

New guide released to complement the ACMA's evidence-informed approach to regulation

A new publication designed to guide stakeholders and citizens through the ACMA's formal, written consultation processes was released in February. *Effective consultation: The ACMA's guide to making a submission* forms part of the ACMA's overall approach to regulation, which is outlined in another publication also released in February called *Evidence-informed regulation: The ACMA approach*.

As an evidence-informed regulator, the ACMA uses an array of information and analysis to ensure that its decision-making and regulatory policy development is informed by a sound evidence base. Key forms of information used by the ACMA include: industry data, social and market research, international approaches to regulation and consultation mechanisms. The ACMA analyses and considers this material to develop a balanced and appropriate response to regulatory issues.

'We use high-quality evidence from a wide range of sources to inform our regulatory development and decision-making,' said Chris Chapman, Chairman of the ACMA. 'This is outlined in our statement of approach to evidence-informed regulation and a good practical example can be seen in the way that various forms of evidence have informed the ACMA's current review of the commercial radio standards.'

'While the ACMA already employs a range of measures to promote best practice, we will continually strive to make improvements and hone our decision-making approach. One of our current initiatives is this publication of guidance to stakeholders on how to make a submission to our consultation processes.'

Consultation provides a key source of information for the ACMA's regulatory decision-making. The ACMA is committed to consultation on regulatory issues, and to ensuring transparency through its practice of publishing responses to submissions to external consultations. To the ACMA, effective consultation means ensuring that all interested stakeholders have the opportunity to be heard before a final decision is made.

The *Effective consultation* document provides practical tips for stakeholders, particularly for those who may be unfamiliar with formal consultation processes. All stakeholders are encouraged to consider this guidance

The ACMA convenes a number of regular consultative and advisory panels and hold conferences and seminars at which stakeholders are encouraged to put forward their views. Social and market research is also used

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when drafting their submissions to an ACMA issues paper. Tips for preparing submissions to the ACMA's written consultation processes include:

- > tailoring submissions to the issue(s) under consideration
- > clarifying whose viewpoints are represented by the submission
- > providing reasons for the views expressed
- > providing supporting evidence, where possible
- > adopting a broad definition of 'evidence'
- > having a look at previous submissions to consultation exercises.

Apart from formal, written consultation processes, the ACMA employs a number of ways of consulting and engaging in dialogue with stakeholders, recognising that written consultation has its limits, with some interested parties better placed than others to respond.

to better understand the views, needs and behaviours of those who may have an interest in, or be affected by media and communications regulation. ☎

Both documents, *Effective consultation: The ACMA's guide to making a submission* and *Evidence-informed regulation: The ACMA approach* are available on the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au (go to About ACMA: the ACMA organisation > Service, accountability & reporting > Evidence-informed regulation and Effective consultation).

