



The ABA has sought public comment on its consultation paper regarding concerns about reception of the SSW television service in parts of South West Western Australia. The ABA is proposing to accept Golden West Network's undertaking to install and maintain a transmitter in the town of Pemberton.

ABA proposal on TV reception concerns in south west WA

The ABA has released a consultation paper regarding concerns about reception of the SSW television service in parts of South West Western Australia. The ABA has sought public comment on the paper, and accepted comments until 25 January 1999.

The ABA is proposing to accept Golden West Network's undertaking to install and maintain a transmitter in the town of Pemberton.

The paper reports on the submission provided by the Golden West Network and data on field strength measurements carried out by the National Transmission Agency (NTA) in relation to the signal quality in parts of the SSW licence area. The studies include the five towns listed in the ABA's proposed licence condition (Bridgetown, Manjimup, Margaret River, Nannup and Pemberton).

As the field strength measurements for Bridgetown, Margaret River, Nannup and Manjimup appear to meet the minimum level of service required by the ABA's Technical Planning Guidelines the ABA is proposing to accept Golden West Network's submission that transmitters are not currently

required in these towns.

This proposal is consistent with the ABA's initial approach of requiring the licensee to 'restore and maintain' the signal to a standard previously enjoyed. In other words, the ABA is not trying to lift the bar higher than what it has been in the past.

The ABA's action on this matter follows representations about television reception in the licence area by the Federal Member for Forrest, Mr Geoff Prosser MP, and others.

Background

A major refurbishment of the Mount Lennard television transmission facility was completed by the NTA in December 1996. The facility is operated and maintained by the NTA and provides transmissions for ABC television, the regional commercial television service SSW and national FM radio broadcasting services for the cities of Bunbury and Busselton and the surrounding area of South West Western Australia.

As a consequence of the refurbishment, the quality of reception of Golden West Network's SSW service at various towns in the south west-

ern corner of the SSW licence area deteriorated. In cases where viewers lost their SSW service completely because of the antenna difficulties at the transmission site, the quality of reception before the antenna was already poor.

On 2 April 1998, the ABA decided to commence a process to impose a licence condition on the SSW licence to address certain reception problems in the South West Western Australia licence area.

On 30 April, the ABA wrote to Golden West Network advising that it was of the view that the service in the towns affected (Pemberton, Margaret River, Bridgetown, Nannup and Manjimup) should be restored. The best way to achieve this was to require the licensee to restore and maintain the level of signal in these towns to a standard previously enjoyed. The ABA advised Golden West Network that it was proposing to impose a condition on the SSW licence. The terms of the proposed licence condition were:

The licensee shall establish and maintain UHF transmission sites for the SSW service at the following places by 1 January 1999:

- Manjimup
- Pemberton
- Bridgetown
- Margaret River
- Nannup

On 12 June 1998, GWN lodged its written submissions with the ABA with regard to the proposal to impose a licence condition on the licensee for the SSW licence area.

On 24 July 1998, GWN made additional submissions to the ABA, and provided copies of data of technical studies (including field strength measurements) conducted by the NTA in relation to the signal quality of the SSW service in parts of the SSW licence area. The studies included the five towns specified in the ABA's proposed condition: Pemberton, Margaret River, Bridgetown, Nannup and Manjimup.

Consultation and comment

The consultation paper is available on the ABA web site, <www.aba.gov.au> or by calling 1800 810 241 (free call).

ABA accepted public comment on the paper up until the close of business, 25 January 1999.