



Television broadcasters meet HDTV broadcasting requirements

From 1 July 2003, the ABC, the SBS and the commercial television broadcasters in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth were required to broadcast a quota (1040 hours per year) of programs on their digital services in high definition. In the first six months of the application of the quota, all broadcasters met and exceeded their quota requirements, calculated on a *pro rata* basis.


A number of popular prime-time programs are broadcast in high definition, including *The Panel*, *White Collar Blue* and *Everybody Loves Raymond* on the Ten Network, *Home & Away*, *All Saints* and *Alias* on the Seven Network and *McLeods Daughters*, *CSI* and *ER* on the Nine Network. These programs have all been produced in the high definition format.

The ABC and the SBS are permitted to 'up-convert' their analog or standard definition digital programs to high definition digital programs. For example, the ABC program, *The Bill*, broadcast in prime-time, has been up-converted to a

high definition format. The SBS has converted all the programs on its main channel to a high definition format (its World News Channel is only broadcast in SDTV).

'It is pleasing to see that the commercial and national television broadcasters met the requirements for broadcasting in high definition, with some broadcasters exceeding the requirements,' said Professor Flint. 'The result for viewers is a high quality viewing experience, with some of the most popular prime-time programs now broadcast in high definition.'

In time, all broadcasters in non-remote areas of Australia will be required to meet the high definition quota of 1040 hours per year, with the obligation commencing for each broadcaster two years after the date that they are required to start broadcasting in digital mode.

The obligation to meet the 1040 hour per year quota applies to all other broadcasters two years after the date on which they are first required to commence broadcasting in standard definition digital mode in an area. 

Community television in Sydney

On 18 March 2004, the ABA announced that Television Sydney (TVS) Ltd was the successful applicant for the community television licence for Sydney. However, on 19 March 2004, the previous triallist, Community Television Sydney Ltd (CTS), lodged an application in the Federal Court against the ABA's decision to allocate the licence to TVS. On 16 April 2004, the Federal Court dismissed CTS' application and stayed the ABA's decision for seven days. The ABA decided to make spectrum available for this seven day period to allow CTS to continue broadcasting. CTS ceased broadcasting at midnight on 23 April 2004, and TVS became the permanent licensee.

Under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, TVS has 12 months to commence broadcasting from the date of the ABA's decision to allocate the licence, or such longer period notified in writing by the ABA. 