



IN THE NEWS

**Summary of analog channel changes**

areas affected by the use of digital channels in the Adelaide, Canberra, Hobart and Melbourne markets.

The following table shows planned analog channels for

Market	Affected area	Analog channel assignments						
Canberra	Weston Creek/ Woden	CTC						
		Existing	10					
		New	52					
Melbourne	La Trobe Valley	GLV						
		Existing	8					
		New	37					
	Ballarat	VTV	ABRV					
				Existing	6	11		
				New	36	42	Channels for additional high power transmitters	
	Bendigo	BCV						
			Existing	8				
			New	38	Channel for additional high power transmitter			
	Foster	GLV	ABL					
				Existing	6	11		
				New	54	57	If required	
King Island	TVT	TNT	ABKT					
				Existing	6	8	11	
				New	53	56	68	If required
Adelaide	Port Neill	ABNS	GTS					
				Existing	6	8		
				New	56	59	Power increase for existing services, or channels for additional local area transmitters	
Hobart	Bicheno	TVT	ABT					
				Existing	8	10		
				New	51	54		
	Launceston	TNT						
			Existing	11				
			New	59				
	Taroona	TVT						
			Existing	8				
			New	40				

**Planning tools**

In carrying out its digital planning task, the ABA is using a sophisticated digital terrain model specifically designed for planning purposes in 1995. This effectively models the entire topography of Australia in digital form. For digital signals, as much as for analog signals, the nature of the landscape across which the transmissions occur is one of the most significant influences on the signal quality. The ABA is using a range of internationally accepted tools to predict the propagation path of digital television signals. These include well-established and still valid models such as ITU Recommendation 370, and those developed by Bullington and the BBC. They also include the most recent tools, such as CRC-COV: a Canadian propagation model developed specifically to predict the behaviour of digital transmissions. The use of a digital terrain model and the accurate analysis of the propagation path remain the most important factors in efficient digital planning.

**ABA to**

The ABA invites public comment on its proposal to vary the Children's Television Standards (CTS) to allow extensive coverage of the 2000 Olympic Games by the Seven Network.

'The Sydney Olympic Games are a sporting and cultural event of great national importance,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman.

'The planned extensive coverage by the Seven Network, coupled with time zone differences across the country, mean that the Sydney Olympics required more scheduling flexibility than the current rules allow.'

The CTS require commercial television stations to show children's C and preschool children's P programs during the week in designated time slots. The proposed variation will be a temporary measure for the duration of the games. The variation will allow weekday children's C and preschool children's P programs to be displaced for the Seven Network's coverage of the Olympic Games. Instead the Seven Network will be required to make-up these programs at other times.

The Seven Network will broadcast an hour a day of new Australian C drama programs in enhanced and



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## vary CTS for Olympic Games

promoted time slots during the winter school holidays of the 2000 school year. In most States these will be the holidays between second and third terms, while in Tasmania the winter holidays are between the first and second terms. An hour of P preschool programs will be shown in two separate time slots each day in the week, on either side of the Games.

'So that children would not miss out the ABA sought the advice of a child development consultant on Seven's options for the rescheduling of the P and C programs,' said Professor Flint. 'The consultant considered additional C programs in the school holidays would be welcomed by school age audiences during the colder months, while rescheduling close to the Olympics event is a more appropriate solution for the pre-school audience.'

The Seven Network will inform children, parents and carers in its audience of the changes to their usual viewing slots due to its Olympic coverage.

### Consultation

The ABA is required by section 126 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* to seek pub-

lic comment before varying a program standard. It is therefore inviting submissions on its proposal to vary the displacement provisions of CTS 3(1).

### CTS displacement rules

The current CTS rules allow C programs for primary school age children to be displaced for live coverage of sport or events of national importance. For the Sydney Olympics, however, it would be difficult to make up the amount of displaced C programming within the week either side of the Olympics as required under the current rules. In the case of P programs for preschoolers there is no allowance for displacement. However, a variation would allow the displacement of P programs to follow the current rules for C program displacement.

### Proposed variation

The ABA proposes to insert the following new subparagraph in CTS 3 for the period 15 September to 1 October 2000:

(m) to allow coverage of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games a licensee holding the exclusive rights to live coverage of that event may displace any weekday C period to another time in the C band

during the winter school holidays in the 2000 school year, and any weekday P period to another time in the P band within the week either side of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

### Consultant advice

The ABA sought advice from a child development consultant on a range of options provided by the Seven Network for the rescheduling of the C and P programs. For C programming the consultant favoured re-scheduling the displaced period to the school holidays preceding the Olympic Games. An hour of programming each weekday afternoon from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. during the winter holidays is likely to be acceptable to the child audience at a time when there are good reasons for seeking to be indoors. School age children are more likely to understand the significance of the Olympics and rescheduling of programs. In most States the C programs will be broadcast in the holidays between the second and third terms of the 2000 school year, while in Tasmania the winter holidays are between the first and second terms.

For P programming, the consultant favoured doubling the programming in the weeks

before and immediately after the Olympic Games using two time slots: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Unlike school-age children, preschoolers would have difficulty connecting extra programming in, for example, July with the loss of their programs in September. The consultant considered it would be easier for them to understand the changes if they occur within a shorter time-frame. Scheduling episodes at separate times, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, will help maintain very young viewers' enjoyment and engagement. The consultant also stressed the importance of the Seven Network alerting children, parents and carers of the changes to their usual viewing in an effective, prominent and frequent manner.

### To make a submission

Submissions should reach the ABA by Wednesday 17 November 1999.

Submissions may be sent by mail, fax or email.

The proposed variation, *Children's Television Standards (Variation) No.2 1999*, is available on the ABA web site at <[www.aba.gov.au](http://www.aba.gov.au)> or from the ABA.