

ABA APPROVES TEMPORARY BROADCAST BY KIX FM

The ABA has approved a 30 day temporary broadcast by Melbourne aspirant community radio group Landmark Radio Inc.

Landmark Radio has indicated to the ABA it intends to use the callsign KIX FM and provide a youth oriented community radio service during its temporary broadcast, set to run between 14 July and 12 August 1994 on the FM band frequency 89.9MHz.

'Landmark Radio is a non-profit incorporated association and has provided details of its constitution and the community it intends to serve,' said Mr Giles Tanner, ABA Director Planning.

The ABA authorises temporary broadcasts by aspiring community broadcasting groups to enable them to test their equipment and build community support for their proposed service. The ABA will look at the performance of aspirant groups during temporary broadcasts in considering applications for additional temporary broadcasts and allocation of permanent community radio licences.

'In discussions with the ABA, Landmark Radio has offered a voluntary undertaking not to exceed the limit on sponsorship time imposed on permanent community radio services during its temporary broadcast,' Mr Tanner said.

Community radio services are non-profit broadcasting services which are provided for community purposes. While advertising is prohibited, community services can broadcast up to four minutes of sponsorship announcements per hour. No such limit applies to temporary broadcasts, which are categorised as open narrowcasting services for the purposes of the Broadcasting Services Act.

COMMUNITY BROADCASTING

Community broadcasting services are defined by the Broadcasting Services Act as services that 'are provided for community purposes; and are not operated for profit or as part of a profit making enterprise; and that provide programs that are able to be received by

commonly available equipment; and are made available free to the general public...'

Holders of community broadcasting licences must continue to represent the community interest that they represented at the time their licence was allocated and encourage members of the community they serve to participate in their operations and the selection and provision of programs.

TEMPORARY BROADCASTS

Last year, after wide consultation with the commercial and community radio sectors, the ABA increased the temporary transmission period for aspirant community radio groups from 28 to 90 days in each 12 months.

The ABA has recently announced a review of these procedures, highlighting problems raised with the existing policy. These problems include legal difficulties, creation of false hopes and expectations amongst aspirant groups, advertising during temporary transmissions, multiple applications from related groups and problems with accountability.

The ABA has released a discussion paper canvassing these issues and has asked for comments by 28 July.

[The text of the ABA's discussion paper is reproduced on pp 7-11.]

ALLOCATION PROCESS FOR COMMUNITY RADIO LICENCES

The ABA is holding public meetings and calling for public submissions on the mix of television and radio services to be available in various parts of Australia. In the last nine months, the ABA has visited all the areas given top priority in its planning process. These are areas where there are few existing services, such as remote Australia, Darwin and the Top End, and areas where there is only one commercial television service (including Mildura, Griffith, the Riverland and Spencer Gulf in SA and regional WA).

Areas where there are many services, such as Melbourne and the other metropolitan areas, have been given a

lower priority. It is anticipated the ABA will be looking at radio planning for Melbourne in late 1995.

Once the ABA has sought public input, it will draft a licence area plan (LAP). This will set out the number and characteristics of existing services and vacant channels in an area. The ABA will inform the Minister for Communications and the Arts of the expressed public demand for community and national services and the Minister may reserve channels for these purposes.

There are at least three unassigned Melbourne-wide FM radio frequencies which are likely to be available for permanent licences after planning is completed.

If the Minister reserves a channel or channels for community radio and there are more aspirant groups than reserved channels, the ABA will conduct a public inquiry to select the service which would be best for the community. That decision will be taken on the basis of the application, the demand for the service and the manner in which the applicant has acted during its temporary broadcasts.

