

The ABA is calling for comment on what priority should be given to allocating the community broadcasting licences made available in its licence area plans.

Community broadcasting licence allocation

The ABA has so far decided to make 33 new community broadcasting services available as a result of its planning process. All these services are in regional and remote communities in Australia in line with the ABA's planning priorities which give highest priority to areas where demand for services is greatest and the population of the particular area is most in need of additional broadcasting services i.e. group one.

The ABA is calling for comment on the order in which it should allocate these licences.

The ABA proposes to establish a flexible policy on the order and timing of allocation exercises and to develop a timetable in consultation with the community broadcasting sector¹. This timetable will be updated in *ABA Update* each quarter.

Examples of assumptions, principles or circumstances which may be considered in deciding the order of allocation are:

- the principles embodied in the ABA planning priorities established in 1993;
- whether an area already has a community radio service;
- the existing radio services available in the area; and
- whether known aspirant broadcasting groups are well placed to pursue licence allocation at that time (for example, whether applicants have the necessary establishment funds and are likely to be in a position to commence a new service within a year).

The ABA allocated the first community broadcasting service licence, in Mildura on 11 September 1996, to the Association for the Blind Ltd to provide a Radio for the Print Handicapped (RPH) service.

The ABA invites comment on the order in which the following licences be made available for allocation:

| State | Area | No. of licences |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| NSW | Lord Howe Island | 1 |
| Qld | Mt Isa | 2 |
| SA | Kangaroo Island | 1 |
| WA | Esperance | 1 |
| | Geraldton | 2 |
| | Kalgoorlie | 1 |
| | Meekatharra | 1 |
| | Merredin (Bruce Rock) | 1 |
| | Northampton | 1 |
| | York | 1 |
| NT | Katherine | 1 |
| Territories | Christmas Island | 1 |
| | Cocos Islands | 1 |

Licences which have been deferred:

| Area | No. of licences | Deferred to |
|------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Cunnamulla | 1 | 27 Aug 97 |
| Kalgoorlie | 1 | 16 Oct 97 |
| Katanning | 1 | 10 Oct 98 |
| Mandurah | 1 | 19 July 98 |
| Narogin | 1 | 10 Oct 98 |
| Northam | 1 | 27 Aug 98 |
| Riverland | 1 | 22 Aug 98 |
| Wagin | 1 | 10 Oct 98 |

Allocation has been deferred in these areas in order to allow time for community broadcasting groups to organise and build necessary support and skills before an allocation exercise commences.

Licences which have already been advertised:

| Area | No. of licences | Closing date for applications |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Mildura | 2 | closed |
| Darwin | 2 | closed |
| Ceduna | 1 | 11 November 1996 |
| Broome | 1 | 16 December 1996 |
| Derby | 1 | 16 December 1996 |
| Fitzroy Crossing | 1 | 16 December 1996 |
| Halls Creek | 1 | 16 December 1996 |
| Torres Strait | 1 | 24 December 1996 |

¹ The ABA is consulting with the following community broadcasting organisations: Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA); the National Indigenous Broadcasting Association of Australia (NIMAA); Australasian Christian Broadcasters (ACB); the Australian Council for Radio for the Print Handicapped (ACRPH); the Communications Law Centre (CLC); and the National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council (NEMBC).

Comment may be submitted in writing to: The Manager
Allocations and Renewals Section
Australian Broadcasting Authority
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