



Datacasting test transmissions

Datacasting test transmissions will be conducted in the Canberra, Newcastle and Sydney markets from late May to 30 November 2000. The trials will enable aspirant datacasters to test the technical feasibility of their services.

The conduct of the test transmissions will not prejudice the allocation of spectrum for permanent datacasting services, nor the regulatory arrangements that will apply to permanent licences and which have yet to be finalised.

The following table shows the organisations that will be conducting test transmissions in each market.

SYDNEY	f2, ITVA, News Ltd, ntl, Online Media Group and Telstra
CANBERRA	f2, ntl
NEWCASTLE	Online Media Group, Telstra

For more information about the datacasting trial, and the regulatory policy, go to the ABA's web site at <www.aba.gov.au/what/datacasting>.

New non-BSB service for Busselton/Margaret River

The ABA has allocated a new commercial radio broadcasting licence to serve the Busselton/Margaret River area of Western Australia. The licensee may not use the broadcasting services bands to deliver its service.

The licence has been allocated to South West Broadcasting Pty Ltd.

South West Broadcasting Pty Ltd must commence its service within 12 months of being allocated the licence, or within a longer period as approved by the ABA.

How was the licence allocated?

Under section 40 of the Act the ABA may allocate to a person, on application in writing, a commercial radio broadcasting licence for a service which does not use the broadcasting services bands. The broadcasting services bands is that part of the radiofrequency spectrum on which normal AM and FM radio services and free-to-air television services are provided.

Before allocating a section 40 licence the ABA must designate a particular area in Australia as the licence area of the licence. Designating a licence area allows the control provisions of the Act to be applied to the service.

Applicants must pay a fee.

What are the differences between broadcasting services bands and non-broadcasting services bands commercial broadcasting licences?

The Act sets out significantly different regulatory regimes for commercial broadcasting services that use the broadcasting services bands and those that do not. The intention of the Act in establishing a lighter regulatory regime for non-broadcasting services bands services is to foster and encourage the introduction of a range of new services using alternative technologies.

A licence for a broadcasting services bands commercial broadcasting service authorises the licensee to both provide a commercial radio service and to have access to radiofrequency spectrum to carry the service. In other words, a broadcasting services bands licence authorises both content and carriage. Because licences using the broadcasting services bands allow use of a scarce and valuable public resource — the radiofrequency spectrum — they are limited in supply.

Sydney licences auction

The ABA will auction two new commercial radio licences, one for Sydney and one for Campbelltown on Wednesday 24 May 2000. There were 15 applicants for the licence to serve Sydney and 9 for the licence to serve Campbelltown.

The auction will be in the Northern Pavilion, Darling Park, 201 Sussex Street at 10 a.m. Registered applicants must check in between 8.30 and 9.45 a.m. Only registered applicants may bid for the licence. For more information about the auction, call Patricia Sharpe, ABA Licensing, on (02) 9334 7827.

New community radio licences for Queanbeyan and Tuggeranong

The ABA has allocated two new community radio licences, one for Queanbeyan, New South Wales and the other for Tuggeranong, Australian Capital Territory.

The Queanbeyan licence was allocated to Queanbeyan Community Radio QBN-FM Inc. to broadcast on 96.7 MHz on the FM band from Queanbeyan, and from 107.7 MHz from Williamsdale.

The Tuggeranong licence was allocated to Valley FM Broadcasters Association Inc. to