

services. We'll hold public meetings and discussions with local government bodies, existing stations and potential new service providers. Our aim is to involve all interested persons in the planning process. Their participation, ideas and views will be crucial to its success. We'll then draw up an exposure draft licence area plan for each area in the top priority group, and invite comments. Our intention is to publish the exposure drafts in March next year. Once people have had an opportunity to look over the draft and make any submissions we will publish the final licence area plans.

### **When will we see or hear new stations?**

Applications for new licences in the top priority areas will be invited after licence area plans for those areas have been published. The commencement of new services will depend on how quickly successful applicants can build their studios and transmitting facilities. The Act places a time limit of one year to start broadcasting, although the ABA can extend the start date.

### **Which towns will you be visiting first?**

Planning teams will be visiting towns in the top priority group shortly. We plan to hold meetings in Darwin, Griffith, Mildura and Renmark during November, and in the central and south west Western Australia zone and regional South Australia in early December. Most visits will take place early in the new year.

### **Is it too late to have a say about planning?**

Certainly not. The journey is just beginning. The planning priorities have now been set, but public participation is again vital in the next stage, the preparation of licence area plans. We'll advertise our public meetings on radio and television and in newspapers well in advance of our arrival in a town. We need to know what people want. It is crucial to drawing up a successful licence area plan for their area.



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## **ABA TO HOLD PLANNING MEETINGS AROUND AUSTRALIA**

The ABA will hold public meetings over the coming months at a number of centres around Australia to canvass community views about television and radio services.

This follows the release of the priorities for planning broadcasting services throughout Australia over the next three years. The priorities established the order in which different parts of Australia would be planned.

Meetings will be held in Darwin, Griffith, Mildura and Renmark in November. These will be followed in December by meetings in Geraldton, Northam and Albany in the south west corner of Western Australia as well as Mt Gambier and towns in the Spencer Gulf region of South Australia. In the new year there will be meetings in Bunbury, Busselton and Mandurah in Western Australia and Alice Springs.

Further details of times and venues will be published in local newspapers and announced on radio.

These meetings are part of the ABA's commitment to the new planning process for television and radio services which involves wide public consultation. The ABA wants to hear from all members of these communities with an interest in shaping the mix of services to

be available in their area.

'The planning of radio or television services in these areas was considered a top priority for the ABA and the public meetings aim to ensure the plans we draw up reflect what people actually want,' said ABA member Mr Tim O'Keefe.

'We want to hear from a wide cross-section of the community - people in the broadcasting industry, representatives of community groups, anyone who watches television or listens to the radio,' said Mr O'Keefe. 'These meetings are opportunities for people to have their say about the number and type of television and radio services currently available to them and to influence the mix of services that may be available in the future.'

Public meetings are one of a number of ways groups and individuals can participate in the planning process. ABA staff will also be meeting with other interested organisations.

Written submissions will also be invited. They should be addressed to the Planning Officer, ABA, PO Box 34, Belconnen, ACT 2616.

For further information contact Ian Laird on (02) 334 7883.



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## **NEW FM RADIO SERVICE FOR WAGGA**

The Wagga Wagga region of New South Wales is to get a new FM radio service.

The ABA has granted a supplementary FM radio licence for five years to Riverina Broadcasters (Holdings) Pty Ltd, licensee of the local AM radio station, 2WG.

The new FM service will cater for a core youth audience of 15 to 24 years. Its program format includes classic rock music, news and sports coverage. 2WG's existing AM service will feature news, talk and information, as well as a new music mix of hits and memories for older listeners.

'This new licence will expand the choice of radio services available to local listeners,' said Mr Tim O'Keefe, ABA Member.

The decision is the conclusion to the ABA's joined inquiry as to whether to grant a commercial FM radio licence and whether to grant a supplementary FM radio licence for Wagga Wagga.

There was one applicant for the supplementary licence and one for the independent commercial licence, Wagga and Riverina FM Stereo Broadcasters Pty Ltd. The inquiry was considered by the ABA under the *Broadcasting Act 1942*.

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