

90 days to apply for third commercial TV licence in Darwin

The licensees of Darwin's two commercial television stations have 90 days from 1 January 2006 to indicate, either jointly or separately, their intention to apply for a third, digital only, free-to-air commercial television licence for the Darwin area. The Nine Network's Territory Television Pty Ltd, licensee of NTD Darwin, and Telecasters Australia Pty Ltd (Southern Cross Broadcasters), licensee of TND Darwin, may apply for the licence as a joint-venture company or separately.

DESIGNATED TIME

ACMA determination of the 'designated time' (1 January 2006) started the process that may lead to the establishment of a third commercial television service for Darwin, unless some other mutual agreement is reached by the licensees.

NEXT STEPS

After submitting a written notice within the 90 days, Territory Television and Southern Cross Broadcasters or their joint-venture company, must apply for the licence within 12 months after the end of the 90 days. If the licence is allocated to a joint-venture company, it cannot be transferred for two years. If both Territory Television and Telecasters Australia decide to apply separately for the licence, ACMA will auction the licence. If there is only one application from an existing licensee, ACMA must allocate the licence to that licensee for the allocation fee of \$12,000. This is the third commercial television licence offered under section 38B of the Broadcasting Services Act, which sets out the process for allocating a new commercial television licence in markets where two commercial television licences operate. Previous licences were offered in the Mildura and Tasmania licence areas.

NEW COMMUNITY RADIO SERVICE FOR OATLANDS

ACMA has decided to make channel capacity available for a new community radio service at Oatlands in Tasmania's midlands area.

No submissions were received following ACMA's call for public comment on the proposal on 23 August 2005.

Mid FM, an aspirant community radio group, has been providing

a general format service on a temporary community broadcasting licence at Oatlands since May 2003.

Oatlands is some 60 km north of Hobart, outside the licence area of the Hobart commercial and community radio services. Receiving these services at Oatlands is considered fortuitous.

ACMA will seek applications for the new licence this year.

The licence area plan for Oatlands radio is available on the ACMA website, www.acma.gov.au, at ACMA > Publications > Radio & Television > Broadcasting > Planning > Licence area plans (LAPs), or phone 1800 810 241.

Local number portability changes for phone users

A new telecommunications industry code will support 'cooling off' periods when providers use telemarketing to encourage consumers to switch phone providers on their landline phones. The code also provides greater flexibility in the movement of local numbers within larger geographic areas.

The code means consumers now have more opportunity to consider their purchasing decisions. They also have the option of returning with their telephone number to their original provider, without penalty, during the cooling-off period.

Consumers will also benefit significantly from changes allowing more flexibility in the movement of local numbers within larger geographic areas. The code previously restricted the porting of local telephone numbers to smaller geographic areas. This resulted in some consumers enduring the cost and inconvenience of a number change, despite moving within the same locality.

The ACIF C540:2005 Local Number Portability Industry Code was developed by the Australian Communications Industry Forum (ACIF). ACMA has registered the code, making it enforceable. The code is on the ACIF website, www.acif.org.au.

Temporary community broadcasting licences allocated 5 NOVEMBER 2005-24 JANUARY 2006

LICENCE AREA	LICENSEE	FREQUENCY	START	FINISH	ALLOCATED
NEW SOUTH WALES					
Moss Vale RA1	MVH FM Inc.	92.5 MHz	16/06/05	15/06/06*	22/11/05
Sanctuary Point RA1	Bay and Basin Community Resources Inc.	92.7 MHz	2/12/05	1/06/06	24/11/05
VICTORIA					
Upper Murray RA1	High Country Christian Broadcasters Association Inc.	94.9 MHz	7/12/05	6/0/06	24/11/05
Geelong RA1	Geelong Ethnic Communities Council	94.7 MHz	26/06/05	25/06/06*	20/12/05
SOUTH AUSTRALIA					
Goolwa RA1	Radio Alexandrina Community Broadcasters Association Inc.	96.5 MHz	30/01/06	29/01/07	24/01/06
Goolwa RA1	The Fleurieu Christian Broadcasters Inc.	96.5 MHz	30/01/06	29/01/07	24/01/06
NORTHERN TERRITORY					
Alice Springs RA2	8CCC Community Radio Inc.	102.1 MHz (Alice Springs) and 102.1 MHz (Tennant Creek)	19/11/05 14/1/06	13/12/05 18/11/06	15/11/05
Alice Springs RA2	Community Radio Association of Central Australia Inc.	102.1 MHz (Alice Springs)	14/12/05	13/01/06	22/11/05

* licence period extended