



Echuca, Ballarat and Barham can look forward to a new range and diversity of community radio services now that the ABA has allocated three new community radio licences.

New community radio licences for Echuca, Ballarat and Barham

The ABA has allocated three new community radio licences, two in Victoria in Echuca and Ballarat, and one in New South Wales in Barham.

The licensees have 12 months to get the new services up and running.

'The proposed services will add to the range and diversity of radio services in these communities, said Mr Gareth Grainger, Acting ABA Chairman. 'The focus by community radio stations in regional areas on local issues is an important component of the broadcasting mix.'

The ABA has allocated these licences after a process of consultation with the local communities to seek their views on what additional broadcasting services were needed in their area. The new community radio licences were advertised in local media, and the applications received were assessed, particularly in regard to whether the proposed services would meet existing and future community needs.

Echuca

A community radio broadcasting licence to serve Echuca was allocated to Echuca/

Moama Broadcast Service Incorporated. The new service will broadcast on 104.7 MHz from approximately 2km south of Echuca.

In the radio licence area plan for the Bendigo region, released on 8 August 1997, the ABA determined one new community FM radio broadcasting service be made available for Echuca.

The ABA advertised for applications for the new licence on 18 December 1997. One application was received for the licence, from Echuca Moama Broadcast Service Inc.

Ballarat

A community radio broadcasting licence for Ballarat was allocated to Ballarat Gospel Radio Incorporated and its service will operate on 103.9 MHz from Mt Warrenheip.

In the radio licence area plan for the Ballarat region, released on 8 August 1997, the ABA determined one new community FM radio broadcasting service be made available.

The ABA advertised for applications for the new licence on 13 December 1997. One application was received for

the advertised licence, from Ballarat Gospel Radio Inc.

Barham

In Barham, a community radio broadcasting licence was allocated to Two States Community Radio Incorporated. The new service will broadcast on 89.1 MHz from Moulamier Rd, Barham.

In the radio licence area plan for the Swan Hill region, released on 27 June 1997, the ABA determined one new community FM radio broadcasting service be made available for Barham.

The ABA advertised for applications for the new licence 17 December 1997. One application was received for the advertised licence, from Two States Community Radio Incorporated.

Community licence allocation

Section 80 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, provides for the allocation of community broadcasting licences.

The ABA uses a merit based allocation process where applicants compete on the basis of merit for the licence. The

process includes opportunity for the public to comment on applications received.

The ABA must also have regard to:

(a) the extent to which the proposed service would meet the existing and perceived future needs of the community within the licence area of the proposed service; and

(b) the nature and diversity of the interests of that community; and

(c) the nature and diversity of other broadcasting services (including national broadcasting services) available within that licence area; and

(d) the capacity of the applicant to provide the proposed service; and

(e) the undesirability of one person being in a position to exercise control of more than one community broadcasting licence that is a broadcasting services bands licence in the same licence area; and

(f) the undesirability of the Commonwealth, a State or Territory or a political party being in a position to exercise control of a community broadcasting licence.

The Minister may also give directions to the ABA to give priority to a particular community interest or interests.