



ACMAsphere

Australia's regulator for broadcasting, the internet,
radiocommunications and telecommunications

www.acma.gov.au

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TALKING RADIO-QUIETNESS



AN IMPRESSION OF HOW A SINGLE ARRAY STATION (PART OF THE SQUARE KILOMETRE ARRAY) WOULD LOOK AT MILEURA STATION
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ACMA is providing both technical and regulatory support, through its Radio-Quiet Zone project team, for an Australian bid to host the world's premier radio astronomy facility, the square kilometre array (SKA) telescope, at a site in Western Australia. The site

may also be suitable for other radioastronomy facilities.

The square kilometre array is a one billion Euro project, run by an international consortium, to build a radioastronomy facility significantly better than any in existence. Australia is one of four countries bidding

to host the array, and a decision on site ranking is expected later this year. The bid has federal government support and is being coordinated by the Australasian SKA Consortium.

The radio-quiet zone aims to maintain the current 'radio-quietness' of a site in remote

Western Australia (near Mileura Station, around 120 km east of Meekatharra). The area has very low levels of radiofrequency energy because of its low population and remoteness.

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INTERNET COMPLAINTS IN JANUARY 2006

INTERNET HOTLINE

Established under Schedule 5 to the Broadcasting Services Act, ACMA's internet complaints hotline enables Australian residents to complain to ACMA about prohibited or potentially prohibited internet content. Complaints can be registered at www.acma.gov.au/hotline.

ASSESSING INTERNET CONTENT

Internet content is assessed in accordance with the National Classification Code and Guidelines. The prohibited categories for Australian-hosted content are RC (Refused Classification), X 18+ (consensual sexually explicit material), and material rated R 18+ (Restricted) that is not protected by adult verification procedures. For overseas-hosted content, the prohibited categories are RC and X 18+.

Australian-hosted items

For Australian-hosted prohibited items, ACMA issues a take-down notice to the relevant internet content host (ICH), directing the ICH not to host the content. Failure to comply with such a notice may result in a maximum penalty per day of \$5,500 for an individual and \$27,500 for a corporation.

Overseas-hosted items

For overseas-hosted prohibited or potentially prohibited items, ACMA

notifies the content to the suppliers of approved filter software in accordance with procedures outlined in the internet industry codes of practice. Under the codes, internet service providers are required to provide one or more approved filters for the use of their subscribers.

If ACMA finds internet content is of a 'sufficiently serious' nature (such as child pornography), it will notify the relevant police force and/or the relevant accredited hotline.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints received	55
Invalid complaints ¹	5
Investigations terminated ²	10
Investigations completed	44
Items actioned ³	41

ITEMS ACTIONED. JANUARY 2006

CLASSIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF INTERNET CONTENT ⁴	AUSTRALIAN-HOSTED ITEMS (TAKE-DOWN NOTICE ISSUED)	OVERSEAS-HOSTED ITEMS (REFERRED TO MAKERS OF FILTERS)	TOTAL
X – Actual sexual activity	0	16	16
RC – Child – depiction	0	22	22
RC – Bestiality – depiction	0	1	1
RC – Sexual violence – depiction	0	1	1
RC – Sexual fantasy – depiction	0	1	1
TOTALS	0	41	41

- 1 A complaint is not investigated by ACMA if:
- the complaint does not meet the statutory requirements under clause 22(3) and clause 25 of Schedule 5 (e.g. no internet address provided; complainant not an Australian resident) or
 - the complaint falls within the

meaning of clause 26(2) of Schedule 5 (frivolous, vexatious, not made in good faith, or made for the purpose of frustrating or undermining the effective administration of the scheme) or

- the complaint concerns matters not within the scope of Schedule 5 (e.g. the complaint relates to an electronic 'virus').

- 2 A complaint is terminated under clause 26(4) of Schedule 5 if ACMA has insufficient information to conclude the investigation.
- 3 ACMA assesses each piece of internet content, such as a single web page or newsgroup posting, separately (these are referred to as 'items' of internet content). Action is taken in relation to

- 4 Descriptions of internet content in this table are based on the National Classification Board's Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games 2005, available at www.oflc.gov.au/resource.html?resource=62&file_name=62.pdf.

ACMA TALKS RADIO-QUIETNESS

WORKSHOP

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ACMA representatives participated in a poster session, raising awareness of the radio-quiet zone for the square kilometre array (see photo, right), at the Workshop on the Applications of Radio Science (WARS2006) in Leura in New South Wales' Blue Mountains, on 15–16 February. Conducted by the National Committee for Radio Science (NCRS), these forums are a means for presenting current work in radio science, particularly in Australia, and an opportunity for radio scientists to discuss and promote new work.

As well as presentations on a number of insightful square kilometre array and astronomy projects, at the workshop this year there were

presentations on HF, VHF and UHF radio wave propagation, upgrading the capacity of existing fibre-optic networks and developments for wireless networking.

RADIOASTRONOMY

The study of radioastronomy requires the reception of extremely weak

signals from distant parts of the universe. Radioastronomy receivers therefore need to be very sensitive. Radiofrequency interference from man-made sources can easily mask the signals being studied. The aim of a radio-quiet zone is to limit the effects of man-made noise so that

radioastronomy has an optimal environment to receive signals.

There also needs to be a balance between providing adequate protection to radioastronomy, while not unfairly denying access to the radiofrequency spectrum to the surrounding community.



(L-R) ACMA'S ANDREW STEWART, ALEX SENETA, ERIK LENSSON AND VAUGHAN BARRY, AND THE POSTER PRESENTED AT WARS2006.