



The ABA has finalised its licence area plan for television broadcasting in Spencer Gulf and radio and television broadcasting in the Broken Hill area.

Final plans for broadcasting in Spencer Gulf and Broken Hill

The ABA released its final licence area plans for Spencer Gulf television services and Broken Hill television and radio services on 28 February 1996.

Commercial television

The ABA has decided that a second commercial television licence will not be made available for allocation in either region because there is insufficient entrepreneurial interest.

The ABA foreshadowed this decision in the February '96 edition of *ABA Update*. Earlier, in a news release dated 14 December 1995, the ABA advised that all entrepreneurial interest in providing a second commercial television service in the Spencer Gulf and Broken Hill markets had been withdrawn.

The news release also stated that second commercial licences would not be made available for allocation unless strong entrepreneurial interest emerged.

The existing commercial television operator, GTS, notified the ABA that it was not interested in providing a second commercial service under s.73 of the Act.

The ABA subsequently received an expression of

interest in providing a commercial television service in the Spencer Gulf market from Spencer Gulf based Media Advertising and Video Production (MAV). The ABA decided that MAV's submission did not constitute strong entrepreneurial interest.

National and community television

In both markets, the ABA has reserved channels for the existing ABC television service, a high powered SBS television service and a national/community television service.

Low powered community-funded SBS television services currently operate within parts of both markets. The ABA has prepared technical specifications which will provide complete coverage of both markets.

'ABC and SBS funding decisions are made by Cabinet. In areas where the Government has no immediate plans to extend these services, the ABA will consider applications for re-transmission by local communities,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman.

The National Indigenous Media Association of Australia has advised the ABA that the Whyallin Multi Media Arts Group is interested in establishing a community television service in the Spencer Gulf region.

Commercial radio

The ABA will make two medium power open narrowcasting radio licences available in Broken Hill.

Broken Hill currently has two commercial radio services. 'We haven't made any other radio licences available for Broken Hill as there was little demand and the market has a limited ability to generate advertising revenue,' Mr Webb said.

He said that it was important for people to understand the emergence of new services depends on the market: 'New commercial services will only appear if a business operator decides to make a go of it. The ABA cannot fund or compel others to fund new broadcasting services.'

So far, Sydney based Tourist Radio Pty Ltd, Sydney based 2KY Racing Radio and Far West Radio Pty Ltd (licensee of Broken Hill commercial radio services 2BH and 2HIL) have expressed interest in providing open narrowcasting services in Broken Hill.

The licence area plan for Spencer Gulf does not include radio services as radio planning was given a lower priority and is scheduled to take place in 1997.

Community radio

The ABA decided not to make a second community radio licence available for allocation in Broken Hill. As mentioned above, radio planning in the Spencer Gulf area will take place in 1997.

Allocation of licences

Transmitter licences for temporary community television services will be allocated via a merit-based process, while open narrowcasting radio licences will be auctioned via a price-based process.

'The ABA may decide to auction the open narrowcasting radio licences for Broken Hill at the same time as licences for other regions of Australia in a single exercise. This suggests mid year for auctioning the Broken Hill licences,' said Mr Webb. ☐

Copies of the plans

Copies of the plans (which include decisions, reasons and records of advice received) can be viewed at the Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Port Pirie, Alex Ramsey Library (Whyalla Stuart), Peterborough, Cummins School, Quorn School, Jamestown, Clare, Burra and Broken Hill libraries, or can be obtained from the ABA by telephoning freecall 1 800 810 241.