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nical information contained in the FAP as background against which the priorities can be set.

But the danger of releasing the two documents together is that rather than determine service priorities and the plan accordingly, the draft FAP simply reflects what services now exist or are planned, and appears to open up only what is left over.

Certainly, the FAP does not indicate what channels might be available for low power narrowcast services in each area. When it was asked specifically about planning for more narrowcast services, the ABA response at the Sydney seminar was that frequencies not planned or allocated for broadcasting might be available for narrowcasting, or might possibly be passed to the Spectrum Management Agency to be allocated on a price-based system.

The clear message from the seminar was that anyone interested in providing services, including narrowcast services, should immediately say so or risk not being allowed for in future.

Seminar participants also expressed concern about how the ABA will make frequencies available to aspiring service providers. The ABA talked about making 'efficient' rather than 'maximum' use of the spectrum, and releasing spectrum in line with demand rather than flooding the market. To some at the seminar, this sounded more like protecting established broadcasters than releasing spectrum for new services.

## Beauty Contests Might Sneak Back

Questions from the floor raised the possibility of the re-emergence of service allocation by beauty contest.

Perhaps conscious of the current debate on allocation of pay TV licences, the ABA said that, in granting community licences, the initial grant will be a three month licence for test transmission, during which time the ABA can assess the licensee's capability of providing the service.

Further, while the ABA has not yet determined a price-based allocation system for licensing commercial services, it did raise the possibility of setting some initial hurdle which all applicants would have to meet, such as a deposit, and possibly suitability requirements set out in the Act.

The Act does not require prospective licensees to be judged as 'suitable' by the ABA before a licence is allocated, but it does give the ABA the power to make judgements about suitability if it decides to do so. The issue then is what process the ABA will follow to make such judgements, as none is provided for in the Act.

Another unresolved issue is whether - and when - planning priorities and frequency allotment plans will be reviewed. The criteria the ABA must have regard to in planning services include social and economic characteristics of an area, developments in technology and the demand for services - all of which will change over time.

If the ABA views this planning process as simply the first step in an ongoing process to determine and meet changing community needs, the public planning processes could, over time, meet Government objectives for new and diverse services in line with community demand. If not, however, the exercise may set the current broadcasting players in that slow hardening concrete, and with none of the former safeguards to ensure the licensees are suitable and are providing adequate and comprehensive services to the community.

As many at the meeting noted wryly, in either case, the lawyers are likely to do well out of the changes. □

*Holly Raiche*

Copies of the kits can be obtained by ringing 008 81 0241, and submissions will be accepted until 28 May. The ABA, after considering submissions and feedback from the seminars and workshop, will make and publish a determination of planning priorities in late July.

In the second half of the year, its consultations will continue in country areas, remote Australia and the Top End.

## Pioneer Public Station Comes of Age

**Adelaide's 5UV, the first public radio station to broadcast on the AM band, has just turned 21.**

The setting up of 5UV during the Whitlam era was a major landmark in the effort to establish community radio, the third sector of Australian broadcasting. Two decades on, Australia is considered a world leader in community broadcasting.

In 1970, a local businessman donated \$100,000 to set up the station based on the University of Adelaide, and it was given a communications licence, on the same band as taxis and police radio.

Keith Conlon was the first producer/manager when the station officially opened in 1972. The first programs were designed as courses with associated printed material. Listeners enrolled for a fee and received the notes. There was no music because the nature of the licence did not permit it.

In 1975, the University was granted an experimental licence, and music programs began. The licence required time to be given for community access, and community groups, ethnic broadcasters and other educational institutions used the station facilities.

Keith Conlon departed for commercial radio and later the ABC after 12 years. He was succeeded by Jill Lambert and later by the current incumbent, Jeff Langdon.

5UV continues to provide a wide range of programs including fine music, jazz, folk, news, arts, comedy and nostalgia, as well as having a continued strong education emphasis.

The station, which remains dependent on core funding from the University, will hold a two-day fundraising radiothon on 26-27 June, and CU urges all Adelaide readers to tune in and contribute. □