

ACMA believes that reform of 400 MHz band arrangements is urgently needed and is important to Australia's future. A significant proposal in the consultation paper is the proposed identification of a harmonised government band to facilitate interoperability between government agencies, particularly those providing law enforcement, security and emergency services.

MATTERS for comment

ACMA is seeking public and industry comment on a consultation paper detailing proposals for changes to arrangements in the 400 MHz band.

Future arrangements in the 400 MHz band

The paper discusses planning options and presents a number of innovative proposals for the future use of the radiofrequency spectrum in the range 403–520 MHz (the 400 MHz band). This band is 'prime real estate' for the land mobile service, and is also important to other services, including the fixed (point-to-point and point-to-multipoint), radiolocation and amateur services. The paper has been prepared following an initial consultation in April 2008 where a broad range of options were introduced.

ACMA believes that reform of 400 MHz band arrangements is urgently needed and is important to Australia's future. In pursuing change, ACMA is committed to delivering improved efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility, and also to maximising the public benefit arising from use of this spectrum.

A significant proposal in the consultation paper is the proposed identification of a harmonised government band to facilitate interoperability between government agencies, particularly those providing law enforcement, security and emergency services.

Other proposals outlined in the paper include:

- creation of a 6.25 kHz channel raster with aggregation to 12.5 kHz permitted
- prohibition over time of channels greater than 12.5 kHz in high and medium-density areas (unless justification can be provided)
- changes to frequency assignment and coordination rules
- provision of a 10 MHz duplex frequency split segment in part of the 450–470 MHz band to facilitate flexible technology choices and options for the allocation of this spectrum
- flagging an increase in apparatus licence taxes in high-density areas as an incentive for efficient use of the spectrum
- no changes to arrangements in the 440–450 MHz band
- no change to duplex split arrangements in the 470–520 MHz band
- options to address the expiry of spectrum licence in the upper 400 MHz band (commonly referred to as the 500 MHz spectrum licences)
- retention of the spectrum embargo in the 518–520 MHz band to preserve options pending 'digital dividend' outcomes
- changes to the bandwidth and number of channels in the Citizen Band Radio Service.

Input from stakeholders on the proposals put forward in the paper is essential to determine the best arrangements for future use of the 400 MHz band. The discussion paper is available in pdf (1.2 Mb) or Microsoft Word (2.45 Mb) formats on the ACMA website www.acma.gov.au. Go to About ACMA: News and media centre: Issues for comment.

The closing date for submission is **COB Friday 29 May 2009** and may be made by email: 400MHzreview@acma.gov.au

or post:

Mr Andrew Stewart
Government Planning Section
Australian Communications and Media Authority
PO Box 78
Belconnen ACT 2616

Electronic submissions in Microsoft Word or rich-text format are preferred.

Please direct any questions about this discussion paper to Adam Clash:

02 6219 5170 or adam.clash@acma.gov.au.