

Framework for the introduction of digital radio

Senator Coonan has announced a framework to guide the introduction of digital radio in Australia.

In announcing the framework, the Minister said that as radio is the only mainstream broadcasting platform to remain analog-only, and with increasing competition from new digital platforms such as the internet and mobile phones, the radio industry needs the certainty to plan and promote the potential benefits of digital radio.

EUREKA 147

Under the framework, Australia will implement terrestrial digital radio based upon European Digital Audio Broadcasting Standards, also known as Eureka 147.

The commercial, national and wide-coverage community broadcasters currently operating in the broadcasting services bands in the six state capital cities will have the opportunity to participate and will share the available digital spectrum.

There will be a moratorium on the allocation of new broadcasting services bands commercial radio licences. This moratorium will be for six years from the commencement of the first digital broadcasts.

The moratorium will preclude new commercial entrants to the broadcasting services bands in digital for the period of the moratorium. There will be no new restrictions on current or

potential commercial digital radio services operating outside the broadcasting services bands.

There will be dedicated spectrum for the two national broadcasters, a guaranteed minimum level of broadcast capacity to incumbent commercial broadcasters (more spectrum will be available if new services are offered), guaranteed access to the digital platform for wide-area community broadcasters, no simulcast requirement and a first right of refusal to broadcasters to control the multiplex and hold relevant spectrum for a nominal administration cost.

The full details of the policy are on www.minister.dcita.gov.au/



Photo courtesy Broadcast Australia

Final annual reports for the ABA and ACA

The final annual reports of the Australian Broadcasting Authority and the Australian Communications Authority, prepared by the Australian Communications and Media Authority, are now available.

'The merger of the ABA and the ACA to form ACMA was a major focus for both agencies through the year,' said Lyn Maddock, Acting ACMA Chair. 'The establishment of ACMA will enable a coordinated regulatory response to converging technologies and services in areas as diverse as spectrum

management and content regulation. The hard work by members and staff of both organisations during the year ensured a smooth transition into the new agency for staff of both former agencies.'

Both reports are available on the ACMA website, www.acma.gov.au and go to ACMA > Publications > Information about ACMA > Annual Reports, or telephone 1800 226 667 or 03 9963 6968.