



## **Renewal of Sydney community television licence**

SYDNEY: The ABA has renewed the licence held by Community Television Sydney Ltd (CTS) until midnight, Tuesday 7 May 1996. During the next few weeks, CTS will have to show cause why the licence should be renewed for a longer period.

This step has been taken because there are serious questions about whether the licence should be renewed at all given unresolved issues arising from the contractual relationship between parties involved in providing the CTS service (CTS and Filmpot Pty Ltd/SPN TV).

'Given the gravity of a decision to not renew the licence, we're concerned that CTS and any other affected party should be given reasonable opportunity to respond to the issues we have identified,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman.

'CTS must provide clear evidence to the ABA that it is able to provide and maintain community and educational television services in accord with its licence conditions and with other relevant laws if it wants its licence renewed again,' said Mr Webb.

If the licence is not renewed, the ABA would consider whether it should issue a new licence.

'This would involve an assessment of the merits of any community-accessible non-profit organisations willing and able to provide

community and educational television services that may apply for the licence,' said Mr Webb.

When the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* took effect a new service category — community television — was defined for the first time.

However, community television licences using the broadcasting services bands cannot be allocated until a decision is made on the use of the sixth high power television channel. The Act contains no specific provision for temporary licensing of community broadcasting.

To give effect to the trial of CTV, the ABA has created a temporary licensing regime using the provisions of the Act for making spectrum (channels) available on a

temporary basis, and allowing services to operate for community and educational purposes under the open narrowcast television 'class licence'.

Aspirant community television broadcasters have access to the sixth channel under a temporary licensing scheme by which the ABA issues a single apparatus licence to a representative non-profit community organisation in each television licence area to be served.

To receive an apparatus licence, an applicant organisation must satisfy the ABA it could meet the definition of a community broadcasting service as outlined at section 15 of the Act.

An applicant must also satisfy the ABA that it is legally constituted and governed in such a manner as to ensure fair access to decision making processes and allocation of air time. The ABA has promulgated a set of allocation criteria (referred to as an access statement) which it uses when assessing compliance with the licensing requirements. ABA practice has been to issue licences for a year at a time. The relevant spectrum is presently available until 30 June 1997 on an area-by-area basis.

It is a special condition on the licence that it can only be used to provide an open narrowcasting television service for community and educational non-profit purposes.

The ABA is responsible for making the spectrum available, administering program standards and deciding issues relating to community access to the CTS service. The ABA has the power, delegated to it by the Spectrum Management Agency, to issue, renew, suspend and cancel transmitter licences.

## **Community TV in Mildura and Darwin**

SYDNEY: The ABA has decided to make two community radio licences available in Darwin and two in Mildura. It has received three applications for the Darwin licences and two applications for the Mildura licences.

'These will be the first applications for new community radio broadcasting licences to be assessed under the ABA's new merit based allocation system,' said ABA Chairman Mr Peter Webb.

The ABA called for comment on the licence applications. The period for comment closed on 12 April 1996.

Free-to-air community broadcasting service licences are allocated on the basis of merit. Where there is only one applicant, the ABA only has to decide if that applicant merits a licence.

**The ABA has released its regular publication, *Radio and Television Broadcasting Stations 1996*, which gives transmission details of all Australian national, commercial, community and retransmission (or self-help) broadcasting services as at January 1996. Other class licensed, open narrowcasting services (such as tourist information services) are not included.**

**The listings are ordered by callsign, by frequency or channel, and by area served. Information shown for each service also includes transmitter location and radiated power. A general information section includes a brief summary of transmission standards for MF AM Radio, VHF FM Radio and Television, as well as a table of TV channel frequencies.**

**Available for purchase from the ABA ph: (02) 334 7700, or Commonwealth Government bookstores, price \$40.**