



# Applications invited for new community television licences

## for Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney

The ABA has invited applications for community television broadcasting licences to serve Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. Each licence is to provide a service on UHF channel 31. Because an ABA decision affecting community television in Adelaide is currently under review, the ABA has decided not to invite applications for the licence in Adelaide at this stage.

'Community television will play a valuable role in meeting local needs, providing an outlet for innovative and niche programming and opening opportunities for enthusiastic volunteers to train in television production, programming and management,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman.

### Community television

In 1992, the Government asked the ABA to conduct a trial of community television using the vacant sixth television channel (UHF channel 31 in capital cities) in Australia. As the ABA did

### For copies of the application booklets

Applicants should contact the ABA's Licensing Section on 1800 226 667 or (02) 9334 7700 for copies of the Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth or Sydney application booklets. General information is also available on the ABA's web site at: [www.aba.gov.au/tv/licensing/community/index.htm](http://www.aba.gov.au/tv/licensing/community/index.htm)

### Closing date : 9 May

Applications for these licences must be received before midnight on Friday 9 May 2003. The ABA will not accept any applications lodged after this date.

From Monday 26 May 2003, copies of all applications received will be placed for public perusal on the ABA's web site at: [www.aba.gov.au/tv/licensing/new\\_licences.htm](http://www.aba.gov.au/tv/licensing/new_licences.htm)

### Applications on view

Copies of applications received will also be made available for public perusal in the following libraries: Brisbane Central City Library (Brisbane applications only); State Library of Victoria, Melbourne (Melbourne applications only); State Library of Western Australia, Perth (Perth applications only) and the City of Sydney Library, Town Hall House, Sydney (Sydney applications only).

### Submissions on the applications : 9 June

The ABA welcomes written submissions from members of the public in relation to the applications received. Submissions, including email submissions, should be lodged with the ABA by 5 pm on Monday 9 June 2003. Send email submissions to [info@aba.gov.au](mailto:info@aba.gov.au). Copies of any letters of support included with applications and subsequent support letters received by the ABA will not be displayed on the web site or in libraries but can be made available for inspection on request. Anyone who has concerns about public access to their personal details should advise the ABA to treat this information as confidential.

not have the power to issue temporary community television licences it made the channel available for fixed periods for non-profit community/educational open narrowcasting services. Community television services have been provided on a trial basis since 1994 under the open narrowcasting class licence scheme.

A review of the community television trial, conducted under Schedule 4 to the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, was tabled in Parliament in June 2002.

As a result of the issues raised in the review, the Act has recently been amended. The new framework for community television licences introduces requirements aimed at improving the financial and management capacity and accountability of community television licensees. It also assists the revenue raising ability of the community television sector. The new measures are intended to balance the need for ongoing financial viability of the community tel-



vision sector with the need to ensure that the sector maintains its community and not-for-profit nature.

### **Allocation of the licences**

Community licences can be allocated only if the ABA makes new community broadcasting services available in an area following its planning process and the release of a licence area plan.

The ABA has advertised for applications in newspapers in the licence areas. In light of the recent judgment of the Federal Court of Australia handed down on 31 January 2003, the ABA will not be granting any extensions of time within which to apply for a community television licence.<sup>1</sup> The review of the ABA's decision in Adelaide is expected to be concluded by the end of February 2003, and the ABA will decide the best way to take community television forward in Adelaide at that time.

Applications received will be made available for public comment. Written comments on applications must be lodged with the ABA within 14 days (generally) of the date the ABA places them in public libraries.

The ABA will decide if a licence is to be allocated and in the case of competing applicants, to which applicant. The ABA will allocate these licences on the basis of the merits of applicants and their proposed services and, when necessary, on their comparative merits.

<sup>1</sup> See ABA Update no 117, p.10



# Extension of commercial radio standards

The ABA proposes to extend the three commercial radio standards (the Broadcasting Services (Commercial Radio Current Affairs Disclosure) Standard 2000; the Broadcasting Services (Commercial Radio Advertising) Standard 2000 and the Broadcasting Services (Commercial Radio Compliance Program) Standard 2000 placed on all commercial radio licensees in November 2000.

The three commercial radio standards are due to cease operation on 2 April 2003. The ABA is proposing to extend the operation of the standards indefinitely.

'At the time the ABA imposed the standards on the commercial radio industry, the ABA expected the commercial radio industry to develop and submit to the ABA for registration, codes of practice to operate from 3 April 2003 that would provide at least the same level of community safeguards as are contained in the standards,' said Professor Flint.

'As current investigations into matters in relation to compliance with the commercial radio standards will not have been concluded before the cessation of operation of the stand-

ards on 2 April 2003, the ABA has taken the view that the standards should continue in operation. Once those investigations have been concluded and their implications (if any) for the standards determined, the ABA will consult with the relevant industry body, which is Commercial Radio Australia, on the future of the standards.'

'The ABA's intention is that the standards should be replaced by codes of practice that provide the same level of community safeguards at the appropriate time and after wide community consultation.'

The three standards relate to disclosure of commercial agreements by presenters of current affairs programs, the need to distinguish advertisements from other programs and the estab-

lishment of compliance programs by commercial radio licensees. Unlike codes of practice, compliance with standards is a condition of a broadcaster's licence.

### **Inquiry**

In its final report on the Commercial Radio Inquiry of 2 August 2000, the ABA found systemic failure to ensure the effective operation of the industry's self-regulatory codes of practice and proposed to determine three program standards to remedy this failure.

On 21 November 2000 the ABA determined three program standards for commercial radio licensees. The standards commenced operation on 15 January 2001.



### **Report**

The final report of the ABA's inquiry, *Commercial Radio Inquiry – Final Report to the ABA* is on the ABA's web site at [www.aba.gov.au/radio/investigations/projects/commerc\\_radio/reportindex2.htm](http://www.aba.gov.au/radio/investigations/projects/commerc_radio/reportindex2.htm).

It can also be purchased from the ABA, price \$30, tel (02) 9334 7700

### **Standards**

The three commercial radio standards can be found on the ABA's web site at [www.aba.gov.au/radio/content/standards/index.htm](http://www.aba.gov.au/radio/content/standards/index.htm)

### **Submissions**

The closing date for submissions was 3 March 2003.