



Top End Sounds Pty Ltd (Top End Sounds) bid \$7000 to be the successful bidder at the ABA's new open narrowcasting television licence allocation exercise conducted in December 1996.

Open narrowcasting licences

The ABA has auctioned licences for an open narrowcasting television service in Darwin and an open narrowcasting radio service in Broome, Western Australia on 17 December 1996 at the ABA's Sydney offices.

Top End Sounds Pty Ltd (Top End Sounds) bid \$7000 to be the successful bidder for the new open narrowcasting television service in Darwin. This service will operate on UHF channel 64. Top End Sounds intends to provide a tourist service.

The Totalisator Agency Board of Western Australia (TAB of WA) was the successful bidder for a new open narrowcasting radio service in Broome with a bid of \$16 000. The Broome service will operate on 104.5 Mhz.

The ABA received two applications for the Darwin licence and two applications for the Broome licence. They were among 42 licences for new open narrowcasting services set to be issued by the ABA. The licences were advertised on 1 November and applications closed on 29 November 1996.

The licences are being issued under a price-based allocation system which was determined by the SMA for the ABA.

'Darwin and Broome residents can look forward to the introduction of additional narrowcasting services in the near future,' ABA Member Mr Tim O'Keefe said. 'The people of Darwin and Broome have asked the ABA for new narrowcast television and radio services and these auctions are the successful culmination of the ABA's planning process in response to their demands.'

Under the price-based allocation system, the licence is issued to the highest bidder, provided the price bid is at least equal to the reserve price of \$4000 and the other requirements which govern the system are met. The licences will be issued for five years.

The successful bidder must begin a service within six months of being issued the licence (or within a longer period with the ABA's permission).

As there was only one application for each of the other 40 licences, these licences will be issued to the applicants for the reserve price once formalities have been completed. The 40 were taken up by nine different applicants. The ABA will announce the successful applicants

when the licences have been issued.

The Darwin and Broome licences are the first open narrowcasting licences to be auctioned as a result of the ABA's planning process.

Open narrowcasting services

Open narrowcasting services are services whose reception is limited by being targeted to special interest groups, or by being intended for only for limited locations, or by being provided during a limited period or to cover a special event, or because they provide programs of limited appeal, or for some other reason.

The overwhelming majority of narrowcasting services already licensed by the ABA are racing or tourist information services.

Price-based allocation system

The ABA has developed a price-based system to issue certain specified transmitter licences for the purpose of providing open narrowcasting services.

The price-based system is governed by the *Issue of Broadcasting (Narrowcasting)*

Transmitter Licences Determination (the determination). Because of legislative requirements, the price-based allocation system has been determined by the Spectrum Management Agency for the ABA.

To apply for an advertised licence, applicants have to complete an application form, a form of authority which authorises agents to act on an applicant company's behalf at an auction, and a form of indemnity and guarantee which is to be completed and executed by applicant companies and by a director of an applicant company. Any person may apply for a licence.

Applicants must pay a non-refundable application fee of \$900 for each licence. The fee has been set to cover the ABA's costs in issuing the licences.

If the ABA registers more than one application for an advertised licence, the registered applicants will bid for the licence at an auction style licence allocation exercise.

The highest bidder must pay a deposit of 10 per cent of the price bid immediately following the auction, and complete a form of acknowledgment which sets out the rights and obligations of the applicant in



relation to the licence. Full payment for the licence (price bid less the deposit) must be made by 4.00 p.m. the day after the auction for licence. The ABA will issue the licence as soon as is practicable after full payment is received.

If a successful applicant fails to meet any of the require-

ments, the licence will not be issued to the applicant. The ABA may then re-offer the licence.

If there is only one applicant for a licence, no licence allocation exercise will be held. Instead, the applicant will be issued the licence for the reserve price, subject to the requirements of the determination.

Licences for which a single application was received are contained in the table below.

State	Area	Frequency	
New South Wales	Broken Hill	100.5 MHz	
	Broken Hill	105.3 MHz	
	Balranald	95.5 MHz	
	Balranald	97.1 MHz	
Victoria	Mildura	1359 kHz	
	Queensland	Blackall	98.3 MHz
		Charleville	103.3 MHz
		Longreach	103.7 MHz
South Australia	Roma	94.3 MHz	
	Winton	98.3 MHz	
	Coober Pedy	98.1 MHz	
	Ceduna/Smoky Bay	102.1 MHz	
Western Australia	Renmark/Loxton	95.7 MHz	
	Renmark/Loxton	1557 kHz	
	Woomera	106.5 MHz	
	Roxby Downs	95.5 MHz	
	Carnarvon	96.5 MHz	
	Exmouth	95.7 MHz	
	Esperance	89.5 MHz	
	Geraldton	1008 kHz	
	Kalgoorlie	1431 kHz	
	Karratha	101.7 MHz	
	Wagin	1422 kHz	
	Mandurah	1449 kHz	
	Merredin	95.9 MHz	
	Southern Cross	88.7 MHz	
	Northam	1323 kHz	
	Port Hedland	92.5 MHz	
	Derby	01.1 MHz	
	Kalbarri	105.3 MHz	
	Kununurra	105.7 MHz	
	Laverton	104.5 MHz	
Leinster	99.7 MHz		
Meekatharra	92.5 MHz		
Mt Magnet	104.1 MHz		
Newman	96.9 MHz		
Wyndham	100.5 MHz		
Northern Territory	Darwin City	92.3 MHz	
	Darwin East	90.7 MHz	
	Darwin North	91.5 MHz	

The ABA has finalised licence area plans for television and two new community radio services in the remote areas of Central and Eastern Australia as well as 11 new open narrowcasting radio services in the Bourke region of New South Wales.

New television and radio services for regional Australia

The ABA has finalised licence area plans (LAPs) for television services in the remote areas of Central and Eastern Australia and has made channels available for two new community radio services and eleven new open narrowcasting radio services in the Bourke region of New South Wales.

Central and Eastern Australia

These areas are served by the licensees of IMP in the Central Zone, QQQ in the North East Zone and ITQ at Mt Isa.

The ABA has not made additional competing commercial television licences available, due to lack of interest from potential service providers.

'Improvement of television services in the two markets is still a priority for the ABA,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman. 'If the outlook for additional or improved services changes, the ABA will revisit its licence area plans.'

The changeover to compressed digital video (CDV) in the satellite delivery of television broadcasting in these remote areas during 1997 may change the level of interest in the provision of additional television services.

After the introduction of satellite CDV television broadcasting, the ABA will consider options such as additional licences or aggregation of remote television licence areas if there is sufficient investor interest.