

The ACMA releases 3.6 GHz band for WAS

Spectrum in the 3575–3700 MHz band (the 3.6 GHz band) is being released to support the deployment of wireless access services (WAS) in regional and remote areas of Australia.

The ACMA is responsible for facilitating access to spectrum for new technologies and managing the radiofrequency spectrum in accordance with the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*. This is done in a flexible and responsive manner to balance the needs of existing spectrum users.

'Availability of spectrum in regional areas for broadband wireless access services—in bands for which equipment can be readily sourced—has emerged as a major issue for broadband wireless access services and users,' said Chris Chapman, Chairman of the ACMA.

The release of the 3.6 GHz band for WAS aims to address this demand in regional and remote areas of Australia in the short to medium term.

WAS encompasses a range of services including:

- > fixed wireless access
- > broadband wireless access
- > wireless local loop
- > multipoint distribution system
- > radio local area network.

Mobile telephony services and mobile television can also be considered as types of WAS. Examples of broadband wireless access service technologies include WiFi, WiMAX and IMT.

The ACMA first announced its intention to allow the use of the 3.6 GHz band for the deployment of WAS on 14 October 2008. In April 2009, the discussion paper *Release of the 3.6 GHz band for Wireless Access Services* was released and 21 submissions were received from industry and stakeholders regarding the associated policies and allocation methodologies. The ACMA decided to release the 3.6 GHz band for WAS in regional and remote areas of Australia as a result of this consultation process.

Following the release of the 3.6 GHz band, the current spectrum embargo will be lifted to allow applications for point-to-multipoint apparatus licences, which will be received and assessed via the administrative allocation process. The ACMA is in the process of developing an appropriate price-based allocation (PBA)

framework to allocate apparatus licences in the pre-defined PBA areas of the 3.6 GHz band.

The administrative allocation process, also called an over the counter (OTC) process, will be applied in regional and remote areas where:

- > it is anticipated there will be limited demand
- > analysis demonstrates that sufficient spectrum is expected to be available to meet demand.

A PBA process will apply in pre-defined geographic areas where:

- > the ACMA anticipates some demand for access to spectrum due to the population density within the area
- > analysis demonstrates that the amount of spectrum available may be limited as a result of incumbent services in the band.

The ACMA intends to release the geographic areas subject to allocation via the OTC process one at a time. Applications will be assessed as they are received and in accordance with the assignment model set out in Radiocommunications Assignment and Licensing Instruction FX19 (RALI FX19).

There will be a 10-day application window for point-to-multipoint transmitter licences. The first application window will commence on 16 November 2009 and close on 27 November 2009 for Area 1, which includes parts of south-east South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and southern New South Wales (see map). The ACMA will invite applications for the other defined geographic areas in due course.

The 21 submissions received by the ACMA in response to the discussion paper can be viewed on the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au (go to For licensees & industry: Service & technical requirements > Radiofrequency spectrum: Frequency assignment & coordination > Latest developments).

Complete details on the allocation and application process, as well as the relevant technical documentation, can also be viewed on the ACMA website (go to For licensees & industry: Service & technical requirements > Radiofrequency spectrum: Frequency assignment & coordination > Latest developments > Release of the 3.6 GHz band in regional and remote areas of Australia).

For further information, contact Brett McClymont on 02 6219 5550 or via email lais@acma.gov.au.

Pre-defined geographic areas subject to allocation

