



New community radio licences:

1. Meekatharra

The ABA has allocated a new community radio licence for Meekatharra, Western Australia.

The licence was allocated to Meeka FM Community Radio Station Inc. to operate a service on 98.3 MHz on the FM band.

Meeka FM Community Radio Station Inc., which was the only applicant, satisfied the ABA that it would meet the existing and perceived future needs of the Meekatharra community.

The proposed service will reflect the range of needs and interests of the local community, providing a mixed program format of music and talk and

including local and indigenous material.

2. Cairns

The ABA has allocated a new community radio licence for Cairns, Queensland.

The licence was allocated to Bumma Bipperra Media Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation Inc. to operate a service on 98.7 MHz on the FM band.

The applicant satisfied the ABA that it would meet the existing and perceived future needs of the Aboriginal community within the Cairns licence area which includes Yarrabah and Mossman.

When the ABA invited applications for the new community radio licence on 25 April 1998, it received two applications. These were from Bumma Bipperra Media, targeting the Aboriginal community, and Smithfield Community Radio Association, targeting the youth community. The applications were assessed with particular regard to whether the proposed services would meet existing and future needs within the Cairns region.

The ABA decided to allocate the licence to Bumma Bipperra after concluding that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, which makes up five per cent of the population of the licence area, is poorly served at present. The ABA concluded that there is already a range of broadcasting

services available in Cairns that are targeted to young people.

The proposed service will operate full time and will reflect the range of needs and interests of the local Aboriginal community. It will provide entertainment, news and cultural programs and a range of information including matters relating to education, the arts, and health issues.

Cairns region

The Cairns area is currently served by the national television services, ABC and SBS, and commercial television services, RTQ, STQ and TNQ. In addition to the ABC radio services 4ABCRN, 4ABCFM, 4JJJ, 4QY and 4QCC, there are two commercial services, 4CA and 4HOT, and one community radio service, 4CCR. Two new FM commercial radio licences were allocated in August 1998, but services have not yet commenced broadcasting. One licence to provide an open narrowcasting service will be available for price-based allocation in May this year.

In the radio licence area plan for the Cairns region, which was released on 18 October 1997, the ABA determined one new community radio service would be made available.

Licence allocations

The ABA has allocated these licences after consulting with the people of each region to seek their views on what additional broadcasting services they needed.

Each licensee has 12 months to get the new service up and running.

ABA invites applications for community radio licences in Queensland

The ABA has invited applications for four new community radio licences to serve Bundaberg, Gladstone, Yeppoon and Emerald in Queensland.

'Allocation of new community radio licences has begun as a result of the ABA's public planning process being finalised in these areas,' said Mr Gareth Grainger, ABA Deputy Chairman. 'The planning process identified demand for new community broadcasting services operated by people living in each of these locations.'

Free-to-air community broadcasting service licences must be allocated on the basis of merit. Under this system, in areas where there is only one applicant for a community broadcasting licence, the ABA need only decide if the applicant merits a licence.

