisations develop health and fitness programmes for their employees. Mr Quek holds a Bachelor of Business Diploma in Physical Education degree and has expertise in the field of sports media, having worked at the former sports channel, SportsCity.

Key interest: Sports, current affairs and radio programmes

29. Mr Casimir Rozario

Mr Rozario is a retiree who now trains part time at the Civil Service College. He has worked in various ministries, managing public relations, public education and public affairs. He was Director (Public Affairs) at the Ministry of Home Affairs when he retired from the civil service in 1999.

Key interest: Info-educational programmes, programmes for the elderly

30. Mr James Soh

Mr James Soh has been the Executive Director of the National Youth Achievement Award (NYAA) Council of Singapore since 1992. Under his leadership, the NYAA Council was conferred the 'Excellence of Singapore Award 96' in recognition of the Council's work both in Singapore and abroad. Mr Soh was also awarded 'The Green Leaf Award 93' (Individual) by the Ministry of Environment for outstanding contribution to environmental protection and preservation in Singapore. Mr Soh has held various positions in government ministries and non-governmental agencies and has chaired many international and national youth projects. Besides his knowledge of youths, James had previously given active service to the PAC Subcommittee for Info-Education programmes.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes

31. Mrs Yeo Chin Nam

Mrs Yeo is the Principal of Henderson Secondary School. She has participated actively at programme review sessions, with well thought and balanced viewpoints. Her knowledge of youth and enabled her to provide a good sensing of the impact which the broadcast media may have upon this age group. Mrs Yeo has a keen interest in TV and Radio programming.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes

PACE'S CHOICE OF PROGRAMMES

The PACE recognises quality programming from broadcasters, and would like to applaud good titles aired during the period from August 2004 to July 2005. Listed below are programmes of notable quality observed by the Committee, and broadcasters are recommended to produce and acquire more of such good programmes for telecast on their channels. It is to be noted that the list is not intended to be exhaustive and not arranged in any order of merit.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES

Local Productions (Kids Central)

Double Chin

This dramatised info-education series on health and nutrition is entertaining and realistic in the issues it explores. The programme, which appeals to children in upper primary, is well-paced and the messages are self-explanatory.

We Are REM (re-run)

This is a local drama series which involves three good friends who go around solving different puzzles and mysteries in each episode.

Jobs For Juniors 2

Featuring children trying out their dream jobs, this second series continues to be informative and entertaining. The host is also engaging and is able to keep the viewers interested in what is going to happen next.

Acquired Productions (Kids Central)

Little Bear

A cartoon based on the popular children's books by Else Holmelund Minarik, this preschool programme is the story of a little bear's many adventures with his friends. The programme is entertaining as well as educational and is a good way to teach children about feelings of life, and the importance of virtues like courage, pride and honour.

Backyard Science

Targeted at school going children, this is a science series that takes science out of the laboratory and into the real world. Hosted by two teens in a 'virtual studio', this programme which is fast paced and fun shows how the world works in an entertaining way, and helps children demystify some of the amazing phenomena encountered in their daily lives.

ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMMES (DRAMAS & SITCOMS)

Local Productions

***Like My Own* (Ch 5)**

This 13-part local drama is about a teenager who is fostered into the care of another family and how this changed the relationship of those involved. A refreshing change from the usual local comedy, this programme examines the themes of family and a mother's love for a child who is not her own, and the sacrifices she makes.

True Courage (Ch 5)

This series is about ordinary people with extraordinary courage. By showcasing these stories of people who have found the strength to survive their hardships and find meaning in life, it is a series that is both inspiring and motivating for the family.

First Mums (Ch 5)

This drama series looks at the trials and tribulations of four soon-to-be mums from different walks of life who have to deal with their impending motherhood. This engaging drama examines the social pressures and issues that women have to deal with and is a commendable effort on the broadcaster's part to examine these complex topics in a local production.

Coming Home (Ch 5)

This telemovie is part of the Yellow Ribbon Project aimed at creating awareness of giving second chances to ex-offenders. With a cast of veteran and younger artistes, this heart-warming production is all about love, forgiveness and the power of the family. Given the subject matter, the production's sensitive treatment of a tough issue is to be applauded.

Missing (Ch 5)

The returning season of this engaging docu-drama continues to look at various cases of missing persons in Singapore. Using a combination of re-enactments and interviews to tell the stories, the series is not just well-researched and produced, but also engaging as it retells stories of those who went missing.

Chase (Ch 5)

This 13-part drama is a contemporary love story featuring an attractive cast. At once funny and poignant, this series is well-produced and has an engaging script. The production values of this programme is also worthy of praise.

Life (Ch i)

This excellent series is an anthology featuring stories about ordinary people living in Singapore and touches on themes and issues like singlehood, family ties, and friendship. Each well shot and produced story has a different tone, and overall, it is an interesting series with a strong focus on issues pertinent to life in Singapore.

Singapore Shakes (Ch i)

This series takes Shakespeare's plays and gives them a unique Singaporean spin. Stylishly shot and with good production values, this 13-parter was on the whole engaging and has an excellent cast. By adapting the bard's plays such as more popular ones like Macbeth and less known ones like Timon of Athens, the series has proven that local productions can be both intellectual and entertaining at the same time.

Six Weeks (Ch i)

A six-part mini-series, *Six Weeks* tells the poignant, touching story of a man who discovers that he is terminally ill and has only six weeks to live. This thought provoking production is one of Ch i's last few dramas to be aired and the quality of the production is to be commended.

Durian King (Ch i)

Durian King is a comedy about how a yuppie who loses his fortune and has to redeem himself with the help of an unlikely, motley group he normally would not associate with. The series' strong local flavour, the comedic timing of the cast and the unusual stylistic presentation of some scenes makes this a series that is both entertaining and fun to watch.

Acquired Productions

Cold Case (Ch 5)

This intriguing drama about a lone female detective who has been assigned to deal with unsolved crimes is wonderfully scripted and well produced. The premise of the programme which is that of dealing with unsolved crimes also sets it apart from other detective dramas.

Arrested Development (Ch 5)

This award-winning comedy about a level-headed son who has to take over the running of his family after his father goes to jail has great acting and a witty script. Unlike other sitcoms, this series goes beyond the typical slapstick formula and yet remains hilarious and intelligent.

Desperate Housewives (Ch 5)

This drama about four housewives whose best friend and neighbour committed suicide is both funny and serious at the same time. With sharp dialogue and an unpredictable plot, this is a series that manages to be engaging and enjoyable to viewers at the same time.

Everwood (Ch 5)

Everwood is an engrossing family drama exploring the visceral and often heartbreaking relationship between a father and son living in a small town in the Rocky Mountains. The series tackles controversial issues like abortion and medical use of drugs without making it ponderous or preachy. The themes of family bonding and understanding also make this a wonderful family drama.

Without a Trace (Ch 5)

Told through a series of flashback, this FBI drama about missing persons has a solid cast and is filled with clever plot twists. The ability of the script to focus on both the cases and the personal lives of the agents makes this a compelling series to watch.

ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMMES - VARIETY

Acquired Productions

The Apprentice 2 (Ch 5)

The Apprentice is an innovative and intellectually engaging reality series where candidates are judged on their abilities to take on different business projects as they vie for the opportunity to work for Donald Trump. Season 2 of the series continues to engage viewers with the challenging tasks that the contestants face. In addition, other than the business advice offered by Trump in the programme, viewers also learn about failure and success factors, and what it takes to be a leader through the experiences of the candidates.

The Amazing Race 7 (Ch 5)

An example of a quality reality TV series, *Amazing Race* continues to constantly intrigue and captivate with its combination of creative challenges, competition and drama. The programme is not only entertaining but informative as it offers interesting bite-sized trivia about various global destinations.

American Idol 4 (Ch 5)

American Idol manages to reinvent the traditional talent quest format and is a highly entertaining and engaging programme. It features talents from various American states and has inspiring elements demonstrating that dreams can come true for the man on the street.

Local Productions

Singapore Idol (Ch 5)

This local version of the reality series *American Idol* is amongst the most popular local TV series in Singapore. While the series initially received some negative comments regarding how the judges had critiqued contestants and the calibre of the host, *Singapore Idol* nonetheless is one of the few programmes on air that has managed to generate much excitement and result in a significant following among viewers, including family audiences. The programme has also successfully given a platform to showcase young budding talents in Singapore.

SPORTS PROGRAMMES

Local Productions

Training Day (Ch 5)

This variety-cum-sports programme tackles sports in a refreshing way by getting challenging a celebrity to pick up a new sport in 24 hours under the supervision of national athletes and coaches. Sports featured include *silat*, wakeboarding, and women's soccer.

2004 Olympics Games Coverage (Ch 5)

With the coverage of the 2004 Olympics Games spread over various channels, sports fans managed to get a comprehensive of the action as well as the struggles and triumphs of the athletes involved in the games.

2004 Tiger Cup Coverage (Ch 5)

Although the Singapore National Football team was not the favourite to win the ASEAN Football Championship, it managed to perform well and went on to clinch the coveted trophy. MediaCorp's coverage of the matches leading to the triumph has given Singaporeans who could not be present at the games a chance to share in the Lions' glorious moment.

ARTS & CULTURE PROGRAMMES

Local Productions on Arts Central

No Strings Attached

Hosted by Tang Quartet, *No Strings Attached* brings fun and lively elements into the world of classical music. This contemporary and refreshing series is able to engage audiences by exploring issues intimately related to Singaporeans, such as how classical music has spread sub-consciously into our daily lives.

Bandwidth

Bandwidth is a unique and interesting series that brings local music closer to the hearts of Singaporeans. Local musicians are given the chance to showcase their talents and also interact with the public as they perform in the public arena. Musicians introduced in this series include: The Observatory, Wicked Aura Batacuda, Magnetic Band, Budak Pantai, Bedouin Groove and Analog Girl.

Hidden Dragon

This series provides an insight into the rising and up-coming trends of Asian films in the cinemas and film festivals. It profiles the film industries and leading film directors in regional countries, such as Thailand, Hong Kong and Singapore.

A Thousand Words

A Thousand Words is a visual interpretation of poetry by young local filmmakers, including celebrity reviews of both the poem and the film. It provides a unique local perspective to the interpretation of poetry.

Stage to Screen

In *Stage to Screen*, some of Singapore's most popular theatre plays get adapted for television production. This series showcases local talents as writers, directors and actors in portraying a diverse variety of local life stories. *Stage to Screen* makes these theatre plays more accessible to the public.

Generation Next

Generation Next features outstanding Singapore youths and tells the story of how they overcome adversity with fortitude, pursue their dreams relentlessly and in the process transform and touch the lives of many others. This series is inspiring and engaging as it proves that with perseverance and hard work, Singaporeans will be able to achieve their dreams and aspirations.

Acquired Productions on Arts Central

Documentaries Series- Great Minds

This series of documentaries introduces many 'great minds' such as Leonardo, Confucius, Galileo, in the history of mankind. *Great Minds* provides deeper insights into a wide range of interests covering arts, philosophy, astrology, physics and psychology. Its interesting style of presentation makes it easier for more people to appreciate these various arts and cultural forms.

INFO-EDUCATION AND CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMMES

Local Productions

***360* (CNA)**

This forum discussion programme brings viewers to the core of the day's top stories affecting Singapore and the region features credible studio panelists. The programme is also scheduled at a timeslot (9.30-10pm) which is accessible to viewers.

***EarthBeat – Biologic* (Ch i)**

Members found this environmental series on Singapore's wildlife and fauna a programme of relatively high production quality and commended it for being engaging and well-paced.

***High Stakes – The Casino Debate* (CNA)**

Members found the programme refreshing and engaging as it offered multiple platforms for viewers to air their views on the casino debate.

***I'm Special, IT's OK* (CNA)**

This three-part series on the use of Assistive Technology in helping the disabled gain access to IT and the Internet is a commendable effort to raise awareness of the difficulties faced by the disabled in communication and employability and how IT has benefited the disabled.

***One Deed One Lifetime* (CNA)**

The collection of stories that celebrate small acts of kindness featured in this six-part series were found to be both engaging and heart warming. The programme is also well-paced.

That's IT! (CNA)

Pitched at the layman rather than “techie”, the programme, which looks at the lifestyle aspect of the gadgets and gizmos, is informative and engaging.

Urban Escape (Ch 5)

From fishing grounds and war memorials to poetry-reading restaurants and bargain shops, this series features lesser-known places in Singapore, their history and unique characteristic. *Urban Escape* is an informative programme which is well-paced and engages the viewer.

PACE AUDIT

March 2001 – February 2002

Recommendations by PACE

Recommendations/Feedback		Status
News, Current Affairs & Info-Ed	Maintain quality in news/current affairs reporting. More newsworthy topics to be considered rather than sensationalistic stories bordering on tabloid news e.g. Chu Mei Feng sex scandal.	Barring the occasional slip-up, broadcasters have tried to maintain good standards in news reporting. There have also been few recent complaints on the matter.
	Share programme resources for richer programming by dubbing/subtitling quality local programmes into other languages to widen viewership base.	Some quality non-English programmes have been adapted for broadcast on CNA e.g. <i>The Changing Face of Rivers</i> (Ch 8) and <i>Vannangal (Palette)</i> (Vasantham). <i>True Files</i> (Ch 5) is also re-versioned for broadcast on Ch 8.
Children's Programmes	Show a balance of programmes that aid in a child's total development i.e. socially, emotionally and morally.	Programmes like <i>Pet Ventures</i> , <i>Champs</i> and <i>Green Crusade</i> were effective in conveying social messages while the local children's drama <i>Kids United</i> explored real issues faced by children and conveyed sound moral values.
	Help parents to guide their children's viewing habits by providing consumer/viewing advice e.g. programmes for certain age groups.	Advisories were provided in publicity materials to differentiate programmes suitable for various age groups.
Arts/Culture	Local arts programmes can be cross-promoted on other channels.	PACE has noted that more has been done for the cross-promotion of arts programmes. E.g. <i>Stage to Screen</i> and <i>Celebrity Portraits</i> were promoted on Ch 5. However, more can be done in this area.
Entertainment	Successful short stories/novels can be adapted for local dramas e.g. Arts Central's <i>AlterAsians</i> .	Examples of such adaptations that have gone on air include <i>The Singapore Short Story Project</i> and <i>Stage to Screen</i> .
	With the influx of reality TV series, broadcasters should be more selective in the type and quality of such shows they air.	Some efforts have been made to acquire quality reality series such as <i>The Amazing Race</i> , <i>The Apprentice</i> and <i>American Idol</i> .
Advertising	More responsibility is needed to ensure that advertisements that go on air are of good taste and decency, and also scheduled appropriately	Broadcasters are generally more mindful of the standards of advertisements that go on air as well as scheduling considerations. There have been fewer public complaints about problematic advertisements.

PACE AUDIT

March 2001 – February 2002

Recommendations by PACE

Recommendations/Feedback		Status
Sports	Showcase programmes which raise awareness on sports and opportunities for local athletes.	Sports magazine programmes like <i>Training Day</i> and <i>Fair Match</i> attempted to showcase different sports in Singapore. Other programmes included CNA's <i>Home Teams</i> on sports families and <i>In the Arena</i> , a sports forum discussion programme.
Radio Programmes	Radio to be used as a platform to lend support to and showcase local music talents.	Some efforts are being made by stations to support local artistes e.g. Power 98FM has dedicated time belts featuring songs by local musicians. Songs by international artistes however still dominate the airwaves.

March 2001 – February 2002

Outstanding Areas of Concern/ Areas for Improvement

Recommendations/Feedback		Status
Children's Programmes	Kids Central should show more quality info-educational programmes during weekends instead of just cartoons and entertainment programmes.	While some local and acquired children's info and drama programmes are being shown on weekends, programmes of the entertainment genre dominate weekend programming.
Entertainment	More accessible timeslots for quality acquired dramas.	This is a perennial issue where broadcasters tend to schedule quality programmes at late night time slots while programmes of lesser quality but with mass appeal occupy prime time slots. Broadcasters have noted the committee's feedback and have responded that in general, commercial considerations play a significant role in how programmes are scheduled.
Sports	Work with national sports agencies and other sports industry partners to promote sports icons and personalities.	Little has been done in this area.
	Promote sports at a school level.	There has been little or no coverage on school sports.

PACE AUDIT

March 2002 – February 2003

Recommendations by PACE

Recommendations/Feedback		Status
General	More multi-cultural /multi-religious elements in programmes to enhance inter-cultural understanding among different races.	Examples of multi-racial elements in dramas/ sitcoms include <i>Achar!</i> and <i>Police and Thief</i> . Documentaries that helped to enhance cross-cultural understanding include <i>Festivals of Asia</i> , <i>Soul Food</i> and <i>Ode To The Past</i> .
	Broadcasters should ensure clear and consistent programming schedules instead of shuffling line-ups in response to competition.	The situation has improved.
Entertainment	More local flavour and creativity when adapting international programme/gameshow formats.	Good examples of broadcaster's attempts include the Asian Songs episode of <i>Singapore Idol</i> and local specials of <i>Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?</i>
Arts/Culture	More in-depth and analytical arts and cultural programmes.	PACE noted that there is a good mix of 'light' and serious in-depth cultural programmes shown on Arts Central.
Children's Programmes	More programmes targeted at pre-schoolers.	There were efforts by Kids Central to differentiate programming for pre-schoolers and school-going children. Programme listings in newspapers also indicate programmes for the two age groups.
Radio Programmes	Radio presenters to exercise greater sensitivity when handling callers with problems.	Broadcasters have taken note of the issue and consistently remind presenters to be more sensitive with callers.

PACE AUDIT

Outstanding Areas of Concern/ Areas for Improvement

Recommendations/Feedback		Status
Sports	Introduce a dedicated time belt for sports programmes	There is no dedicated time belt for sports programmes to date.
	Highlight sports events at a school level e.g. as a segment in a sports magazine programme	There was little or no coverage on school sports.
	Work with national sports agencies and other sports industry partners to promote sports icons and personalities	This is an outstanding issue.

PACE AUDIT

July 2003 – July 2004

Recommendations by PACE

Recommendations/Feedback		Status
Entertainment	Programmes with mature/horror themes should be appropriately scheduled after family viewing hours. Trailers for such programmes should be suitably treated and scheduled as well.	Broadcasters are more aware of this issue now.
	More careful selection and appropriate scheduling of reality programmes that capitalise on the baser human qualities e.g. greed and selfishness.	Programmes with more mature themes are scheduled after 10pm.
Children's Programmes	More caution should be exercised for cross-channel promotion of programmes that are not suitable for children.	Broadcasters have taken note of this and exercised discretion.
	Include arts and cultural elements in programmes for children.	Some efforts in this area. Programmes include <i>Block 523</i> and <i>Cows and Crayons</i> .
Arts/Culture	More profiles on local artists in programmes.	Local artists with international acclaim were highlighted in programmes like <i>No Strings Attached</i> , <i>Celebrity Portraits</i> and <i>Hidden Dragons</i> .
Info-Education	More quality info-educational programmes that educate and entertain on mass channels.	Some programmes include Ch 5's <i>Urban Escape</i> and <i>Food Chain 2</i> ; and Ch i's <i>Biologic</i> , <i>Fat To Fit</i> and <i>Site And Sound 2</i> .
	Better primetime slots for info-educational and current affairs programmes.	While the bulk of info programmes are still shown before 8pm and after 10pm, Ch 5 noted the request and recently scheduled the second season of <i>Food Chain</i> at 8pm. CNA also carries its local info-ed and current affairs programmes at primetime (i.e. 7-11pm).
Sports	Increase range of sports programming beyond soccer and golf.	Some attempts to provide a range. Ch 5 has previously provided media coverage of local sports events like the <i>Netball Singapore competition</i> , <i>Singapore marathon</i> , <i>AMF Bowling World Cup</i> and <i>HSBC Wakeboard World Cup</i> .
	Use TV as a medium to support local sporting icons.	Some attempts. Sports magazine programmes <i>Training Day</i> and <i>Fair Match</i> featured local athletes and the sports they play.

PACE AUDIT

July 2003 – July 2004

Recommendations by PACE

Recommendations/Feedback		Status
Programmes for the Elderly	Encourage positive portrayal of the elderly as self-sufficient and enjoying their retirement.	An episode of <i>Get Rea!</i> featured elderly ladies who believe life begins at 50 and the activities they are involved in.
Radio	Other stations to add regular arts content to their programme schedules with the closure of Passion 99.5FM	Some regular arts content on WKRZ 91.3FM and the International Channel 96.3FM. The new channel Lush 99.5FM will provide regular arts programming, but needs time to ramp up its content.
	Avoid reliance on sexually suggestive and sensationalistic content to attract listeners	Broadcasters are now more aware of this based on previous breaches and there are less complaints on this matter. However, such issues will surface from time to time when DJs push the boundaries.
Recommendations in line with 2004-Year of The Family	Programmes ideas related to the family include: achieving work and family life balance, promoting school and family partnership and achieving family harmony.	Family-themed programmes produced include: <i>Here's Looking At You Babe</i> (CNA) and <i>Family</i> (CNA), a magazine series exploring issues of concern to parents.

PACE AUDIT

July 2003 – July 2004

Areas for Improvement

Recommendations/Feedback		Status
Children's Programmes	More wholesome cartoons where adversarial conflict does not form the main focus (e.g. <i>Hamtaro</i>)	The concern remains as the majority of the cartoons available in TV markets contain violence and focus on adversarial conflict.
	More programmes for teens aged between 12 to 14 years old	The broadcaster responded that a survey conducted showed that some programmes aired are enjoyed by children of all ages including those up to 14 years of age. However PACE feels more could be done to specifically cater to the viewing needs of teens.
Entertainment	Raise standard of local English programming <i>Especially in scriptwriting for sitcoms</i>	Broadcasters are aware of the problem and are working on it.
Current Affairs	More quality current affairs programmes pitched at the mass audience e.g. <i>What Matters</i>	Some efforts at this. Current affairs programmes pitched at the masses include: <i>Get Rea!</i> and <i>High Stakes -The Casino Debate</i> . However, there is still a lack of current affairs programme in general for the man-in-the-street.
Sports	Increase media coverage of local sports events and provide platform to support sports programmes organised by schools and grassroots organisations.	There continue to be little efforts in these areas.
Programmes for the Elderly	More programmes for the elderly, in particular information and cultural programmes.	There have not been programmes specifically produced for the elderly since <i>The Good Life</i> which was targeted at retirees. There have also not been any cultural programmes targeted at the elderly on English channels.
Recommendations in line with 2004-Year of The Family	Recommended programme areas with children as sub-theme: a) Weekly news programme b) Set up a parent-cum-educators voluntary group to spear head initiatives e.g. facilitating public education campaigns, accrediting quality children's programmes. c) Produce resource guidebook with MOE/MCYS for teacher-student discussions on programmes.	Yet to be followed up.

PACE AUDIT

July 2003 – July 2004

Areas for Improvement

Recommendations/Feedback		Status
Recommendations in line with 2004-Year of The Family	<p>Recommended programme areas with the elderly as sub-theme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) More philosophical and wellness programmes b) More evergreen programmes c) More chat shows d) Reviving story-telling on radio 	<p>Yet to be followed up.</p>
	<p>Introduce programmes that encourage family members to do sports together as well as interstitials with bite-sized information about sports, health tips and sporting facilities</p>	<p>Other than interstitials from the Health Promotion Board, there has been not been such programming.</p>