

Licence for new HPON radio service in Canberra to be auctioned

ACMA will auction a licence later this year to provide a new high-power open narrowcasting radio service in Canberra operating on 1323 kHz on the MF-AM band.

This follows a submission to ACMA from Tatley Pty Ltd (trading as Rete Italia), which is interested in providing an Italian-language radio service in Canberra. Rete Italia currently has services in Adelaide, Atherton, Gosford, Ingham, Melbourne, Mildura, Shepparton, Swan Hill, Sydney and Wollongong.

In November 2005, ACMA announced that before it made MF-AM spectrum available for new analog radio services, it would consider the suitability of that spectrum for future introduction of digital radio services.

After assessing the utility of 1323 kHz for digital radio services (using the Digital Radio Mondiale technology), ACMA found that its potential use in Canberra is constrained by an existing co-channel service in Adelaide. The frequency was consequently considered suitable for an analog service with a transmitter power limited to 400 watts with a directional radiation pattern.

The variation to the licence area plan and variation to the frequency allotment plan are on the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au or contact ACMA on telephone (free call) 1800 810 241.

OPEN NARROWCASTING SERVICES

Open narrowcasting services are broadcasting services whose reception is limited in at least one of the following ways (specified in section 18 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*):

- by being targeted to special interest groups
- by being intended for limited locations (e.g. arenas or business premises)
- by being provided during a limited period or to cover a special event
- because they provide programs of limited appeal or
- for some other reason.

These services operate under class licences—standing authorities for an operator to enter the market and provide a service, as long as the operator has access to delivery capacity and abides by the licence conditions. Class-licensed service providers who wish to use the broadcasting services bands part of the radiofrequency spectrum must obtain a transmitter licence—an apparatus licence issued under the *Radiocommunications Act 1992* that authorises the licensee to operate a transmitter in accordance with the licence conditions.

ACMA generally issues transmitter licences to provide open narrowcasting services under an auction-style price-based allocation system, unless there is only one applicant. Licences are allocated to the highest bidder or, if there is only one applicant, at the reserve price. Applicants for licences must register with ACMA and pay an application fee for each licence applied for. ACMA must set a reserve price for individual licences. Licences issued by price-based allocation are for five years, but ACMA may issue a new transmitter

licence at the end of that period, either by price-based allocation or application under section 100 of the *Radiocommunications Act*.

