



the commercial digital television services at Mt Tamborine.

The ABA consulted on proposed changes to the Gold Coast national services in the May 2003 draft variation to the digital channel plans. The ABA is awaiting advice from the national broadcasters on their requirements at Mt Tamborine before finalisation of the variation to the digital channel plan for the national services.

The decisions in this variation only affect the digital television services; analog television reception on the Gold Coast will not improve as a result of this variation. To access the improved reception, viewers will require a digital set-top box or digital television. The national television services, ABC and SBS, commenced digital transmissions from Mt Tamborine in August 2002. The commercial broadcasters are expected to commence digital transmissions from Mt Tamborine in February 2004, however this timing is dependent on the new infrastructure being in place on time.

Digital channel plans

The ABA finalised the digital channel plans for Brisbane and Toowoomba in July 1999.

In September 2000, the ABA varied the digital channel plans for Brisbane and Toowoomba to include the allotment and assignment of digital repeater channels at the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast. At the same time, the ABA also removed the allotment of digital channels at Toowoomba. The allotment of digital channels for Toowoomba was considered in the development of the digital channel plans for Regional Queensland determined by the ABA in October 2001.

In May 2003, the ABA released a draft variation to the digital channel plans for Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast that incorporated changes to the technical specifications of both the national and commercial digital television services at Mt Tamborine.



Moving from analog to digital broadcasting

Schedule 4 to the Broadcasting Services Act sets out arrangements for the conversion, over time, of the transmission of television broadcasting services from analog mode to digital mode. Under the arrangements, the ABA is required to formulate two schemes for conversion – a commercial television conversion scheme, and a national television conversion scheme.

Commercial Television Conversion Scheme (CTC Scheme)

The ABA formulated the CTC Scheme in March 1999. The Scheme commenced on 9 June 1999. The ABA varied the CTC Scheme on 21 December 2000. The ABA varied the CTC Scheme in January 2003, to provide for Part B – Remote Licence Areas.

National Television Conversion Scheme (NTC Scheme)

The ABA formulated the NTC Scheme in December 1999. It was approved by the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts on 2 February 2000, and commenced on that date. The Minister approved a variation to this Scheme on 20 December 2000. The Minister approved a variation to the NTC Scheme in January 2003, to provide for Part B – Remote Licence Areas.



Additional frequency to improve 3HFM's service in Portland

The ABA has decided to make available an additional frequency for commercial radio service 3HFM (MIXX FM) to serve the town of Portland, Victoria

The new service will operate on 93.7 MHz from a transmitter at Mt Clay.

'The ABA decision follows consideration of requests from the licensee of the commercial radio service in Hamilton to provide an adequate service to Portland, which is within the Hamilton licence area,' said Professor Flint.

The 3HFM main transmitter, which operates on 88.9 MHz from Mt Bainbridge, does not adequately serve the Portland area. The licensee of the 3HFM



service has been conducting a test transmission on 93.7 MHz from Mt Clay since April 2003.

The draft variation to the Hamilton radio licence area plan were released for comment on 9 July 2003.

Licence area plan

A copy of the variation to the Hamilton licence area plan is available on the ABA web site at www.aba.gov.au or by calling Freecall 1800 810 241.