

Significant events exemption for equipment testing and labelling

ACMA recently sought public comment on a proposal to exempt international visitors to Australia, who import radiocommunications equipment solely for use at 'significant events', from compliance with testing and labelling requirements of Australian technical standards.

Various kinds of radiocommunications devices are brought into Australia for use by international media representatives, participants and organisers for use immediately before and during short-term events such as the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne.

Changes to the regulatory arrangements exempts importers from the obligation to label and test devices brought into Australia for the duration of a designated significant event. It also gives ACMA greater flexibility in managing the licensing aspects of such events. For the most part, equipment supplied for such events would comply with the relevant Australian Standards if it were tested.

ACMA will determine whether an event is a significant event on a case-by-case basis and will identify the event as such on a specific webpage on the ACMA website. The webpage will provide details of the event, including the duration and location(s).

Where an event is being evaluated for determination as a significant event, licensing is still required for all equipment used at the event and normal frequency assignment processes will apply.

The exemption only applies to the period in which the significant event runs, at specified locations, and covers only those devices imported solely for use at the event. The arrangements do not condone the use of equipment in Australia without ACMA having further risk-mitigation processes in place.



ACMA, in conjunction with event organisers, will examine the need for implementing mechanisms to minimise any risks or harm to radiocommunications users, for example:

- provision of on-site ACMA staff to provide regulatory support
- on-site monitoring and interference resolution resources
- assessment and clearance of all equipment before it is used
- labelling of all devices assessed to indicate whether they can be used or not and
- frequency coordination for users of class licensed devices such as radio microphones.

Event organisers, users and suppliers will be specifically

informed that:

- the imported equipment is only exempted from normal compliance arrangements for the duration of the event and at specified locations indicated on the significant events page on the ACMA website and
- at the conclusion of the event equipment should be exported, otherwise the equipment becomes subject to and must comply with normal regulatory arrangements.

ACMA proposes to amend all the relevant technical standards made under section 162 of the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*, which are listed in Schedule 3 of the *Radiocommunications Devices (Compliance Labelling) Notice 2003*. Comments on the proposed changes closed on 31 August 2005.

The changes are expected to come into effect in October 2005.

Similar amendments were made recently to the *Telecommunications Labelling (Customer Equipment and Customer Cabling) Notice 2001*. These exempted importers of telecommunications equipment and cabling from the need to comply with applicable standards where the equipment is imported solely for use at a significant event, with connection managed by the telecommunications network operator, and is exported at the conclusion of the event.

For more information, contact ACMA by email to noel.higgins@acma.gov.au.