



- allowing an increase in power from 500 W to 2 kW for the WIN10 digital television service at Batemans Bay.

An explanatory paper and variation to the digital channel plan for the NSW South Coast are available on the ABA website at <http://www.aba.gov.au/tv/digitaltv/planning/nsw/index.htm> or by phoning Freecall 1800 810 241.

ABA audits ten largest ISPs for code compliance

The ABA has released its findings on how the ten largest Australian Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are meeting their consumer information obligations under the Internet Industry Codes of Practice for Internet content.

The audit, which was conducted on the ISPs' Internet sites on 8 August 2004, indicated a high degree of compliance with the codes. Only two of the ten ISPs audited, iPrimus and AAPT, were found not to be fully compliant.

The websites of iPrimus and AAPT were not compliant as they did not contain information for content providers about their legal responsibilities and labelling. AAPT's websites also lacked information about how subscribers could complain to the ABA and about procedures to deal with complaints concerning unsolicited emails.

AAPT has since revised the information on its website so that it now complies fully with the codes. Discussions between iPrimus and the ABA are continuing.

The report of the ABA's findings is available on the ABA's website at: www.aba.gov.au

The audit was also timely as it identified three key areas in which the code provisions could be improved: the currency and prominence of information and the promotion of filters. The Internet Industry Association (IIA), which is reviewing the codes, has been supportive of the ABA's recommendations.

The IIA's new draft codes were released for public consultation on 22 November 2004. The codes are available on the IIA's website at: www.iaa.net.au

Appointments

Lyn Maddock, Acting ABA Chair, has been appointed by Minister Coonan as a part-time Associate Member of the ACA, in place of Michael Gordon Smith. Giles Tanner has been reappointed as a full time acting member of the ABA Board. Both appointments are until 30 June 2005 or the merger, whichever is earlier.

Update on ACMA Bill

The *Australian Communications and Media Authority Bill 2004* (the ACMA Bill) and related legislation were introduced into Parliament on 2 December 2004. The ACMA Bill establishes a new regulatory authority for communications: the Australian Communications and Media Authority (the ACMA). The provisions of the ACMA Bill provide for the Bill to commence on proclamation, or on 1 July 2005 if no proclamation has been made by that date.

The ACMA replaces the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) and the Australian Communications Authority (ACA). The functions of the ACMA will essentially be the functions currently undertaken by the ABA and the ACA.

The formation of the ACMA is a response to convergence within the communications industry. The establishment of the ACMA will enable a coordinated regulatory response to converging technologies and services.

The ACMA will comprise a full-time chair, a full-time deputy chair, and from one to seven other members who can be either full or part-time. Each term of membership is to be up to five years. Members may be reappointed, provided the total term of membership does not exceed 10 years. Previous appointment as a member or associate member of the ABA or the ACA will count towards this period.

On 8 December 2004 the Senate agreed to a motion moved by Senator Cherry (Democrats) to refer the provisions of the ACMA Bill and related legislation to the Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee for inquiry. The Committee is to report by 10 March 2005.

New radio services for Bathurst area

The ABA has decided to make channel capacity available for new and improved radio services in the Bathurst area of New South Wales.

'The ABA has made additional channels available to improve reception of commercial radio service 2BS Bathurst at Sofala, Burruga and Blayney and for an additional ABC service in Bathurst City,' said Lyn Maddock, Acting ABA Chair.

The ABA has made channel capacity available on 90.1 MHz (Sofala), 88.1 MHz (Burruga) and 89.3 MHz (Blayney) for retransmission of the 2BS service. ▶