

Mt Gambier **community television** trial extended

The community television trial being conducted by BushVision Inc, in Mt Gambier, South Australia, has been extended for six months, until 4 March 2007. The trial has been running since October 2005.

In making its decision, ACMA identified certain matters that must be addressed by BushVision before any further extension will be granted. It found that BushVision:

- failed to demonstrate that its corporate structure ensures that control of the community television trial resides with the community of Mt Gambier
- does not have a programming policy and provided insufficient evidence to find that it has an open and non-exclusive membership

policy supported by a fair grievance mechanism and

- has not adequately demonstrated that the Mt Gambier community is able to take part in a broad range of activities involved in the operation and management of the service.

ACMA considers that the extension of time will give BushVision an opportunity to address these concerns—an opportunity for the people of Mt Gambier to get involved in the community television trial and the operations and management of the service.

ACMA also decided that it will not, at this time, make analog or digital spectrum available for BushVision to set up a proposed nationwide

television service for rural Australians, since analog television services are likely to begin being switched off between 2010 and 2012, and the possible allocation of two unassigned digital TV channels may clarify BushVision's digital spectrum options.

The government recently announced that the analog switch-over period will begin in 2010 to 2012 and that it will release a Digital Action Plan, possibly later this year. This plan may contain a road map to guide the process and timeframe for the closure of analog television services in Australia; incentives to broadcasters and receiver manufacturers and importers to move to digital television; appropriate incentives and potential assistance to

consumers to move to digital television; and an articulation of the roles of various stakeholders in achieving analog switch-over.

The government is also currently considering its policy options for the two unassigned digital TV channels, which follows a wide consultative process undertaken by the government and assisted by ACMA, about how these channels might be utilised.

ACMA will only issue an apparatus licence to operate a trial community television broadcasting service on the condition that it is used only for community and educational non-profit purposes, and that the service will provide for participative management and programming practices.



ACMA Chair meets Hong Kong regulators

ACMA Chairman, Chris Chapman, and General Manager, Strategy, Analysis and Coordination, James Shaw, were briefed by regulatory bodies, government and industry players during a recent visit to Hong Kong. Hong Kong continues to have separate regulators for broadcasting and telecommunications/radiocommunications. And while legislation to merge the two bodies has been proposed, the form the new entity will take is still under consideration, so Hong Kong is watching the Australian experience with great interest.

LEFT TO RIGHT: HENRY TSANG, PRESIDENT OF BEAR STARNS ASIA LIMITED, ADRIAN WONG, DIRECTOR, ABERCAN LIMITED, MARION LAI CHAN CHI-KUEN, DEPUTY SECRETARY, COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY BRANCH, COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY BUREAU, STELLA LAU, HEADMISTRESS, DIOCESAN GIRLS SCHOOL, CHRIS CHAPMAN, DANIEL R. FUNG, CHAIRMAN, DES VOUEX CHAMBERS, MS LORNA WONG, COMMISSIONER, TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING AUTHORITY, JAMES SHAW, MRS YVONNE SIU SUN YUK-BUI, MEMBER OF THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY