



Digital TV channel plans for regional and remote WA

The ABA has released the national digital television channel plans for the Albany, Broome, Bunbury, Carnarvon, Central Agricultural, Esperance, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Manjimup, Narrogin, Northam, Port Hedland, Southern Agricultural and Wagin areas of Western Australia.

The plans set out the channels the existing national television broadcasters will use for their digital transmissions. An explanatory paper, which discusses issues raised in submissions and explains the reasons for each decision, accompanies the national digital channel plans.

'In developing these plans, the ABA weighed up a number of important factors. These include the aim of spectrum efficiency, the need to minimise any changes that viewers will have to make to their existing reception equipment to receive digital broadcasts and the desirability of broadcasters being able to use their existing transmission facilities to broadcast their digital television services,' said Professor Flint.

'The ABA has at all time given the interest of viewers a high priority. However, these plans will require some changes to analog services and will have some impact on the use of

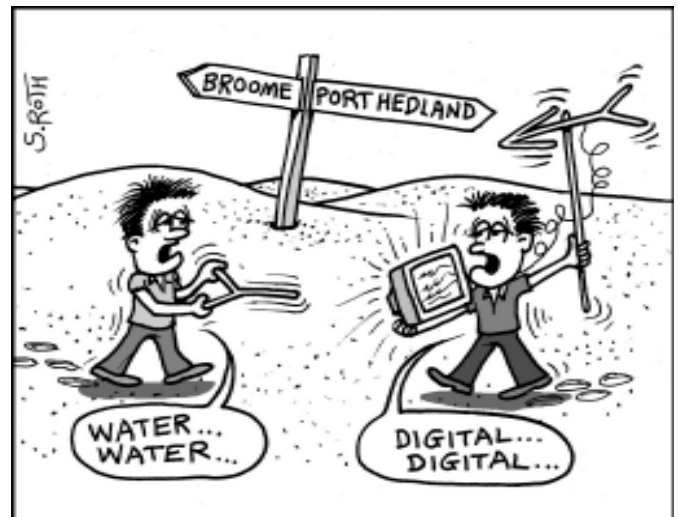
VCRs and set top boxes. Fortunately, only relatively minor disruption to viewers is expected as, in most cases, retuning of television sets and VCRs will be all that is required,' said Professor Flint.

'Public information, education campaigns and telephone hotlines will be established to deal with and provide timely advice for viewers on how to retune devices and alternative connection methods before any changes take place.'

The ABA has also released a second draft of the commercial television digital channel plans for the Albany, Broome, Bunbury, Carnarvon, Central Agricultural, Esperance, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Manjimup, Narrogin, Northam, Port Hedland, Southern Agricultural and Wagin areas of Western Australia.

The draft plans propose changes to the channels the existing commercial television broadcasters could use for their digital transmissions and the ABA has also identified as yet unassigned channels that may be used for other purposes, including datacasting.

An explanatory note, which advises of proposed changes to channel assignments, accompanies the commercial digital television channel plans and invites comments on these



changes. The closing date for comments is 15 August 2003.

The accompanying tables summarise the assignment of national television channels and proposed assignment of commercial television channels for the conversion of commercial and national television services from analog to digital mode.

Analog to digital conversion

The ABA is required (by Schedule 4 of the Broadcasting Services Act) to formulate legislative schemes for the conversion of commercial and national television broadcasting services from analog to digital mode.

The *Commercial Television*

Conversion Scheme was varied by the ABA in December 2000 and January 2003 and the *National Television Conversion Scheme* was varied by the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts in December 2000 and March 2003.

Channels for the existing television broadcasters have been planned for high power digital channels in Albany, Broome, Bunbury, Carnarvon, Central Agricultural, Esperance, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Manjimup, Narrogin, Northam, Port Hedland, Southern Agricultural and Wagin areas of Western Australia.

As knowledge of digital television technology is continu-



ALBANY							
Area served	Analog /Digital	Analog channel assignments/ Proposed digital channel assignments					
		ABAW	SSW	SBS	WOW	Reserved	Unassigned
Revised DCP	Analog	7	10	40	43		
	Digital	8	9A	41	44	6	47, 50

BROOME							
Area served	Analog /Digital	Analog channel assignments/ Proposed digital channel assignments					
		WOW	ABW	WAW	SBS	Reserved	Unassigned
Revised DCP	Analog	6	8	11	29		
	Digital	7	9	10	9A	12	28, 31

BUNBURY							
Area served	Analog /Digital	Analog channel assignments/ Proposed digital channel assignments					
		SSW	ABSW	SBS	WOW	Reserved	Unassigned
Revised DCP	Analog	3	5	33	39	—	—
	Digital	30	36	34	37	40	44, 47

CARNARVON							
Area served	Analog /Digital	Analog channel assignments/ Proposed digital channel assignments					
		ABCNW	WOW	WAW	SBS	Reserved	Unassigned
Revised DCP	Analog	7	9	10	12	—	—
	Digital	6	8	9A	11	29	30, 32

Note: SBS replacing current channel 28 retransmission service with a channel 12 service in latest round of SBS analog extensions

ESPERANCE							
Area served	Analog /Digital	Analog channel assignments/ Proposed digital channel assignments					
		VEW	ABEW	SBS	WOW	Reserved	Unassigned
Revised DCP	Analog	7	10	28	31	—	—
	Digital	12	9A	9	32	30	29, 33

GERALDTON							
Area served	Analog /Digital	Analog channel assignments/ Proposed digital channel assignments					
		ABGW	GTW	SBS	WOW	Reserved	Unassigned
Revised DCP	Analog	6	11	29	32	—	—
	Digital	41	9A	42	45	48	43, 46

KALGOORLIE							
Area served	Analog /Digital	Analog channel assignments/ Proposed digital channel assignments					
		ABKW	VEW	WOW	SBS	Reserved	Unassigned
Revised DCP	Analog	6	8	11	28	—	—
	Digital	9A	10	12	7	9	29, 30

ing to evolve, the ABA has taken a staged approach in preparing digital channel plans. As a result, the plans do not identify additional 'translator' channels for local areas within the rural signal level contour that may not receive good analog television reception from the main transmitter, as the precise need for these for digital television is not known at this stage.

The ABA wants to be satisfied that the best technical information is available to it, through programs of test transmissions and further test studies, prior to finalising channels. This approach is aimed at achieving maximum spectrum productivity by optimising channel usage.

All issues raised in submissions have been taken into account in finalising the national digital channel plans and are discussed in the accompanying explanatory statement to each digital channel plan.

Analog channel changes

Viewers in eight areas in Remote Western Australia, Albany, Broome, Pingelly, Carnarvon, Esperance, Green Head, Kulin and Eneabba may be affected by analog service changes. Viewers in these areas may need to retune their television sets and VCRs, however, in most cases it is expected that viewers' existing antennas should be suitable for the new channels as they have been planned to be close to the existing analog channels. The changes may be required to avoid extensive co-channel interference to the existing analog services from the allotment of digital channels in Remote Western



Australia. The explanatory papers indicate the alternative channels should these moves be required.

Impact on VCRs and pay TV set top boxes

Channels 36, 37 and 38 are often default RF output channels for VCRs and other ancillary devices such as pay TV set-top boxes. Channel 36 has been assigned to the ABC in Bunbury, while channel 37 is proposed to be allotted in Bunbury. Channel 36 is proposed to be allotted in Central Agricultural, channels 36 and 37 are proposed to be allotted in Southern Agricultural and channel 38 is assigned to the ABC in Wagin. Due to frequency congestion in these regions, the ABA is unable to identify alternative channels that are within the bandwidth of viewers receive antennas. Allotting alternative channels, should sufficient channels be available, would require viewers to purchase new antennas to receive the digital services. Unfortunately some inconvenience to viewers is unavoidable. However, the decisions would only result in comparatively minor disruption and/or cost to viewers as all that would be required, in most cases, is a retuning of television sets and VCRs.



MANJIMUP							
Area served	Analog /Digital	Analog channel assignments/ Proposed digital channel assignments					
		SBS	ABW	SSW	WOW	Reserved	Unassigned
Revised DCP	Analog	54	57	60	63	—	—
	Digital	55	58	61	64	67	66, 68

NARROGIN							
Area served	Analog /Digital	Analog channel assignments/ Proposed digital channel assignments					
		SBS	ABW	SSW	WOW	Reserved	Unassigned
Revised DCP	Analog	54	57	60	63	—	—
	Digital	55	58	61	64	67	66, 68

NORTHAM							
Area served	Analog /Digital	Analog channel assignments/ Proposed digital channel assignments					
		SBS	ABW	SSW	WOW	Reserved	Unassigned
Revised DCP	Analog	53	56	59	62	—	—
	Digital	54	57	60	63	67	66, 68

PORT HEDLAND							
Area served	Analog /Digital	Analog channel assignments/ Proposed digital channel assignments					
		ABPHW	WOW	WAW	SBS	Reserved	Unassigned
Revised DCP	Analog	7	9A	11	42	—	—
	Digital	8	10	12	6	9	41, 43

SOUTHERN AGRICULTURAL							
Area served	Analog /Digital	Analog channel assignments/ Proposed digital channel assignments					
		ABAW	SSW	SBS	WOW	Reserved	Unassigned
Revised DCP	Analog	2	9	28	31	—	—
	Digital	11	12	29	32	33	36, 37

WAGIN							
Area served	Analog /Digital	Analog channel assignments/ Proposed digital channel assignments					
		SSW	ABW	SBS	WOW	Reserved	Unassigned
Revised DCP	Analog	6	8	29	32	—	—
	Digital	35	38	28	31	41	43,46

Digital television channel plans

For copies of the digital television channel plans and accompanying explanatory papers for Remote Western Australia go to the ABA's web site: www.aba.gov.au/tv/digitaltv/planning/wa/index.htm. or tel: Freecall 1 800 810 241.

