

ensure that your service complies with the relevant standards and conditions which are applicable to advertising.

### **Can I play music on an open narrowcasting service?**

TO'K: As music is a key element of most mainstream broadcasting services, its use as a program component in open narrowcasting services may be limited. However, the choice of music, the style and manner in which the music is presented and the characteristics of the music itself may influence whether the service is broadcasting or narrowcasting.

If you are talking about a high power, free-to-air narrowcasting service that is not limited by location or time, then there are music styles which, because of their limited appeal, don't receive airplay on mainstream services and which may qualify as narrowcasting. For example, a service broadcasting solely baroque music may be seen to be narrowcasting.

Narrowcasting services may also use small proportions of music as a 'bridge' between program elements. However, the greater the number of components which are introduced into a format, the wider the appeal of the service becomes - even if each component could be narrowcasting in isolation.

If people have proposals for music or other services and they are not

certain whether the service would be narrowcasting or broadcasting, they can apply to the ABA to give them an opinion on the category of that service.

### **Why should I get an opinion on category of broadcasting service?**

TO'K: Not all proposals for narrowcasting services are black and white. At the same time, there are differing views about what is and isn't a narrowcasting service. If you are not certain that your proposal is narrowcasting, the ABA can give you an opinion which is binding for five years as long as the service continues to reflect the details in your application. There are substantial fines under the Act for providing broadcasting services without licences so you should confirm as far as possible that your proposal for a narrowcast service fits within the criteria outlined in section 18 of the Act.

### **If I decide to apply for an opinion, how can I be sure that my application will be confidential?**

TO'K: Firstly, the Act requires that the opinion given by the ABA must remain confidential until the service is actually operating.

Secondly, the ABA has a policy that applications for opinions on categories of service will also remain confidential until the service is actually operating. If

you ask for an opinion, your application and the decision the ABA makes on the opinion will be kept confidential until you advise us that your service has commenced. Once this happens the ABA publishes the decision, which outlines why you were given a particular category of broadcasting service, in the *Government Notices Gazette* and a copy of your application is made available for public access.

### **Can you describe some of the different kinds of open narrowcasting services which are currently operating?**

TO'K: A number of tourist information services are currently operating in metropolitan and rural areas throughout Australia. These are low power services which generally broadcast a pre-recorded segment which is replayed throughout the day. This enables a person who might be driving in a particular area to tune to the frequency, listen to the service long enough to obtain some information such as attractions or accommodation in a particular region and tune out again.

There are also open narrowcasting services providing race calls and TAB results, services aimed at the rural sector which broadcast market reports and other information, and various foreign language services.



## **350 SUBMISSIONS ON PLANNING PRIORITIES**

The ABA received more than 350 public submissions in response to its exposure draft on planning priorities for the development of radio and television services.

The exposure draft, which set a timetable for planning the broadcast spectrum throughout Australia, was released on 2 May 1993 and submissions were accepted until 28 May.

The ABA also released an exposure draft of frequency allotment plans (FAPs) on 2 May. This specified the total number of radio and television channels to be made available in each existing service area. Comments on this draft closed on 25 June 1993.

The planning process has received great support from the public, broadcasting industry bodies and other interested people,' said ABA Chairman, Mr Brian Johns. 'Judging from the favourable reaction to the exposure draft, it appears most people are happy with the draft planning priorities,' he said. 'However, this latest round of public consultation has provided an opportunity for those people with a different view to express it.'

Some of the submitters want their planning priority changed. Mr Johns said the ABA will consider these requests when preparing the final document, which is due for release in late July 1993.

Submissions received in this latest round will be made available for public inspection at that time. Submitters confirmed many needs expressed in the earlier round of submissions: for more services, changes to technical parameters, the extension of SBS and ABC services and for more community radio.

The ABA held planning seminars and technical workshops on the two draft documents in most mainland capitals during May.

Copies of the draft planning priorities and frequency allotment plans are available by calling the ABA on freecall (008) 81 0241.

