



# Recent ABA planning decisions

## Power restriction on Melbourne radio services removed

The ABA has removed a special condition that restricted the operation of three Melbourne FM radio services in the direction of Tasmania.


The three services are the commercial radio service due to be allocated later this year on 91.5 MHz and existing Melbourne community radio services 3TSC on 89.9 MHz and 3SYN on 90.7 MHz

The decision to vary the technical specifications of the three services is contained in a variation to the licence area plan for Melbourne, released today.

The three services were restricted due to the operation of the ABC television service on VHF channel 3 from Mt Barrow, Tasmania. The restriction was imposed because of possible mutual interference between the three radio services (which are all within the frequency range covered by VHF channel 3) and the ABC service. However, as the ABC service ceased operation in

November 2002, the restrictions to the three radio services in Melbourne are no longer required.

The ABA determined the Melbourne licence area plan in June 2000. In the plan the ABA determined the licence area populations of the commercial and community radio licences in the Melbourne licence area plan using 1996 Census data. The ABA has now designated licence areas of the Melbourne commercial radio services and the community radio services for Melbourne, Bacchus Marsh, Camberwell, Melbourne City, Melbourne Eastern Suburbs, Melbourne North West Suburbs, Melbourne South East Suburbs, Melbourne Southern Suburbs, Melbourne West, Melton, Frankston, Mornington, Mountain Districts, Plenty Valley, Sunbury, Waverley, Werribee and Yarra Valley using 2001 Census data.

The variation to the Melbourne licence area plan is available from the ABA web site or tel. 1800 226 667. 

## Smithton transmitter and power increase for Burnie radio services

The ABA has made additional channel capacity available in the FM band on 94.5 MHz for the existing commercial AM service 7BU Burnie, to operate a translator in Smithton, Tasmania.

It has also decided to vary the technical operating conditions of FM commercial radio service 7SEA Burnie to allow an increase in power from 8 kW to 20 kW.


The decisions are contained in a variation to the radio licence area plan for Burnie, released today.

The additional FM channel capacity has been planned by the ABA under the Commercial Radio Blackspots Program. This program is an Australian Government initiative which will provide \$5 million over three years to deliver new or improved commercial radio services to regional and remote communities where it has not

been commercially viable for licensees to provide coverage. The Program will ensure that greater access to commercial radio services is provided to a large number of people located in regional and remote Australia.

Commercial Radio Australia (CRA) has identified Smithton/Stanley in the Burnie commercial licence area as a radio blackspot area for the existing 7BU AM radio service.

In December 2001, the ABA determined the Burnie radio licence area plan. The licence areas in the plan were determined using 1996 Census data. The ABA has now designated the Burnie commercial radio licence area and the Wynyard community radio licence area using 2001 Census data.

The variation to the Burnie licence area plan is available from the ABA web site or tel. 1800 226 667. 



## FM channel available for community radio service in Yarraman

The ABA has decided to make channel capacity available for a community radio service at Yarraman Queensland. The service will operate on 99.7 MHz from Millar Street, Yarraman. The ABA will be calling for applications for this service at a later date.

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


Since July 2002, the Yarraman and District Historical Society Inc., (YDHS) has been operating on a temporary community broadcasting licence, using the frequency 99.7 MHz. YDHS has expressed interest in obtaining a permanent community radio licence to serve the town of Yarraman.

Although temporary community broadcasting licences confer no rights nor indicate any

ABA preference for a group to be granted a permanent community radio service, the ABA believes that the new permanent community radio service will attract applications.

The ABA determined the Kingaroy licence area plan in October 1998. In the plan, the ABA designated the licence area populations of the Kingaroy commercial and Gayndah, Cherbourg and Wondai com-

munity radio broadcasting licences using 1996 Census figures. The licence areas have now been designated using 2001 Census figures. The licence area for the new community radio service in Yarraman has also been defined using 2001 Census figures.

The variation to the Kingaroy licence area plan is on the ABA web site or tel. 1800 226 667 for a copy. 

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## Variation to digital channel plans for national services at the Gold Coast

The ABA has released a variation to the digital channel plan for Gold Coast to incorporate changes to the technical specifications of the national digital television services to operate from Mt Tamborine, Gold Coast.

The variation to the digital channel plan will permit an increase in the antenna height for the ABC and SBS digital television services at Mt Tamborine, together with a change of radiation pattern. The changes will accommodate a major infrastructure upgrade, which is intended to improve digital television coverage.

The decisions in this variation only affect the digital television services; analog television reception on the Gold Coast will be unaffected. To access the improved reception, viewers

will require a digital set-top box or digital television. The national television services, ABC and SBS, are expected to change their digital transmissions at Mt Tamborine sometime between July and September 2004, in conjunction with the commencement of the commercial digital services.

The ABA's decisions are contained in the explanatory paper and variation to the national digital channel plan for Gold Coast, available on the ABA's web site at [www.aba.gov.au/tv/digitaltv/planning/qld/index.htm](http://www.aba.gov.au/tv/digitaltv/planning/qld/index.htm) or tel. 1800 810 241.

### **The conversion scheme**

Schedule 4 to the Broadcasting Services Act sets out arrangements for the


conversion, over time, of the transmission of television broadcasting services from analog mode to digital mode. The ABA is required to formulate two schemes for conversion – a commercial television conversion scheme, and a national television conversion scheme.

The *Commercial Television Conversion Scheme* and the *National Television Conversion Scheme* empowers the ABA to make or vary digital channel plans for commercial and national services respectively.

### **Digital channel plans**

The ABA finalised the digital channel plans for Brisbane and Toowoomba in July 1999 and these were varied in September 2000 to include the allotment

and assignment of digital repeater channels at the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast. The allotment of digital channels at Toowoomba was also removed.

In May 2003, the ABA released a draft variation to the digital channel plans for Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast and finalised a variation in August 2003 that incorporated changes to the technical specifications of the commercial digital television services at Mt Tamborine. The final digital channel plan for the commercial services reflected an antenna height of 102 metres. The ABA did not finalise the digital channel plans for the national services, as the national broadcasters were undecided about a change to the proposed technical specifications. 



## Changes to Warrnambool radio services

The ABA has decided to change the transmitter site and technical specifications of commercial radio service 3YB Warrnambool.

The ABA also decided to extend the licence area of the existing community radio service 3WAY Warrnambool and designate both the community and commercial radio licence areas against the 2001 Census boundaries.

The ABA's decisions are contained in the varied licence area plan for Warrnambool.

3YB currently operates on 882 kHz on the AM band from Bushfield on a maximum CMF (cymotive force) of 630V directional. The ABA decided to allow the transmitter to be moved to an alternative site at Blighs Road, Purnim, approximately 14 km NE of the existing transmitter site.

The variation also allows for the CMF to increase from 380V to 450V in the sector 180-230 degrees.

The extension to the licence area of the 3WAY community radio service follows a decision made by the ABA in 2001 to extend the licence area to include the towns of Mortlake, Terang, Camperdown, Cobden, Timboon, Port Campbell and Peterborough. At the time the

decision was not put into effect in the legislative instrument.

In December 2001, the ABA designated the licence areas within the Warrnambool licence area plan using 1996 Census data. The ABA has now redesignated the licence areas using 2001 Census data.

The variation to the Warrnambool licence area plan is available from the ABA web site, [www.aba.gov.au](http://www.aba.gov.au), or tel. 1800 226 667.

## Variation to digital channel plans north coast and inland NSW

The ABA has released details of the channels the existing national television broadcasters will use for their digital transmissions at six locations in New South Wales (Dungog, Gloucester, Mudgee, Kandos, Laurieton and Upper Hunter).

The channels are contained in a variation to the digital channel plans for the North Coast of New South Wales and Inland NSW. An explanatory paper, which discusses issues raised in submissions and explains the reasons for each decision, accompanies the national digital channel plans.

'In finalising these plans the ABA weighed up a number of important factors. These include the aim of spectrum efficiency, the need to minimise any changes that viewers will have to make to their existing reception equipment to receive digital broadcasts and the desirability of broadcasters being able to use their existing transmission facilities to broadcast their digital television services,' said Professor Flint.

The explanatory paper and the variations to the relevant digital channel plans are on the ABA's web site, [www.aba.gov.au](http://www.aba.gov.au), or tel. 1800 810 241.

### The conversion scheme

Under the arrangements for the conversion scheme, the ABA is required to formulate two schemes – a commercial television conversion scheme

(CTCS), and a national television conversion scheme (NTCS).

The CTCS commenced on 9 June 1999. The NTCS was approved by the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts on 2 February 2000, and commenced on that date.

#### Locations for additional digital television repeater services

Location	Transmission site	Location	Transmission site
<b>Inland New South Wales</b>		<b>North coast of New South Wales</b>	
Mudgee	Endicott Hill	Laurieton	Jolly Nose Hill
Kandos	Baldy Peak	Gloucester	Kiaora Lookout
		Upper Hunter	Rossgole
		Dungog	Coorei Hill