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New digital datacasting licences for Ten Network

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The licences were allocated to Network Ten (Sydney) Pty Ltd, Network Ten (Melbourne) Pty Ltd, Network Ten (Brisbane) Pty Ltd, Network Ten (Adelaide) Pty Ltd and Network Ten (Perth) Pty Ltd

Ten has described the nature and content of the proposed datacasting services as 'the broadcast of matter that falls outside the definition of digital program-enhancement content in Schedule 4 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*.'

'The proposed services will add value to the digital television services provided by Network Ten in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman.

Datacasting services can include electronic program guides, Internet content, electronic mail, information services, educational programs, interactive computer games, text or still images, and advertising or sponsorship

material.

'The ABA expects that the appeal and value of digital television services generally will be further enhanced as new datacasting services start to become available over the next year or so through digital television receivers and set-top boxes,' Professor Flint said.

Background

Datacasting

A datacasting service is broadly defined as a service that delivers content in the form of text, data, speech, music or other sounds or visual images (or in any form or combination of forms) to persons with appropriate reception equipment, when the delivery of the service uses the broadcasting services bands.

Similar services delivered outside the broadcasting services bands are not regulated as datacasting services.

The definition of datacasting is wide enough to include the delivery of radio and television programs. However, datacasters face restrictions on providing the kinds, or 'genres', of

programs and audio content commonly regarded as traditional television or radio programming.

Datacasting licences

Any person wishing to provide a datacasting service, including commercial and national broadcasters, must hold a datacasting licence.

Only Australian companies, the national broadcasters, Government bodies or a body corporate established under Australian law for a public purpose may hold a datacasting licence.

Datacasting licences have the following characteristics:

- they are issued without any entitlement to a transmitter licence;
- they have no expiry date, ie they are issued in perpetuity;
- there is no specified licence area within which the service has to be provided; and
- there are no foreign ownership restrictions or other restrictions on ownership and control of the licences.

To contact the Ten Network, please call Ms Susan Oddie, General Manager - Business Affairs, on (02) 9650 1395.