



# News Update

## Applications

Closing date for applications is **5 p.m. Wednesday 24 March 1999**

For copies of the kit, *Allocation of Community Broadcasting Licences (Broadcasting Services Bands)* or for more information, call the ABA's Licensing Section on (02) 9334 7700.

If there is more than one applicant, the ABA may also have to choose on the basis of comparative merit. Alternatively, applicants could combine to present a unified application.

Prospective applicants should obtain a copy of the free application kit, *Allocation of Community Broadcasting Licences (Broadcasting Services Bands)*. The kit also contains the application form, Form ABA 32—Application for the Allocation of a Community Broadcasting Licence (Broadcasting Services Bands).

Copies of applications received will be available for perusal the relevant local public libraries after 1 April. The ABA welcomes written submissions about the applications.

broadcasting licences in 1997 was widely welcomed by aspirant community broadcasters who previously had been restricted to a maximum of just ninety days of temporary



## Temporary community radio services on the Gold Coast

The ABA has recently allocated additional temporary community broadcasting licences to aspirant community radio groups on the Queensland Gold Coast.

The ABA is in the process of planning for new radio licences across Australia. With additional Government funding, planning Brisbane, the Gold Coast and other metropolitan areas is being accelerated. When planning is complete the ABA can then proceed to allocate any new community and commercial licences it has made available.

Until then, new community radio groups can apply for temporary licences.

There are five active aspirant groups in the Gold Coast area but only three temporarily available FM channels. Channel sharing is therefore necessary.

'The introduction of temporary community

transmissions per year,' said the ABA Chairman.

'We cannot discriminate between temporary community broadcasters in allocating time to them. Nor can we refuse to license new aspirant broadcasters that satisfy the prescribed eligibility requirements,' he said.

One of the five aspirant groups on the Gold Coast is Radio Hope Island, which has been operating continuously now on 94.1 MHz on the FM band for just over twelve months, and has been operating on and off for about four years.

The ABA has licensed a new aspirant, Gold Coast Community Broadcasters, to use 94.1 MHz from 2 February to 30 May 1999. Gold Coast Community Broadcasters has been waiting since April last year to get access to a channel.

Radio Hope Island will next be able to broadcast, on 94.1 MHz, from 1 June to 30 September 1999.

## Programs granted P or C classification

Programs granted C or P classification between 9 January 1999 and 2 February 1999. Producers interested in submitting programs for classification should contact Liz Gilchrist, Manager, ABA Children's Television on (02) 9334 7840.

Program Title	Origin	Class	New/ Renewal	Decision Date	Applicant
BAREFOOT KIDS	Australia	PRC	new	27-1-99	YPH Film Management Pty Ltd
HI-5	Australia	P	new	2-2-99	Kids Like Us Pty Ltd
NEW ADVENTURES OF OCEAN GIRL; THE	Australia	CAD	new	22-1-99	Media World Pty Ltd

C - children's program, CAD - C Australian drama, P - preschool, PRC - provisional C





Another aspirant, Christian Air Broadcasters, has been operating on the second available frequency, 95.7 MHz, continuously for the past year and will continue until 30 May under its present licence. Gold Coast Community Broadcasters will then change channels and broadcast on 95.7 MHz until 30 September 1999.

Two groups will share the third available frequency, 94.9 MHz, during this time. They are Hott FM, a youth service that has also been broadcasting on and off over the past four years and a new group called Heat FM, which seeks to include the gay and lesbian community in its broadcasts.

### **Gold Coast Community Broadcasters**

The ABA licensed a new aspirant, Gold Coast Community Broadcasters, to use 94.1 MHz on the FM band from 2 February to 30 May 1999.

On 2 February, Gold Coast Community Broadcasters advised the ABA that delays in the delivery of a radio transmitter prevented the start of its temporary service. The ABA understood that transmission would commence by the end of the first week of February.

Gold Coast Community Broadcasters then started broadcasting on 11 February.

### **ABA collects \$206.6m in licence fees**

The ABA has collected commercial broadcasting licence fees of \$206.6m. The fees are based on revenue earned by the commercial television and radio industries during the 1997-98 year.

'Licence fees are paid by industry for using broadcasting spectrum which is a scarce public resource,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman. 'The money collected goes to the Commonwealth's consolidated revenue.'

The ABA collected \$194.5m from 47 commercial television services (compared to \$170.7m from 44 services in the previous year) and \$12m from 213 commercial radio services (compared to \$10.8m from 181 services in the previous year). A small number of services are yet to pay or have not paid the correct fee.

'This is a 13.8 per cent increase on last year's figure of \$181.5m. This reflects an increase in the number of both television and radio services and also lower rebates claimed by regional television services,' said Professor Flint.

The rebate scheme, which has been in operation since 1989, recognises the expenses

incurred by regional television licensees in expanding their service areas under the Government's equalisation policy. The two licensees in Tasmania claimed rebates of \$800 000 each which reduced the amount of fees payable by them. Some regional services in New South Wales and Victoria have been able to offset the payment of their licence fees by using credits accrued over the period of the equalisation rebate scheme.

Rebates and use of unused credits for this year totalled \$5.7m (compared to \$7.4m in the previous year). The reduction is due to the fact that services in markets which first benefited from this policy in 1988-89 have now exhausted their right to a rebate.

Annual licence fees are calculated on a percentage of gross earnings by the licensee for the previous financial year. Fees for individual operators are not available in order to preserve confidentiality.

The April issue of *ABA Update* will contain the aggregated financial results for commercial television and radio.

### **Internet content regulation**

In December 1998, the ABA reported to the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator the Hon. Richard Alston on its work in the area of online content regulation. The report was prepared in response to the second direction from Minister requiring the ABA to investigate online content regulation issues including codes of practice, content labelling, community education and international developments. The report is available on the ABA's web site <[www.aba.gov.au](http://www.aba.gov.au)>.

While the report is complete, Stephen Nugent, formerly Manager, Research at the ABA, has taken up a temporary appointment as Manager Special Projects. His responsibilities include coordinating the online content regulation activities of the ABA. In addition, he is involved with the ABA's preparations for digital broadcasting, particularly datacasting, the area where digital broadcasting and online services most closely overlap.

In terms of online content regulation, the ABA continues its membership of the reference group for the Internet Content Rating Alliance. It will also continue the Australian Families Guide to the Internet web site, liaison with industry, community organisations and government agencies, and participation in, and presentation at, relevant conferences and seminars.