# Channels for digital TV repeater services in inland NSW assigned

ACMA has allotted and assigned digital channels for television repeater services at Adelong, Braidwood, Captains Flat, Cobar, Condobolin, Coolah, Cowra, Hay, Jindabyne, Nyngan, Oberon, Talbingo, Thredbo, Tumbarumba, Tumut and Young. In each of these areas, as yet unassigned channels that may be used for other purposes, including datacasting have been identified.

The maximum effective radiated power of the services that will use the digital television channels allotted and assigned for Cooma/Monaro has been increased from 50 to 100 kilowatts.

In making the decisions, ACMA took into account the need for spectrum efficiency and to minimise any changes that viewers will have to make to their existing reception equipment to receive digital broadcasts. It also considered the desirability of broadcasters being able to use their existing infrastructure to broadcast their digital television services.

The Commercial Television Conversion Scheme and National Television Conversion Schemes were formulated in 1999 and varied in December 2000 and January 2003. Under these schemes, ACMA is empowered to develop and vary digital channel plans for areas throughout Australia. The digital channel plans determine which channels are to be allotted to each licensee for the purposes of transmitting services in digital mode and the technical characteristics of those channels.

One of ACMA's objectives in planning channel allotments is to enable broadcasters to plan their digital transmission coverage to achieve the same level of coverage as with its analog coverage.

The decisions are contained in an explanatory paper and variations to the commercial and national digital channel plans, which are on the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au (go to ACMA > Publications > Broadcasting > Planning > Final digital channel plans (DCPs), or contact ACMA on telephone (free call) 1800 226 667.

# 3.4 GHz BAND SPECTRUM PRICES REDUCED

ACMA has reduced the reserve prices for spectrum in the 3.4 GHz band to encourage take-up of the spectrum to provide services to the community. The spectrum is suitable for the delivery of wireless local loop services and wireless broadband internet access.

There is 35 MHz of spectrum available in Brisbane, which may provide a significant opportunity for new wireless internet service providers to enter the market. There is also spectrum available in Hobart, Launceston, and Sydney.

Reserve prices are being lowered by as much as 75 per cent in an effort to encourage use. These licences were passed in at auction in 2000 and the new prices reflect the shorter terms remaining on the licences and changes in market conditions. ACMA will revise these prices annually to take into account the reduced licence term and changing market conditions.

Applications for the next allocation round close at 11.00 am on 13 September 2006. Licences may be allocated for the reserve price if there is only one applicant. An auction is only triggered if there are two or more applicants.

The spectrum will be allocated as technology-flexible spectrum licences that can be used for virtually any type of service permitted by the technical framework, and depending on the amount of spectrum acquired at auction. The licences will expire on 13 December 2015.

In October 2000, 482 spectrum licences in the 3.4 GHz band were auctioned and most were sold. The unsold lots were offered again in 2002, and since 2004 have been offered on a rolling quarterly auction program. Of the 15 unallocated lots, 10 are in Brisbane.

The band is currently used in Australia and elsewhere for wireless local loop (also known as fixed wireless access) services to provide an alternative to wireline telephony and data services.

Spectrum licences are not limited to any particular technology, system or service. Instead of authorising the use of a specific radiocommunications device at a fixed site, they give licensees the freedom to deploy devices anywhere within their licence area, provided that the devices are compatible with the core conditions of the licence and the technical framework for the bands.

More information about the 3.4 GHz allocation is on the ACMA auction website at http://auction.acma.gov.au/current_projects/3.4_ghz/index.asp.