

The ABA's Special Events fact sheet, below, gives details of what a special event is and how to apply for a special event transmitter licence.

## Special events

The ABA plans the availability of segments of the broadcasting services bands (VHF and UHF television, FM and AM radio).

The ABA can make unallocated broadcasting spectrum available for alternative uses, such as narrowcasting. Narrowcasting services are those whose reception is limited in some way. The limitation can be that they are targeted to a special interest group, or limited by location, or are provided during a limited period or to cover a special event, or because they provide programs of limited appeal, or for some other reason.

In the case of services for special events, they are limited to coverage of the event.

### What is a special event?

The ABA defines a special event as:  
a distinct and organised event of major sporting, cultural or other community significance.

The Explanatory Memorandum to the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* referred to special events as:

sporting events such as the Adelaide Grand Prix, the Olympic or Commonwealth Games, various championships etc.; cultural events such as horticultural or flower shows, artistic exhibitions, etc.

### What is a special event service?

The applicant must establish a substantial connection between the special event and the special event service, by providing detailed programming information. The applicant must also indicate whether the

special event service is primarily for the purpose of providing information about the event, and making the event more meaningful to the listener/viewer.

### How to apply

1. Complete both Form ABA 12 and the ABA Checklist to accompany an application for a transmitter licence for a special event. Copies of Form ABA 12 (*Application for a Transmitter Licence in the Broadcasting Services Bands*) and the checklist are available from the ABA, ph: (06) 256 2832.
2. Attach the checklist (and supporting documents) to the completed Form ABA 12 and send to the ABA at the address listed below.
3. Applications must be submitted at least two months before the special event. Applications submitted less than two months before the event may not be processed in time.
4. If your application is approved, you will be required to pay a transmitter licence tax. Copies of the fee schedules are available from the ABA, ph: (06) 256 2832.

### Technical specifications

The transmitter signal power, commonly known as effective radiated power (ERP), is determined on the basis of the coverage requirements for a particular area. The useable signal strength requirement is dependent on the environment. Higher signal strength is required in urban (as distinct from rural) areas to overcome the higher level of manufactured noise.

Transmitter licences for special events are granted for both television and radio and usually use planned FM radio frequencies and UHF television channels.

#### Note

Licences will normally only be granted to cover a short period, coinciding with the duration of the special event.

A transmitter licence for a special

event is not intended to be and will not be issued as a substitute for a broader licence, or as a substitute pending such an application.

### History

Legislative provision for the limited broadcasting licence scheme (s. 82 AB of the *Broadcasting Act 1942*) came into force on 23 January 1989. The scheme aimed to authorise defined specialised services which did not fit into existing licence categories and would not normally have the same public interest implications as major broadcasting services. This provision allowed for the allocation of limited broadcast licences by the former Australian Broadcasting Tribunal for the following service categories: broadcasting for remote Aboriginal communities (BRACS); special events; local information; and, Text/Graphic Information (e.g. Teletext).

The Broadcasting Act was perceived to be inadequate in addressing the emerging demand for open narrowcasting, subscription broadcasting and subscription narrowcasting services.

The *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, introduced on 5 October 1992, sought to respond not only to 'broadcasting' services, but to address the increasing demand for specialised narrowcasting services serving 'niche' markets.

The ABA has the discretion to make spectrum available for open narrowcasting services, including those for special events services, under s.34 of the Act. However, this is not intended to be at the expense of the main task of planning spectrum for mainstream broadcasting services.

### Where to get more information

For more information about special events licences contact the ABA's Planning Branch in Canberra. Ph (06) 256 2800. Fax (06) 253 3277. 

