



The ABA has released its draft licence area plan for Sydney, Gosford and Katoomba and a proposed licence variation for Lithgow and seeks public comment on its proposals.

ABA proposes two new commercial radio services for Sydney

The ABA is proposing to make two new commercial radio services, three Sydney-wide community radio services and three open narrowcasting services available in Sydney.

The first commercial radio service is proposed to be made available soon after the Sydney licence area plan is finalised, expected early next year. The second service is proposed to be made available four years later.

The proposals are contained in the draft licence area plans for Sydney, Gosford and Katoomba and a proposed variation to the licence area plan for Lithgow.

'The preliminary views represent the ABA's thinking at this stage of the planning process,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman. 'Before reaching a final decision the ABA will have regard to the submissions obtained through public consultation on the draft licence area plans. The ABA seeks information from interested parties that will assist in making informed decisions in the licence area planning process.'

Finalisation of the licence area plans is dependent on

the information the ABA receives in response to its preliminary views and the ABA's own assessment as to the most economic and efficient use of the radiofrequency spectrum.

Community services

One of the aims of the ABA's planning process is to use spectrum efficiently. In order to rationalise frequencies in the Sydney area, the ABA is proposing that some local coverage community radio services move to alternative frequencies to allow for two of the three proposed additional wide coverage community radio services.

The proposed move affects three channels presently used: by 2NSB Chatswood (91.5 MHz) and 2MWM Manly (93.7 MHz Manly North and 92.1 MHz Manly South).

Campbelltown

The ABA is also proposing to make a commercial radio service available to serve the Campbelltown area and four community radio services to serve suburban areas of Sydney (one each for Blacktown, Campbelltown, Hornsby and Penrith).

Gosford

In Gosford, the ABA is proposing to make one new commercial, two new community and four open narrowcasting radio services

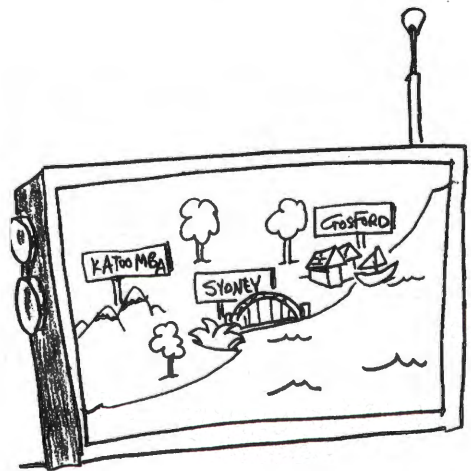
available. It is also proposing a change in frequency, increase in power and extension of licence area for the existing community radio service, 2CCC Gosford.

Lithgow

In Lithgow, the ABA is proposing that the existing commercial FM radio service, 2ICE, change frequency to accommodate a second new commercial radio service in Sydney. It is also proposing an extension to the licence areas of the two Lithgow commercial radio services 2LT, operating on the AM band, and 2ICE to include parts of the Katoomba region.

Metropolitan markets

The draft licence area plans for the Sydney area are the first to be released for a metropolitan area. The draft plans



for the rest of the metropolitan markets, Melbourne (including Colac and Geelong), Brisbane (including Gympie, the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast, Lismore and Murwillumbah), Adelaide and Perth are proposed to be released in early 2000.

Copies

The draft licence area plans for Sydney, Gosford, Katoomba and Lithgow can be viewed

- at the ABA's web site at www.aba.gov.au
- on CD-ROM from the ABA after 6 September 1999 by calling Freecall 1800 810241
- for viewing at local libraries soon after 6 September 1999

Closing date

for comment on the draft licence area plans for Sydney, Gosford, Katoomba:

11 October 1999.



Draft licence area plans

The draft licence area plans for radio in Sydney, Gosford and Katoomba contain details of all national, commercial, community or open narrowcasting radio broadcasting services that are proposed to be available using the broadcasting services bands of the radiofrequency spectrum. These are the parts of the spectrum used by AM and FM radio services. The draft variation to the Lithgow licence area plan contains proposals for changes to the Lithgow commercial radio services.

National services

National broadcasting services are free-to-air ABC or SBS services, or Parliamentary broadcasts. Commercial broadcasting services are privately owned free-to-air services operated for a profit. Community broadcasting services are free-to-air services provided for community purposes by non-profit groups. Open narrowcasting services are free-to-air services that are limited by targeting programs to a specific audience or by signal coverage area.

The Australian Government primarily funds extensions of, or improvements to, national services. The respective operators fund extensions of, or improvements to, commercial and community services within their licence areas.

It is important to note that the ABA cannot fund or compel others to fund additional broadcasting services, or improved reception of existing broadcasting services, in an area. It can only make channel capacity available.

With the exception of the capacity reserved for national broadcasters and channel capacity made available for allocation to community broadcasters, other capacity set out in the licence area plans will generally be made available for commercial licences and open narrowcasting services, under a price-based allocation scheme.

Capacity set out for community licences will be made available by means of a merit-based system. The ABA will generally begin the allocation process after a final licence area plan for each area has been determined.

Main issues

The main planning issue disclosed to date by the ABA's consultation process is the limited availability of spectrum to accommodate the interest expressed by existing and potential radio broadcasters in establishing new services.

The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Richard Alston, has asked the ABA to seek comment on the level of community dissatisfaction with the reception of national services in the in Richmond/Windsor and Gosford areas and the relative community demand for improved reception of national services compared with new services.

Another issue the ABA will consider is possible compensation for community radio services 2MWM Manly and 2NSB Chatswood for costs incurred in changing frequency.

Summary of proposals

Sydney

The ABA is proposing:

- To make two additional commercial FM radio services available, one on 96.9 MHz and the other on 95.3 MHz. The allocation of the second service (95.3 MHz) is proposed to take place four years after determination of the licence area plan.
- To change the frequency of 2ICE Lithgow from 95.3 MHz to 107.9 MHz to allow a 150 kW FM service to be made available in Sydney.
- To make three additional wide coverage Sydney FM community radio services available, on 92.1 MHz, 93.7 MHz and 94.5 MHz.
- To change the frequencies of 2MWM Manly North (from 93.7 MHz to 88.7 MHz) and South (92.1 MHz to 90.3 MHz) and 2NSB Chatswood (from 91.5 MHz to 99.3 MHz) to allow additional wide coverage Sydney community radio services.
- To make two wide coverage Sydney AM open narrowcasting radio services available, on 1386 kHz and 1539 kHz and one at Penrith on 1476 kHz.
- To make one local coverage commercial FM radio service available in Campbelltown on 93.1 MHz.
- To make local coverage community FM radio services available to serve the Blacktown (99.9 MHz) Hornsby (100.1 MHz), Campbelltown (100.3 MHz) and Penrith (100.7 MHz) areas.
- To change the technical operating conditions of some existing national, commercial and community radio services, including frequency changes for community radio services 2BCR Bankstown, 2RDJ Burwood, 2MWM Manly, 2NSB Chatswood and 2VTR Windsor.



Gosford

The ABA is proposing:

- To make one additional commercial FM commercial radio service available, on 104.5 MHz.
- To make two additional community FM radio services available, on 93.3 MHz and 94.9 MHz.
- To change the frequency of community radio service 2CCC, to 94.1 MHz, and extend its licence area.
- To make four open narrowcasting radio services available on 801 kHz, 92.5 MHz, 96.3 MHz and 98.1 MHz.



Katoomba and Lithgow

The ABA is proposing:

- To change the frequency of 2ICE Lithgow, from 95.3 MHz to 107.9 MHz, within three years after determination of the Sydney licence area plan, to allow a 150 kW FM to be made available in Sydney and extend the licence areas of 2ICE and 2LT Lithgow into Katoomba.
- A power increase and extension of licence area to Blackheath for the 2BLU Katoomba community radio service.

