



ABA invites expressions of interest for a community television broadcasting trial in Adelaide

The ABA has invited expressions of interest to operate a community television broadcasting trial UHF channel 31 in Adelaide for 12 months

The Australian Broadcasting Authority has invited expressions of interest to operate a community television broadcasting trial in Adelaide. The ABA will make available UHF channel 31 for a period of 12 months for the trial. The service will operate under the open narrowcasting television 'class licence' for community and educational non-profit purposes.

"Community television can 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.

"It is the intention of the Authority to seek applications for a permanent community television licence to serve the Adelaide licence area during the 12 month trial period," he also said.

The ABA will assess all expressions of interest on merit and only one licence will be issued.

What is a trial community television broadcasting service?

In 1992, the Government asked the ABA to conduct a trial of community television

(CTV) using the vacant sixth television channel (Channel 31) in Australia. CTV has operated on a trial basis since 1994 under the open narrowcasting television 'class licence' for community and educational purposes.

An open narrowcasting service is a service that is limited in one of a number of ways as defined at section 18 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (the Act). For example, by targeting a special interest group, by providing programming of limited appeal, by being provided for a limited duration, or by servicing a limited location such as a business premise or sporting arena.

Class licences are not separately issued in the manner that service licences are, eg., permanent community or commercial licences. However, to operate a narrowcasting service using the broadcasting services bands (BSB), a service provider must obtain from the ABA an apparatus licence (under the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*).

A condition is placed on these licences that they be used only for 'community and educational non-profit purposes'.

Previous trial community television broadcasting service in Adelaide

Adelaide Community and Edu-

cational Television Inc (ACE TV) was previously licensed to provide a service in Adelaide under the community television trial. However, in December 2002, the ABA decided to cancel their licence. The ABA decision followed an investigation into ACE TV. The investigation considered whether ACE TV had complied with the condition on its licence to provide an open narrowcasting television service for community and educational non-profit purposes.

The ABA's investigation report is available on its website (see details below).

ACE TV lodged an application with the Australian Communications Authority (ACA) for reconsideration of the ABA's decision to cancel its licence. In February 2003, the ACA upheld the ABA's decision.

Why is the ABA conducting a further trial in Adelaide?

The ABA deferred the continuation of the community television trial in Adelaide until the ACA's reconsideration process was completed.

The ABA is seeking expressions of interest in conducting a new trial of community television in Adelaide for a period of 12 months. The trial will provide the Adelaide community with an opportunity to participate in the operation of the trial service and to develop the capacity necessary to provide a permanent community television broadcasting service.

The ABA intends to seek applications for a permanent com-

munity television licence to serve the Adelaide licence area during the 12 month trial period. If the permanent licence is awarded prior to the end of the trial period then the trial licence will be cancelled at that time.

Who may lodge an expression of interest to operate a trial CTV service?

The ABA will only accept expressions of interest from companies formed in Australia or an external Territory (including companies limited by guarantee and incorporated associations) that represent a community interest.

What information will the ABA take into account when making a decision?

The ABA will assess all expressions of interest on merit having regard to the matters set down in the Access Statement and management, financial and technical capacity of the applicant to provide the service.

In deciding whether to allocate a trial CTV licence, the ABA will take into account relevant information provided with an expression of interest and any other information that it considers relevant in deciding whether to allocate the licence.



The ACE-TV investigation report is available on the ABA website at www.aba.gov.au/tv/investigations/projects/ACE/ACE_finalReport.pdf. or by calling Freecall 1800 810 241.