

Work plan for the allocation of community broadcasting licences

The ABA has so far made 41 new community broadcasting licences available as a result of its planning process.

The ABA published a proposed work plan for the allocation of new community broadcasting licences in the November edition of *ABA Update*. The ABA also called for comment on the development of a policy on the order and timing of licence allocations, and proposed that the criteria to be considered in deciding where and when to call for applications should include:

- the principles embodied in the ABA planning priorities established in 1993;
- whether an area already has a community radio service;
- the existing radio services available in the area; and
- whether known aspirant broadcasting groups are well placed to pursue licence allocation at that time (for

example, whether applicants have the necessary establishment funds and are likely to be in a position to commence a new service within a year).

The ABA received comment from the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia; the National Indigenous Broadcasting Association of Australia; the National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council; the Public Sector Management Office of the Western Australian Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet, 6SON Christian Broadcasters and Radio for the Print Handicapped.

As comments supported the criteria the ABA proposed, the ABA has decided to start the allocation of a further five licences: two in Mt Isa (Qld), one in Kangaroo Island (SA) and one each on York and Meekatharra (WA) (see Table 1 below). The order and timing of allocation for licences shown in Table 2 is yet to be determined. Having consid-

ered the criteria set out above, along with the preparedness of known aspirant groups, the ABA is not satisfied at this time that commencement of allocation exercises in these areas would be productive.

The ABA intends to maintain an open and flexible approach to its licence allocation work plan to maximise the likelihood of successful allocation exercises and thus allow as many new services to go to air as quickly as possible. The ABA welcomes comment on the order and timing of the allocation of available licences as the work plan at any time, as it is under continual review.

The ABA will settle the work plan for publication at least on a quarterly basis in the first week of February, May, August and November. Comments received before those dates will be able to be considered in that quarter. ▶

Table 1: Licences which have been advertised:

Area	No. of licences	Closing date for applications
Mildura*	1	allocated 11 September 1996
Darwin	2	closed
Ceduna	1	closed
Broome	1	closed
Derby	1	closed
Fitzroy Crossing	1	closed
Halls Creek	1	closed
Torres Strait	1	closed
Mt Isa	2	closed
York	1	closed
Kangaroo Island	1	17 March 1997
Meekatharra	1	21 March 1997
Total	14	

*Note that there is a second licence available in Mildura (see Table Two) which will be re-advertised. An earlier allocation exercise lapsed with the withdrawal of the only applicant

Table 2: Licences for which the ABA has not yet called for applications:

State	Area	No. of licences
NSW	Lord Howe Is	1
VIC	Mildura	1
WA	Albany	1
WA	Kalgoorlie	1
WA	Esperance	1
WA	Geraldton	2
WA	Merredin (Bruce Rock)	1
WA	Northampton	1
Territories	Christmas Island	1
	Cocos Island	1
NT	Katherine	1
Total	12	

The ABA invites comment on the order and timing for the allocation of these licences.

Table 3: Licences planned but not yet available for allocation:

Area	No. of licences	Licence available after
Cunnamulla	1	27 August 1997
Katanning	1	10 October 1997
Boorooloola	1	14 October 1997
Kalgoorlie	1	16 October 1997
Bourke	1	8 January 1998
Lightning Ridge	1	8 January 1998
Mandurah	1	19 July 1998
Riverland	1	22 August 1998
Northam	1	27 August 1998
Narogin	1	10 October 1998
Wagin	1	10 October 1998
Bunbury	1	27 November 1998
Margaret River	1	27 November 1998
Collie	1	27 November 1998
Bridgetown	1	27 November 1998
Total	15	

Allocation has been deferred in the areas listed in Table three in order to allow time for community broadcasting groups to organise and build necessary support and skills before an allocation exercise commences. Note that the dates given are not a timetable for when the licences will be allocated but rather the dates after which the ABA will consider offering the licences.

The ABA will update and publish its community allocation work plan in *ABA Update* each quarter.

Comments on the order and timing of the allocation of available licences may be submitted by writing to:
The Manager
Allocations and Renewals Section
ABA
PO Box Q500
Queen Victoria Building NSW 1230

Number of radio licences in Australia

These tables provide a snapshot of commercial and community radio licences operating, as at 27 February 1997.

Community radio licences by State and FM/AM

	FM	AM	Total
ACT	1	2	3
NSW	42	2	44
Vic.	28	2	30
Qld	43@	2	45
SA	14@	2	16
WA	20@	4	24
TAS	6	1	7
NT	40@	0	40
Australia	194	15	209

@ - includes former BRACS (Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities) licences, now categorised as community.

Commercial radio licences by State, capital/regional and FM/AM

	Capital City@		Regional *			Total
	FM	AM	FM	AM	s.39**	
NSW/ACT	6	7	18	29	17^^	77
Vic.	4	5	5^	12	6^^	32
Qld	2	4	10#	21	8^^	45
SA	3	2	0	6	2	13
WA	3	2	4#	12	13^^	34
TAS/NT	3	1	2#	7	2^^	16
Australia	21	21	39	88	47	218

@ - Includes Canberra and Darwin

* - includes Ipswich

** - includes latest s.39 licences issued for Grafton and Coffs Harbour (27/2/97)

^ - Includes commercial radio licence allocated to Lookridge Pty Ltd to serve Mildura

^^ - Eight licences allocated under s.39 have started service, 3MDA Mildura, 3BBA Ballarat, 2BXS Bathurst, 2GZF Orange, 3WWM Horsham, 4SEE Nambour, 6CST Mandurah and 8EZY Darwin (all FM services).