

ACMA announces new policy for 3D TV trials

The ACMA will consider authorising further trials of 3D TV and other emerging technologies until the end of 2011, using the currently unassigned digital channels.

The Authority has now set out its approach to further trials to help broadcasters and the community understand the conditions under which such trials may be considered. This includes several additional requirements and limitations on the authorisation of trials.

'Recent 3D TV trials have helped pioneer a new form of broadcasting in Australia and internationally,' said ACMA Chairman Chris Chapman.

'Providing appropriate safeguards are in place to protect consumers' interests, the ACMA will continue to facilitate industry's deployment of 3D TV and other evolving technologies in the period to the end of 2011.

'The ACMA has a unique opportunity to provide access to valuable UHF spectrum that will only be available for a short period of time during the switchover from analog to digital television.'

The 7 MHz digital television channel that has been used for 3D TV trials is only available for a limited period pending completion of the digital switchover occurring between 2010 and 2013.

This channel, which is currently available in most areas of Australia and is commonly referred to as Channel B, will be subsumed in the UHF channel replanning process known as 'restack'.

The decision to allow further trials follows a review of a series of 3D TV trials in seven locations around Australia in 2010.

These trials have provided valuable information to industry on the application of the new 'frame compatible' method of 3D transmission.

The tests also gave viewers possessing 3D TV receivers within the test transmission areas the opportunity to experience a new and still-evolving form of broadcast television.

In September 2010, the ACMA released a discussion paper, *Temporary trials of 3D TV and other emerging technologies*, which called for comment on a range of matters associated with trials of new technology, including spectrum allocation and consumer issues.

The ACMA considered responses to the discussion paper, reports from broadcasters on the 2010 3D TV trials, and other information on the evolution of 3D TV from both Australian and international sources.

It concluded that further trials of 3D TV could provide broadcasters with valuable information about this new technology, but that additional safeguards were needed to manage consumer expectations about the continuing availability of 3D broadcasts. ☞

The ACMA's approach to further trials, and the responses it received to the discussion paper, can be found on the new 3D TV section of the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au (go to For licensees and industry: Licensing and regulation > Broadcasting: Broadcasting licensing > Current activities > 3D Television).

