



The ABA has recently released a licence area plan for the Griffith and MIA area of New South Wales, and a draft licence area plan for the remote region of Western Australia.

New TV licence for Griffith and MIA

The ABA has announced it will make a new commercial television licence available in Griffith and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area.

'This is the second commercial television licence to be made available as a result of the ABA's national planning process. The first licence was made available in Mildura/Sunraysia. We've consulted extensively with the broadcasting industry, service providers and the Griffith public in making our decision,' said Mr Bob Scott, ABA Deputy Chairman.

Local television operator MTN, which has expressed interest, may only run a second service at the ABA's discretion.

'Under section 73 of the Act, the ABA may allow MTN to provide an extra service only if it's satisfied 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 Scott.

A J Fulton Enterprises Pty Ltd, based in Leeton, has already expressed interest to the ABA about operating the second service.

Mr Scott said it is important for people to understand the development of new services depends on the market. 'The new service will only appear if a business operator decides to make a go of it. The ABA cannot fund or compel others to fund new broadcasting services,' he said.

A new commercial television service would use channel 31 on the UHF band. The ABA has also reserved television channels for national (ABC/SBS) services in Griffith and the MIA.

The LAP does not include radio services as the ABA found greater public demand for more television services when it was planning priorities. Radio services planning is scheduled to begin in 1996.

Planning

The television licence area plan (LAP) for Griffith and the MIA shows the number and characteristics of all national and commercial television and services to be made available using the broadcasting services bands of the radiofrequency spectrum. These are the parts of the spectrum used by 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. (The *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* does not require licence areas for national services).

'National broadcasting services' refers to free-to-air ABC or SBS services or to Parliamentary broadcasts. 'Commercial broadcasting services' are privately owned free-to-air services operated for a profit.

The release of the LAP follows extensive public con-

sultation including a public meeting in Griffith 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. The ABA received about 50 submissions which were considered in preparing the Griffith LAP.

Summary of decisions

The ABA's decisions are detailed in the licence area plan (LAP) for television in Griffith and the MIA.

1. Channel capacity is reserved for the existing national television service, an additional national service and a national/community television service in Griffith and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, in accordance with the Minister's notifications.

The existing national service will continue to operate from Mt Bingar on VHF channel 7 and at Hay on VHF channel 11.

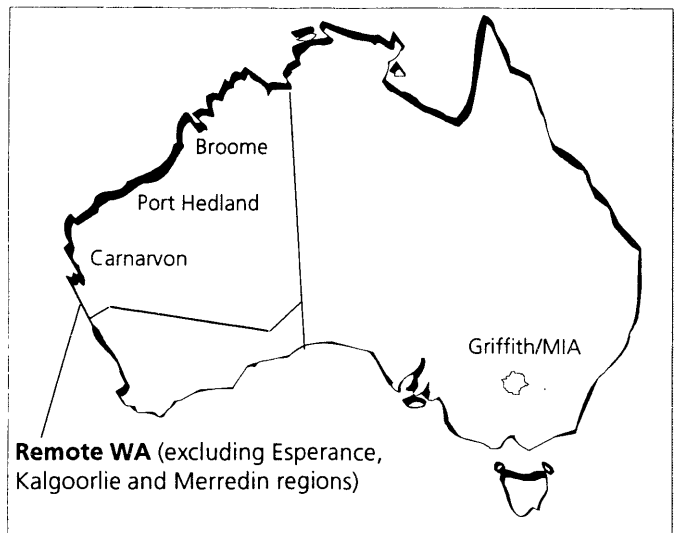
The additional national television service will be on UHF channel 28 with a nominal transmitter site at Mt Bingar and at Hay on UHF channel 60.

The additional national/community television service will be on UHF channel 47 with a nominal transmitter site at Mt Bingar and at Hay on UHF channel 69.

2. One additional commercial television service will be made available in Griffith and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA). The service will be on UHF channel 31, with the nominal transmitter site at Mt Bingar.

Capacity will be made available at Hay for re-transmission of the additional commercial television service. The transmitter will operate on channel 63.

The licence area of the existing commercial television service (MTN) in Griffith and the MIA will be varied to exclude the township of Coolamon.





The licence area of the additional commercial television service will be the same as that for the varied MTN licence area, using 1991 census boundaries.

3. Channel capacity for a community television service will not be made available for allocation in Griffith and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA). The decision to reserve channel 47 at Mt Bingar and 69 in Hay for a national/community television service, and the ABA's readiness to make those channels available for temporary use by community and educational television, should adequately address demand and any interest by potential community television services in Griffith and the MIA.

Licence allocation

Commercial licences will be available under a price-based allocation scheme, except where the existing commercial television operator provides the sole service of its type in the market.

As the ABA has also decided to make one licence for an additional commercial television service available in the area, MTN (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.

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. ☐

The ABA proposes new licences for allocation in Carnarvon, Karratha and Port Hedland, Western Australia.

ABA proposes to make new radio licences available in remote WA

The draft licence area plan for remote Western Australia contains proposals to make new commercial radio FM licences available for allocation in Carnarvon, Karratha and Port Hedland, Western Australia.

'The ABA's public consultation has shown interest from existing commercial radio licensees in Carnarvon, Karratha and Port Hedland in providing an additional radio service,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman.

The ABA also proposes making new FM community radio licences available for allocation at Carnarvon, Exmouth, Karratha and Port Hedland, and new AM community radio licences available for allocation at Fitzroy Crossing, Broome, Derby and Halls Creek.

So far industry has expressed little interest in providing additional commercial television services to the region, which currently has one service, Golden West Television. The ABA has invited potential service providers to submit proposals, such as aggregation of licence areas, which might result in a second service.

'The proposals will now undergo public comment and if confirmed will lay the groundwork for new broadcasting services for people living in this region,' said Mr Peter Webb.

'This is part of a national

planning process which will result in detailed blueprints for radio and television services Australia-wide. Planning services for remote WA has a high priority as there's only one commercial radio service in each radio market and one commercial television service in the region.'

Mr Webb said it was important to understand the ABA's role:

'The ABA's job is to identify vacant radio and television channels and decide the number and type of channels for new and

improved services. Then it's for business and the community to take up these opportunities,' he said.

The release of the plan follows extensive public consultation including public meetings in Carnarvon, Exmouth, Broome, Karratha, Port Hedland, Newman, Derby, Kununurra, Leonora and Meekatharra during February and March 1994. A call for written comment resulted in almost one hundred submissions, which the ABA has considered in preparing the draft plans. ▷

For copies of the LAPs

Both the LAP (Griffith/MIA) and the draft LAP (Remote WA) can be obtained from the ABA on free call 1800 810 241.

Griffith/MIA

Copies of the plan (which includes decisions, reasons and records of advice received) can be viewed in libraries in Griffith and the MIA.

Remote WA

Copies of the draft LAP for remote WA are available in local libraries throughout the remote WA region.

Submissions

Written submissions are invited and should be addressed to:

Planning Officer for Remote WA

ABA

PO Box 34

Belconnen, ACT 2616

Please quote file ref: 95/5179.

Submissions closing date:

31 October 1995