

This book presents a unique perspective on the dramatic changes sweeping telecommunications worldwide. It charts a global restructuring of telecommunications industries, away from the monopoly structures of the past towards increased competition, deregulation and

privatisation. The book's authors are international policy-makers and scholars, who examine the current regulatory environment within a contemporary theoretical and historical context. The in-depth analysis of the US case, important because of its widespread interna-

tional influence, is balanced by a world survey, with specific contributions on the countries at the forefront of the revolution: Great Britain, France, Germany and Japan, and on the politics of international telecommunications.



LICENSING DECISIONS

THE FOLLOWING LIST OF LICENSING DECISIONS IS INCLUDED AS A MATTER OF RECORD OF THE AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING TRIBUNAL'S INQUIRIES. REFERENCES TO MEMBERS APPLY TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE TRIBUNAL, NOT THE ABA. COPIES OF THE RELEVANT REPORTS ARE AVAILABLE FROM GRAEME RODRICK ON (02) 959 7860.

NEW CAIRNS FM RADIO SERVICE

The Tribunal granted a supplementary FM radio licence for five years to Greater Cairns Radio Limited, licensee of the local AM radio station 4CA.

The new FM service will serve 18-34 year olds in the Cairns area by providing a contemporary music format, while 4CA's existing AM service will feature talk programs and easy listening music for an older audience.

Both services will be on air 24 hours a day.

The two applicants for Cairns' new FM licence, Greater Cairns Radio Limited (GCR) and Cairns FM Pty Ltd, presented their cases to the Tribunal at public hearings in Cairns in July and August this year.

The Tribunal undertook a careful analysis of prospects for radio revenue in the Cairns market, after 4CA said its commercial viability would be jeopardised if the licence was granted to an independent operator and Far Northern Radio Pty Ltd, licensee of overlapping service 4AM Mareeba, said it would not be commercially viable if the licence was granted to the incumbent licensee, GCR.

Tribunal Member, Ms Sue Brooks, said

Tribunal projections of 4CA's and 4AM's revenue and expenditure indicated their services would remain commercially viable if faced with further competition.

In making her decision, Ms Brooks considered social and economic factors affecting the Cairns area, 'these show the Cairns area will continue to grow strongly and this will stimulate competition, causing an increase in the demand for advertising. The radio sector will supply part of this increased demand.'

Ms Brooks said she was concerned about the management capability of Cairns FM because a commercial radio licence involves greater responsibility than managing a commercial enterprise.

'While I acknowledge the integrity and candour which individual board members displayed during the hearings, I have considerable reservations about the Board's management capabilities to guide the establishment of an FM service in a highly competitive environment even with the management structure changes,' she said.

NEW BUNDABERG FM RADIO SERVICE

The Tribunal granted a five year supplementary commercial FM radio licence to Bundaberg Broadcasters Pty Ltd, licensee of local AM radio station 4BU.

The new FM service will provide a contemporary music format, aimed at the younger audience aged below 39 years, while 4BU's existing AM service will feature talk programs, more sport, drama, and easy listening music for an older audience.

The two applicants for Bundaberg's new FM licence, Bundaberg Broadcasters Pty Ltd and Rockworth Pty Ltd, presented

their cases to the Tribunal at a public hearing in Bundaberg in September this year.

The Tribunal undertook a careful analysis of prospects for radio revenue in the Bundaberg market, after 4BU said its commercial viability would be jeopardised if the licence was granted to an independent operator.

In making his decision, Tribunal Member, Mr Kim Wilson, considered social and economic factors affecting the Bundaberg area.

'Given the current economic situation, Bundaberg has been doing reasonably well in holding its own, but the immediate outlook for commercial radio in the area is not buoyant,' he said.

'Our projections of 4BU's revenue and expenditure indicated its service would not remain commercially viable if faced with competition from an independent operator.'

The new service will start broadcasting when transmission links from the new studio complex have been completed.

NEW ALBURY-WODONGA FM RADIO SERVICE

The Albury-Wodonga region will soon have a new FM radio service.

Tribunal Member, Mr Bruce Allen, granted the licensee of AM radio station 2AY, Radio Albury Wodonga Limited, a supplementary licence to operate an additional radio service for five years.

2AY plans to broadcast complementary programs on its two services. It has said the existing station will carry Hits and Memories music for listeners over the age of 35, together with talkback and coverage of sports and community activities. The new FM service will offer a contem-

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porary music format to an audience mainly aged between 18 and 39.

The Tribunal had been inquiring into whether either or both of an independent and a supplementary commercial radio licence should be granted. However, the only company interested in the independent licence, Albury-Wodonga Broadcasters Pty Ltd, withdrew its application on 3 August 1992.

The inquiry considered whether the overlapping 3NE Wangaratta service would remain commercially viable after the new Albury-Wodonga service commences, and concluded that it would.

DECISION ON DARWIN LICENCE REFERRED TO ABA

The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal referred the issue of an additional commercial FM radio licence for Darwin/Katherine to the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA).

The ABA replaced the Tribunal on Monday, 5 October 1992, when the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* took effect.

The ABT has also recommended the ABA give priority to the Darwin/Katherine market when planning new services.

The Tribunal referred the Darwin/Katherine grant to the ABA because it decided not to grant a commercial FM radio licence to The Media Company (NT) Pty Ltd.

The Tribunal found The Media Company (TMC) does not have the necessary management capability to provide a radio service to the market. It expressed serious doubts about TMC's financial capability, as well as its ability to operate a radio service with sufficient administrative skill to provide an adequate and comprehensive service.

'This lack of administration skill was demonstrated by the poor cohesion of the

TMC Board and the lack of professionalism in its application and presentation of its case,' said Mr Peter Webb, Tribunal Acting Chairman.

The Tribunal found the Darwin/Katherine market is viable and the existing 8HOT service would survive the introduction of another radio operator.

TRIBUNAL DECIDES NOT TO GRANT SALE LICENCE

The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal decided not to grant a commercial FM radio licence in Sale because it would severely disadvantage the local AM service 3TR.

The then Tribunal Acting Chairman, Mr Peter Webb, said while FM Gippsland Pty Ltd was found suitable to hold the licence, the Tribunal's analysis of the market showed 3TR would not be viable if a competing service was established in the same area.

Projections of 3TR's revenue and expenditure indicated the service could not reduce costs further and remain viable if faced with increased competition.

'3TR's operating costs have been reduced considerably over the last two years and scope for further reduction is limited,' said Mr Webb.

He said the Tribunal's analysis of the region's ability to generate radio advertising revenues, showed 3GG Warragul would not be jeopardised by a new service.

In making his decision, Mr Webb also considered the social and economic factors affecting the Sale region.

'While there were some signs of population growth, the outlook for the regional economy is certainly not buoyant, which would limit the revenue available from radio advertising,' he said.

