

Wireless access services

What's the future demand?

ACMA is asking stakeholders for their views as a guide in developing strategies to support future wireless access services in Australia.

The term *wireless access service* covers the variety of local loop systems that use the radiofrequency spectrum (for example, 3G, fixed wireless access, broadband wireless access, wireless local loop, the multipoint distribution system and radio local area networks). Examples of wireless access service technologies include Wi-Fi, WiMAX and IMT-2000.

BANDWIDTH DEMANDS TO GROW

Spectrum access is central to addressing the emerging expectations for universal fixed, mobile and travelling connectivity. In the longer term and consistent with world-wide trends, we can expect bandwidth demands to grow, including in the regional and remote areas of Australia.

CONSULTATION IN PRINT AND IN PERSON

As part of its consultation process, ACMA released, in February, a comprehensive spectrum planning discussion paper, *Strategies for Wireless Access Services*.

The discussion paper provides information about:

- wireless access demand drivers
- international trends and current wireless access services bands and initiatives
- existing frequency licensing frameworks and their relative merits
- a number of frequency bands with the potential

- to support future wireless access, and
- a candidate 'private park' regulatory framework, providing a potentially feasible alternative for managing spectrum access of future wireless access services applications.

The paper also provides information on relevant spectrum sharing and incumbent issues.

WIRELESS SPECTRUM STRATEGIES SEMINAR

A follow-on seminar, *Wireless Spectrum Strategies 2006*, was held at the Australian National Maritime Museum, Ultimo, Sydney, on 6–7 March 2006. The seminar focused on future spectrum needs for wireless access and mobile television. Well attended, and generating a buoyant mood, the seminar afforded the stakeholders, incumbents and new players, the opportunity to put forward their points of view. There was also the opportunity for the members of the Authority and the new senior executive of ACMA to engage with players in the spectrum world.

This consultation represents only the first step in the wireless access spectrum planning process. For any

subsequent spectrum re-farming or other action arising from ACMA consideration of responses to this paper and to points of view expressed at the seminar, there will be further detailed consultation with stakeholders and potentially affected incumbent licensees, and potential new market entrants.

COMMENTS INVITED

ACMA invites comments on wireless access spectrum demand, the specific issues raised in the paper and any other stakeholder issues. Written comments should be received by ACMA by Monday, 3 April 2006. All responses will be considered in the development of short, medium and long-term spectrum strategies for Australian wireless access deployment.

The *Strategies for Wireless Access Services* discussion paper is on the ACMA website, www.acma.gov.au and go to Industry > Radiocommunications > Frequency Planning > Recent Additions.

ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPER REGISTER UPDATED

ACMA has completed a comprehensive update of its Associated Newspaper Register. The register assists ACMA in its monitoring of compliance with the cross-media provisions of the Broadcasting Services Act. Under the Act, a person is prevented from being in a position to exercise control of a commercial television or radio licence and a newspaper associated with the licence area of such a licence. The operation of this provision is dependent on the effective maintenance of the register as it identifies the newspapers affected by the cross-media limits. Consequently, the register is an important tool in assisting industry to comply with the cross-media laws.

A newspaper is entered into the register as being associated with one or more licence areas if ACMA is satisfied that at least 50 per cent of its circulation is within that licence area and, in the case of commercial radio licence areas, the circulation of the newspaper within that licence area is at least two per cent of the licence area population.

The newspaper must be in English, be published on at least four days each week, and at least 50 per cent of its circulation must be by way of sale.

ACMA is required to maintain the register under the Broadcasting Services Act, and it now includes overlapping licence areas.

The register is on the ACMA website, go to Radio&TV > Ownership & control > Limitations on control > Control requirements and select Associated Newspaper Register – 16 February 2006