



The ABA has released a discussion paper, *Planning for Commercial Television in Remote and Regional Western Australia*. The paper discusses two alternatives for commercial television in the area.

Submissions invited for commercial television in remote and regional WA

The ABA has called for expressions of interest in providing a second commercial television service to serve all of remote and regional Western Australia.

The ABA is preparing licence area plans for television in the areas currently served by commercial television broadcasting services SSW South West Western Australia, GTW Geraldton, VEW Kalgoorlie and WAW Remote Western Australia. Between them, these licence areas cover the entire state, excluding Perth.

The ABA has released a discussion paper, *Planning for Commercial Television in Remote and Regional Western Australia*. It sets out the current status of commercial television planning in the area, discusses various options for improving television services and calls for submissions and expressions of interest in providing an additional service. The closing date for submissions and expressions of interest is 18 September 1996.

Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman, said that the ABA has to decide whether to make additional commercial television services available for allocation, and if so, how many.

'One of the options is to make available one additional licence covering all of non-

metropolitan Western Australia. Alternatively, we could make additional licences available for each of the four existing television markets. The option ultimately chosen will depend on investor interest - the ABA cannot fund or make others fund additional services,' Mr Webb said.

Draft licence area plans

Last year, the ABA released for public comment draft licence area plans accompanied by discussion papers for each of the four television licence areas.

The draft licence area plans for Geraldton and the Mid-West (area covering GTW) and Kalgoorlie/Esperance/Merredin (area covering VEW) were released in January and March of 1995 respectively. In both areas, the ABA's preliminary view was that it would make one additional commercial television broadcasting service available, with a licence area identical to the existing service. The new services would use UHF channels.

The ABA released its draft licence area plan for remote Western Australia (area covering WAW) in July 1995. The ABA expressed the preliminary view that there is little or no prospect of an additional com-

mercial television service using the broadcasting services bands being provided to serve this area due to lack of entrepreneurial interest. However, the ABA invites potential service providers to submit any proposals that might facilitate the provision of a second service.

The ABA released its draft licence area plan for the SSW licence area in September 1995. In this draft, the ABA invited comments on: issues related to whether to make available for allocation, channels for one additional commercial television service in the South West and Great Southern market, to operate from Mt Lennard, Mawson Trig, Mt Latham and Mt Barker and 13 related transmitter sites.

The ABA foreshadowed that any new service would have the same licence area as SSW and would use UHF channels. The ABA also proposed that the existing commercial service would not be required to move from its present Band II channel (VHF channel 5) to UHF for at least ten years.

Expressions of interest/submissions

In response to these preliminary views, the ABA received the following expressions of interest:


- Sunraysia Television Ltd. Interested only in a licence to serve the SSW licence area.

- jmb Pty Ltd. Interested only in a single licence to serve all four regional and remote Western Australian licence areas.

- A group of successful businesses based in Albany Interested in a single licence to serve all four regional and remote Western Australian licence areas.

- Golden West Network Pty Ltd.

Preference is for a single licence issued under s.73 (now s.38A) to serve all four regional and remote Western Australian licence areas.

In addition a submission was received from the Premier of Western Australia, The Hon. Richard Court MLA, in response to the draft licence area plan for the SSW area. Among other things, the submission recommended that the second commercial television service should only be granted on the basis of a full (state-wide) licence area. 

Copies of the discussion paper, *Planning for Commercial Television in Remote and Regional Western Australia* can be obtained by telephoning the ABA on Freecall 1800 810 241