



The ABA has released for public comment a draft plan about new television services for the Mount Gambier/South East region of South Australia.

New television proposals for Mount Gambier and South East

The ABA's proposals include:

- a second commercial television licence on a UHF television channel, which would cover the same area as the existing commercial SES television service (any new television services would be on the UHF band and viewers may need to purchase a UHF antenna to receive these services),
- reserving television channels for a future SBS and a national/community service throughout the Mount Gambier region,
- reserving six new limited coverage UHF television channels at Naracoorte to improve television reception in the town.

'The proposals will now undergo public comment and if confirmed will lay the groundwork for a new commercial television service for the people of the South East,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Acting Chairman. 'This is part of a national planning process which will result in detailed blueprints for radio and television services Australia-wide. Planning television services in the Mount Gambier/South East region has a high priority as there is only one commercial television service in the area. Planning radio services was given a lower priority and is scheduled to take place in 1996.'

Mr Webb said it was important to understand the ABA's role: 'The ABA's job is to iden-

tify vacant radio and television channels and decide the number and type of new channels and licences. Then it's for business and the community to take up these opportunities. We cannot fund or make others fund extra services. We can't demand improved reception for existing services,' he said.

The draft plans follow extensive public consultation by the ABA which held a public meeting in Mount Gambier in December 1993. More than thirty written submissions were received and then considered in preparing the ABA's discussion document.

The plan, a discussion document and microfiche copies of submissions will soon be available at local libraries in Bordertown, Casterton, Kingston SE, Millicent, Mount Gambier and Naracoorte, or on freecall (008) 810 241.

Licence area plans

Draft licence area plans describe the number and characteristics of services to be made available in an area. They contain details of all national (SBS and ABC), commercial and community radio and television broadcasting services to be available on the broadcasting services bands of the radiofrequency spectrum in a region. These are parts of the spectrum used by AM and FM radio services and VHF and UHF television services.

Main issues

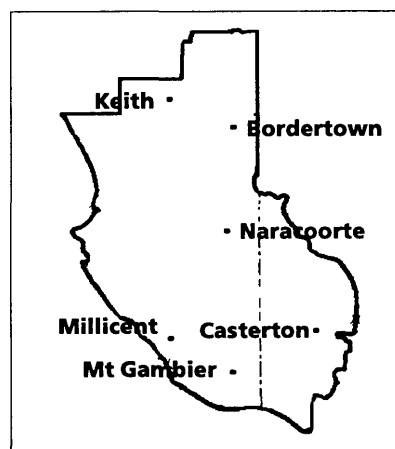
The main planning issues are whether additional commercial television licences should be made available in the Mount Gambier/South East region, and if so, how many.

South East Telecasters Limited, the licensee of the existing commercial television service SES, has indicated that it may be interested in applying to provide a second commercial service.

During the ABA's public consultation, two other submitters (WIN Television/Vic and Sunshine Television Ltd/Qld) expressed their interest in providing additional commercial television broadcasting services for the Mount Gambier/South East region.

The ABA believes the objects of the Broadcasting Services Act would be best served by making a single additional commercial service available in the area. These objects talk of promoting the availability of a diverse range of radio and television services offering entertainment, education and information, and encouraging providers of commercial and community broadcasting services to be responsive to the need for a fair and accurate coverage of matters of public interest and for an appropriate coverage of matters of local significance.

The ABA proposes to make



television channels available for a future SBS television service at six sites (Mount Burr, Bordertown, Keith, Kingston SE/Robe, Naracoorte and The Gap) and for a national/community service throughout the Mount Gambier/South East area, pursuant to the Minister's notices of reservation.

The ABA proposes including additional UHF television channels for commercial and national television services at Naracoorte, an additional site within the Mount Gambier/South East region. The new site will improve reception in Naracoorte and surrounds.

The ABA canvasses the option of increasing the power of the existing ABC service operating from Mount Burr on channel 1 to improve reception to the north east of the Mount Gambier/South East region. ☐

Submissions

Send written submissions to:
Planning Officer for Mount Gambier/South East,
ABA,
PO Box 34,
Belconnen, ACT 2616,
by 22 March 1995.