



# News Update

## ABA's planning visits

QUEENSLAND: During the first week of August, the Deputy Chairman of the ABA Mr Bob Scott, Mr Colin Knowles (General Manager Planning and Corporate), and Ms Lydia Melnikoff (Assistant Manager Services Planning), visited the south east Queensland regions of Darling Downs and South Burnett to meet with licensees and aspirant broadcasters. This visit marks the completion of planning visits for markets in the ABA's priority group three.



At the meeting with 4TAB and TAB Queensland  
l-r: Bill Thornburn (TAB), Van Richards-Smith (4TAB), John McCormack (General Manager 4TAB), Bob Scott (ABA), Dick McIlwain (General Manager TAB), Lydia Melnikoff (ABA)

The primary function of these visits is to explain the planning process and assist current and aspiring

broadcasters to identify the matters they should address in their written submissions.

The ABA also finds these visits very valuable in gaining first hand knowledge of the markets and for meeting its clients face to face on their territory. It is an opportunity to meet the wide cross-section of the people who make up the solid base of supporters of community radio, and decision makers and staff engaged in providing commercial radio in their areas.

During the visit, the ABA representatives met with existing broadcasters and a number of people interested in starting new services in

community groups in places like Dalby and Warwick which currently have no truly local radio services able to address the wide range of community needs not able to be met by commercial or national radio services.

The Toowoomba market will present some interesting challenges for ABA planners and broadcasters alike. Toowoomba is probably the smallest three station commercial market in Australia. It has no local commercial FM radio service and the Brisbane and Ipswich commercial FM stations which are easy to receive in many parts of the city do attract a number of listeners. There is a strong interest in the ABA making local commercial FM available and the ABA expects to receive a number of submissions about how this might be achieved while at the same time preserving important elements of the service mix currently provided on the AM band.

The provision of new services in very small markets in economic terms like the South Burnett present other challenges, particularly for the broadcasters.

While in this region the ABA also took the opportunity to meet with the Queensland TAB which has sought channels to provide racing broadcasts throughout Queensland. Racing services which are already available in a number of centres including Brisbane, have proven very popular with punters and the racing industry.

## New digital radio broadcasting task force

SYDNEY: 'It's not a case of if radio will be digital, but when radio will be digital', said ABA Deputy Chairman Mr Bob Scott when addressing the ABC's *Radio: delivering the digital future* conference on 16 August in Sydney.

Digital sound broadcasting (DSB) will be able to deliver compact disk quality radio and allow for a great variety of options for combining broadcasting and data services.

To prepare for the future, the ABA has established a joint ABA/industry task force.

'Making the correct decisions for the public, broadcasters and potential new service providers needs informed debate,' Mr Scott said.

The ABA is also developing a detailed report on the possible broadcasting uses of DSB, the technical options for delivery of these services and has invited key sectors of the broadcasting



At the meeting with 4DDB  
l-r: Lydia Melnikoff (ABA), Bob McMinn, Leslie De Voil, Danny Davidson

these areas. There are active community groups in Warwick, Dalby and Toowoomba anxious to establish community radio stations. The ABA is particularly pleased to see well supported