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## **TV INDUSTRY CELEBRATES A WATERSHED YEAR**

The commercial free-to-air television industry is celebrating the beginning of the switch to digital television services at a function at Parliament House in Canberra tonight. Industry leaders and a cross section of the industry's stars have joined politicians and senior government officials to mark this important event.

Free TV chairman Wayne Goss said, "It has been an extraordinary year for Australian viewers and for the free-to-air television platform."

Mr Goss highlighted the success of Free TV's five new digital multi-channels, the successful switch-off of analogue TV in Mildura and the launch of the VAST satellite service as significant milestones for the industry. Goss also noted the networks' launch of free online catch-up TV services and the world's first-ever 3D free-to-air television broadcast as evidence of the medium's evolution.

"Now we are about to embark on the major task of turning off the analogue free-to-air television services that have served all Australians so well since 1956.

"This is a really great moment for Australian TV viewers with a range of new channels providing diversity and choice in addition to the better picture quality and sound of digital television.

"In terms of the anti-siphoning list, we want to deliver to the public by continuing to them their major sport, free of charge, right around the country.

"While the media landscape is evolving at a rapid rate, proof of free-to-air TV's continued relevance and popularity can be seen in the fact that people still spend more time watching TV than with any other media. We are in 99.7 per cent of Australian households and every day, of every week, more than 13.4 million Australians tune in to Free TV," said Mr Goss.

Mr Goss added, “70 per cent of Australians still rely *exclusively* on their free-to-air television service – choosing not to pay for TV.”

Mr Goss took the opportunity to thank the Minister, The Hon Senator Stephen Conroy, for all the work that has already been done towards digital switchover and the ongoing work in reviewing the anti-siphoning list.

“There’s a lot of hard work yet to be done,” Mr Goss said. “But if 2010 has taught us anything, it is that Free TV continues to deliver in the public interest to all Australians, no matter where they live or what their circumstances.

“Free TV remains committed to delivering a television platform that is diverse, vibrant and competitive and one that continues to deliver the very best content, free to all Australians,” said Mr Goss.

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