



# New community television station in Adelaide?

## ABA receives five expressions of interest for a community television broadcasting trial

The Australian Broadcasting Authority has received five expressions of interest to operate a community television broadcasting trial in Adelaide.

Expressions of interest were received from C31 Adelaide Ltd, Adelaide Community & Educational Television Inc., Australian College of Entertainment Ltd, Adelaide One Television Inc., and The Adelaide CTV Consortium.

The ABA will assess all expressions of interest on merit to identify a suitable applicant to operate the community television trial.

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.

It is the intention of the ABA to seek applications for a permanent community 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.

The ABA has recently called for applications for permanent community television broadcasting

licences to serve Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. Applications for these licences closed on 9 May 2003.

### 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 whose reception is limited in one of the ways identified in section 18 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (the Act). For example, by targeting a special interest group, by providing programs of limited appeal, by being provided for a limited duration, or by servicing a limited location such as business premises or sporting arenas.

Class licences are not separately issued in the same manner as service licences, 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'.

### Who may operate a trial CTV service?

Under the *Radiocommunications Act 1992* an apparatus licence may be held by an individual or by an incorporated body, whether that body is incorporated under the Corporations Law or under State or Territory legislation. The ABA, however, will only issue an apparatus licence to operate a trial community television broadcasting service on the condition that it be used only for community and educational purposes. Furthermore, interested parties should satisfy the ABA that any proposed trial service would incorporate a participative management structure and programming practices.

A permanent community television broadcasting licensee must be a company limited by guarantee under the Corporations Act [refer to 81(1)(a) of the

Broadcasting Services Act, 1992]. It is, therefore, highly likely that the operator of the trial service will be a company formed in Australia or an external Territory (including companies limited by guarantee and incorporated associations) that represents a community interest.

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

In issuing an apparatus licence under section 100 of the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*, the ABA, as delegate of the Australian Communications Authority, is to have regard to all matters that it considers relevant. See Attachment A—section 100 of the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*.

The ABA will assess all expressions of interest on merit having regard to the matters set out in the Access Statement and the 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 information provided with an expression of interest and any other information that it considers relevant.

