



CALL FOR PLANNING SUBMISSIONS

The ABA has invited submissions from the public and industry about priorities for planning radio and television services throughout Australia.

The priorities will decide how the ABA allocates its planning resources and will set a timetable for the licensing of new broadcasting services in various parts of Australia.

The Chairman of the ABA, Mr Brian Johns, said consultation with the public and industry was the ABA's first step towards providing new and improved broadcasting services.

'The ABA's approach to priority setting is to listen to what the public and industry want. We're keen to hear from people about where and when new services are needed and how we can improve existing services,' he said.

Mr Johns said submissions could cover any issue about broadcasting services, including comment on the range of services available in a region and reception problems.

'Submissions will make an important contribution to the priorities exposure draft we will publish for comment during the first quarter of 1993. The ABA expects to announce final priorities in mid-1993,' he said.

The ABA has prepared a free information kit on the planning process which includes a guide to help people make submissions. The kit is available by calling the planning information line on (008) 81 0241.

Submissions should reach the ABA by 12 February 1993. All submissions received will be made available for public inspection.

PLANNING AND THE ABA

Planning and management of the broadcasting spectrum have been assigned to the ABA.

Broadcasting services - radio and television - are major sources of information, views and entertainment in this country. Some services are delivered over the airwaves, which until now have been regarded as a scarce public resource.

Planning decisions must balance public interest against technical factors. For this reason, planning and management of the broadcasting parts of the radiofrequency spectrum, known as broadcasting services bands, have been assigned to the ABA, to be undertaken in an open and accountable way.

The planning functions of the ABA are set out in Part 3 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*. All of the stages of the planning process must be the subject of wide public consultation.

The Act provides for a three stage planning process. This process is central to the operation of the Act as channels cannot be made available for new services until the planning is completed. The three stages are:

- Establishment of priorities for planning the provision of services;
- Preparation of frequency allotment plans that determine the number of channels to be available in particular areas of Australia, to provide services that use the broadcasting services bands; and
- Preparation of licence area plans which determine the number and characteristics, including technical parameters, of the broadcasting services that are to

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- **Guide to Service Providers Under Class Licences - Attachments**

be available in particular areas.

In undertaking these tasks the ABA is to promote the economic and efficient use of the radiofrequency spectrum and to have regard to planning criteria set out in the Act.

Once the Minister has determined the broadcasting bands, the ABA is required to determine a planning priority list. The list is to identify the order in which broadcasting services will be planned. For example, the list may identify FM radio in north-west Queensland as being the immediate priority and AM radio in south-west Victoria as being low on the list.

A guide to the preparation of submissions on broadcasting planning is on pp. 8 and 9.

