



New metropolitan radio licences likely by end of 1998

BRISBANE: Subject to any delays caused by legal challenges, the ABA should be in a position to allocate new commercial radio licences in some metropolitan markets by the end of next year, Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman, said at the Annual Convention of the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters in Brisbane last month.

'Licence area planning in remote Australia is now complete. Planning for regional Australia is making good progress, and should be finalised by mid 1998. The ABA will commence consultation in metropolitan markets early next year,' said Mr Webb.

'Planning should be complete in some metropolitan markets in time for licence auctions to be held before the end of 1998. The remaining metropolitan auctions will probably take place in the first half of 1999.'

The ABA's planning process will continue to be characterised by consultation with the public and the industry, Mr Webb said. A channel availability paper for Perth, of the kind already released for Sydney, should be released in November this year. Such papers canvass the various options for utilising channels to best advantage.

The ABA plans to release zone information booklets, which contain information about the nature and extent of existing services in a market, details of channel availability and indications of interest in providing new services, for Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth early next year.

'General meetings in all metropolitan markets with aspirants and incumbents, as well as representative bodies like FARB, are likely to be held in March/April next year,' Mr Webb said.

Mr Webb also urged caution about the availability and cost of digital radio broadcasting (DRB) receivers.

'One of the imponderables about DRB is the cost, and therefore the acceptability, of receivers. They are starting to come on the market and should be available from the middle of next year. Initial estimates put the cost in the A\$1000-1500 range. Top of the range models come with digital screens on which high definition pictures and data can be shown. This facility may prove to have considerable appeal to the imagination of Australian operators.'

'The Americans have not really produced a viable system to rival the European Eureka 147 system. If they decided to go with Eureka 147,

one could feel more comfortable about the prospects for the world-wide success of digital radio broadcasting. But at the moment, the world is without American participation in the receiver market.'

'The ABA, as one of the planning agencies involved in the move to digital, will want to see what the receiver manufacturers can tell us over the next twelve months or so and what the vehicle builders in particular have to say about the prospects for drive time in digital,' he said.

Major rollout of temporary community radio stations

SYDNEY: The ABA has invited early applications for temporary community broadcasting licences in 38 radio markets (see tables opposite).

'The great majority of these communities have no community radio service at present,' said ABA Chairman, Mr Peter Webb. 'These are areas which meet a simple test for early licensing.'

'The ABA will consider early applications from aspirant community radio broadcasters who operate in areas which meet three criteria. The area must have a radio channel which is likely to be available for a new community radio service in the long-term. A temporary channel which does not cause interference must have been already identified and there must only be one applicant in that area,' he said.

The ABA is also working on a licensing policy to enable the extension of temporary community broadcasting licences to other areas where the licensing issues are more complex. The ABA has now received comments from interested parties on a range of issues in response to a discussion paper on the implementation of a new temporary community radio broadcasting licence scheme.

The key issues for the policy will be what channels can be used for temporary broadcasting, how the ABA will determine the amount of broadcasting air-time that should be made available and how to manage competition for access to limited broadcasting air-time.

New community radio licences

REMOTE AUSTRALIA: The ABA has allocated community radio broadcasting licences for the Halls Creek region of Western Australia, Torres



Temporary community broadcasting licences

Town/City	Organisation
New South Wales	
Barham	Two State Community Radio Inc.
Bathurst	Bathurst Christian Broadcasters Inc
Bega	Bega Access Radio Inc
Bourke	Muda Aboriginal Corporation
Byron Bay	Bay FM Community Radio
Casino	Casino's Own Wireless Assoc Inc.
Cobar	Cobar Community Radio Inc.
Deepwater	Deepwater Community Radio Assoc Inc.
Dubbo	Dubbo Christian Broadcasters
Kandos	Kandos Rylstone Community Radio
Lightning Ridge	Lightning Ridge Community Radio
Narrabri	Narrabri Shire Community Radio
Newcastle (Dangar)	Newcastle Christian Broadcasters Ltd
Queanbeyan	Queanbeyan Community Radio QBNFM Inc.
Victoria	
Alexandra/Eildon	Upper Goulburn & District Community Radio
Bacchus Marsh	Bacchus Marsh Community Radio Inc.
Ballarat	Ballarat Gospel Radio Inc
Colac	Colac Public Radio Group
Corryong	Upper Murray Community Gospel Broadcasters
Horsham	Horsham & Dist. Community FM Radio
Kyneton/Daylesford	Central Highlands Victorian Broadcasting Inc
Mansfield	Mansfield Community Radio Inc
Mount Beauty	Mt Beauty Neighbourhood Centre Inc.
Walwa/Jingellic	Walwa & District Community Radio
Wangaratta	Wangaratta Community Radio Association Inc.
Queensland	
Beaudesert	Beaudesert Community Radio Group Inc
Cunnamulla	Kooma Aboriginal Corporation For Land
Dalby	Dalby Broadcasting Association
Gladstone	Gladstone & District Christian Broadcasting Assoc. Inc
Gympie	Cooloola Christian Radio Association Inc.
Milton	Family Radio Ltd
Townsville	Townsville Christian Broadcasters
Yeppoon	NAG Radio Broadcasting Association Inc.
South Australia	
Mount Gambier	South East Christian Broadcasters Inc
Port Pirie	Pirie Community Radio Broadcasters Inc.
Tanunda	Barossa Broadcasting Board Inc.
Western Australia	
Bruce Rock	Bruce Rock Community Radio
Tasmania	
Tasman/Forrester Peninsulas	Tasman Community Broadcasters

Strait and Mount Isa regions of Queensland.

The licence for the Halls Creek region was allocated to Puranyangu-Rangka Kerrem (Aboriginal Radio) Aboriginal Corporation and the licence for the Torres Strait region to Torres

Strait Islanders' Media Association Incorporated.

Puranyangu-Rangka Kerrem (Aboriginal Radio) Aboriginal Corporation will target the Aboriginal community in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, including the Halls Creek area, and will broadcast its new service on FM 98.1 MHz.

Torres Strait Islanders' Media Association Incorporated will target the Torres Strait Islander community of the Torres Strait. The new service will broadcast on AM 1260 kHz. Both licensees have 12 months to get their new services up and running.

Licences for two services in Mount Isa have been allocated to Mt Isa Christian Broadcasters Association Inc. and Mt Isa Aboriginal Media Association.

Mt Isa Christian Broadcasters Association Inc. will target the Christian community in the Mount Isa area and will broadcast its new service on FM 105.7 MHz. Mount Isa Aboriginal Media Association (Aboriginal Corporation) will target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Mount Isa and Gulf ATSIC Regional Council Areas and will broadcast its new service on FM 100.9 MHz.

The ABA has allocated the licences after a process of consultation with the local communities to seek their views on what additional broadcasting services were needed in the regions.

Puranyangu-Rangka Kerrem (Aboriginal Radio) Aboriginal Corporation has been conducting test transmissions in the Halls Creek region on FM 105.7 since 1994. The Torres Strait Islanders' Media Association Incorporated has been channel sharing with the ABC for 12 years. Mt Isa Christian Broadcasters Association Inc. has been conducting test transmissions in the Mount Isa region on FM 105.7 since 1994. Mount Isa Aboriginal Media Association (Aboriginal Corporation) has been conducting test transmissions in the Mount Isa region on ABC Radio since 1992. In August 1996 it began test transmissions as MOB FM on FM 88.0.

Ten community licences have now been 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.