

Broadcasters comply with HDTV quota for 2005

All television broadcasters, except TND Darwin, reported that they met their quota requirements for the broadcast of high definition television (HDTV) programs on their digital services in 2005. The quota was introduced for all national and commercial television broadcasters as part of the conversion from analog to digital transmission currently under way in Australia.

Digital services allow broadcasters to provide significantly enhanced picture clarity and quality, through the production of programs in high definition quality video. To ensure viewers receive the benefits of the new technology, a quota for high definition programs has been introduced progressively, to begin two years after a broadcaster commences broadcasting in digital mode in its area.

Popular prime-time programs broadcast in high definition in 2005 included *Law and Order: Criminal Intent* on the Ten Network, *Grey's Anatomy* on the Seven Network and *The Alice* on the Nine Network.

The ABC and the SBS are permitted to 'up-convert' their analog or standard definition digital programs to high definition digital format. For example, the ABC program, *The Bill*, has been up-converted to a high definition format. The SBS has converted all the programs on its main channel to a high definition format (its *World News Channel* is only broadcast in standard definition).

All regional digital services have now started HDTV broadcasts, apart from the digital-only services in Tasmania and Mildura. These are required to start HDTV programming in September 2006 (TDT Tasmania) and January 2008 (MDV Mildura).

TND Darwin's obligation to meet the HDTV quota commenced on 1 April 2005. Calculated on a pro rata basis, this meant that TND was required to broadcast 780 hours in its first quota period. However, it only broadcast 772 hours and 52 minutes, a shortfall of seven hours and eight minutes.

TND admitted its failure to broadcast the required number of hours to meet its HDTV quota and cited technical difficulties as one cause of its failure to reach the quota. TND has advised ACMA that these technical problems have now been rectified and also stated that while it had made significant efforts to make up the quota during the year, it had underestimated the HDTV amount of programming required. In light of the actions taken by TND to ensure that the problem does not recur, ACMA is not proposing to take further action against the licensee at present.

All commercial and national television broadcasters in mainland capital cities were required to begin transmitting their services in standard definition digital mode, simultaneously with their analog services, from 1 January 2001. The obligation to broadcast a minimum of 1,040 hours per year of high definition programs for these services commenced on 1 July 2003.

Compliance figures for the national broadcasters and metropolitan commercial networks are shown in the table and figures for individual broadcasters, including regional licensees, are on the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au (go to Radio & TV > Digital broadcasting > Digital TV > Compliance).

Broadcaster	HDTV hours broadcast (range)
ABC	2,004-2,456
Nine Network	1,835-1,842
SBS	5,237-6,887
Seven Network	1,565-1,642
Ten Network	1,274

Continued from page 1

CYBERSMART DETECTIVES COMES TO PERTH

Aimed at young people in the upper primary school age range (a group identified as most 'at risk'), Cybersmart Detectives uses the internet to teach young people key internet safety messages, especially those related to use of internet chat rooms. The key messages are:

- Parents should monitor their children's use of the internet, particularly chat rooms.
- Children should never give out personal information when they're chatting online.
- If children want to meet face-to-face someone that they've chatted with, they should always take a parent with them.
- Be aware that in the online environment, people may not be who they say they are.

ACMA administers Australia's co-regulatory scheme for internet content, established under Schedule 5 to the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, providing advice and assistance through its internet safety website, www.cybersmartkids.com.au, and printed resources. ACMA also has a complaints hotline at www.acma.gov.au/hotline for reporting offensive internet material.

The brochures *Cybersmart Guide* and *How to be Phone Smart* are on the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au (go to Internet > Content Regulation > Community awareness) or from ACMA.