



The ABA has proposed 20 new radio licences for central NSW in its latest draft licence area plan.

New radio licences proposed

The draft licence area plans for central NSW propose eight commercial radio licences, five community radio licences and seven open narrowcasting radio services. Of the eight commercial radio licences, six could go to existing local broadcasters in Orange, Dubbo, Bathurst, Lithgow, Mudgee and Parkes, while the remaining two would be for

Under recent amendments to broadcasting laws aimed at speeding up the allocation of second licences for single service markets, these stations are eligible for an additional new commercial radio licence for their market before the ABA's plans are final.

Licensees 2BS, 2GZ and 2LT have already applied to the ABA for a second licence under this scheme. Licensees

an additional licence for existing operators,' he said.

Commercial radio

The ABA has proposed two new licences in Orange and Dubbo because of interest expressed by potential service providers.

No interest has been expressed in providing a competitive service for the four

Open narrowcasting radio

The licence area plans also contain proposals for new FM open narrowcasting radio services in Orange, Dubbo, Bathurst, Lithgow, Mudgee, Parkes/Forbes and Con-dobolin.

Public comment invited

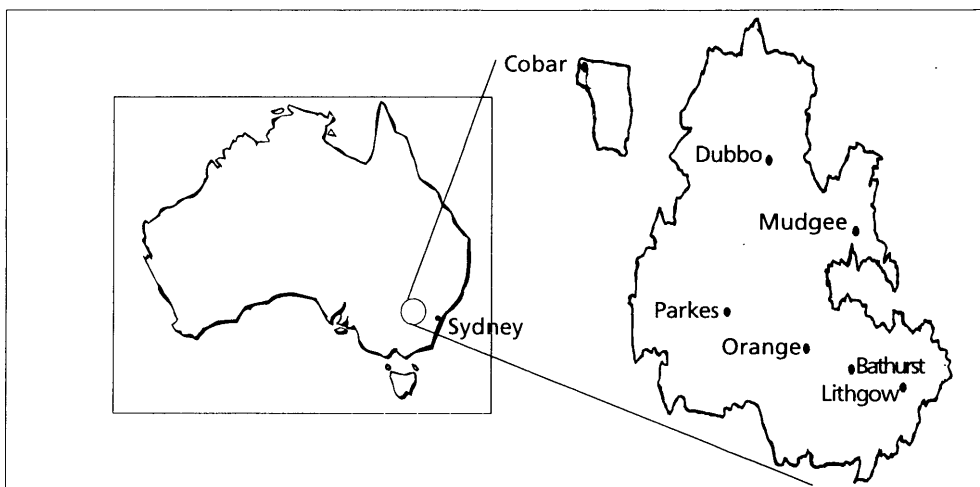
The public is invited to comment on the suggestions made in the radio draft LAPs.

Mr Scott said it was important to understand the ABA's role.

'The ABA's job is to identify vacant radio channels and decide the number and type of new channels and licences to be made available. 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 release of the draft licence area plans follow public consultation by the ABA which held meetings in central NSW during November 1994. More than one hundred and sixty submissions were received about radio services in central NSW. Planning for television services in the region is scheduled for the second half of 1996.



competitive services in Orange and Dubbo.

'These proposals lay the groundwork for a significant expansion of radio broadcasting services throughout central NSW,' said Mr Bob Scott, ABA Acting Chairman.

Single service markets

2GZ Orange, 2DUDubbo, 2BS Bathurst, 2LT Lithgow, 2MG Mudgee and 2PK Parkes are the only commercial radio stations operating in each of their markets.

2DU, 2MG and 2PK have until 5 March 1996 to apply (for more detail, see p. 8).

'We're pleased licensees are keen to provide new services. This is a great opportunity for the radio industry to offer listeners in country areas a greater depth and variety of programming. However, if these broadcasters do not take up second licences, the ABA will re-consider its proposals,' said Mr Scott.

'In Orange and Dubbo where two licences are on offer in each area, we're proposing a competitive service as well as

remaining markets of Bathurst, Lithgow, Mudgee and Parkes.

Community radio

The ABA has also proposed one FM channel for community radio broadcasting in each of the following towns — Orange, Dubbo, Cobar, Bathurst and Kandos.

If there is interest from the public, the ABA will consider making channels available for community radio broadcasting in Lithgow and Mudgee, no earlier than two years after LAPs for these areas are final.



Main planning issues

The main issue resulting from the ABA's consultation process is the limited availability of spectrum to accommodate interest expressed by existing and potential radio broadcasters in providing new radio services.

There is strong interest from the public in increasing the

able. In making its proposals, the ABA has weighed up submissions from the public requesting additional radio services and the interest of those who wish to supply additional radio services against the known vacant spectrum.

Commercial radio

Parties expressing interest in providing new commercial radio services, other than ex-

Pty Ltd (a subsidiary of Bunbury based Rural Press), Robyn and Timothy Pankhurst (Dubbo) and Phillip Percival (Dubbo).

Community radio

The ABA is proposing to upgrade the 2LVR Forbes/Parkes community radio service transmitter power, extend its current licence area and make a

Allocation of licences

With the exception of the capacity reserved for national broadcasters and channel capacity made available for allocation to community broadcasters, other capacity set out in the LAP will generally be available for commercial licences and open narrowcasting services, under a price-based allocation scheme.

for central NSW

number of radio services across central NSW of all types — national, commercial, community and open narrowcasting.

There is a range of ABC radio services available throughout central NSW, but each commercial market contains only one commercial radio station. Only Bathurst, Orange, Parkes and Forbes are served by community radio.

While the ABA wants to make channels available to increase the number of radio services throughout central NSW, there is a limited spectrum avail-

isting broadcasters, are:

■ McCullough Robertson Solicitors on behalf of a client (identified as an established broadcaster but the name of company is unavailable at this time) has expressed interest in providing two additional commercial radio services in both the Orange and Dubbo markets;

■ Orange based Say FM Pty Ltd has expressed interest in providing a commercial radio service in Orange;

■ in Dubbo, interest has been expressed in providing a commercial radio service by Regional Broadcasters Australia

re-transmission service available at Condobolin.

Open narrowcasting

The ABA is proposing one additional high power open narrowcasting service available in Bathurst and Parkes/Forbes, one additional medium power open narrowcasting service available in Orange and Mudgee and one additional low power open narrowcasting service available in Dubbo, Lithgow and Condobolin.

The ABA planning process

The release of draft licence area plans (LAPs) is part of stage three of the planning process.

The first stage was completed in September 1993 with the release of the ABA's priorities for planning services across Australia.

Stage two was completed with the publication of the frequency allotment plan (FAP), setting out the number of radio and television channels in particular areas of Australia.

From 5 January 1996, under s.39 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, the existing commercial radio licensees (2GZ Orange, 2DU Dubbo, 2BS Bathurst, 2LT Lithgow, 2MG Mudgee and 2PK Parkes) are entitled to apply immediately to the ABA for a second service, without the need for the ABA to have already undertaken the detailed planning process in determining a licence area plan.

The technical specifications for the second services are the same as those contained in the draft licence area plans for central NSW.

Capacity set out for community licences will be made available by means of a merit-based system. The ABA will generally begin the allocation process after a final LAP for each area has been determined.

Channels not immediately required for broadcasting services may be allocated for other purposes (such as open narrowcasting) for a fixed period determined by the ABA.

At the end of that period, the spectrum may once again become available for mainstream broadcasting. ☐

Licence area plans

The six licence area plans for radio in central NSW contain details of all national (ABC and SBS), commercial, community or open narrowcasting radio broadcasting services to be available on 'broadcasting services bands' of the radiofrequency spectrum. These are the parts of the spectrum used by AM and FM radio services.

The discussion document provides background and detailed explanation of the plans.

The ABA's plans, a discussion document and microfiche copies of submissions are available at libraries throughout central NSW, or can be obtained from the ABA, freecall 1 800 810 241.

Submissions

Written submissions should be sent to:

Planning Officer for Central NSW

ABA
PO Box 34
Belconnen ACT 2616
by 1 March 1996.