



Improved availability for 6IX Perth

The ABA has varied the licence area plan for Perth, to improve the availability of the commercial radio service 6IX in the southeast area of Perth.

The ABA is making alternative technical specifications available for the 6IX FM translator service at Rockingham. The alternative technical specifications include a change of site, along with an increase in the effective antenna height and a change in the radiation pattern.

'The ABA is of the view that the changes to the translator service at Rockingham, along with the additional translator service at Wanneroo, will rectify signal deficiencies in the Perth area improving the availability of 6IX within its licence area,' said Lyn Maddock, Acting ABA Chair.

Before deciding on whether to change the technical specifications of the Rockingham FM translator service, the ABA took into account the views of all who made submissions to the draft variation.

Licence area plan

The ABA determined the Perth licence area plan in October 2001. In determining the plan, the ABA made available channel capacity for two additional translator services for the existing AM commercial radio service 6IX at Wanneroo and Rockingham, both using the

FM frequency 105.7 MHz. The translator services were made available in order to rectify reception deficiencies in the north and the south of the 6IX licence area.

Since the release of the Perth licence area plan, the licensee of 6IX, Radio Perth Pty Ltd (Radio Perth) has proposed changes to improve the coverage of the two additional translators.

In March 2002, the ABA released an explanatory paper and draft licence area plan variation proposing alternative technical specifications for the Rockingham translator service. The proposed alternative technical specifications included an alternative transmitter site, an increase in the effective antenna height and a change in the radiation pattern. The ABA did not propose any changes to the technical specifications of the northern translator service, as the ABA was satisfied that the licence area plan technical specifications at Wanneroo would provide adequate coverage of the 6IX service in the northern part of its licence area.

The ABA considers that the alternative technical specifications for the Rockingham translator service will allow 6IX to ensure that it achieves the optimal audience reach within the southern part of its licence area without causing interference to the 6IX translator service in the north.

No community radio licence in Latrobe Valley

The ABA has decided not to allocate a community radio broadcasting licence in the Latrobe Valley at this time.

The ABA sought applications for the licence in May 2002. Two groups applied, Gippsland Christian Broadcasters Inc (Life FM) and Gunai Media Aboriginal Corporation (Gunai). Life FM claims to serve the Christian community of the Latrobe licence area while Gunai claims to represent the Aboriginal population in the licence area.

'After giving careful consideration to the criteria laid down in the legislation and the information provided by all applicants, the ABA has decided in this case not to allocate the licence,' said Ms Maddock.

'The ABA finds that neither of the applicants were able to satisfy the ABA that they could provide a broadcasting service that would meet the needs of their claimed community of interest.'

'The ABA has decided that in 12 months it will review the situation, with a view to re-advertising the availability of the licence. During the intervening period the ABA encourages both groups to operate temporary services to develop their capacity,' she said.

Until such time as the ABA reviews the temporary licence services and reconsiders a permanent allocation, the channel set aside for this licence (99.9 MHz) will be made available for temporary community broadcasting. Both groups will be able to broadcast under temporary community broadcasting licences, sharing the one frequency.

Latrobe Valley licence area

At Census 1996 the licence area population was 81 826. The 2001 census data reveals a slight decrease in the population of the licence area, to 80 569.

ABC and SBS television and three commercial television services broadcast in the Latrobe Valley licence area. Radio services include two commercial services, 3TR and 3GG, one community service, 3GCR and three national services, 3GLR, 3ABCFM and 3JJJ.

In the radio licence area plan for the Latrobe Valley area, released in December 2001, the ABA determined that one new community FM radio broadcasting service be made available for the Latrobe Valley.