



# FM radio services proposed for Launceston

The ABA has revised its proposals in relation to FM radio in Launceston and now plans to convert both commercial radio services and the ABC Local Radio service from the AM band to the FM band.

The revised proposals are contained in an explanatory paper and a revised draft variation to the Launceston licence area plan released on 20 December 2004.

'The ABA is concerned that there are no commercial FM radio services in Launceston. The proposal would result in residents of Launceston having access to the improved sound quality of FM commercial radio currently enjoyed in other Australian communities of comparable size,' said ABA Acting Chair, Ms Lyn Maddock.

The ABA is proposing that 7LA operate on 89.3 MHz and 7EX operate on 90.1 MHz in the FM band.

The ABA is also proposing that the ABC Local Radio service move from 711kHz on the AM band to operate on 91.7 MHz in the FM band. The ABC's other national radio services, NewsRadio, Classic FM, Radio National and Triple J all operate on the FM band in the Launceston region. The FM

channel will also result in improved reception of Local Radio in the area.

On the evidence currently before it, the ABA is not satisfied that an additional community radio service in the Launceston market would be likely to add substantial diversity to the programs available in the market. An aspirant community radio group, World Music Radio, has expressed interest in providing a multicultural community radio service in the area. The ABA notes the proposal to introduce a self-help SBS radio service in Launceston (with the Launceston City Council as licence holder) and proposes to review the community radio situation in two years.

The revised draft variation to the Launceston radio licence area plan is available from the ABA website or by calling Freecall 1800 226 667.

## Background

The Launceston area is currently served by two AM commercial radio services, 7LA and 7EX. These operate on 1098 kHz and 1008 kHz respectively, at a maximum ERP of 5 kW. The area is also served by two

wide coverage community radio services (7LTN and 7WAY) as well as a community radio service for the print-handicapped that emanates from Hobart. There are local coverage community services in Northern Midlands and George Town.

The Launceston region is also served by five national ABC radio services. NewsRadio operates on FM 92.5MHz, Classic FM operates on FM 93.3 MHz, Radio National operates on FM 94.1 MHz, Triple J operates on FM 90.9 MHz, and Local Radio operates on AM 711 kHz.

FM radio channels have become available in Launceston since the ABC television service on VHF channel 3 in North East Tasmania (Mt Barrow) was turned off. The ABC television service is now operating on the UHF band. As VHF channel 3 overlaps the FM radio band, this change has resulted in the availability of additional FM channels in the Launceston area.

The ABA has identified FM 89.3 MHz and 90.1 MHz as available for use in Launceston, co-sited at Mt Barrow. These frequencies are suitable to operate as high power services with a maximum ERP of 5 kW (directional) from the existing NE Tasmania Broadcast Aus-

tralia (BA) site at Mt Barrow. The ABA has also identified 91.7 MHz as a high power service with a maximum ERP of 192 kW to operate from Mt Barrow and 104.5 MHz as a medium power service with a maximum ERP of 3.5 kW to operate from Trevallyn.

In September 2004, the ABA released an explanatory paper and a draft variation to the licence area plan for Launceston proposing that the 7LA commercial radio service convert to 89.3 MHz in the FM band. The ABA also proposed that an SBS retransmission service be made available on FM 104.5 MHz, to operate from Trevallyn. The draft licence area plan variation did not propose any changes to the ABC Local Radio service and did not propose to make available an additional community radio service or open narrowcasting radio services.

The ABA has revised its draft variation to Launceston licence area plan and is proposing conversion of the 7EX commercial radio service and the ABC Local Radio service from the AM to the FM band. The ABA has not revised its proposals in respect to community radio or open narrowcasting radio. ☐