

TEMPORARY COMMUNITY BROADCASTING LICENCES

ALLOCATED, 16 MARCH-30 APRIL 2006

State	Licence area	Licensee	Community served	Frequency	Start	Finish	Allocated
WA	Bunbury RA 3	Harvey Mainstreet (Inc.)	General	96.5 MHz	20/5/06	19/5/07	24/3/06
Qld	Palm Island RA1	Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Welfare Association	Aboriginal	97.3 MHz	13/5/06	12/5/07	19/4/06

New Credit Management Code aims to deal with telecommunications debt

A revised industry code dealing with credit management practices in the telecommunications industry will provide improved protection for consumers vulnerable to financial hardship arising from telecommunications debt.

Registered by ACMA on 13 April 2006, the revised code contains new safeguards designed to help consumers, especially young people, avoid unexpected high telephone bills. These include introducing comprehensive financial hardship programs to assist customers experiencing difficulties paying their bills. Industry has committed to develop flexible programs to meet the needs of customers who may need this assistance. Telecommunications service providers must also offer tools such as call barring, caps on expenditure, download limits and pre-paid services to help customers manage their spending and avoid going into debt.

The code was developed by an Australian Communications Industry Forum (ACIF) committee comprised equally of consumer and industry representatives. The revised code is a practical outcome from a consultative, cooperative process and its completion demonstrates industry's commitment to developing a comprehensive credit management system.

Registration of the code means ACMA can issue directions to individual service providers to comply with the code. Providers have six months to implement the improved credit management practices required by the revised code.

If not satisfied with the response of their service provider to a complaint about credit management, consumers can make a complaint to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman.

The code outlines a framework for giving customers access to information and basic credit management

processes. These include:

- steps undertaken to enable a customer to gain and maintain access to services
- minimum steps (including acceptable minimum timeframes for advising customers) that a service provider must take before suspending, restricting or disconnecting a customer's services
- processes which follow disconnection of services, including the collection of debts and
- disclosure of customer personal information to a third party that may take place as a consequence of credit management action.

Large organisations are not covered by this code because they generally negotiate contractual arrangements with service providers that address individual credit issues whereas such negotiations are not available to individual consumers.

The changes include new requirements on service providers to:

- credit assess customers where usage or expenditure limits are not in place
- have credit control tools in place and available for use by customers to manage their expenditure
- enable customers to access current information on the unbilled amounts on their account of which the service provider is aware
- have a financial hardship policy to assist customers experiencing hardship, that is available on request and
- follow credit management processes before default-listing a customer.

To allow service providers time to implement the new code provisions, including staff training and preparation of public information about their credit control tools, the revised code is being implemented in two stages. Six months after registration, all code rules will be operational and enforceable.

The Credit Management Code is on the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au (go to Industry > Codes > Register of Codes) and the ACIF website at www.acif.org.au.

CHILDREN'S AND PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS GRANTED CLASSIFICATION, FEBRUARY 2006

Program title	Series	Episode	Style	Type	Country of origin	New/renewal	Classification	Decision date	Applicant
<i>Easter in Bunnyland</i>	n/a	n/a	Animation	Drama - other	Australia	Renewal	CD	3/4/06	Burbank Animation Studios Pty Ltd
<i>Erky Perky</i>	1	14-26	Animation	Drama - series	Australia	New	CD	20/3/06	Erky Perky Pty Ltd
<i>FARMkids</i>	1	1-13	Animation	Drama - series	Australia	New	CD	13/4/06	FARMkids Pty Ltd
<i>Jungle Girl and the Lost Island of the Dinosaurs</i>	n/a	n/a	Animation	Drama -telemovie (TV)	Australia	Renewal	CD	20/3/06	Burbank Animation Studios Pty Ltd

CD - Children's program drama. A classification expires five years after the date it was granted or renewed.