



New commercial radio licences

More than fifty new regional commercial radio licences likely

From March 1996, the ABA will start licensing new commercial radio services in regional radio markets across Australia, which will improve the choice available to radio listeners in these areas.

'This means more variety for listeners in country areas as two commercial services will provide more diverse programs,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman.

From 5 January 1996, licensees which are the only provider of a commercial radio service in their market have been able to apply to provide a second local service.

The new procedure is the result of an amendment to the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* which became effective on 5 January 1996 and was announced in December by the Minister for Communications and the Arts, the Hon. Michael Lee.

Earlier in 1995, the ABA had recommended to the Minister that early licensing of additional commercial services in the country's remaining solus, or single service, radio markets be allowed. The Minister accepted the ABA's recommendation and this amendment is the result.

'This new legislation will speed up the process of allocating second commercial radio licences in solus markets, if the existing operator is interested in providing an extra service,' said Mr Webb.

This means that up to 54 new commercial radio licences could be granted in regional areas of Australia, ahead of the ABA's licence area planning process.



Allocation fee

The ABA has set an allocation fee of \$10 000 for these licences which is based on the estimated costs of planning and allocating them. These licences are not currently subject to licence fees, but the Minister has announced all licences allocated under the Act will be subject to annual fees.

The ABA has sent eligible licensees a copy of the ABA information package, which includes an application form. Licensees should apply to the ABA no later than 5 March 1996.

For more information on s.39 licences, see over page.

The ABA has received applications from 16 regional licensees (as at the end of January) who are interested in providing a new commercial radio service in their market.

Applications have been received from: 2BS Bathurst, 2EC Bega, 2GN Goulburn, 2GZ Orange, 2RG Griffith, 2LT Lithgow, 2XL Cooma, 3BA Ballarat, 3CS Colac, 3NE Wangaratta, 3SH Swan Hill, 3WM Horsham, 4SSS Nambour, 5SE Mt Gambier, 6MM Mandurah and 7XS Queenstown.

The ABA has proposed the technical conditions necessary for Bathurst, Lithgow, Orange, Ballarat, Wangaratta, Griffith and Mandurah. Industry bodies and licensees who wish to comment on these have until the 5 February for Bathurst, 7 February for Ballarat and 8 February for Orange and Mandurah, 17 February for Wangaratta and 20 February for the remainder.

After considering any comments received about the proposed technical conditions, the ABA expects the first licences to be allocated in early March.

Other licences are expected to be issued progressively as technical specifications are circulated and a suitable frequency is determined for each new service.

Commercial radio stations eligible for s.39 licences

NSW: 2AD Armidale; 2BS Bathurst; 2CS Coffs Harbour; 2DU Dubbo; 2EC Bega; 2GF Grafton; 2GN Goulburn; 2GZ Orange; 2LF Young; 2LT Lithgow; 2MG Mudgee; 2MO Gunnedah; 2NZ Inverell; 2PK Parkes; 2RE Taree; 2RG Griffith; 2XL Cooma.

Victoria: 3BA Ballarat; 3CS Colac; 3NE Wangaratta; 3SH Swan Hill; 3WM Horsham.

Queensland: 4GC Charters Towers; 4GY Gympie; 4HI Emerald; 4KZ Innisfail; 4LG Longreach; 4MB Maryborough; 4SB Kingaroy; 4SSS Nambour; 4VL Charleville; 4ZR Roma.

South Australia: 5CC Port Lincoln; 5MU Murray Bridge; 5RM Renmark; 5SE Mt Gambier.

Western Australia: 6AM Northam; 6BY Bridgetown; 6KA Karratha; 6KG Kalgoorlie; 6LN Carnarvon; 6MD Merredin; 6MM Mandurah; 6NA Narrogin; 6NW Port Hedland; 6SE Esperance; 6TZ Bunbury; 6VA Albany; 6WB Katanning.

Tasmania: 7AD Devonport; 7BU Burnie; 7SD Scottsdale; 7XS Queenstown.

Northern Territory: 8HOT Darwin.

ACT: no eligible licensees.