



New community radio licence for Colac, Victoria

During October 2001, the ABA allocated a new community radio licence to Otway FM Community Radio Group Inc in Colac, 150 km south-west of Melbourne in Victoria.

The service will broadcast on 104.7 MHz on the FM band, with translators at 99.1 MHz in Apollo Bay and 88.7 MHz in Lorne. Otway FM is currently broadcasting on the 104.7 MHz frequency under a temporary community broadcasting licence that expires on 30 November 2001. The permanent community radio broadcasting licence will commence on 1 December 2001.

There were two applicants for this licence: Otway FM Community Radio Group Inc, which claims to represent the general community of Colac, and Vision Australia Foundation which claims to represent the print-handicapped community of Colac. Both applications were assessed with particular regard to whether the proposed services would meet existing and perceived future community needs.

'The proposed service will add to the range and diversity of services in the Colac area,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman.

'The ABA noted that Otway FM intends to provide some programming for the print-handicapped in addition to their current programming. The applicant therefore satisfied the ABA that it would meet the existing and perceived future needs of the general community in the Colac area.'

The ABA made this licence available after a process of consultation with the people of the local community to seek their views on what additional broadcasting services were needed in their area.

Otway FM's current temporary service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The proposed service will provide programs, including talk and music, that will be of interest to the wider community in the Colac area.

The licence area for the allocated licence includes the surrounding towns of Beac, Birregurra, Winchelsea, Camperdown and Port Campbell.

The Colac area is currently served by an ABC television service in addition to the commercial television services VTV58, BCV61 and AMV64.

Radio services in the Colac area include two commercial services. There is currently no permanent community radio service.



New narrowcasting services proposed for western Victoria

The ABA is proposing to make 10 new open narrowcasting radio services available in the Warrnambool, Hamilton and Horsham radio markets. The new open narrowcasting services are proposed for Ararat, Casterton, Hamilton, Horsham, Portland, St Arnaud, Stawell, Terang, Warracknabeal and Warrnambool.

The ABA is also proposing to make channels available for 10 additional national radio services. Four of these (for Horsham, Nhill (two services) and Portland) were proposed in the ABA's draft licence area plan released in July 2001. The other six are proposed in the revised plan released in early November 2001. They are for Horsham (three services), Warrnambool and Western Victoria (two services).

In addition, the ABA maintains its preliminary views on additional commercial and community radio services, as proposed in its draft licence area plans for the Western Victoria region. The two additional commercial FM radio services proposed by the ABA (one each in Warrnambool and Hamilton) would be allocated to the existing operators under section 39 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*.

These proposals are contained in the ABA's revised preliminary views on radio services for the Western Victoria region released during November 2001.



'The ABA is pleased to have been able to identify additional capacity for both national and narrowcasting services within the Warrnambool, Hamilton and Horsham radio markets,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman. 'The ABA is now seeking any further information from interested parties that will assist it in making informed decisions. Before reaching a final decision the ABA will have regard to all the submissions obtained through public consultation.'

Background

Draft licence area plans for radio in Western Victoria, containing details of all national, commercial, community or open narrowcasting radio broadcasting services that are proposed to be made available using the broadcasting services bands of the radio frequency spectrum, were released for comment on 20 July 2001. These revisions to the draft plans are in response to submissions received.

'National broadcasting services' refers to free-to-air ABC or SBS services, or to Parliamentary broadcasts. 'Commercial broadcasting services' are free-to-air services operated for profit and with programs intended to appeal to the general public. 'Community broadcasting services' are free-to-air services provided for community purposes by non-profit groups. 'Open narrowcasting services' are free-to-air services which are limited in some way, such as by targeting programs to a specific audience or by signal coverage area. Over 90 per cent of open narrowcasting licences issued by the ABA have been for racing radio or tourist radio services.

Section 39 of the *Broadcasting Services Act, 1992* provides for the allocation of an additional commercial radio licence to the licensee of a radio service in an area where only one commercial radio licence is in force.

The Australian Government primarily funds extensions or improvements to national services. The respective operators fund extensions or improvements to commercial and community services within their licence areas.

It is important to note that the ABA cannot fund or compel others to fund additional broadcasting services, or improved reception of existing broadcasting services, in an area. It can only make channel capacity available.

With the exception of the capacity reserved for national broadcasters and channel capacity made available for allocation for community broadcasters, other capacity set out in the licence area plans will generally be made available for commercial licences and open narrowcasting services, under a price-based allocation scheme.

Capacity set out for community licences will be made available by means of a merit based system. The ABA will generally begin the allocation process soon after a final licence area plan for each area has been determined.

The draft licence area plans for Warrnambool, Hamilton and Horsham are part of the ABA's planning for Group 5 markets, expected to be concluded by the end of the year.

Submissions

An explanatory paper explaining the basis of the revised preliminary views and the revised draft licence area plans for Western Victoria (Warrnambool, Hamilton and Horsham) is available on the ABA's web site at:

www.aba.gov.au/radio/services/planning/laps/vic/Western_Victoria/index.htm

or by calling Freecall 1800 810 241.

The explanatory paper is also available for viewing at local libraries.

Submissions on the revised preliminary views were due by 16 November 2001.

