



Recent ABA planning decisions

New radio services for far north Queensland

The ABA has decided to make FM channel capacity available for the Cairns commercial radio services 4CCA at Redlynch Valley and 4HOT at Little Mulgrave, Queensland.

'The ABA's decision follows a request from the licensees of 4CCA and 4HOT to help them resolve reception deficiencies in these regions,' said Mr Tanner.

The ABA has also decided to make FM channel capacity available to the ABC in Cairns and Cairns North for future national radio services.

'This is part of the ABA's ongoing commitment to reserve channel capacity for the possible future provision of the full range of ABC radio services to communities or regional transmission areas with a population of 10 000 people or more,' said Mr Tanner.

The ABA has also decided to make FM channel capacity available for a new community radio service in Cairns and a new high power open narrowcasting radio service in Port Douglas. The ABA will call for applications for these radio services in the near future.

The ABA uses a merit-based allocate process for community broadcasting licences.

The licence for the open narrowcasting service will be issued under the ABA's price-based allocation system. If there is more than one applicant for a licence, an auction-style licence allocation exercise will be held at which the licence will be issued to the highest bidder. If there is only one application for a licence at the close of applications, the licence will be issued to the applicant for the reserve price.

These decisions are in the variation to the Cairns radio licence area plan, available on the ABA's web site, www.aba.gov.au/radio/services/services/qld/cairns/index.htm or by calling Freecall 1800 226 667. ☒

Deepwater and Glen Innes community radio services

The ABA has extended the licence area of the Deepwater community radio service to include Glen Innes.

The decision is contained in a variation to the Inverell licence area plan for radio services.

The ABA's decision follows consideration of a request from the licensee of the Deepwater community radio service, Deepwater and Districts Community FM Radio (DCFM) to extend the licence area of the Deepwater service to include

Glen Innes,' said Mr Tanner.

DCFM has been operating a temporary service in Glen Innes since August 2002, largely providing a retransmission of its existing Deepwater service. The ABA called for applications for a Glen Innes community radio licence in March 2004, for which DCFM was the only applicant. When considering whether to allocate a Glen Innes community radio licence to DCFM, the ABA decided that it would be more appropriate to merge the licence areas of the two services, making only one community radio service available in the Deepwater/Glen Innes region. ☒

Current analog TV channels confirmed for remote central and eastern Australia

The ABA has decided that analog television services using channel 5A in the Remote Central and Eastern Australia licence area may now remain on that channel until the end of the analog/digital simulcasting period, whenever that may be.

Television services in most parts of Australia are currently operating on both analog and digital channels, with the expectation analog services will eventually be turned off. However, the details of how television in Remote Central and

Eastern Australia will convert to digital are still the subject of discussions between the ABA, broadcasters and the Department of Communications Information Technology and the Arts. For this reason, the analog/digital simulcast period has not yet begun in Remote Central and Eastern Australia

In December 1998, the ABA varied the Remote Central and Eastern Australia television licence area plan and made channel 67 available at Wandoan, Queensland to accommodate the clearance of the ABC television service ABQ on channel 5A. The decision also indicated the need for clearance of channel 5A in approximately ten years from the release of the licence area plan variation.

When the simulcast period ends, services that have been operating in analog mode in VHF Band II (channels 3, 4 and 5) or on channel 5A will cease. The ABA believes there is no pressing need to clear VHF Band II/5A channels.

In the variation to the television licence area plan for Remote Central and Eastern Australia, the ABA has decided to remove this alternative channel capacity and to vary the technical specifications of the analog television services in these areas to reflect the current operating conditions.

The variation to the Remote Central and Eastern television licence area plan is on the ABA web site at www.aba.gov.au/tv/analog/planning/nt/index.htm or by calling Freecall 1800 226 667. ☒