



The ABA has announced it will make new television and radio licences available in the Mildura/Sunraysia area.

ABA's first LAP

New TV and radio licences for Mildura/Sunraysia?

Business and industry will be able to consider taking up a commercial television licence and two commercial radio licences in Mildura. At the same time, locals will be able to begin organising to apply for two community radio licences, following the release of the

tled to one of the new commercial radio licences: 'Under section 39 of the Broadcasting Services Act, 3MA is entitled to apply immediately to us for one of these licences,' he said.

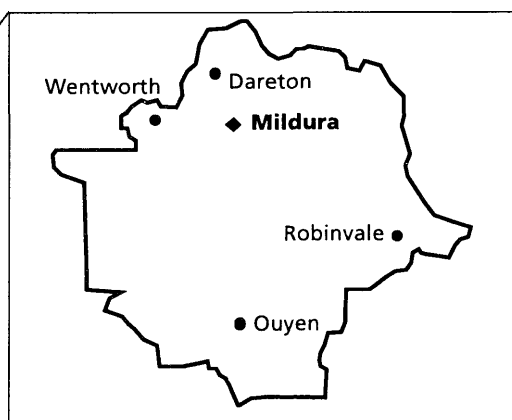
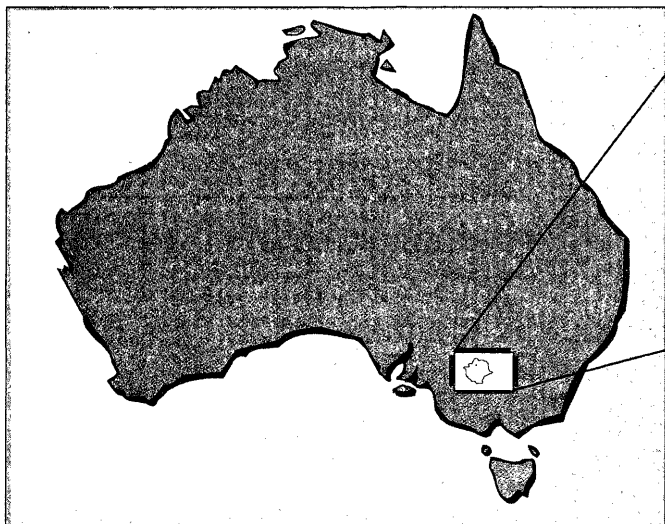
Local television operator STV may only run a second service at the ABA's discretion.

'Under section 73 of the Act,

'New services will only appear if a business operator decides to make a go of it. New community services will exist only if there is sufficient community interest. The ABA cannot fund or compel others

spectrum reserved for that licence could be used for other purposes, including narrowcasting.

A new commercial television service would use channel 35 on the UHF band



ABA's licence area plan for Mildura/Sunraysia.

'These new licences are the first to be made available as a result of the ABA's national planning process. We've consulted extensively with the broadcasting industry, service providers and the Mildura public in making our decision,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman.

Because the ABA has decided to make two commercial radio licences available, 3MA (the existing commercial radio operator in Mildura) is automatically enti-

the ABA would allow STV to provide an extra service only if it is satisfied that no other person is likely to be interested in, and likely to be in a position to operate the second commercial television licence,' said Mr Webb. So far, only Alice Springs based commercial television operator Imparja has expressed interest to the ABA about operating the second service.

Mr Webb said it was important for people to understand that the development of new services depended on the market.

to fund new broadcasting services,' he said.

Except for second licences for sole operators, the commercial licences (which must be renewed every five years) will be auctioned via a price-based allocation process now being finalised by the ABA. New community licences will be allocated via a merit-based process, also being completed.

'I expect both of these processes to begin later this year. The ABA may however decide to auction commercial licences from more than one area in a single exercise. This suggests an early 1996 start for auctioning of the first commercial licences,' said Mr Webb.

If there is no interest in any one of the new commercial and community licences, the

while any new commercial and community radio services would use the FM band. The ABA has also reserved television and radio channels for national (ABC/SBS) services and made available a low power AM channel in Mildura for an open narrowcasting radio service.

While the ABA's consultation process disclosed very strong demand from local viewers for two new commercial television services, the ABA has only planned for one because of the high costs of introducing new services and indications that investors would be unlikely to be interested in funding two extra services in such a small market.

Mr Webb said the ABA's planning process should not



be compared with the former equalisation policy which was struck in the mid-1980s. This brought three commercial services to most of regional Victoria by creating large markets of around one million viewers.

'Under equalisation, there was considerable financial assistance to broadcasters. Now, the ABA is solely reliant on private industry and the wider community to fund new commercial services. Equalisation also relied on creating very large markets to ensure the viability of three services, whereas the Mildura market contains only 56 000 people,' said Mr Webb.

The ABA's decisions are detailed in the licence area plan (LAP) for radio and television in Mildura/Sunraysia.

The LAP and planning

The licence area plan (LAP) for Mildura/Sunraysia shows the number and characteristics of all national, commercial, community and open narrowcasting television and radio services to be made available using the broadcasting services bands of the radiofrequency spectrum. These are the parts of the spectrum used by AM and FM radio services and VHF and UHF television services.

The characteristics of each service include the service's licence area, carrier frequency, transmitter site and technical conditions, including maximum effective radiated power in all directions. (It should be noted that the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* does not require licence areas for national and open narrowcasting services).

'National broadcasting services' refers to free-to-air ABC or SBS services or to Parlia-

mentary broadcasts. 'Commercial broadcasting services' are privately owned free-to-air services operated for a profit. 'Community broadcasting services' are free-to-air services provided for community purposes by non-profit groups. 'Open narrowcasting broadcasting services' are free-to-air services whose reception is limited in some way.

The release of the LAP follows extensive public consultation including a public meeting in Mildura in November 1993, as well as release of a draft licence area plan and a discussion paper explaining the ABA's reasons for its proposals. A call for written comment resulted in about sixty submissions, which the ABA has taken into account in preparing the plan.

Decisions - television

1. Channel capacity is reserved for the existing national television service, an additional national service and a national/community television service in Mildura/Sunraysia, according to the Minister's notifications. The existing national ABC service will continue to operate from Yatpool on VHF channel 6 with a maximum effective radiated power (ERP) of 200 kW. The additional national and national/community television services will be on UHF channels 29 and 38 respectively, with a nominal transmitter site at Yatpool and with a maximum ERP of 600 kW and with a minimum ERP of 200 kW.

2. The new commercial television service would be on UHF channel 35, with the nominal transmitter site at Yatpool and with maximum ERP of 600 kW and with a minimum ERP of 200 kW. It will have the same licence area as the existing commer-

cial television service STV. The licence area will be redefined using 1991 Census boundaries but will otherwise remain unchanged.

3. Channel capacity for a community television service will not be made available in Mildura/Sunraysia. Instead, the ABA has reserved channel 38 for a national/community television service and is willing to make the channel available for temporary use by community and educational television. This should address popular demand for this type of broadcasting.

4. The frequency allotment plan for the VHF/UHF television bands has been varied. Details of the variation are contained in the licence area plan released today.

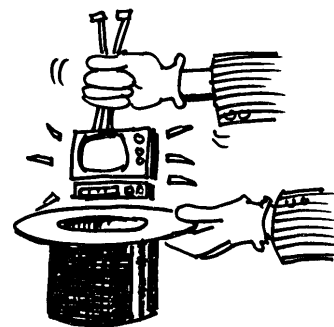
Decisions - radio

1. Channel capacity is reserved for the existing national radio services and a new national radio service in Mildura/Sunraysia, according to the Minister's notification. The existing national services will continue to operate from Yatpool on FM 102.7 MHz, 104.3 MHz and 105.9 MHz, with a maximum effective radiated power (ERP) of 150 kW. The new national radio service will be on FM 101.1 MHz, with a nominal transmitter site at Yatpool and a maximum ERP of 150 kW.

2. The two new commercial FM radio broadcasting services would operate on 97.9 MHz and 99.5 MHz from a nominal transmitter site at Sunny Cliffs with a maximum effective radiated power (ERP) of 20 kW. The licence areas of these services will be identical to the existing commercial AM radio service 3MA against 1991 Census boundaries.

3. The licence area of 3HOT (the existing community FM

radio service) in Mildura will be extended to include Robinvale and Wentworth. The effective radiated power (ERP) of its transmitter operating on 106.7 MHz will be increased from 800 W to 1 kW maximum. Capacity for a separate transmitter at Robinvale, operating on 90.7 MHz with a maximum ERP of 60 W, will be made available for 3HOT. Additional capacity for a separate transmitter at Wentworth, operating on 90.7 MHz with a maximum ERP of 60 W, will also be made available for 3HOT. The ABA will consider the question of extending



3HOT's service to Ouyen at the time it considers planning for Central Victoria and Central Murray (Planning Zone 16), of which Ouyen is a part.

4. One of the new community FM radio broadcasting services will operate from Dareton (92.3 MHz) and the other from Mildura (107.5 MHz), both with a maximum effective radiated power (ERP) of 1 kW. Capacity will be made available at Robinvale for re-transmission of these services. The transmitters will operate on 89.1 MHz and 89.9 MHz, respectively, both with a maximum ERP of 60 W. The licence areas of these services will be the same as the extended 3HOT licence area.

5. Subject to Australia's obligations to neighbouring countries, the ABA will make available one low power AM channel in Mildura, with a



cymomotive force (CMF) of 140V, for an open narrowcasting service. (The channel will be made available under s.34 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, for a minimum period of five years, and the provider will be determined by use of a price-based allocation system under s.106 of the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*).

6. The frequency allotment plan for the VHF FM band has been varied. Details of the variation are contained in the licence area plan.

The ABA planning process

The finalisation of a licence area plan completes stage three of the planning process.

The first stage was completed in September 1993 with the release of the ABA's priorities for planning services across Australia.

Stage two was completed with the publication of the frequency allotment plan, setting out the number of radio and television channels in particular areas of Australia.

Allocation of broadcasting services bands licences

With the exception of the capacity reserved for national broadcasters and the channel capacity made available for allocation to community broadcasters, other capacity set out in a LAP will be available for commercial licences, under a price-based allocation scheme.

Exceptions are where an existing commercial radio or television operator provides the sole service of its type in a market. Both 3MA and STV are solus operators in the Mildura market.

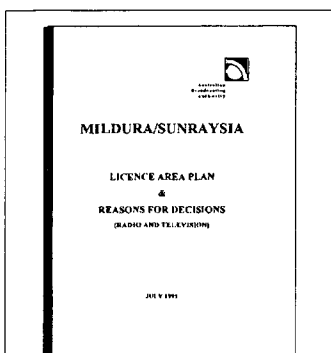
As the ABA has decided to make licences for two addi-

tional commercial radio services available in the area, 3MA (the existing solus radio operator) may be allocated one of these licences on request, under s.39 of the Act.

As the ABA has also decided to make one licence for an additional commercial television service available in the area, STV (the existing solus service provider) may apply to provide a second service for a limited period. The ABA can approve this (under s. 73 of the Act), if it is satisfied that another person would be unlikely to be interested in, and in a position to, operate another commercial television broadcasting service in that market.

Frequencies for new open narrowcasting licences will be made available under s. 34 of the Act, and providers will be determined by use of a price-based allocation system in conjunction with the Spectrum Management Agency.

Extension of national services is primarily funded by the Australian Government. In areas where the Government has no immediate plans to extend a national service, the ABA will consider applications for re-transmission by local communities. ☐



Copies of the plan (which includes decisions, reasons and records of advice received) can be viewed in libraries in the Mildura/Sunraysia area, or can be obtained from the ABA on Freecall 1 800 810 241.

The commercial television industry recorded a large increase in profits in 1993-94, reflecting increased revenue and reduced expenditure

Large increase in profits for commercial TV

The ABA's publication, *Broadcasting Financial Results 1993-94*, released in mid-July, shows both the commercial television and radio industries reported revenue growth for the third consecutive year.

'These are positive results for both the commercial television and radio industries with television revenue and profit showing continued growth and the number of commercial radio stations returning to profit increasing for the third successive year,' said ABA Chairman, Mr Peter Webb.

Commercial television

The commercial television industry made a broadcasting profit of \$342.7M in 1993-94, three times the profit earned in 1992-93. Profit before interest and tax increased to \$427.0M (up from \$266.6M in 1992-93). This is the largest recorded broadcasting profit for commercial television in the history of this publication, which has been produced by the ABT/ABA since 1983-84.

Commercial television revenue increased by 5.5 per cent in 1993-94 to \$2147.3M com-

pared with the 9.5 per cent increase reported in 1992-93. Total expenditure decreased by 6.2 per cent to \$1804.5M reversing a 14.0 per cent increase in 1992-93. Interest expenses decreased by 45.3 per cent to \$84.3M. Expenditure on Australian programs fell by 9.2 per cent to \$469.9M in 1993-94. The main factor contributing to this decline appears to be expenses in the previous year associated with the Barcelona Olympic Games.

Licence fees for commercial television increased by 3.9 per cent to \$135.6M in 1993-94. These increases are associated with the increase in broadcasting revenue.

Commercial radio

Commercial radio profit before interest and tax decreased by 4 per cent to \$50.2M in

