

NEW RADIO LICENCES FOR MACKAY

Radio listeners in Mackay will soon have their first commercial FM radio station while the first community radio licence for the area has also been granted.

A supplementary commercial FM licence has been granted for five years to Barrier Reef Broadcasters Pty Ltd, licensee of local AM radio station 4MK Mackay.

The new FM station will meet the needs of the under 35 age group in Mackay with lifestyle segments and a contemporary Top 40 hits format.

The existing AM service will feature music appealing to older listeners and extended news.

As 4MK is the only commercial service in the area and there is no substantial overlap with any other service, the decision to grant the additional FM licence was taken quickly.

The ABA did not receive any complaints about 4MK's management and programming and was satisfied the station met all requirements.

To satisfy the ABA, 4MK's licensee had to demonstrate management, financial and technical capabilities, as well as the ability to provide a comprehensive and adequate service.

These criteria no longer apply under the new *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, but were in force at the time the inquiry began.

COMMUNITY RADIO

The community radio licence was

granted for five years to the Community Radio Association Mackay (CRAM). The new service will meet the needs of the local community by providing a wide range of music, local information, talk-back, news and educational programs.

'CRAM intends to provide programs of interest to a diverse range of community groups,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Deputy Chairman. He said CRAM's members should be congratulated for the effort they had put into applying for a licence. To satisfy the ABA, CRAM had to demonstrate management, financial and technical capabilities, as well as the ability to provide an adequate and comprehensive service.

Importantly, the ABA was satisfied members of the Mackay community would be in a position to control the licence and participate in the operation and programming of the service. The management, financial and technical criteria no longer apply under the new *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, but were in force at the time the inquiry began.

New suitability criteria now apply to the licence and to meet these CRAM must continue to provide the service in a way which does not significantly risk an offence against the Act or breach of the licence conditions.

The ABA's decision is explained in greater detail in its reports on the Mackay licences available from the ABA on (02) 959 7811.

NEW ZEALAND VISIT

Nick Herd, Assistant Director, Programs Division visited New Zealand on behalf of the ABA in February. The purpose of the visit was to establish contact with New Zealand government agencies and industry bodies and to look at the operation of pay TV in New Zealand.

Mr Herd met officers of the Ministry of Commerce who have responsibility for broadcasting policy and the Chief Executives of the NZ Broadcasting Commission (NZ On Air), Broadcasting Standards Council and NZ Film Commission. He also met the Executive Director of the Independent Producers and Directors Guild of NZ and senior executives of Television New Zealand and TV 3.

Mr Herd visited Sky Television, the NZ pay TV broadcaster, where he met the Chief Executive and other senior executives and was briefed on their operations and in particular their subscriber management system.



COMMUNITY TV ON THE WAY

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1. the level of openness or non-exclusivity in membership and membership policy;
2. the existence and fairness of any grievance mechanisms relating to membership exclusions;
3. the equity of access for members to programming airtime and the existence of structures including a grievance mechanism, designed to allocate airtime fairly;
4. the flexibility of programming policy and format sufficient to allow new consourses of programming to be incorporated; and
5. the right of the community to take part in a range of activities involved in the operation and management of the

service.

The ABA will further look to the constituting documents of the applicant (and any other material on which the applicant relies) for evidence of a consistency with the purposes for which the sixth channel has been or will be made available, that is, community and educational non-profit use.

