



## ***A History of Regional Commercial Television to be published in 2022***

*A History of Regional Commercial Television in Australia* by Dr Michael Thurlow will be published in 2022.

The book's author, media researcher and historian Dr Michael Thurlow, said the work represents the first dedicated history of commercial television outside Australia's state capitals.

"Television began in Sydney and Melbourne in 1956. Commercial television was extended to regional Australia in three stages. Thirty-five stations were opened between 1961 and 1977.

"Most regional areas had the choice of just two channels – the ABC and a local, commercial station – until the early 1990s."

In their heyday, regional commercial stations produced many hours of local news, sport, women's children's, religious, light entertainment, and information programs. The largest stations employed more than 100 people. Many of Australia's most prominent media personalities began their careers in regional commercial television.

The aggregation of the largest regional commercial television markets from the late 1980s brought additional choice to viewers, but at the cost of both localism and independence.

"The high cost of aggregation saw many long-term operators sell their stations to a new breed of television entrepreneur, including Bruce Gordon, Paul Ramsay, and Kerry Stokes," said Dr Thurlow.

"Local program production, except news, was mostly ceased as regional stations aligned their schedules with those of their metropolitan network affiliates."

Today, regional commercial television is dominated by the Prime, WIN, and Southern Cross networks. The Seven and Nine metropolitan networks also directly own and operate a small number of regional licences. Imparja is Australia's only Indigenous owned and operated commercial television station.

The book is organised into five parts, which represent the key phases in regional commercial television development.

Based on fine-grained empirical research, each chapter recovers and explores significant developments in the sector's history. Particular attention is given to the operational, technical, financial, program, production, and ownership aspects of regional commercial television stations.

The book includes details of the many well-known television professionals who began their careers both in front of and behind the cameras at Australia's regional commercial televisions. It also features descriptions of many of the programs produced by regional stations in their own studios.

"This book is the result of more than 10 years' of research. It records, recognises, and promotes the history of a remarkable and unique industry which has contributed much to the economic, cultural, and social development of regional and rural Australia over the past six decades," said Dr Thurlow.

Follow Channel 35 on Twitter @Channel35AU for updates including the publication date and where to purchase.

**Dr Michael Thurlow is a media researcher and historian, and former regional commercial television journalist, producer, and presenter. *A History of Regional Commercial Television in Australia* will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2022. Contact: michael@channel35.au; 0458 707070.**