



News Update

serve remote and regional Western Australia, on Wednesday 1 April 1998.

The licence area of the service covers all of Western Australia, excluding Perth.

'The ABA has received ten applications for the licence and is extremely pleased with the size and strength of the field,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman.

The auction will be held in Perth. Members of the public may attend the auction, but only registered applicants may bid for the licence. As is the normal practice with auctions, only the name of the successful bidder will be made public.

Applications for the licence closed on Thursday 26 February 1998.

Extension of 2TEN into Stanthorpe

The ABA has taken the preliminary view that it should allow the community radio service 2TEN Tenterfield to extend its licence area to serve the town of Stanthorpe, Queensland.

The proposal to extend the community radio licence area follows consideration of a submission on community-of-interest ties between Tenterfield and Stanthorpe, provided by 2TEN Tenterfield.

The ABA's proposal is contained in a consultation paper which is supplementary to the discussion paper and draft licence area plan for radio services in the Toowoomba/Warwick area of the Darling Downs region, released by the ABA in November 1997.

The proposed 2TEN Stanthorpe transmitter is planned to operate on FM 98.7 MHz from a nominal site at Mt Marlay, with a maximum effective radiated power of 100 W.

Applications invited for 7 new community radio licences

The ABA has invited applications for seven new community radio broadcasting licences in Southern NSW and Northern Victoria. The licences are to serve Albury, Alexandra/Eildon, Corryong, Mansfield, Shepparton, Walwa/Jingellic and Wangaratta.

'Allocation of these new community broadcasting licences has begun as a result of the ABA's public planning process being finalised in these areas,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman. 'Licences are being offered because the planning process identified demand for new community broadcasting services that are operated by people living in these communities.'

Free-to-air community broadcasting service licences are allocated on the basis of merit. If there is only one applicant for a community broadcasting licence, the ABA need only decide if the applicant merits a licence.

When there is more than one applicant, the ABA may have to choose on the basis of comparative merit. Applicants may combine to present a unified application.

Community radio applications for Bathurst

The ABA is seeking public comment on applications for a community radio broadcasting licence to serve the Bathurst area of New South Wales.

The ABA received applications for the licence from Bathurst Christian Broadcasters Inc. trading as Radio Rhema, and Bathurst and District Community Radio Broadcasters Inc.

The public file, containing the applications and other relevant information is available for inspection at Bathurst City Library.

Send written comments to:
Manager, Allocation and Renewal,
ABA, PO Box Q500, Queen Victoria Building,
NSW 1230 by Friday 20 March 1998.

Senate Select Committee on Information Technologies

The ABA appeared before the Senate Select Committee on Information Technologies at the New South Wales Parliament House in Sydney on 5 February 1998. The Committee was holding hearings as part of its inquiry:

To evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness and privacy implications of the existing self-regulatory framework in relation to the information and communications industries and, in particular, the adequacy of the complaints regime.

In his opening statement to the Committee, Mr Giles Tanner, ABA General Manager, said, 'The ABA has now had five years experience implementing the self-regulatory framework for the broadcasting industry adopted by Parliament with the introduction of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*. We hope we are able to assist the Committee in its evaluation of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the existing system with the information we are able to provide about the ABA's experience'.

The ABA had previously provided a written submission to the Committee. This contained

The ABA's consultation paper is available for viewing at the Stanthorpe, Toowoomba and Warwick libraries. The document can also be obtained from the ABA by telephoning Freecall 1800 810 241. Send written submissions to:
Planning Officer for Darling Downs
ABA
PO Box 34
Belconnen, ACT 2616
by 13 March 1998

For more information:
call the ABA's Allocation and Renewal Section on (02) 9334 7700.

Applications

Applications for the Albury, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Alexandra/Eildon, Corryong, Walwa/Jingellic and Mansfield licences must be received **before 5.00 pm, Tuesday 14 April 1998.**



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Copies of the ABA's submission and its opening statement are available from the ABA: call (02) 9334 7700.

information about ABA research into community attitudes to television, on-line services, codes of practice, the complaints process, and ABA investigations into unresolved complaints.

The main focus of the Committee's questions to the ABA was privacy and media intrusion; the complaints process and the time taken to resolve complaints; and illegal material available through on-line services. The ABA undertook to provide the Committee with information about the time taken by the ABA to complete investigations into unresolved complaints.

Court upholds ABA CanWest decision

The Full Federal Court has dismissed an appeal by CanWest Global Communications Corp. against the August 1997 judgement by Justice Hill of the Federal Court. This judgement upheld the ABA's original decision that CanWest Global was illegally in control of the Ten television network.

The deadline for CanWest to rectify its breaches of the Broadcasting Services Act is 4 April 1998.

ABA decisions

At its meeting in Sydney on 27 November 1997, the ABA made the following decisions:

1. determined the licence area plans for radio services in the Atherton region of northern Queensland;
2. approved the revised policy guidelines for issuing transmitter licences for special events;
3. subject to comments by the industry, approved the policy for considering applications for the retransmission of programs transmitted by a commercial or community broadcasting licensee within or outside the licence area of that licence; and
4. endorsed the establishment of a national ABA Children On-line Taskforce.

At its meeting in Sydney on 12 December 1997, the ABA made the following decisions:

1. approved the drop-through of parts of the radiofrequency spectrum for temporary community broadcasting licences;
2. allocated temporary community broadcasting licences for radio services in various parts of Australia;
3. decided that applications for retransmission of television services in remote areas will be considered only where an 'applicant area' is not receiving the number of services licensed to service that area, or where reception of

services is of poor quality. This policy became effective immediately and will be reviewed after three years in light of technological developments; and

4. allocated subscription television broadcasting licences to Foxtel Cable Television Pty Ltd and Selectra Pty Ltd.

Globalisation of broadcasting and on-line services

The following is the synopsis of a report by Pat Manser, Director Policy and Communications. The report was prepared after Ms Manser's Senior Executive Fellowship during which she visited France, the United Kingdom and Singapore. The full text of the report is available on the PSMPC Web site at: <<http://www.psmpc.gov.au>>.

The terms 'convergence' and 'information superhighway' in relation to the broadcasting and on-line services industries are becoming so overused as to be almost meaningless. They are, nonetheless, the tips of the icebergs of some serious issues for Australia, its government, their regulators and the community generally. These issues range from the protection of children from material that might be harmful to them, to national sovereignty and the globalisation of the industries involved. They span questions of economic growth in the 'information age' to the social values and mores of the societies involved.

The report discusses the current state of play on these matters the United Kingdom, France, and Singapore. These countries were chosen because of their international input into the issues and their similarity with Australia in their attempts to ensure good public policy outcomes in both broadcasting and on-line services.

All three have distanced their broadcasting and on-line regulation from direct government involvement to the extent that they all have independent statutory authorities, accountable to their parliaments, to manage these issues. All three are multicultural communities with interests in social cohesion and a focused role for government intervention in industry with specific social goals in mind. All three regulate the content of the broadcasting and on-line industries to some extent.

The pressures to change this latter approach are canvassed:

- the nature of the industries involved and their desire for economies of scale;