

## **ALLOCATION GUIDELINES - GENERAL PARAMETERS**

1. Different service (in the context of programs) = different callsigns.
2. Location of the parent station is used to determine the State/Territory identifier.
3. The nature of any retransmission arrangements will not be taken into account in determining callsigns.
4. Translators will have the same callsigns as their parent station. Where it is necessary to specifically refer to individual transmitters, use means of identification, such as their geographical location, frequency or channel number. In the case of radio, 'T' will be used to identify a translator (e.g. 2EAR/T).

## **BACKGROUND**

Callsigns have been attached to broadcasting stations from the beginning of broadcasting in this country. At that time it was a requirement of the *Wireless Telegraphy Act 1905*. Under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, however, there is no legislative requirement for broadcasting band services to use callsigns. Article 25 of the International Telecom-

munication Union Radio Regulations - International Section requires that 'all transmissions shall be capable of being identified, either by identification signal or other means'. The regulations do not require the allocation of international callsigns to domestic services and permit identification to be by means such as the name or location of a station, its operating agency, call number or signal, or by other clearly distinguishing features readily identified internationally. Where a station transmits on several frequencies (for example, through translators) a separate callsign for each transmitter is not mandatory.

In reality, many television and radio stations do not use their callsigns on air, choosing instead to use a catchy phrase (such as 'Hits and Memories'), a company name (such as Prime), or a frequency (such as FM 104.7) to cement its identity with the public.

Despite the lack of legislative support for callsigns, the ABA finds them to be administratively useful - particularly to link databases and licence documents, as shorthand for referring to broadcasting services, and to provide an efficient means of being able to categorise services by common categories such as State, AM

and FM. They are the only unique identifier for a broadcasting service - several services may share a frequency nationally, licensees may own several services, and transmission sites may be shared by a number of services.

In November 1992, the ABA wrote to the major representative broadcasting organisations seeking their views on the matter, as well as proposing new arrangements for allocating call signs. The ABA proposed that the term 'callsigns' be changed to 'broadcaster identifiers' in order that the break from past practices be emphasised and the administrative nature of the identifiers be stressed.

The broadcasting industry indicated its general agreement with the new arrangements, although the term 'broadcaster identifiers' was not universally supported. Several other terms were suggested, but none as readily understood as 'callsigns'. The ABA considered the issue at its meeting on 15 February 1993 and agreed that the term should be callsigns. The ABA also ratified the allocation arrangements.

Copies of the arrangements are available from the Planning Division of the ABA (06) 256 2800. A fact sheet on the subject will be issued in the near future.



## **FREQUENCIES RELEASED**

The ABA has approved the release of the following frequencies under s. 34 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*:

- 89.1 MHz at Port Augusta, SA, for an Aboriginal open narrowcasting service. A licence has been issued;
- FM frequencies at Busselton, Pemberton, Mandurah, Cowaramup and Launceston within the broadcasting services band (BSB). The release applies until 28 February 1994;
- 202-208 MHz and 222-230 MHz to the Civil Aviation Agency until 28 February 1996 for the purposes of radionavigation services. The decision will be reviewed in December 1995;
- 99.1 MHz for the areas of Gosford and Wyong, NSW and Townsville and Toowoomba, Qld, for open narrowcasting (tourist information) services. The release is until 28 February 1994;
- two frequencies within the VHF-FM band (88-108MHz) for open narrowcasting purposes until 31 December 1993. The release of BSB spectrum is for the Queensland TAB at Blackwater and Clermont.
- for the purposes of radioastronomy, in the range 137-144 MHz throughout Australia, with the exception of areas where this frequency band is used for the channel 5A television services. The drop-through is subject to review in December 1995;
- an unallocated (seventh) UHF frequency to provide an open narrowcasting (tourist information) service at Jindabyne, NSW for two years from the date of the grant of the transmitter licence, or May 1995, whichever is the earlier;
- for the continued retransmission of RTQ programs for five years from the grant of the date of the transmitter licence and the continued retransmission of RTQ programs to the community of Alpha, which lies outside the licence area of RTQ.

