



'Fourthly, where an applicant proposes to serve a particular community interest, for example a Christian or an Aboriginal interest, the applicant should demonstrate that the greater part of that community interest will be served. And fifthly, where there is more than one applicant competing to represent a similar community interest, the ABA would prefer them to try to find a cooperative arrangement, particularly where public resources will be required to ensure the success of the application.'

The ABA is currently engaged in allocating new community radio licences in Albury, Bathurst, Bendigo, Bourke, Cairns, Esperance, Hervey Bay, Maryborough and Shepparton. (See p.xxx for the community licence allocation workplan.)

'Allocating licences is a time consuming exercise—as it should be. It takes much more of the ABA's time and skills than, say, allocating a commercial radio licence, because allocating community radio licences is done on merit rather than price.'

'To ensure not only an efficient but especially a fair allocation of community radio licences, in 1998 the ABA held the first public hearings in its six year existence—one in Darwin and one more recently in Bathurst. As a result of the Darwin hearing the members of the ABA were much better informed in making their allocation decisions.'

The principles indicating how the ABA will allocate licences arose out of the Darwin hearing.

'The Australian media is enriched by community broadcasting. The community broadcasting sector is typically about concern for people, generosity in offering time and skills and ingenuity,' Professor Flint said.

FM licences in capital cities

'The ABA has never set a timetable under which there would be four new FM stations in Sydney and Melbourne, two or three in Brisbane and two each in Adelaide and Perth, running by now,' Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman said.

Professor Flint was responding to press articles quoting Mr Paul Thompson of UK-based DMG Radio Australia.

'The ABA has been planning the allocation of the radio spectrum for a whole continent,' Professor Flint said. 'We decided those areas with the least number of services, regional and remote Australia, deserved the highest priority. Finally we would complete those areas with the most services, the capital cities. Our engineers now also have to plan for the introduction of digital broadcasting.'

'The Government has been most sympathetic to our problem and has recently given us the necessary funds to complete both tasks.'

The result is that the draft licence area plans for radio in Sydney and Melbourne should be available in 1999. In fact, we hope to have them out closer to the middle of 1999. This would represent a slippage of just six months from what we were saying earlier this year, before digital planning began.'

More pay TV licences for Foxtel and Optus

The ABA has allocated 20 subscription television broadcasting licences to Foxtel Cable Television Pty Limited and 98 subscription television broadcasting licences to Optus Vision Media Pty Ltd.

'The ABA has become aware in recent times that some people wishing to subscribe to pay TV have not been able to do in some parts of the country,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman. 'While the ABA cannot compel any subscription television broadcaster to provide its services in any place, I am pleased to be

