

# Review of the 2.5 GHz spectrum band

Following release of a discussion paper on 12 January 2010, the ACMA is seeking comment on options for the future pricing, planning and licensing arrangements for the 2.5 GHz band.

As a consequence of consultation processes on the frequency range 2500–2690 MHz (the 2.5 GHz band) since 2006, the ACMA has reached a preliminary view that the current planning, licensing and pricing arrangements for this band may not support its future efficient allocation and use. The ACMA has developed a wide-ranging discussion paper about future options for the 2.5 GHz band, including options for the current incumbent users, to give all stakeholders the opportunity to comment on technical and policy issues associated with the use of the spectrum.

At present, the 2.5 GHz band is used almost exclusively in Australia by free-to-air television broadcasters for outside broadcasting, which includes electronic news gathering (ENG). The purpose of the discussion paper—*Review of the 2.5 GHz band and the long-term arrangements for ENG*—is to seek comment from industry and interested parties on a range of options for the future pricing and planning arrangements for the 2.5 GHz band; and the appropriateness of several other bands to provide suitable long-term spectrum arrangements for ENG.

The discussion paper follows the ACMA's announcement in October 2008 that it intended to review the 2.5 GHz band to determine how it can be planned and allocated to maximise the overall benefit derived from that spectrum. The announcement was in response to the review of spectrum options for meeting the increasing demand for wireless access services (WAS).

'This review has two important objectives,' said Chris Chapman, Chairman of the ACMA. 'It is intended to identify how the 2.5 GHz band should be planned and allocated so that it accords with its highest value use. Also, we need to identify suitable long-term spectrum arrangements to support the essential ENG services, especially since there has been uncertainty about the long-term spectrum arrangements for ENG services in Australia since

the international identification and harmonisation of the 2.5 GHz band for wireless access services in 2000. This review is an important step in removing that uncertainty, identifying appropriate future arrangements for ENG services and moving forward.'

ENG typically involves the rapid, unplanned deployment of radiofrequency video links to cover live news events, generally for short periods of time. Australian broadcasters have indicated that they consider the continued operation of spectrum for ENG, and access to it, to be essential to the successful coverage of news in Australia. The 2.5 GHz band review therefore addresses some of the uncertainty broadcasters have faced by identifying the following range of bands which, in combination, might be suitable for ENG operations:

- > shared use of the bands 2025–2110 MHz and 2200–2300 MHz
- > exclusive use of the band 2010–2025 MHz, at least in capital city areas
- > ENG access to the bands 1980–2010 MHz and 2170–2200 MHz
- > exclusive use of the band 2570–2620 MHz Australia-wide (part of the 2.5 GHz band).

## Preliminary view

At this point in the 2.5 GHz band review, the ACMA's preliminary view is that ENG services should continue to operate in some part of the 2.5 GHz band, and that the remainder of the band might be available for WAS via spectrum licensing in major metropolitan areas, and may be available for both ENG and WAS in other areas.

'The ACMA is committed to consultation and collaboration on spectrum matters', said Mr Chapman, who encourages all interested stakeholders to read this important discussion paper and consider making a submission to the ACMA.

The ACMA will hold a 2.5 GHz Spectrum Tune-Up meeting on 5 March 2010 at the National Convention Centre, Canberra. The ACMA encourages all interested parties to consider attending this Spectrum Tune-Up so that they can express their views about the 2.5 GHz review and other related issues.

Closing date for submissions for the discussion paper is 12 March 2010. Submissions should be sent by email to [2.5GHzproject@acma.gov.au](mailto:2.5GHzproject@acma.gov.au).

For more information on this issue and to access a copy of the *Review of the 2.5 GHz band and the long-term arrangements for ENG* discussion paper, visit the ACMA website at [www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au) (go to About ACMA: News & media centre > Issues for comment > IFC 01/2010).

Figure 1: Example of a typical electronic news gathering system

