



ABA meets with applicants for Sydney community TV licence

The ABA has met with the applicants for the community television licence for Sydney to clarify outstanding issues surrounding the licence allocation. The meeting took place on 29 January 2004.

The ABA received six applications for the Sydney licence. They were from Australian College of Entertainment Ltd, Christian City Church Sydney Ltd, Community Television Sydney Ltd, Multicultural Community Radio Association Ltd, Television Sydney (TVS) Ltd, and Youth Television (Y?TV) Ltd.

Spectrum for the sixth channel community television trial in Sydney expired on 31 December 2003, and the ABA has decided to extend the trial by making further spectrum available until 19 March 2004. An allocation decision is anticipated about that time.

The ABA has also decided to extend the sixth channel community television trials in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth until 30 April 2003 in order to resolve outstanding issues relating to the allocation of these licences. At this stage, the ABA is leaving open the issue of whether it needs to meet with

the applicants for the licences in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth.

The community television trial in Lismore is not part of the current allocation process, however, as the trial expires on 31 December 2003, the ABA has decided to extend the trial to 31 December 2004 during which time it is anticipated that the ABA will advertise for applications for a permanent licence.

Community television licences

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 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.

A review of the community television trial, conducted un-

der Schedule 4 to the Broadcasting Services Act was tabled in Parliament in June 2002. The Broadcasting Services Act was subsequently amended in 2002 to include requirements aimed at improving the financial and management capacity and accountability of community television licensees and assist 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 television sector with the need to ensure that the sector maintains its community and not-for-profit nature.

Community television licence applications

On 17 February 2003, the ABA invited applications for the community television licences in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. By the closing date on 9 May 2003, six applications were received for the Sydney licence, five for the Perth licence, three for the Brisbane licence and two for the Melbourne licence.

