



Milestones in digital TV switchover

The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, recently announced milestones in Australia's digital television revolution in September 2008.

A Bill allowing a rolling switchover has been introduced to parliament and research programs vital to the free-to-air digital television transition are now underway.

'The Rudd Government is getting on with the job of the digital television switchover. This Bill and research arrangements will allow us to meet our commitment in a sensible, considered way', Senator Conroy said.

The Broadcasting Legislation (Digital Television Switchover) Bill 2008 will ensure that a phased approach to turning the analog signal off is completed in 2013.

'The government is now able to set a flexible, region-by-region timetable for analog signal turn-off, taking into account local market circumstances and community feedback', Senator Conroy said.

The Minister has announced a \$4.8 million contract for Newspoll to launch the Digital Tracker research program. Reporting quarterly, it will provide vital information on regional switchover trends, which can be used by the broadcast industry, retailers and antenna installers.

Executive Director of the Digital Switchover Taskforce, Andy Townend, said the Digital Tracker is designed to provide long-term, large-scale research into awareness and understanding of the digital television switchover.

'This research tool will provide the taskforce with insights into digital conversion rates, intention to convert and public feedback so we can ensure the national campaign to inform the community is effective', Mr Townend said.

A \$1 million technical survey to assist with the

special digital television reception issues for some flats, apartments and townhouses, known as Multi-Dwelling Units, is also now underway. It is being conducted by Australian Digital Testing.

'We will survey 600 sites across the nation to provide estimates of the cost and timeframes needed to rectify problems within different sizes and types of buildings, so we can provide timely and practical information to the public', Mr Townend said.

The taskforce is calling for expressions of interest from relevant parties to have their buildings included in the project.

Expressions of interest can be sent to housing@digitalswitchover.gov.au