

PROPOSAL TO REMOVE INCONSISTENCY IN THE RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS ACT

ACMA has called for comment on a proposal to amend the Radiocommunications Act so devices using emerging technologies can be authorised to operate under a class licence.

Currently, section 138 of the Act restricts ACMA's ability to issue or amend a class licence to authorise devices when the frequency has been designated for spectrum licensing (under section 36). This would mean that the operator of the new device would have to negotiate with relevant spectrum licensees to operate, under a third party authorisation, in segments of the spectrum already allocated to these licensees. While this is not the case for spectrum re-allocated

for spectrum licensing under section 153B of the Act, in other cases the operator could face a difficult and onerous task.

One example of the new technologies that could benefit from the change is ground-penetrating radar. ACMA recently received a proposal to authorise this low-powered ultra-wide band technology which uses short pulses of radiofrequency emission to penetrate the ground—a useful tool for engineers and architects, among others. ACMA has found that an increasing number of new devices, like ground-penetrating radar, require large bandwidth but many have low potential for interference.

THE PROPOSED SOLUTION

ACMA proposes to amend the Radiocommunications Act to allow class licences to be issued in frequencies covered by a section 36 designation.

The proposal is in the discussion paper, *Proposal to Amend the Radiocommunications Act to Allow the Authorisation of Devices under Class Licences in Spectrum Designated for Spectrum Licensing (section 36)*, which is on the ACMA website, www.acma.gov.au (go to Latest > For Comment > Issues for Comment).

SUBMISSIONS

The closing date for submissions is 17 February 2006.

ACMA PRESENTS: Wireless Spectrum Strategies 2006

A seminar on future spectrum needs for wireless access and mobile television. See pages 23, 24 for more information, or go to www.acma.gov.au

INQUIRY INTO COMMUNITY BROADCASTING

On 19 January 2006 the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts asked the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts to inquire into and report on issues pertaining to community broadcasting in Australia.

The Committee invites interested persons and organisations to make submissions addressing the terms of reference by 17 March 2006.

For more information go to: www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cita/community_broadcasting/index.htm

New community radio service for Perth?

ACMA has proposed that an additional community radio service be made available for the Perth city area using the frequency 90.5 MHz. Two active aspirant community broadcasters, Capital Community Radio and Western Sports Media, will share the frequency until March 2006.

MAKING WAY FOR DIGITAL RADIO

ACMA is also proposing to withdraw the availability of MF AM channel 1170 kHz for an open narrowcasting service in Perth, given the potential suitability of the frequency for future digital radio services in

Western Australia's south west.

ACMA invited aspirant narrowcasters to contact it about any other AM options available in Perth, for example lower power channels with less potential for digital radio services in regional areas.

The proposals are in the revised draft variation to the Perth licence area plan and explanatory paper released on 14 December 2005 and available on the ACMA website, www.acma.gov.au. (Go to Latest > For Comment > Broadcasting > Draft licence area plans (LAPs)) or telephone 1800 810 241 for a copy. The closing date for comment was 6 February 2006.

New class licence proposed for aircraft stations and some aeronautical mobiles

ACMA is proposing to issue a new class licence, under section 132 of the Radiocommunications Act, to accommodate the radiocommunications devices displaced by the proposed revocation of Radiocommunications (Aircraft Stations) Class Licence 2001.

The licence is considered too restrictive to allow for the full range of radiocommunications required within the aviation industry.

The proposed new licence contains the licence conditions, operating requirements and technical parameters for radiocommunications in the aeronautical bands of the radiofrequency spectrum. It will authorise aircraft stations and certain aeronautical mobiles, whether ground-based or carried in aircraft.

In conjunction with this proposal, ACMA also intends to make a new determination for apparatus licensing arrangements supporting aeronautical stations.

The closing date for comment was 27 January 2006.

For more information contact Meg Owen, Space and Terrestrial Regulation Section, telephone (02) 6219 5279 email: margaret.owen@acma.gov.au

Proposal to vary the radiocommunications miscellaneous devices class licence

ACMA is developing a new licensing regime to accommodate emergency position indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs), 406 MHz EPIRBs, personal locator beacons (PLBs), 406 MHz PLBs and the maritime survivor locating system.

To support the new regime, ACMA proposes to vary, under section 134 of the Radiocommunications Act, the Miscellaneous Devices Class Licence 1999 to remove a reference to emergency locating beacon devices authorised by the licence.

The closing date for comment was 27 January 2006.

For more information, contact Rebecca Dale, Space and Terrestrial Regulation Section, telephone: (02) 6219 5578 email: radiocommunications.licensing.policy@acma.gov.au