



New community licence for Kangaroo Island

KANGAROO ISLAND: The ABA has allocated a community radio broadcasting licence for Kangaroo Island, South Australia.

The licence has been allocated to Kangaroo Island Community Radio Incorporated and will enable the provision of a service that targets the entire Kangaroo Island community. The licensee will broadcast its new service on FM 90.7 MHz and has 12 months to get the new service up and running.

'The proposed Kangaroo Island service will, to a great extent, meet the community radio broadcasting needs of much of the community,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman. 'Presently, no other service in the region satisfies those needs.'

The ABA has allocated the licence after a process of consultation with the local community. The ABA sought the community's views on what additional broadcasting services were needed in the region and advertised the availability of the new community radio licence in the local media. The application received was made available to the public for comment, particularly in regard to whether the proposed service would meet existing and future community needs.

Kangaroo Island Community Broadcasters Inc. has been conducting temporary transmissions since 1992.

This is the fifth community licence to be allocated under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*. As licence area plans are completed for regions around Australia, additional community radio broadcasting licences will be determined and then advertised for allocation. Any new community broadcasting licences detailed in these licence area plans will be allocated using a merit based process.

ABA urges merger of Albany community radio applicants

ALBANY: The ABA has written to the two applicants for the permanent community radio broadcasting licence to serve Albany, WA and has encouraged them to merge or otherwise cooperate in support of a single application.

'This policy is desirable where there are applicants competing to represent the same community interest or similar interests as is the case in Albany. The ABA hopes that the

applicants will have as their primary focus, the needs and interests of the community within the Albany licence area,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman.

The ABA called for applications for a new community radio licence for Albany on 8 April 1997. Two applications were received, from Albany Community Radio Inc., and Great Southern Community Radio Inc. The applicants appear to have similar aims and objectives and are competing to represent the same community interest or similar interests.

The Albany community radio licence area comprises parts of four local government shires of the Great Southern Region of Western Australia: the Town of Albany (Albany central business district), the Shire of Albany (outlying Albany suburbs), the Shire of Plantagenet (Mt Barker area) and the Shire of Denmark (Denmark area).

The ABA has placed a copy of its letter to the applicants on the public file in the Albany and Mt Barker public libraries and has sent a copy to the Mayor of Albany and to the chief executive officers of the local government shires in the licence area.

Applicants have been asked to respond to the ABA by Monday 28 July 1997.

ABA invites comment on Torres Strait community radio applicant

TORRES STRAIT: The ABA is seeking public comment on an application for a new community radio broadcasting licence in the Torres Strait region of North Queensland.

The ABA has received one application for the Torres Strait licence, from Torres Strait Islanders Media Association Incorporated.

'We're interested in hearing from local people about the application,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman. 'We'd particularly like to hear whether the proposed service will meet existing and future community needs. The public's view on the applicant's capacity to provide the service is also of interest to us.'

The period for comment on the licence application closes on 31 July 1997. The ABA may make comments submitted to it available to the applicant.

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 will assess the application



against criteria set out in the Broadcasting Services Act.

Copies of the application are available for perusal at the Torres Strait Shire Council Library.

ABA joins international group on Internet content rating

GERMANY: The ABA has welcomed the developments in international cooperation on issues relating to use of the Internet announced at a conference in Europe.

'The ABA is particularly pleased a number of key organisations have agreed to establish an international working group on content rating. The ABA will be a participant in this group,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman.

The European Commission, in three individual declarations by European Ministers, business leaders and users, has endorsed the proposed global rating systems as a way of empowering users and protecting children. This approach has also featured in the statements by the US Secretary of Commerce and the Japanese State Secretary for International Trade and Industry.

'The ABA welcomes this endorsement, and the proposal that self-regulation and technical solutions, such as voluntary content filtering and rating, should play a central role in content control,' Mr Webb said.

'The ABA is concerned with identifying measures which will provide children with a protective framework for on-line services such as is available in other sectors like broadcasting, cinema and video and computer games.'

'The ABA has long been taking an active role in worthwhile measures for Internet regulation which represent practical responses to community concerns,' he added. 'Flexibility in regulatory arrangements needs to be the hallmark of this work.'

Ministers of 29 European countries agreed on a number of key principles at the 'Global Information Networks' Ministerial conference in Bonn, Germany, held from 6-8 July 1997.

There was broad consensus between European Ministers, industries and users on the key issues and solutions for the development of on-line services. These issues include safety, security, and flexibility of systems and regulation.

Apart from the ABA, the organisations to be involved in the working group on content

rating include the Recreational Software Advisory Council (USA) and Internet Content Rating for Europe (INCORE). INCORE has as its core partners ECO Forum (Germany), Internet Watch Foundation (UK) and Childnet International (based in the UK).

National framework for on-line content regulation

CANBERRA: The Minister for Communications and the Arts, Senator Richard Alston, and the Attorney-General, Mr Daryl Williams, have announced principles for a national approach to regulate the content of on-line services such as the Internet.

'Material accessed through on-line services should not be subject to a more onerous regulatory framework than "off-line" material such as books, videos, films and computer games,' Senator Alston said.

'As a guideline, what is protected behaviour "off-line" should be protected behaviour on-line. This framework balances the need to address community concerns in relation to content with the need to ensure that regulation does not inhibit industry growth and potential.'

The framework, a result of ongoing consultation with industry, will encourage the on-line service provider industry to develop codes of practice in relation to on-line content, in consultation with the ABA.

Under the framework, complaints about matters relating to the codes of practice would be made first to the relevant on-line service provider. The ABA will be able to investigate unresolved complaints.

Senator Alston said that the Government's approach was consistent with election policy, and the recommendations, released last June, of the ABA's major study of on-line content regulation.

The proposed arrangements recognised that on-line service providers were often not in a position to be aware of all material transmitted through their service, and cannot be held responsible in every case for material they have not created.

The approach also acknowledged that there were good commercial reasons for on-line service providers to treat responsibly material available on their services. For the most part, on-line service providers would meet their obligations by complying with codes of practice and acting quickly to resolve complaints.

