



ABA licences community TV in Perth and Mandurah

PERTH: The ABA has issued a licence to the West Australian Community Broadcasting Association (WACBA) which will manage access to the sixth television channel in the Perth/Mandurah area.

WACBA, the peak body for community broadcasting in Western Australia, will hold the licence on behalf of two existing aspirant community television groups: Mandurah Community Television (MCTV) and Perth Community Television (CTV Perth).

WACBA is a consortium which draws membership from a range of community broadcasting licensees, aspirant groups and individuals.

'WACBA satisfied the ABA its activities would be open to individuals, community and educational groups. Also, it has highlighted the importance of open access in its founding charter,' said ABA Chairman, Mr Brian Johns.

The ABA has made the sixth channel (UHF Channel 31—the last high power free-to-air television channel in the Perth/Mandurah area) available until February 1996 and has issued WACBA a one year transmitter licence as an open narrowcaster for community and educational non-profit purposes.

The ABA cannot allocate permanent community television licences on the sixth channel before a ministerial review of the television broadcasting industry, which must be completed by July 1997.

The announcement follows earlier decisions by the ABA to make the sixth channel available to providers of open narrowcasting services for community and educational non-profit purposes in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Lismore.

Sixth channel

As there is no separate sixth channel frequency for Mandurah, which lies within the Perth television area, both MCTV and CTV Perth were competing for one licence. Discussions between the ABA, the WA Department of State Services and WACBA resolved that WACBA act as broker between the two groups by holding the licence.

WACBA said that, with the endorsement of CTV Perth and MCTV, it was willing to act as guarantor to ensure that the only presently available frequency was shared equitably and operated in the community interest.

The consortium will operate transmitters at two sites: Bickley and Mandurah. The

transmitters are not be used concurrently to avoid interference problems.

As licensee, WACBA will be responsible for making decisions about access to air time which both aspirant groups must abide by.

MCTV and CTV

MCTV and CTV Perth have both undertaken temporary transmission broadcasts.

MCTV has been broadcasting on weekends from Mandurah under a temporary transmission licence since November 1993.

CTV Perth has been in contact with the ABA since early 1993 about progress towards a long term (continuing trial) licence application. CTV Perth undertook its first temporary transmission for a three week period in late 1994 from a transmitter site in Bickley.

Program content standards applying to community television

While industry codes of practice are being developed, the ABA's program content standards for narrowcasting services apply to community television broadcasters. WACBA has been temporarily licensed as a narrowcaster, pending the ministerial review of the television broadcasting industry.

Under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, industry groups representing various broadcasting industry sectors are required to develop codes. This means broadcasters are primarily responsible for ensuring programs reflect community standards, and for handling complaints about the content of their programs.

Another 270 pay TV licences allocated

SYDNEY: The ABA has allocated 150 licences for non-satellite pay TV broadcasting services to Interactive Telecommunications Network Ltd (Interactive). It has also allocated a further 120 licences to Australis related companies, Star Vision Pty Ltd (Star Vision), Selectra Pty Ltd and Vinatech Pty Ltd.

The ABA has allocated 20 licences to Star Vision, 50 to Selectra and 50 to Vinatech.

Selectra intends to deliver its services via cable and MDS (multipoint distribution system which transmits via microwaves) to country areas of NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

Vinatech intends to deliver its services via cable and MDS to the whole of the Northern Territory, country areas of Queensland, plus the far north eastern corner of NSW.

Selectra is wholly owned by STV Pty Ltd